



The Queue Line Chronicle



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ACE South Central Region—Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana—Summer 2007

SchlitterCon IV—By Mike Robinson and Jason McMillon



SchlitterCon. It's a word that not only applies to a gathering of enthusiasts, but a state of mind. What other event can transcend a day into a Zen-like experience where everything is perfect? Nothing else can

describe the most unique event in the country. A combination of location, schedule, and company makes this the perfect event. Not even questionable weather could put a damper on SchlitterCon IV. Even though there was some rain and overcast skies, not a single item on the itinerary was affected by the weather.

This was to be the fourth SchlitterCon. The event got its name during the add-on day during Coaster Con in 1999. That was the event that Texas' very own ACE member Dawn Robinson, full of enthusiasm and sunshine shouted out the word "SchlitterCon!" for all the world to hear – and a unique event was named. Since then, ACE members have collected every other year to celebrate this event, and some have gone every year regardless of there being an event or not.

This year we had Jeffery Siebert, and while famous for his events at theme parks, we all wondered what kind of event he would be able to pull off at a water park. Many of us had made our room reservations in January 2007 for the entire three-day weekend after experiencing Schlitterbahn hospitality at Winterfest back in January.

The rooms at the resort are all very nice and have been remodeled with hardwood floors in the front rooms, nice 27-inch TV's and a full size refrigerator and stove which came in very handy for a lot of the attendees. As a special treat, ACE members staying at the resort were treated to a fruit basket, bagels, and juice & milk waiting in their rooms.

Registration went quickly even with 94 people registered for the event. It was during registration that event goers started noticing these interesting laminated SchlitterCon logos everywhere. One could only again wonder what Jeffery Siebert had planned.

The first item up was breakfast and the folks at Schlitterbahn did it right with milk, juice, scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, tortillas and biscuits and gravy. This was not a normal event breakfast but a TEXAS breakfast! Everything was handled very well by the Schlitterbahn staff. It was delicious food, and there was a lot of it. Even with 94 people in line for food, the line moved quick. While

eating our food we were treated to a sound like no other - the pumps for the Master Blaster Tower being turned on and water flowing throughout the structure. Food was quickly abandoned as Jeff told us we could ride. Impromptu ERT of about 30 minutes was there for the taking before the park



Photo— Stacy Bernal

Nate, Garrison and Matt on the Skycoaster

opened on the number one water ride, the Master Blaster!!

Next on the agenda were free flights on one of the most enjoyable Skycoasters anywhere. Being lifted high over the Comal River and dropping and soaring out over the Torrent River is just a lot of fun. The Skycoaster at Schlitterbahn has a unique feeling with a lot of air time as 30 or 40 feet of slack is picked up. But it really is the views of the surrounding landscape that make this one more special than the rest.

There was some free time after that so most attendees hit the park taking advantage of no lines for Dragon Blaster and Family Blaster in Surfenburg. There was a competition on the Boogie Bahn that kept it off limits for most of the day but some night time ERT would fix that!

Everyone reassembled in the afternoon for a behind the scenes tour narrated by Jeffery Siebert himself! First stop was the Schlitterbahn corporate headquarters where everyone had a great time touring Jeffrey's desk. (The keyboard used to type part of this article is courtesy of that tour.)

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The Curly Seat

A Point of View on Coasters, Parks, and ACE from Your Regional Rep

David Lipnicky—ACE South Central Regional Rep
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This view from The Curly Seat is unique as it is nothing like what I intended it to be when I first sat down to write this puppy back in May. What makes it unique is that this is the first Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) ride in The Curly Seat. Fasten your lap bars and try to relax, because I eventually hope you will understand how this one is different and why. Is your lap bar locked? OK, let's go ...

Maybe the two most important things I have learned about being a regional rep or an assistant regional rep in ACE is patience and flexibility. Whether it is the long off-season waiting for a new coaster to arrive, the weather playing havoc with an event or ride debut, trying to work in new ideas in with well-liked activities for an event (knowing you will never make 100% of attendees 100% happy 100% of the time), or even having to scrap an article due to unforeseen circumstances, being an ACE rep can at times be an extreme test of one's serenity and tolerance. Now, just because I recognize that these attributes are essential tools to keeping an ACE rep's sanity, does not mean that I have adequately used what I've learned all the time, but I like to think I have done an OK job more often than not.

