



# South-Central Dispatch

Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana  
Summer 2003

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## Schlittercon II and Fiesta Fest 2003 Kick Off Summer In Texas!



On Memorial Day weekend Schlitterbahn and Fiesta Texas both played host to events to kick off the Texas summer. Schlitterbahn hosted “Schlittercon II” after hosting the very popular original event two years earlier and Fiesta Texas once again hosted “Fiesta Fest”, now in it’s third year. Both events are great examples of how lucky we are to have these parks in our region. Each of these parks go out of their way to make sure everyone has a good time and always do something to make the event special. This year was no exception.

### Schlittercon II

Cementing a long-standing friendship with our organization, Schlitterbahn in New Braunfels, Texas, once again played host to ACEers over Memorial Day weekend. Dubbed Schlitter-Con II, this regional event has comfortably nestled into a biennial pattern started with the add-on day at Coaster Con XXII in 1999.

On hand this year was The Travel Channel, which swooped in specifically to cover ACE’s visit. As the park is frequently featured, the enthusiasts gave the cable channel a new twist to cover America’s award-winning waterpark. Several ACEers were willing to say some kind words to the rolling cameras.

And kind words were certainly easy to come by. For less than the cost of a one-day ticket, ACEers were treated to admission, ERT, a free T-shirt, free lockers, and an all you can eat luncheon – a bargain to be sure!

With a full hour of ERT on the Master Blaster tower complex, members were able to splash in several rides on the innovative technology that graces this section of the park. Draped across the base of the Blastenhoff complex was a large banner welcoming ACE. For those unfamiliar, the Master Blaster uses fast moving blasted sheets of water to keep riders traveling up and down waterslide hills, emulating a coaster experience.

One of the day’s best surprises came at the luncheon following a Q&A session with operations director Terri Adams, Stephen Hauz and Kevin Duffy. A covered structure was unveiled to reveal the first Master Blaster water nozzle prototype, mounted to a stand, for inclusion into ACE’s roller coaster museum.

Signage illustrated the friendship of ACE and NBGS (Schlitterbahn’s sister company, which designs water ride equipment) in the concept of turning water slides into roller coasters.



Banners over the water welcomed ACE at Blastenhoff.  
Photo: S. Madonna Horcher



Schlitter-Con attendees gather around park dignitaries and their cool donation.  
Photo: S. Madonna Horcher

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Photo by Jason Knutson



Regional Rep tests out his new camera at Fiesta Fest.

## The Curly Seat

### A View from the Regional Rep's Seat

While cliché, the saying "It is the best of times, it is the worst of times" aptly fits ACE's 25<sup>th</sup> year. ACE had a great Spring Conference at our own AstroWorld, our region had more events and happenings in a two month period than most regions have in an entire year, and ACE may have had its best Coaster Con ever (the best one I have attended in my 10 years in ACE). However, ACE is working through its darkest moment when a member died on May 31 during the park sponsored Stark Raven Mad event in Indiana. What is most disturbing is the nature of the accident. Although I will not go into all the details here, that tough task has already been documented by the [Holiday World website](http://www.holidayworld.com/xedni.html) (www.holidayworld.com/xedni.html) and the Summer (July-August 2003) edition of ACE News, according to law enforcement reports and an independent investigation, the victim was not riding in the proper position during the fatal ride. Although this happened during a park-sponsored event and not during an ERT session (but on the last public ride of the night while the attendees were supposed to be meeting at the park's picnic area), ACE is at an important crossroads.

While this tragic incident has been widely publicized, what is not widely publicized is that a few parks in the amusement industry have not been great fans of ACE. Some parks have refused to host ACE events or sponsor park events for enthusiasts, because of ... well, us. To be more precise, the ways a handful of our members act during events, and how some of our members

act before and after events. Some in the industry see some members in ACE as egotistical adrenaline freaks, who not just expect, but demand special treatment and perks because they paid for a \$50 membership. In fact, one recent event in this region almost did not happen, because of the past actions from a member. Current actions from some of our members during and between events are still straining relationships with more than one park in our own region. Just in the last year, complaints to various ACE Regional Reps included: violations of park camera policies, use of vulgar language at park employees, ridicule of a park employee's physical attributes, demanding special treatment, arguments with park security, and constant pestering of park employees and officials. Unfortunately, all 8,000 members in ACE are tainted by the actions done by a just a few of us.

