



# The Queue Line Chronicle



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## ACE South Central Region—Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana—Summer 2008

### SchlitterCon V Is a Triple Record Setter

By David Lipnicky

Photo: Krista Baskin



What can one say that has not already been said about ACE's most unique regional event? Well, this is the first time the region only had to wait only one year from the previous one, as it is now an annual event. Oh yes, this year marked the first

time SchlitterCon came in an enthusiast-friendly, expanded two-day format held over the Memorial Day weekend (May 25-26). In addition to the fact that its home to the greatest Waterpark in the charted universe and is located in one of the most beautiful areas in Texas, this event provides a wonderfully odd combination of simultaneous excitement and peacefulness. No wonder SchlitterCon is becoming the favorite event of a continually growing number of ACEers.

With nearly six extra hours of scheduled activities this year, last year's SchlitterCon duration record was easily shattered. The next record set was attendance, as 163 joined in the water-filled fun! This blasted last year's record attendance by 69 (73%). Many attendees enjoyed the free all-day admission prior to the evening check-in at the resort's Surfenburg section, which gave ample time to orient and re-orient themselves with the park's massive layout and attractions. After a welcome by Director of Corporate Communications Jeffrey Siebert, it was off for an exclusive behind the scenes tour of Dragon's Revenge. To say that the park only themed an



Photo: Jason Knutson

existing ride - the park's popular Dragon Blaster watercoaster - is way off the mark. From the tour, one could easily see that Schlitterbahn immersed and enveloped every inch on and around this watercoaster in an intricate setting full of imagination, wonder, and thrills. [Editors note: Dragon's Revenge just won Best New Waterpark Ride of 2008 at Amusement Today's Golden Ticket Awards while Schlitterbahn won their 11th "Best Waterpark"

Award in a row!]

Then it was off to dinner at the Surfenburg Picnic Pavilion where the park offered up some tasty Cajun favorites for dinner and souvenir Schlitterbahn miniature castles with a flag announcing the Dragon's Revenge arrival. While the ride was to debut to the public the next day, ACEers got the treat of facing Dragon's Revenge in the first ERT session. Do not look for a description of this breath-taking water ride here.

*Continued on Page 4*

### West Texas Round-Up 2008

By Jason Knutson

Photos by Jason Knutson unless noted



Photo: Joyland Park

The 2008 July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend saw the return of the region's bi-annual West Texas Round-up for the first time since 2002. July usually means extreme heat for this part of Texas, but this year attendees were treated to some "cool" weather with temps only in the low 90's and a constant breeze.

The event got started early in the afternoon of July 4 at Joyland Amusement Park in Lubbock with the group being met at the front gate by one of the park's owners, Kristi Dean. The group headed over to *Little Coaster*



where wristbands were handed out and ERT began. With only 19 attendees, everyone was able to stay together as a group and go from coaster to coaster. After a few spins on *Little Coaster* it was time for ERT on the always fun *Mad Mouse* and smooth running *Galaxi*. After all had their fill of rides on the *Galaxi*, everyone headed over to the other end of the park for the new-for-2008 Larson/ARM drop tower, Daredevil Drop. The Daredevil Drop is a great addition to Joyland and now makes the park visible from several areas in town. After ERT ended everyone was free to enjoy the park and the many other rides until dinner time.

For those that were interested, an optional tour was taken to the *Greezed Lightnin'* track storage lot. Unlike the region's last visit in 2006, regional rep Curly didn't lead the tour and as a result, no one got lost trying to find the track this time around. The track remains in the same location as it did two years ago.

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Photo: Jason Knutson



# The Curly Seat

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

David Lipnicky—ACE South Central Regional Rep  
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NOTE: None of the parks mentioned here have ever complained to ACE about the matter I am about to address, nor have they ever asked Regional Rep Team (RRT) to take up this matter with our membership, nor have they had any prior knowledge of the topic or content of this article. The decision to cover this topic and all content are entirely the thoughts and feelings of yours truly. Now buckle up!