What you are reading here is proof of these lessons. I started writing my original version for this Curly Seat three months ago, and it was the one coaster article I have most wanted to write in several years. I was so excited about this article that I finished the first draft (sans the final paragraph) in less than 24 hours - record time for me. This one was going to be about my long-time wish to see a seaside wooden coaster back in Texas, and how that dream was finally granted. I have had this wish a bit before I joined ACE 14 years ago. I said I finished the entire article except the last paragraph, which was going to be a short personal take on the ride as my dream actually became real. While new coasters are obviously a big deal to all of us, I hope most reading this have learned over the past several months that the *Boardwalk Bullet* is far more than just a new

coaster for me. No disrespect to any coaster built since 1990, but the last I time have wanted a ride to be built this badly was the *Texas Giant*. The problem is that three months after I just (nearly) finished that first draft, rains are still preventing the *Boardwalk Bullet* from opening, and I still have not been able to ride my dream coaster. In fact, I will not get to ride the coaster before this newsletter goes to print. Oh, how my patience has been tested, and tested, and tested. (Now, here is the flexibility part.) As a result, the remainder of this article will be my views on a few things I have wanted to write about, but would not have been able to cover under normal circumstances. Hands up! We are cresting the lift hill.

It almost never fails, if there is a media day for a ride in our region, my real job will have me traveling several hundred miles away in places such as North or South Dakota, Wyoming, or Montana. While these are beautiful states, collectively, these states have zero amusement parks. (That is almost 400,000 square miles without a single amusement park!) Worse yet, I have encountered blizzards on several of these April and May business trips. This time I was working in Boston and Maine during the Journey to Atlantis media day. You have no idea how badly I wanted to be in San Antonio. However, assistant rep Jeremy Murphy did a great job on my behalf, and seeing the video clips of a boatload of our ACEers having a great time riding while on camera brought a huge smile to my face.

Although we are extremely grateful to have the amazing Jeffrey Siebert in our region, I was not the only one who was a little concerned about the effect on Coaster Con XXX when Jeffrey left Kings Island for Schlitterbahn, and then when Paramount sold Kings Island and the rest of the Paramount Parks to Cedar Fair. Wow, were those concerns unfounded! Kings Island and ACE Events Planning Committee - which is led by our own Yvonne Janik and our own S. Madonna Horcher is a member - did a stellar job! With Stricker's Grove, Holiday World, and

Beech Bend also being great hosts, this one was easily in my top four national ACE events of all time.

My biggest surprise at Coaster Con was *The Beast*. I have always liked the ride, but was not enamored with this undeniable magnificent feat of wooden coaster engineering. However, I finally fell in love with this legendary coaster during Coaster Con XXX. While this monstrous ride was running as fast and furious as ever, actually in my book, its was the ride quality that was far superior than in all my previous visits to Kings Island. I am convinced the biggest difference was the inclusion of magnetic trim brakes replacing the insane amount of skid brakes that used to dominate l-l-l-o-o-o-n-n-n-g stretches of the ride. I always accepted that magnetic brakes provided a higher degree of safety and lower maintenance costs, now I am certain they can provide better ride quality over the traditional skid and the slightly more modern fin/squeeze brakes.

While most ACEers were insanely ecstatic with Holiday World's ferocious tour de force of wooden madness called *The Voyage*, I have to admit that I actually like Beech Bend's *Kentucky Rumbler* better. Do not get me wrong, I like *The Voyage* - a lot. I think it will easily take the top spot in the 2007 Amusement Today wood coaster rankings (and no, I do not have any inside information). I just absolutely love the *Kentucky Rumbler* - so much so, that it has now moved into the #5 position my on my wood list (*Hades* at Mt. Olympus still has my #1 spot as of 08-09-07).

We will enter the brake run of this ADD ride with something extremely close to my heart. When I took over the regional rep reins from Tim Baldwin back in September 2002, the very first item on my regional rep "To-do List" was the implementation of a regional website. When the RRT debuted version 1.0 the following January, we knew we had a winner.