ACE distributes our Code of Conduct to all new members upon joining. That code includes following all safety and rider rules at the parks. Failure to do so can lead to expulsion from the club. More important, **ACE members are required to report violations of that code to ACE or park officials.** We all need to take both of these requirements very seriously.

"If we don't conduct ourselves to this code of conduct, there will be no ACE events. Parks will not invite us." These were the words spoken by our president, Carole Sanderson, during the ACE annual business meeting held this past June at CoasterCon XXVI. With about 200 concerned members attending (a possible record) that annual business meeting, which went more than two hours past its scheduled time (a certain record). Half of this marathon meeting was a frank and open dialog between ACE's Executive Committee and members on the tragedy, ACE's Code of Conduct, and ACE's next steps took up half (just about every single person attended until the very end). In a statement that gave way to a loud round of applause, our president said "We cannot let the actions of a few people in this club ruin it for 8,000 people."

Also stated at CoasterCon, one of ACE's first steps will be the publishing of an open letter to the industry from ACE's Executive Committee describing its code of conduct and its enforcement of that policy (this letter has since been sent). While Carole said, "Basically, we're reiterating everything we already have, but people forget it," it is up to each member in ACE to remember if we want ACE to continue its existence, we must actively follow our rather simple rules. A second step is now non-members can attend events only as guests of a member. If a non-member is expelled from a park during an event, the "sponsoring" ACE member is responsible for all of that non-member's actions. In addition, I have already volunteered my services to help President Sanderson and the Executive Committee with these matters. However, each of us can take a small, but more active role in a couple simple ways. First, if you see a friend or another member violating a park, ACE, or event rule, please remind them of the rule – if they stop, there should be no real need to report the action to the park or ACE in many cases. Second, if you have a problem with the park, please report it to the proper park officials: Guest Relations (not Public Relations) or Park Security.

I would like to end by saying that these cases are really rather rare. The vast majority us not only follow the rules, but most of us are polite, courteous, and show our appreciation to the parks. The Regional Rep Team would like to thank all of our members who set the example for others by going out of their way to thank our host parks in person or by letter.

And that my friends is the view from The Curly Seat.

(David thanks Eric Minton of Get The Loop for his contribution of the ACE Business Meeting quotes and some background information.)

A copy of ACE's open letter to the industry and information regarding Holiday World's cancellation of 2004 enthusiast events can be found in the regional news section on the front page of [www.acesouthcentral.org](http://www.acesouthcentral.org).

## Schlittercon II / Fiesta Fest 2003 (continued from page 1)

To top off this unique moment of generosity, Schlitterbahn/NBGS also donated an incredible \$1,000 to ACE's museum.

In addition to providing attendees with a great day of fun, ACE South Central thanks Sherrie Brammall, Terri Adams, and the entire staff of Schlitterbahn for their outstanding support of our organization.

### Fiesta Fest 2003

#### FIESTA TEXAS SERVES UP A BITTERSWEET TREAT WITH FIESTA FEST 2003

For the last five years Fiesta Texas has proven to be one of the very best hosts ACE has ever encountered. Their third annual Fiesta Fest (May 24-25) continued what is now a Texas tradition. "Eventsmaster" extraordinaire Duane Brown, brought in the Regional Rep Team, Tim Baldwin, and Jeffery Seifert for a January brainstorming in Arlington. One thing agreed upon was continuation of the "day-plus" format started last year. Upon Saturday's evening registration, attendees received personalized lanyards and a special Fiesta Fest 2003 edition visor followed by an opening night reception at the Sangerfest. Bonus night-time ERT on *Scream* and the reinvigorated *Poltergeist* was a festive launch for the event and cap to a great night.

A morning ERT session on *Superman Krypton Coaster* greeted the 100+ attendees on Sunday. The top rated floorless coaster delivered the goods once again. All too soon it was time for the annual cliff top photo tour, a most unique experience, awed even the most jaded ACEer ... plus, it helped build up a hunger our bellies. Not for rides, but for the culinary delights for which Fiesta Texas is rapidly becoming famous. This year, Duane and the entire Fiesta crew threw caution to the wind and tried something this Regional Rep believes has never been attempted before at any ACE or park-sponsored coaster event: a plethora of Chinese delights masterfully created by the park's chefs.

