

# THE REBEL YELL

Volume I, Issue I

ACE Mid-Atlantic Region's Official Newsletter

Spring, 2006

Virginia · Maryland · Delaware · Washington D.C.

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October 22, 2006

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## MEDIA DAY AT PKD

Italian Job Turbo Coaster will begin taking us through the streets of Italy right from Doswell, VA on May 25. Susan Storey, PR manager for Paramount's Kings Dominion has invited a select group of ACERs to this special invitation only media premier. I am very excited that ACE has received this invitation. Watch the next issue of the Rebel Yell to find out how excited we were to get together as a region!

Wanted to go but missed getting into the drawing to go – be sure your profile is updated with an email address so that you don't miss anymore of these fantastic days!



## MEET AND GREET

My name is Elizabeth Ringas and I became the Mid-Atlantic Regional Rep in December. I am very excited about my new duties and all the great things that I hope to organize for our region. I reside in Glen Allen, VA just west of Richmond, making Paramount's Kings Dominion my home park. I work from home as a consultant for Southern Living at Home. My husband, Evangelos and I joined ACE in 1999 and have loved every moment of riding coasters together, having ridden 243 different ones. We have two daughters ages 3 and 1 and a third on the way in September. They truly have their parents' heart for riding; our 3 year old has ridden 16 different coasters and the other will get her first ride this spring. Please feel free to contact me with and questions or ideas as I hope to do all I can for this region to further ACE's mission.



I am Stephen Gray, the assistant representative for the Mid-Atlantic Region. I have only been a member of ACE for a few years, but am honored to be the

new Assistant Representative for the region. Growing up in Pennsylvania, I spent many hours at both Kennywood and Hershey Park. While earning a BA in Drama from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, I made many weekend trips to Cedar Point. I enjoyed it so much that I became a ride operator for The Mantis during my summer breaks. I currently reside in Washington DC with my girlfriend. Currently I am on the campus of George Washington University finishing my Masters in Theater Design. When not working on my studies, I enjoy spending time with my sister. My niece and nephew should be able to ride coasters in a few more years. I hope to see you all in the parks this summer. I look forward to serving you and helping to further the cause of ACE and help preserve even more great coasters like Leap the Dips which I pass every time I drive back to Pennsylvania. My favorite coasters currently include Expedition Everest, Revenge of the Mummy, and Alpengaist. Feel free to drop a note with any questions or if you just want to say hello.



## IS IT REALLY WORK OR A DAY AT THE PARK?

As ACE members, a lot of us probably started out working at a park of some kind. So I set out to discover just how much we all have in common, and found three people with very different experiences.

Take Alan Furno, for example. As a teenager he worked at the North Carolina State Fair as a ticket taker. One day he was working the snake pit, and due to the cold weather the pit had a heater to prevent the snakes from hibernating. To stay warm, Alan actually got into the heated pit with the snakes. A few years later he returned to the fair working at the jewelry booth. He says that the best part was relieving the handwriting analysis folks for their lunch. "That was fun to see people smiling and laughing to see what their signature told about them." Alan also worked at a small carnival running the kiddie coaster and carousel. That's right; Alan has been a ride operator. And in college he worked at a local county fair at the nickel pitch game. With that kind of background, is it any wonder Alan's an ACE member?

Going back to the 1960s, Steve Garner worked at Glen Echo Amusement Park in Maryland, just outside Washington, DC. Steve started out as the ticket taker on the *Coaster Dips*, a Miller double out & back. Steve got to dispatch the train and operate the brake a couple of times during test runs, but never with riders due to his age at the time. He moved on to be a ride operator on the Trabant pie-plate ride, and the scrambler and jet rides. Steve worked from noon to midnight, seven days a week, for \$85/week. He says most of the workers were carnies, but he got the job mainly to "meet girls." And meet girls he did, lots of them. He also met two of the Three Stooges while working at Glen Echo.