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While assistant rep Jason Knutson did all the programming, and assistant rep Scott Connor and Tim Baldwin provided major assistance to the effort, I will admit that I take great pride that I was Jason's co-designer – focusing on the site's layout and usability characteristics and features. Both Jason and I have experience in website design, and we agree on the vast majority layout and usability matters. Do not get me wrong, while I can say www.ACESouthcentral.org is pretty much exactly how first I envisioned it to be when I was Tim's assistant rep, Jason did all of the programming – which is the real work. In addition, Jeremy Murphy, Jason McMillon, Mike Robinson, and Gary Slade all provided feedback and content from the very start. We had made several dozen tweaks, upgrades, modifications over the years -- to the point that we were probably running Version 1.999 by the time ACE's first ever regional website contest took place during Coaster Con XXX this past June.

I will admit when the *Queue Line Chronicle* did not place in the Judge's vote for the regional newsletter contest and it just placed 3rd in the Members Choice vote, I was initially very disappointed. Several people inside and outside our region told the RRT that our issues between May 2006 and April 2007 were our best work ever -- with our Holiday 2006 Double Issue being our best single issue the region ever produced. Some may say my initial reaction was petty or vain. I will not deny that, but I will say that my emotion was also human, and for me to say I felt any other way would be an absolute lie. Luckily, I quickly recalled that when I earlier looked at the binders containing all the eligible newsletters from across all of ACE, there were a record number of truly great regional newsletters. So many in fact, that I immediately thought to myself that despite this year's batch being our best work ever, it may not place in either category. I quickly settled with the notion that while we did not take a top prize, we did our finest work, and many ACE members thought our product was one of the very best. After all, we do produce newsletters to document regional news for ACE and our members, not to win awards. Just as I was pleased in the quality work we had produced, it was time for the top regional website announcements. Although I had told my assistants and myself that we should be proud no matter the result, "Would our high hopes go unfulfilled again?" would not leave my feeble brain. When our region was not announced as the 3rd or 2nd place winners, it was painfully down to all or nothing. Then I heard "South Central Region" announced as the 1st place winner! I instinctively lowered my head, clinched my fist, and forcefully said "Yes" to myself. However, before I even finished with that one word, I heard "YYYYYYYEEEEEEEEEEEESSSS!!!!!" scream out from all the way across the large banquet hall in the voice that is undeniably Scott Connor. The smile I already had grew seven times larger just at hearing Scott's explosion of excitement (or was it relief) from what seemed like a mile away. For that moment, the frustration and sadness over the loss of AstroWorld, Six Flags New Orleans, Western Playland, and Bell's were pushed aside. Outside of thanking Jason, Scott, Jeremy, Jason, and Tim, I do not remember much else of what I said other than I ended with "We finally beat the Southeast region at something!" And that my friends is a very open and honest view from this ADD ride in The Curly Seat.

Don't forget about our upcoming regional events!
Lone Star Coasterthon Weekend September 7th thru 9th
Informal ACE day at the Texas State Fair on September 30th
Fiesta Fest on October 20th and 21st

By Charlotte Schroeder



The most anticipated summer show spectacular to come to Six Flags Over Texas made its debut on a cool night on June 16, 2007 to a crowd of at least two thousand, who were thankful the rain stayed away for a

few hours. When arriving at the park entrance, several spotlights illuminated the sky depicting where the performance was to take place. In the amphitheater, the stage was captivating as it was filled with lots of neon art items, runways, and special effects lighting that really showed off the colorful and vivid costumes worn by the entertainers who performed for us that night.