Each year Six Flags Over Texas puts on an amazing park-sponsored event for ACE with their Lone Star Coasterthon (LSCT). Besides being one of the very most ride-activity-prize-food-packed two-day coaster events in the world, for almost two decades the park has always made it one of the most affordable coaster events anywhere. The vast majority of park-sponsored, ACE one-day, and ACE weekend events cost more than LSCT. In fact, most are two to three times as much. Outside of Fiesta Fest and SchlitterCon, very few come close to the amount of ERT, meals, gifts, and surprises Six Flags Over Texas provides ACEers during LSCT.

One other neat feature is that the park—in their generosity—prices their event far lower than what other events call a “Season Pass Discounted” rate. While the park does not promote the fact – and maybe they should – they essentially price LSCT for all ACE members at (or below) what would otherwise be a discounted rate. This is the park’s thank you to ALL of ACE whether they are a season passholder or not.

Despite this amazing value, each year we hear a few people asking about a “season pass discount.” One can presume these members are relatively new in the history of ACE. Years and years ago, no registration was ever prorated to offer season pass holders discounts to any event anywhere. There was simply an event registration cost. The complexities involved were just the beginning as to why ACE did not wish to approach this. After about two decades, a change happened. Someone or a team of people took a new look at the issue and pro-

ceeded to address it head on. Yes, it added a complicated and time-consuming system to fulfilling registrations, but they did it in response to member comments. And quite frankly, it was successful and ACE members benefit from it today.

Nevertheless, with that success came new challenges. Many attendees, particularly newer members then felt *every* event required a discount. Quite simply, SFOT had such a generous offer for years and years, it was amazing that very little has changed in all that time.

Let us look at this objectively from another angle. If the park instituted a season pass discount or rate, it will not actually save any ACEer with a season pass any money! Before you think I have had one too many rides on *Flashback*, let me explain the reality of how this would actually work in the real world. Given how much the park gives each ACE member at LSCT and how amazingly low the registration rate is, to implement a “Season Pass Discount” or rate, the park would keep the base rate right where it is at for ACEers with a season pass. The only thing that would change is the park would have to create an additional, higher registration rate for ACE members that would be an additional \$10 to \$30 dollars more – or have ACEers who do not have a season pass buy some type of discount ticket from the park that would run an additional \$20-30.

The bottom line is ACEers with a season pass will not pay a single penny less, while the misdirected desire to have a discount would force all other ACE members to pay more. And to be honest, more members in our area than not have season passes. Besides, having the same base rate for ALL ACE members is important to Six Flags Over Texas – and ACE – for three reasons. First, LSCT (not being an event hosted or run by ACE) is a “thank you” from the park to ALL ACEers – not a partial thank you to ACEers without a season pass. Second, LSCT attracts a handful of ACEers from far outside the region - many have come every

single year for over a decade. In addition, those travelers might not have a Six Flags park anywhere near their home, so it is reasonable that they would not have a Six Flags Season Pass. I do not see charging more to those extremely devoted Six Flags Over Texas/LSCT fans as a good thing. Finally, this region has lost THREE Six Flags owned parks in just the last three years, as New Orleans, Houston, and Oklahoma City no longer have a Six Flags park. Let me repeat that devastating fact another way. Just since August 2005, there are no longer Six Flags parks to call home in two of our region’s three states and a third of Texas, so everyone should understand if ACEers from these very large areas of our region might not have a season pass. With this in mind, how could any ACEer want to compound the pain of ACEers from Houston or Louisiana by forcing a higher LSCT rate for non-passholders? Six Flags Over Texas gets this and *all* of ACE should get this too.

I hope that by looking at this matter from the various angles everyone can see that for LSCT a Season Pass discount or rate will not only provide absolutely zero benefit to ACEers, but would actually add a burden to some in our organization. While we should point out that the annual complaints to the RRT and the park have come from a very small minority, enough is enough! Every ACE member should exhibit the gratitude and class that Six Flags Over Texas deserves for being so very, very great to ACE for almost 20 years. For any member who still feels they have questions, **contact me** and I will be happy to discuss this. And that my friends is my view from this bumpy ride in The Curly Seat. (You can now release your seatbelts.)