Jack McCombs is a second-generation park worker. His father grew up in Santa Cruz, California and worked two or three summers at the Santa Cruz Boardwalk in the mid-1920s. He worked the carousel, and Jack says "I recall Dad telling me that he particularly enjoyed working the ring machine. He'd try to load the [brass ring] to time it so a pretty girl would get the ring, and he'd get to meet the girl to exchange the ring for a free ride ticket." Unfortunately things rarely worked out

as planned.

Jack's park job history is a bit more recent, going back to the early days of Kings Dominion. "I believe I can safely say that I am the only ACER who has walked into Kings Dominion several more times than I have walked out of that park." How is that possible? He flew out. The park was brand new and needed to attract an audience, so they put on an air show. They hired Barnstormers Air shows to fly a hot air balloon out of the park. Jack had flown balloons on the west coast and had recently followed his future wife to Virginia, so he was "in the right place at the right time (or perhaps it was the wrong place at the wrong time; I'm still not sure)." Jack flew the balloon out of KD a couple dozen times during the summers of 1975 and '76. He says he was there during the Rebel Yell marathon that got ACE started, but he didn't have time to participate in the event. In 1975 there was plenty of open pavement between the front gates and the ponds leading to the Eiffel Tower, more than enough room to launch a balloon. Jack recalls a particularly memorable launch after a cold front came through Doswell: "A strong north wind, with a 300+ foot tall tower immediately to the south... We held the balloon on the ground for a while that evening, getting it nice and warm before release to get a really quick climb." He says the balloon cleared the Eiffel Tower by about 100 feet, nearly straight over the top of the tower.

John Allen worked at Pontchartrain Beach Amusement Park in New Orleans as a teen. His job was handing out baskets for the swimming pool locker room. John says that the pool was on the beach at Lake Pontchartrain, "back when the lake was not contaminated and swimming there was relatively safe, too." His job got him close to the woodie Zephyr. John was living in Richmond during the Rebel Yell marathon, but it wasn't until 1991 that he found out that coaster clubs even existed, and joined ACE that year. And in the "small world" department, John discovered that he's a fraternity brother of both Ron and Dick Knoebel.

## Fall Thrillfest 2006!

October 22, 2006

Mark your calendars for our regional event at PKD!  
Event flyer online and in the next newsletter!

## Busch Gardens in 2007?

Well, something is coming and we all know that when Busch Gardens builds it, we will come!

According to the Virginia Gazette, the planning commission of James City County approved a special use permit for Busch Gardens Williamsburg. This plan apparently “proposes to erect a queuing building and an embarking/disembarking station collectively totaling approximately 7500 square feet in size”. There is also “additional auxiliary support buildings, as needed, to serve a new theme-park expansion in the New France area”

## Welcome to the Newest Members

### Maryland

*Theodore Ansley (Ridgely)*  
*Colin Fischer (Germantown)*  
*Christopher, Rachel, Zachary,*  
*and Joshua Hills (Perry Hall)*  
*Kelly Jackson (LaVale)*  
*Dylan Lantz (LaVale)*  
*Scott Neibuhr (Bel Air)*

*Jessica, Lloyd, and Katrina Snyder (Smithsburg)*

### Virginia

*Katherine May (Arlington)*  
*Michael Kalman (Burke)*

### Delaware

*Philip, Diane, and Laura Belt (Dover)*

### Washington D.C.

*John Bennett*

## PARK UPDATES FROM THE WINTER

**PARAMOUNTS KINGS DOMINION:** A fantastic addition to PKD’s already awesome line up of coasters arrives May 25. The Italian Job Turbo Coaster, manufactured by Premier Rides and designed by Ingenieur Büro Stengel GmbH, will have three launch sections of LIM launch track with a drop of 31’ 2” reaching a speed of 40 mph. The duration of the ride will be 1:04.

In unfortunate news, Flight of Fear will not operate this season. Its status for the future is unknown.

PKD has also added a new stage show featuring Dora the Explorer and new pay-per-ride go carts.

**SIX FLAGS AMERICA:** Six Flags America had a busy off season that included the arrival of a new vice president and general manager – Terry Prather. Prather joins SFA from Six Flags New Orleans. Prather has 17 years of service to the amusement park industry, managing the rebranding of Jazzland and the safe evacuation of Six Flags New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina.