The show started out with some audience participation as a few guests were picked to walk onstage with clowns to take part in a short pantomime act to get the audience into the show. They also had some hilarious surprises for us too. Then, the performers brought out their neon jumping ropes and performed amazing acrobatic stunts. At times, many performers were on stage at once and it was hard to keep track of all the activities happening. The trapeze performances were very entertaining as many performers were on stage dancing, swinging on swings, and spinning up in the air. It was stunning! A couple of musicians were also on stage playing their violins throughout the show, which added more excitement and intensity. The acrobatic artists were amazing and had the most applause from the audience. There were two guys balancing themselves on a board with a tube underneath, which was so precarious it was hard to watch at times. But the best came last as three men gave a raving performance as only done in true artistry, balance, and precision - it brought the house down. At the end of the show, all the performers came out to a standing ovation, thanking everyone for coming out and enjoying the show. It was a delightful show filled with aerial artistry, music and lighting which made for a memorable night for those who were there. For best viewing, arrive at 9 P.M. when gates open and sit in back seats to experience the show fully. Experience it for yourself when the show returns for next season.

Dave's Top 10 Non-Coaster Things to Love About Amusement Parks (As determined by ACE South Central members' e-Mail responses)

10. Arcade & Midway Games—82 points	5. Water Rides—158 points
9. Carousels—136 points (only 13 points separated spots 9 through 6!)	4. Shows—176 points
8. Souvenirs—143 points	3. Flat Rides—193 points
6. (tie) Food—149 points	2. Drop Rides—220 points
6. (tie) Desserts & Treats—149 points	1. Dark Rides—244 points (pulling away by a wide margin at the end of the voting)

SchlitterCon IV (continued from page 1)

There were about a thousand pictures covering the history of Schlitterbahn along the walls and we had a great time checking them out. Everyone agreed it was a special treat to see the history of the park in pictures along the tour. Then it was back to the tram for destinations unknown. Jeffrey took this time to ask trivia questions and hand out prizes as we navigated the back roads of Texas. Yes, here were a bunch of ACE members in a tram that used to carry visitors past Jaws and King Kong in California traipsing through the hill country over back roads.

Our destination could only be one place. New Braunfels General Store (NBGS International), where the geniuses of water flow make magic happen. There were pallets and equipment stacked for Galveston, a ton of "tear drop" fixtures (the mushrooms that drip water) and fiberglass objects of all sorts! Pirate ships and other items filled the cavernous rooms.

Next was the research & development area that had a towering structure with a steep ramp taking center stage. No word on what this was for, but there was a lot of speculation! A model of a river complex was also on view with all its gates and locks showing that the geniuses at NBGS design things in miniature first!

Then it was another interesting ride back to the park. It was discovered that the ex-Universal Studios Tour trams are quite fun when crossing train tracks. The people in the last tram car were really bouncing when we crossed those tracks. It was nicknamed "TRAM, THE RIDE!" by those in the last car, a light-hearted joke among friends.



Photo— Jason Knutson

Mike Robinson proposes to Dawn after dinner and handing out coupons for a free ticket at any Schlitterbahn park and first ride of the day on Master Blaster. (This was the second set, as the tickets were given out at Winterfest in January also!! Thanks Jeff!!!). The regional rep team presented Sherrie Brammall with the region's industry appreciation award for all her work with ACE for the Schlittercon and Winterfest events they have hosted. Schlitterbahn also presented the regional rep team a check for \$1,000 to go towards the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives. Before the dinner activities were over, Mike Robinson surprised Dawn by asking her to marry him again and presented her with a ring.

After dinner it was time for ERT on the Master Blaster, Wolf Pack, Black Knight and Boogie Bahn. Some crazy rides were had on the Wolf Pack. David L., Jason M., and Mike R. took a couple of turns together and had what they called some of the most insane rides of their lives - saying afterwards that they would never forget them.

The Boogie Bahn was interesting as well. About 20 people were

there and the spread of talent was well varied. There were those who were doing it for the first time and those who were experts. A few of the members had even competed in the contest earlier in the day.



Photo— Jason Knutson

Following ERT was a night float down the Comal River. The amazing Mr. Siebert provided a ton of glow sticks. The brave tubers were covered with them as they floated down the river. It was quite a sight seeing all these lit up tubes and people floating down a dark river. Three drink stations were set up on the banks along the river marked by tiki torches. Floaters 21 and up didn't have to go without frosty adult beverages very long! The float was a favorite part of the trip for many attendees. The water felt great and the slow current was very relaxing.