The lunch was the perfect lead-in to the next event – advance admission to the Zaragoza Theater for Fiesta's newest show, 'The Amazing Acrobats of China.' The newbie of Fiesta's shows was captivating and exciting – a fine continuation of the park's tradition of award winning show packages. Considering Fiesta Fest attracted enthusiasts from a dozen states, this year's schedule allowed first-timers to the park ample time to experience the wonderful sites and attractions this hill country gem has to offer.

Later, ACEers had the opportunity to snag the prime seats for what might be the funniest rendition of 'Rockin' at Rockville.' This year's Ralphie was probably the goofiest of all time (and purely side-splittingly funny).

The evening events started with the new 'Lone Star Spectacular' fireworks and laser show. Besides being every bit as good as the original it was a treat to see something new. Seeing a greeting to ACE in laser-light made the dish even tastier. Still, the event was not finished. Night ERT on the *Rattler* and the vastly underrated *Road Runner Express* followed, then it was time for another Fiesta Fest tradition ... one last souvenir for attendees (and what a souvenir!).



Schlitterbahn's donation to the ACE Museum. (A prototype Master Blaster water nozzle) Photo: S. Madonna Horcher



Fiesta's leadership gathers at Lunch

Photo: S. Madonna Horcher



Fiesta Texas is about the only park a group photo can take place on a cliff. Photo: Jason Knutson

Duane and crew gave attendees a one-of-a-kind collectable by transforming the old hex-nuts from the recently moved *Joker's Revenge* (now the *Jester* at the new Six Flags New Orleans) by giving them a custom silkscreen with the coasters operating dates and some very "punny" humor. A wonderfully unique treat. Just before that final give away, our friend Duane announced he was leaving the Amusement Industry. A series of "Oh Nos" emanated out from the attendees, but Duane added that he had accepted a job at a new concept spin-off chain within the Toys R Us family. Wanting to make sure ACE sees Duane again, our Regional Rep (David Lipnicky) announced that the Regional Rep Team decided to reach into their pockets and pay for Duane's first year membership in ACE.\* As Duane passed out the Joker hex nuts, many attendees responded with hugs and words of thanks in response to Duane's bittersweet news. The vast majority of attendees hung around and talked to each other and to Duane for close to an hour not wanting the event to end and not wanting to say goodbye to our Fiesta Texas friend. (\*The Regional Rep Team and member Daniel Kraig contributed to Duane's membership, which was submitted this summer. Duane, we better see you at one of our events real soon!)

The Regional Rep Team on behalf of all the members of ACE South Central and ACE's Executive Committee thanks our friend Duane Brown for five years of showing us many of the best times we have experienced as ACE members (CoasterCon XXII in 1999, Winterfest 2000, and the first three Fiesta Fests).

— David Lipnicky, Scott Connor, Tim Baldwin and Jason Knutson

All photos below by Jason Knutson



Regional Reps climb aboard The Rattler during ERT. Photo: S. Madonna Horcher



### Thank You!

The David, Scott, & Jason Regional Rep Team would like to thank the following people:

Region members S. Madonna Horcher, Tim Baldwin, Jeff Seifert, Xander Lee and Ryan Gardner for help with the newsletter and/or events covered in this newsletter. Gary Slade and Amusement Today for providing information on various subjects as well as the Spring Con 2004 information. Terri Adams, Sherri Brammall and the staff of Schlitterbahn. Melinda Ashcraft, Duane Brown, David Blazer and the staff of Fiesta Texas. Eric Minton of "Get The Loop". Carole Sanderson, ACE President.

## COASTER CON XXVI

Whether the many details of Coaster Con XXVI may have reached you or not, stories surrounding this spectacular event will abound for some time. This year's convention was one of ACE's strongest events, certainly filled with creativity and enriching moments. More than ever, Coaster Con gave attendees many opportunities to reflect on the organization's 25-year history. There were numerous highlights, which to list them could go on and on. To just sample the many moments, you'd have to mention the fun ERTs and food galore. But those were not the times that made the convention particularly special. It was the poignant memorial service held for ACE members no longer with us at the *Rebel Yell*, the outrageous Midway Olympics, a PKD park scavenger hunt, a hilarious "pop-up" version of the film "Rollercoaster," a delightful Q&A session with six of ACE's seven presidents, a glimpse of part of the ACE archives, a video chronicling 25 years of coasters while ACE has existed, a marvelous keynote speaker, tons of Paramount giveaways, and...well, as stated earlier, this list could go on for some time.