In addition, there will be the arrival of some more new faces in Six Flags across the country – the Justice League will be wandering the streets including Captain America and Wonder Woman, along with a new daily parade, two new shows. A strong focus on guest service and family entertainment is being added with park ambassadors in each themed area to greet guests and offer assistance with directions, questions or concerns.

Wild One will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year! Happy Birthday to the Wild One.

**Busch Gardens Williamsburg:** Busch Gardens is offering all new thrills through the Curse of DarKastle ride. According to Busch Gardens, it will include “extended footage and scene enhancements, startling interaction between 3-D imagery and riders, intensified ride vehicle propulsion, and over-the-top acoustics”.

“Emerald Beat”, a new Irish dance and music show, will take over the Abbey Stone Theatre. “Kinetix”, an all new circus, will amuse our evenings in the Royal Palace Theatre along with the return of the summer concert series.

## Only Our Memories Remain - Lost Coasters

**Drachen Fire, Busch Gardens Williamsburg.** What a perfect day – crisp cool air and no lines on my first trip to Busch Gardens Williamsburg in 1995 and only my third park ever. We rode and we rode and wow did I need a break, but there was one more coaster – Drachen Fire. We made the walk from the Big Bad Wolf and there it stood off the beaten path behind the bumper cars and the Festhaus. Wow did that loop look tall! The rest of the group in line, so no fear, we must push ahead. As I stand in the line the fear only heightens; I had never seen anything like this, but I'm okay really (well, that is what I told myself at least). And then it was over, the fear had taken over or was it my stomach, either way at that moment Drachen Fire became the only coaster to this day to make me vomit and only in the station for that matter! So out of the station I went, where I sat looking up feeling conquered by a coaster, that just couldn't be – I must ride it!



Photo Courtesy of Ted Ansley

And so I did and I loved every second (2min 25 sec to be precise) of that teeth rattling roughness that made it so famous. Here comes that big loop and around we went – five inversions in all. I had the time of my life that day and knew I would be back to ride again.

Sadly, when I came back old Drachen Fire failed me. I sat on the same bench behind a closed gate only wishing to ride again. It just couldn't be that one ride for a lifetime, but trip after trip I only

wished, for Drachen Fire never opened those gates again.

Drachen Fire operated for six short years from 1992 to 1998. After standing but not operating for three years, it was dismantled and the steel was recycled. It stood a pale blue track over the grass that still stands empty. The station still stands as does the train house; you can catch a great view from the train ride or check out the station during Howl-O-Scream – it's a great haunted house now. Elizabeth Ringas is the Mid-Atlantic Regional Representative.

### **King Kobra, Paramount's Kings Dominion.**

I remember when it opened in May of 1977 and the only coasters there were the Rebel Yell and Scooby Doo (as it was known then). King Kobra was built where the Anaconda now is and the entire lake existed back then unlike now. The King Kobra was a vertical reverse like Montezooma's Revenge at Knott's Berry Farm, bringing a total of 3 rollercoasters to Paramount's Kings Dominion. It operated for 11 years till 1986.



Photo Courtesy of Ed Dobbins

I then ended up working in Ocean City, Maryland in 1988 and out of my window, as I lived on 23rd street, I could see it rebuilt at Jolly Roger again as the King Kobra. Impatiently waiting till the season began to go ride, I headed straight there on opening day. It only stayed till 1989.

Then in 1994, I went to England to ride as many coasters as possible and got to ride it at its 3rd



## MY EXPEDITION TO EVEREST

Well I wish it had been the actual mountain, but I am far from qualified to handle a climb like that in any situation. I was however qualified to check out the new Expedition Everest at Disney's Animal Kingdom. This was one climb I was looking forward to setting out on.

I had a few days off of work and had decided to visit a long time college friend of mine who works at Disney World. She had mentioned that we might have a chance to go to Animal Kingdom and actually get to preview the ride. We had spent most of the day in the park and were enjoying ourselves. We had lunch with one of her friends who works at Animal Kingdom, and was informed that a preview was going on.