The night ended with a dessert and drink buffet outside of the hot tub at the resort. Sodas for all, and a selection of adult beverages for those of age. All in all, it was a very nice way to cap off the evening. Schlitterbahn even treated us to a very talented steel drum band from the local high school playing for our enjoyment. Hot tubs, steel drum bands, desserts..... Yes, it was Zen.

And so ended the official fourth SchlitterCon. An event that cost only \$29.95 included two meals, park admission, a free skycoaster flight, ERT, back stage tour, a free ticket to come back or visit another Schlitterbahn park and enough beverages to make anyone happy. Schlitterbahn is a great place to go, ACE event or not. Schlitterbahn treats ACE like family, and they are the crown jewel of water parks. Next year, make sure to keep your calendar open on Memorial Day weekend as we sure hope to see you in New Braunfels.

(SchlitterCon V will be held on Sunday, May 25, 2008)



Photo— Stacy Bernal

Photo— Jason Knutson



Photo— Jason Knutson

Photo— Charlotte Schroeder



and mild dips.

The ride was a huge success, and there were always lines for it. The sharp turns over the water always led to urban tales of horror. It became another badge of courage to ride the *Swamp Buggy*. It also became a badge to keep the ride running as it was prone to frequent shutdowns.

The mid 70's led to some big changes for AstroWorld. Six Flags leased AstroWorld and started managing the park. The *Swamp Buggy* was removed before the first season managed by Six Flags started, leaving a three year legacy of thrilling riders and frustrating the maintenance department. (When another vertical lift coaster came to AstroWorld, big changes were made, but that's another Lost Coaster story.)

I remember riding the *Swamp Buggy* with my dad many times during those years. You would sit on your seats, and the entire top of the car would swing down on top of you leaving a small window to look out of. The car would roll forward and the transition from horizontal to vertical was abrupt. It would be instantly dark with bright sky only visible out of the top of the trunk. All the weight would be on your back as you were pulled up the lift, every rollback clanking loudly in that enclosed space. The climb would take forever and that bright circle of sky would get bigger and bigger until the top was reached, the car would roll upright and tilt to the left as you circled around the tree. At the bottom, the rhythm created by the circular motion was broken by an ingenious piece of straight track that went straight out over the water with two vicious 90 degree turns that finally led to the station.

One of the shortest lived coasters in the South Central Region was The *Swamp Buggy*, a Chance Toboggan that opened in 1970 with Fun Island, a real island that could be traversed over several bridges, including the popular floating bridge. Kids (and adults) would jump up and down attempting to make the bridge rock back and forth. The Wacky Shack also opened up that year and was an early crowd favorite as AstroWorld gave the public their unique version of the tilted house. Following Fun Island, AstroWorld turned its attention to its first new themed area, The County Fair and the roller coaster *Dexter Freebish Electric Roller Ride*.

Swamp Buggy was a portable coaster that was unique to most coasters in a lot of ways. It had individual two seat cars that were enclosed, a vertical lift, and a spiral shaped track.

The *Swamp Buggy* was never replaced until Fun Island was removed to make way for *Viper*. The *Swamp Buggy* stood where the first drop on the *Viper* was located.

Not one to settle for normalness, the Judge had the *Swamp Buggy*, as it was now called, elaborately themed to look like a tree. The cars climbed up the middle of the trunk and then circled down through the branches. At the lowest level, the track extended away from the tree and over the water of AstroWorld's lagoon with two sharp turns

The *Swamp Buggy* might have had the shortest stay at AstroWorld, but those of us who rode it, will always remember it.

SchlitterCon IV Quotes—Charlotte Schroeder

I really enjoyed the nighttime float down the Comal River at SchlitterCon IV. With the steel drum band playing at the hot tub party as we all drifted by, it made for a very relaxing and memorable experience. The neon glow-in-the-dark necklaces were great too- we didn't lose track of anyone. Thank you Scott for talking us into participating. I look forward to another nighttime float on the Comal River next year at SchlitterCon. I'm also glad Steven went on the Skycoaster. He's braver than me.

The ride with Scott and Jeff Siebert on the Wolfpack Raft slide during the night ERT session was a lot to fun too! Had a great time!