Above it all was the hospitality by Paramount's Kings Dominion. For most of those who attended, PKD will be the new measuring stick for hospitality for all conventions to come. Their generosity, their creativity, and their sincere desire for ACE to have a good time were evident continuously. It really was a phenomenal week.

But all of this is covered in *ACE News* and will get even more exposure in an upcoming *Roller Coaster!* So how exactly did Region 19 fit in? Were there any connections to the South Central Region?

You betcha. Once again, the attendees at the convention voted the South Central Dispatch as one of the three best regional newsletters. Numerous Texans participated in the Midway Olympics and all three medallist teams contained south Central members in their group. Local ACEers were seen among the winners of the parks scavenger hunt. ACEers from our neck of the woods were seen on the commemorative 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary poster, as well as some remembered at the touching memorial service. And of course, we were in the thick of things as volunteers, whether it was at the General Store, registration tables, or manning the Buck-a-Ride cans during ERTs which accumulated \$1300.

More importantly, we were there to enjoy what will be a favorite convention for many people for a long time. — Tim Baldwin

Escape from Pompeii

Photo: David Lipnick



## Nuts & Bolts (Items in Brief)

The South Central Regional Rep Team would like to apologize for the delay in getting this newsletter out. All 3 of us have been very busy and this issue has fallen behind schedule. Due to the late mailing of this newsletter you should expect another one by late November / early December which should contain the following:

- Lone Star Coasterthon Coverage
- State Fair Coverage
- In-depth look at Spring Con 2004
- Winterfest details and flyer
- Update on the status of the regional t-shirt for 2004.

**Reminders**— If you would like to sign up for regional email updates or need to update your email address, please visit the ACE South Central Region web site at <http://www.acesouthcentral.org> and click on "Updates & News" and select the link on that page to sign up or change your email address. Also available is a "Member's Only" section where you can download past newsletters and archived videos. You can sign up by clicking a link on the front page of the web site.

**Regional Fright Fest/Halloween Event Dates:** *Wonderland Park* - Oct. 24-31 (FearFest03: *Wonderland's* first ever Halloween Event [www.fearfest03.com](http://www.fearfest03.com)).

*Six Flags Over Texas* – Fridays-Sundays through Nov. 2. *Sea World San Antonio* - Saturdays/Sundays in Oct. *Fiesta Texas* — Saturdays and Sundays in Oct. + Oct. 31st and Nov. 1st. *AstroWorld* – Fridays-Sundays (starting Saturday Oct. 4) through Nov. 2. *Frontier City* - Fridays-Sundays (Oct. 10 through Nov. 2). *Six Flags New Orleans* - Saturdays/Sundays through Nov 2. *Dixie Landin'* – Oct. 9-12, 16-19, 23-26, and Oct. 28-Nov 2.

**The South Central Region will be home to the third Spring Con in a Row!** Our Region will co-host ACE's 2004 Spring Con April 30 - May 2 (in west Texas & New Mexico)! Joyland Amusement Park (Lubbock, TX) will be the host park the on Friday, April 30. Saturday, May 1 will include a special tour of Larson International's factory in Plainview, TX & Wonderland Amusement Park (Amarillo, TX) will be the host park. Spring Con will conclude across the Regional boarder at Cliff's Amusement Park (Albuquerque, NM) on Sunday, May 2. Spring Con 2004 will include three very special traditional family parks, neat Galaxi coasters, two slick wild mouse coasters, one of the most unique steel looping coasters in the world (now running PTC's new steel coaster trains), and the last woodie to come out of the CCI design shop. More details will be provided at [www.ACESouthcentral.org](http://www.ACESouthcentral.org) as they become available.

## THE CROSSOVER—News From Neighboring Regions

**Southeast (Region 14):** Six Flags Over Georgia is holding a season pass day on Saturday, November 8. All ACE members are invited, but you must have a Six Flags season pass to get in the park. The Invitation can be found at [www.acesoutheast.org/SFOGfallfinale.pdf](http://www.acesoutheast.org/SFOGfallfinale.pdf), and a link will be placed in the Regional Website's Crossover section ([www.acesouthcentral.org/Crossover/index.htm](http://www.acesouthcentral.org/Crossover/index.htm)).