We made our way over to the small village and luck was on our side. We made our way into the line and waited for our turn. The theming of the attraction is amazing. Disney has once again out done themselves. The attention to detail is very evident in the actual research that many of the imaginers did when they traveled to Nepal.

For the benefit of those who will be going to ride this fine attraction I will not reveal the secrets you will experience on the ride. I will just tell you a little bit about my experience. I will leave the rest up to you when you ride your first time. Trust

me you will not be disappointed.

The train pulls out of the station with a large puff of smoke and your journey has begun. You experience a little lift hill before the big climb up to the top of the mountain. I think a mountain is an understatement here. This is a goliath! The view on the lift hill going up is amazing. You not only get to see some Yeti idols, but the view from the either side is nothing short of spectacular. You can see for miles on either direction on a clear day.



Photo courtesy of [www.wdwmagic.com](http://www.wdwmagic.com)

On this day not all of the special effects were working, but in the pictures that I have seen since then they look very good and will add a lot to the final attraction. As you exit the top of the lift you begin your high speed chase to a major disaster. The track is gone! As you travel you see in front of you that the track you're on has been twisted and mangled into the air. You have no where to go!

You are not on the edge of the world! You can look around and basically see nothing keeping you from falling to your death. The people below look like tiny ants and the world in front of you seems to be miles away. A loud yeti yell brings you back to life and the crazy journey that is Everest has finally begun.

The next few minutes are mind blowing. You're going backwards and forwards at very high speeds. I was so disoriented that I had to ride a few times to actually figure out what is going on. The sheer thrill and the adrenalin that you feel as you and your fellow passengers traverse the mountain are great.

The drops are well worth the time and the over all experience is something that I would wait hours to ride. Thanks to the fast pass system you really do not have to do that. This is the attraction that Animal Kingdom has badly needed.

With the opening of Everest you can expect the crowds to grow in the park and the overall attendance to go up. I can only hope that this means well for the other major attractions in the park and the overall attendance. I hope this trend of high thrills at Disney parks will only continue. Until next time...happy riding!

Stephen Grey is the Mid-Atlantic Region Assistant Representative.

## FROM THE BACKSEAT

I am very excited by the response that I have received from ACERs in the region. Thank you for all the emails of support.

I want to thank all of the fantastic ACERS that have supported me as I continue to organize things in our region, particularly Ken Moore, Danny Barnes, and Stephen Gray. As more events are planned and the newsletter grows, I will be in need of even more help. Please go to [aceonline.org](http://aceonline.org) and register on the volunteer database, so I can find you when I need you.

Lastly, if you have a story idea or would like to write an article for the next newsletter, please email [eringas@aceonline.org](mailto:eringas@aceonline.org). I would love to hear your ideas for events in the area also. Fall Thrillfest is only the beginning of what we can do!

*Elizabeth*

### Continued from Page 4 - LOST COASTERS

home. Alton Towers now had it and renamed it the Thunderlooper. They opened it in 1990, operating it until 1996.

That's still not the end - as it was then moved to its 3rd continent and 4<sup>th</sup> park as it currently is in operation at Hopi Hari in Sao Paulo, Brazil and has been running since 1999. I still haven't ridden it in its new location but I may have to go on a coast trip to South America now. There's my memory of a classic that made 2 Mid-Atlantic stops over 14 years.

Steve Phelps joined ACE in 1981 and resides in Belcamp, Maryland. He has ridden 552 coasters on four continents. He is a radio personality for XM Satellite radio in Washington D.C. Thanks Steve for your contribution to the newsletter.

### Continued from Page 2 - PARK WORK

My own park job history is not nearly as exciting or memorable, as I was never a ride operator. But if you worked at Busch Gardens in the fall of 1989 or the first half of the 1990 season, and bought lunch or dinner at the Mackinack employee line in New France, I probably sold you a hamburger more than a few times. I worked as a cashier in 1989 and the first half of 1990, was a shop

supervisor for the rest of 1990 and '91, and then moved to Festa Italia in 1992 to sell dry t-shirts to wet people after they rode the Roman Rapids. And in what would become a family tradition, my younger sister (not yet an ACE member, but I'm trying to talk her into it) slung spaghetti in '92, worked at the now-closed petting zoo in '93, and worked in the Clydesdale barn in '94 and '95. Danny Barnes has been an ACE member since 2002 and lives in Portsmouth, VA. He is a Master Control Operator for WAVY-TV AND WVBT-TV in Portsmouth. Thank you Danny for your contribution to the newsletter!