SchlitterCon IV Quotes—Mike Robinson

"Those poor people in the back of the tram..."
 "Is this the box factory?"
 "I am SO out of shape"
 "Bacon? Hell Yeah!"
 "Will you marry me?"
 "\$199.00"

Thank You! The Regional Rep Team would like to thank the following people: Dan Decker, Fran Stephenson, Josie Villela, Katie Homstrom, Beatrice Candu, Kami Watson Huysse (My PR Pro), and the rest of the SeaWorld San Antonio Staff; Sharon Parker, Kendall Kelton, Jane Hatter, Steve Martindale, Stan Mills, Scott Price, Sean Lynch, & the rest of the staff at Six Flags Over Texas; Crystal Evola, Ryan Gardner, Darren Dalton, Ben McTyre, & Martin Bozer of Fiesta Texas; Jeffrey Siebert, Terri Adams, Angela Flournoy, and Jana Faber of Schlitterbahn; Tim Anderson & Jay Wilson of Kemah Boardwalk; Korey Kiepert, Larry Bill, Michael Graham, & Chad Miller of The Gravity Group; Alain Vlemminckx, Chuck Bingham, and the rest of the Martin & Vlemminckx Boardwalk Bullet crew; Errol McKoy and Rusty Fitzgerald of the State Fair of Texas; Robbie & Sally Bell of Bell's Amusement Park; Paul Borchardt of Wonderland Park; David & Kristi Dean of Joyland Amusement Park; Larson International; Gary Slade, Sammy Piccola, Paul McDonald, Alice Baron, & Janice Witherow of Amusement Today; John Odum of Six Flags Parks; Tim Baldwin; Jeffrey Seifert; S. Madonna Horcher; Mike, Dawn, & Zach Robinson; Stacy Bernal; Kari Lipnicky; Conn Berkenbile; Polly & Alan Nichols; Sean & Cheryl Shaver; Charlotte & Steven Schroeder; Russell Rakowitz; Dan McPartland; Kevin Lipnicky & Sarah Simmons; Phil Pan; Jeff Braziel; Michael Tomlinson; Steve Benham; Howard Gillooly; Kevin Knapp; Mark Davidson; Bill Linkenheimer III; Barry Maness of ACE's Southwest region; Robert Ulrich of ACE's southeast region; ACE President Mark Cole; and ACE Immediate Past President Carole Sanderson.

Journey To Atlantis Splashes Into SeaWorld San Antonio

Article and photos by Stacy Bernal

SeaWorld San Antonio treated ACE and local media to a day of discovery on May 11, 2007, with a special invitation to experience their newest thrill ride, Journey to Atlantis.

Attendees gathered in the early morning hours for what was sure to be a day of splashing good fun. Several members of the SeaWorld staff greeted everyone as they arrived, and once all attendees were present, the group boarded the vans and headed into the park.

There was excitement in the air as participants walked toward the towering structure, which is part roller coaster, part water ride. The anticipation was building as everyone made their way through the queue, which meanders around the beautifully landscaped grounds, follows a circular pattern under a domed pavilion, and ends at the loading platform.

Although the morning air was cool and a breeze was blowing, it didn't deter any of the riders from boarding the boats and taking off on an adventure on this most unique ride.

As they traveled up the 100 foot lift, a beautiful view of the park and surrounding city unfolded around them. The view was made even better upon reaching the first of two turntables, which turn riders up to 360 degrees, giving all aboard a panoramic view of the hill country unlike any other.

The turntable smoothly, and very quietly, rotated until the boats were in position with riders facing backwards. A few heart-pumping seconds later they dropped into a reverse camelback, causing those onboard to scream from excitement. They then swooped uphill and into a second turntable, getting another breathtaking look around the area.

The boats were again in position, edging ever further over the drop until they tilted forward and plunged 49 miles per hour into the lake below. A wall of water seemed to spray from every direction, not only giving riders a refreshing 'splash', but many onlookers as well.

The boats then traveled around the lake and back into the station, where riders eagerly switched seats and headed off again.

As if the day wasn't already perfect, the staff at SeaWorld San Antonio went above and beyond by providing a delectable lunch hearty enough to satisfy the hungriest of enthusiasts, and had everyone ready to sail off for more adventures on Journey to Atlantis.