**Heart of America (Region 18):** Coaster Christmas at Silver Dollar City early to mid-December is in the planning stages. More details to come.

Worlds of Fun season passport holders again have the opportunity to bring a friend to Worlds of Fun for just Half Price (plus tax) on any regular operating day through the rest of the 2003 season. This offer expires Sunday, October 26, 2003 and is not valid with any other offer. More information is located at The Crossover section of the Regional Website ([www.acesouthcentral.org/Crossover/index.htm](http://www.acesouthcentral.org/Crossover/index.htm)). For further details, please call 816.454.4545



### **Feature Member: Xander Lee**

#### **You've been in ACE a couple of years. How did you find out about the club?**

I was very into Six Flags Over Texas, and after a while I started to get to know the Six Flags Over Texas fan site owners, both of which were ACE members at the time. They both told me about the club and I decided to join later on that year.

#### **You recently started your career at Six Flags Over Texas. Has this changed your perspective of being an ACE member, and if so, how?**

A bit. I have realized that some of the things guests get upset at operators for (such as not allowing a loose lap bar) are beyond their control unless specifically given permission to do so by a supervisor. I wish all ACE members and general park guests could understand that these policies are in place for their safety and to not yell or get mad at the ride operators for just doing their job as they were trained. Some guests and ACE members are very understanding, but others are not.

#### **What are some of your other interests and hobbies (non-park related)?**

I am much into my high school's technical theatre department. I was the head stage manager for our 2002-2003 musical, "Anything Goes", and I am joining the Advanced Technical Theatre class this year. I hope to major in Lighting Design and Technology at the University of Texas after I graduate in 2005.

#### **Within the last couple of years you've attended several ACE & park-sponsored events. Which one was your favorite and why?**

So far, my favorite event has been Fiesta Fest 2002. Fiesta Fest 2002 was my first Fiesta Fest experience and I thought the park and ACE did an amazing job planning this event. Weakest Link was hilarious and as always the *Poltergeist* and Scream ERTs were a blast.

#### **What park(s) are you most wanting to visit? Which coaster(s) are you most wanting to ride?**

I would really love to make it to Holiday World to ride *Legend* and *Raven* and to experience that park first hand. I would also like to make it out to Six Flags Magic Mountain to ride *X* and hop over to Knott's to ride *Xcelerator* and *GhostRider*.

#### **What ride or attraction would you most like to see installed at Six Flags Over Texas?**

I think Six Flags Over Texas could greatly benefit from the installation of more family friendly flat rides. If marketed the correct way, and maybe along side of a coaster, Six Flags Over Texas would get the attendance increase they are searching for.

#### **From a young person's perspective, what are your thoughts about the direction your regional rep team has taken with new things like the website, t-shirts etc?**

I think the "new" regional rep team is making many great improvements to an already wonderful region to make sure the region stays on top.

#### **You're a big fan of shows at the parks. What are some of your favorites, past and present?**

Of course, first and foremost I have to mention Fiesta Texas shows. Reflections At Rockville High is probably the absolute best show I have ever seen. So well rehearsed and staged. Six Flags Over Texas has also blown me away with their past productions of Arania's Nightmare (Fright Fest), The Best Time Of The Year (Holiday in the Park), and their current productions of Raise A Ruckus Tonite and Me-can-ix.

#### **What is your favorite non-coaster ride or attraction ?**

Over the past couple weeks I have totally fallen in love with Skycoasters, but I also love classic dark rides (like Fire in the Hole at Silver Dollar City) and any of the amazing arsenal of flat rides from KMG.

#### **What do you like most about working at a park?**

I love learning about the rides first and foremost, but I also love visiting parks and picking apart and analyzing the way they (besides Six Flags Over Texas) operate their rides. If I like something I will take it and try to implement the procedure at my ride when I get home to see if we can make it work.

#### **Free question... say anything!**

Thanks David, Scott, and Jason for all the work you do. I had a great time at Lone Star Coasterthon and I want to thank everyone that came and said "Hi" to me at Gold River.