Got a park-job memory? Email your story to me at [mco1043@hotmail.com](mailto:mco1043@hotmail.com) or to regional rep Elizabeth Ringas at [eringas@aceonline.org](mailto:eringas@aceonline.org)

## UPCOMING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

- ACE Day at Knoebels (April 29)
- Spring Conference (May 12-14) Paramount's Canada's Wonderland, Martin's Fantasy Island, and Six Flags Darien Lake
- HoliWood Nights (May 26 & 27) Holiday World
- Rumblefest (May 28) Beech Bend Park
- Coastermania (June 2) Cedar Point
- Coaster EXT (June 3) Geauga Lake
- Coaster Madness! (June 9) Dorney Park
- KennyKon XIV (July 16)
- Coaster Con XXIX (June 18-24) DisneyWorld, Old Town, Cypress Gardens, Busch Gardens, Wet 'n Wild, and Universal Studios Islands of Adventure
- Preservation Conference (August 4-6) Valleyfair!, Como Park, The Park at MOA, and Arnold's Park
- Fall Thrillfest (October 22) Paramount's Kings Dominion

Check out [www.aceonline.org](http://www.aceonline.org) for more regional and park sponsored events!

## ARE YOU GETTING EMAILS FROM ME?

If you have not received an email in at least a month, email me with you email address!

Please email Elizabeth if you change your email address! Also, be sure to add her to your address book so that her emails are not rejected as spam. Emails are sent from two email addresses – eringas@aceonline.org and eringas@yahoo.com, so add them both.

**Email is the best method to get information to you quickly and sometimes the only way!**

### ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

If you would prefer an electronic copy of this newsletter in lieu of a paper one, saving ACE some money, please email [eringas@aceonline.org](mailto:eringas@aceonline.org) with the subject "electronic newsletter".

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Busch Gardens Williamsburg is no longer – as it is now referred to as Busch Gardens Europe. Not that long ago, we remember The Old Country and The Dark Continent, now we have a new name that welcomes us to something larger, something growing, something changing; maybe? Busch Gardens Tampa is now Busch Gardens Africa.

### IS IT TIME TO RENEW?

Don't let your membership run out!

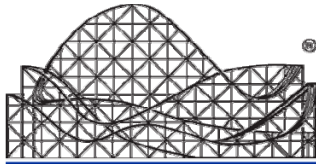
If it is time to renew, please renew quickly, so that you don't miss out on the Rebel Yell and other ACE publications and all the quick email updates and fun stuff ACE has going on. If you have lost your renewal notice, no fear, go to [aceonline.org](http://aceonline.org) and renew online or use the downloadable renewal form. If you cannot access the form, please drop me an email and I will either email one as an attachment or snail mail you a copy.

## ACE ATTENDS COASTER ZOMBIES EVENT AT PKD

April 8 woke us up as a cool and wet day, but that didn't keep the riders away from Paramount's Kings Dominion. CZ enjoyed a morning ERT on Volcano, where the coaster ran great even in the rain. After a jaunt through the park, a picnic lunch welcomed all with a delicious serving of fried chicken and hamburgers and all the soda you could drink.

During lunch, John Janssen, the electrical operation manager for rides maintenance spoke and answered many questions from the CZ folks. Sam Marks followed lunch with lots of awesome door prizes donated by Paramount's Kings Dominion. As lunch wrapped up, everyone headed off for a Scooby Doo and the Haunted Mansion show down. The cool night was honored with a last ride on the Grizzly. Thanks to Sam Marks, President and Founder of Coaster Zombies and Susan Storey, Public Relations Manager for Paramount's Kings Dominion for inviting ACE to join the event. I truly enjoyed getting to meet so many ACE members in the region and look forward to many more fantastic events like this one.





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COASTER  
ENTHUSIASTS**

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