By the end of the day, several ACEers had ride counts in the double-digits, including Joshua & Krystal Heiserman, who rode a total of 47 times! All attendees had a great time, enjoying the ride and venturing into the rest of this beautiful park.

Many heartfelt thanks go to Dan Decker—executive vice president and general manager, Fran Stephenson—communications director, Josie Villela and Katie Hornstrom—communications representatives, Beatrice Cantu—community relations assistant, Kami Watson Huyse of My PR Pro, and the ride operators and staff of Journey to Atlantis for their tremendous hospitality, and for inviting ACE to share in this very special day!



South Central members gather for a group photo



South Central members after being soaked on Journey to Atlantis



Nathan, Sean, Cheryl and Gus on Journey to Atlantis



Nuts & Bolts (Items in Brief)

- Wow! SchlitterCon IV had to be right at the top as one of the most unique events in all of ACE. The nighttime float down Comal River alone was worth the incredibly low registration price. The only downside is how Schlitterbahn and ACE can top SCIV. Well, a great start is that SchlitterCon is now an *annual* event to be held in New Braunfels each Memorial Day weekend. Mark your calendars, SCV will be on Sunday, May 25, 2008!
- Frontier City seems to have had a very good year despite the weather being somewhat wet this year. The new ownership has made some nice investments and the park appears to accelerate the turnaround started last year by Six Flags (the previous owners). With next year being Frontier City's 50th Anniversary, could the park get something big? Let's hope so!
- The RRT received bittersweet news in July that Six Flags Over Texas' (SFOT's) Jane Hatter has left the park to go back to college and pursue a graduate degree. Jane's enthusiasm, hard work, and great ideas made recent LSCTs a success, as she immediately became a great friend of ACE. While we are sad to see her leave, we are very happy that she will be following her dream career in education as our Texas schools can always use smart, energetic, and dedicated principals. The RRT will miss Jane greatly. Filling Jane's shoes is no easy task, but SFOT quickly brought in Kendell Kelton as their Public Relations Coordinator and lead on LSCT. Kendell is no stranger to the SFOT team, and she hit the ground running on LSCT and (just like Jane) has been an absolute joy to work with over these past few weeks. LSCT and ACE will be in great hands with Kendell.
- The RRT is going to try something new once again. This one is the brainchild of assistant rep Jeremy Murphy. We are going to have an informal ACE Day at the State Fair of Texas on Sunday, September 30. This will be a more relaxed event than our formal events, but should be extremely fun, and the RRT agrees that variety does add spice to life (and coaster events). More details and an on-line event flyer will materialize soon.
- The relationship between Fiesta Texas and the RRT kicked into a higher gear this summer during our work on Fiesta Fest 2007. We will be trying several new ideas – some large, some small. The RRT is quite excited about the prospects of the mix our agenda will bring this year. We hope all the ideas work, and our attendees like the new twists. Nevertheless, the new coaster is bringing a new energy to the park, and a highly anticipated new activity for the ERT schedule.
- The *Boardwalk Bullet* is not the only coaster delayed by the freakish rains that have inundated most all of Texas during this spring and summer. West Texas parks Joyland in Lubbock and Wonderland in Amarillo were impacted more severely by the rains of 2007. Both parks had planned to resurrect a former AstroWorld coaster in 2007. The ground at both parks became so saturated, neither park could pour concrete at their planned times. As a result, the return of AstroWorld's *Greezed Lightning* at Joyland has already been postponed until 2008, and the same fate is now expected for the rebirth of the *Mayan Mindbender* at Wonderland. The silver lining to this cloud could be that these coasters debut in 2008 just in time for our West Texas Round-up, which will be held during the 2008 Fourth of July Holiday weekend.



Boardwalk Bullet Update

by Jason Knutson

After several months of above normal rainfall for the Houston metro area, *Boardwalk Bullet* was finally completed at the beginning of August and the first test run took place on August 2nd. They have been adjusting and optimizing areas of the ride here and there since then and have run several more test runs over the past weeks. Opening should hopefully take place sometime in September, but that of course depends on the weather and being able to complete testing. The *Bullet* will have individual ride tickets available just like all the other Boardwalk rides and should be priced somewhere around \$5/ride. Wristbands will also be available that will include the coaster for a few dollars more than the current wristband price of \$16.99. Riders will be in for quite the experience while waiting for their turn on the *Bullet*. The entrance queue wraps around the northwest corner of the structure and once near the station there is track on all sides of the queue giving riders a view of what is to come. The exit path winds through the structure as well, and those that take a while to make it all the way down to the bottom will have the train passing by all around them as they walk down the ramp. The queue and station includes a lot of Old West style theming and will fit in well with the rest of the Saltgrass Junction area. A new ticket booth near the ride and what appears to be an on-ride photo booth have also been built.





Photo— Stacy Bernal

Industry Profile: Jeffrey Siebert—Schlitterbahn

Trace your amusement industry pedigree for us, starting with your earliest job in ‘the biz’.

- Jack Rouse and Associates—First Company Intern – 1994
- Americana Amusement Park, A Coney Island Group Company—Marketing and Sales Manager 1994 – 1997 (4 seasons)
- Cincinnati Mighty Ducks, affiliated with Anaheim Sports, Inc, The Walt Disney Company—Director of Advertising and Promotions 1997 – 1999 (3 seasons)
- Paramount’s Kings Island, Paramount Parks, A Viacom Company—Manager of Communications and Guest Experience 1999 – 2005 (7 seasons)
- Schlitterbahn Waterparks—Director of Corporate Communications 2005-present

Tell us about a favorite moment you had while working at Paramount’s Kings Island.

Ohhhh my gosh there were soooo many great moments while working for Paramount Parks. I think my absolute favorite memory of all time occurred while I was escorting a photographer to the top of the second lift hill on *The Beast* on a spectacular fall weekday. *The Beast* was glowing in the sunshine, the fall color was at its peak, the view was breathtaking to say the least.

You’re well known for your outrageously funny cinematic productions. How did you get started with these, and where do you draw inspiration from?

The “spoof” inspiration really comes from my ACE background. I always try to think of fun ways to get my fellow coaster enthusiasts excited about a new project.

How did the opportunity arise for you to work for Schlitterbahn Waterparks?

During the summer of 2005 I received a phone call from a good industry friend and colleague, Sherrie Brammall, who was Schlitterbahn’s Communications Director for 16 years. She mentioned that she was ready to move on and take on new adventures and was looking for her replacement. I was extremely honored that a world-class organization like Schlitterbahn would consider me to replace an industry legend. I was offered the position, eagerly accepted and the rest is Schlitter-iffic history!

You helped our region present Winterfest on short notice. What are your thoughts of your very first Winterfest experience?

Winterfest was a blast and it was huge fun riding and sliding with all of my friends during our after-hours ERT and EHTT (Exclusive Hot Tub Time). We are always glad to support ACE whenever we can.

You worked very hard with ACE to host SchlitterCon IV. What are your thoughts now that the tremendously successful event is complete?

We can’t wait until next year’s event... the planning has already begun to make the event even more spectacular! It is always amazing how much fun we have hosting ACE events and how quickly the day goes by. I think my favorite part of the event was our nighttime float down the Comal with all of us wearing glow necklaces and having great conversation before the desert luau... great memories. Also.... I had the most fun ever riding the Black Knight enclosed tube slide with Scott Connor.... I never knew you could go soooo fast on a waterslide...ahahahahaha!

People may not know that you too are a coaster enthusiast. What is your favorite Texas coaster?

It is hard to believe that I first joined ACE in 1991 and now we have a family membership. Now that I’ve almost ridden every coaster in the state, my favorite Texas coaster, not including the beloved Master Blaster, is the *Superman Krypton Coaster* at Six Flags Fiesta Texas. Lots of fun surprises!

How do you like living in “the south”, as compared to living “up north”?

Ohhh my gosh... I love it. Not only is the weather fantastic (when it is not the rainiest 6 months in Texas history), but I also appreciate the wonderful southern hospitality offered by the people of Texas. This is a fantastic place to live and raise a family (and playing on the world’s best waterpark rides is a nice perk too).