## Attention!!!

For hundreds more photos from Schlittercon V and West Texas Roundup, be sure to visit the photo gallery at the ACE South Central web site.

<http://www.acesouthcentral.org/PhotoGallery/>



## ACE Helps Six Flags Over Texas Spin in its Newest Coaster

Article and Photos By David Lipnicky



Twenty-seven ACE members joined Six Flags Over Texas and local media on Friday, May 16 to celebrate the debut of the park's new *Tony Hawk's Big Spin* coaster. The park provided ACEers free VIP parking and admission (for those without a Six Flags Season Pass or Season Parking) and a continental breakfast before the proceedings wound up. While the opening ceremonies were going on, park staff escorted ACE to the ride platform where ACE members later took the very first media event rides on the new Gerstlauer spinning coaster.

The ride, which has an identical layout to its siblings at Fiesta Texas and Six Flags St. Louis, takes advantage of the area recently vacated by the Cliffhanger and once occupied by a large part of the Schwarzkopf classic, *Big Bend*, that may be the most scenic area of the park. In this case, the coaster actually accessorizes this space incredibly well, as the sight lines all around the coaster are exceptional. The coaster itself is very fun and the setting – which the park worked very hard at minimizing tree removal with the ride's layout – actually enhances the spinning sensation perceived by the riders.



The park provided a free on-ride DVD of our spin on Tony Hawk, plus 45 additional minutes of unlimited repeat rides during the last half of the media event. Then ACEers were

free to enjoy the park until close. Overall, it was a very memorable experience although your regional rep's brain may have flown half way across the park during his insane ride with Jeff Brazier – which incidentally caused the ride to shut down for 45-minutes at the very end of ERT (with four ACEers at the top of the lift)! However, that is what you get when both ACEers and park staff say they have never seen a coaster spin so furiously fast in their lives!

Our thanks go to Sharon, Olivia, Steve, Kendell, Sean, Xander, and the rest at Six Flags for making the event superb and extremely fun!

## Steel Lasso Reigns in Family Fun for Frontier City

Article and Photos By Steve Benham

On July 24, Frontier City had their Media Day Preview and Grand Opening celebration for their new *Steel Lasso* coaster, a 49-foot high inverted coaster designed by Vekoma and manufactured for Vekoma by Chance-Morgan. This is the third Vekoma Suspended Family Coaster to feature their newly redesigned restraints.



The first two were *Jimmy Neutron's Atomic Flyer* at Movie Park in Germany and *Kvasten* at Linnamaki. Wow! Talk about comfortable seating, this is the ticket – and as we say at work, built for the “customer of size.” The first drop is banked to the right and begins numerous S-curves and helices; the track length is just shy of 1,000 feet long (965 ft.). The coaster has one train operation with eight cars, 2 passengers each, for a total capacity of 16 riders per cycle.

While officially called an inverted coaster, the cars are as much the suspended-type that sway a little to keep the ride smooth. One can see in the photo below that the train has swung to the left outwardly as it enters the station after the final helix. Top speed on this jewel is 30 mph, but you smoothly fly thru the supports during the course of the ride, which adds to the adrenaline. The first drop is over a downward slope that makes the coaster seem higher than it really is as you fly over the walkways below. One of the park's managers said that originally the coaster was going to be inside where the long-dormant *Nightmare* coaster is located. However, they decided they had the best free advertising by placing it at the front edge of the park for great exposure.

A dozen ACEers from Oklahoma and Texas started the day with a 90-minute ERT session with local TV and newspaper reporters starting at 9:00 a.m., which ACE thoroughly enjoyed in great weather. The park then let the general public in for the Grand Opening Ceremonies, and had a local rodeo roping cowboy there with his Lasso performing for the patrons waiting for the coaster to open. The park also gave the first 50 of the public to ride a *Steel Lasso* t-shirt. *Steel Lasso* is getting great compliments and raves from the public, as this is a coaster the entire family can ride -- and enjoy! Whenever you are passing thru Oklahoma City, be sure to stop by Frontier City and ride the new *Steel Lasso*.





The ride experience saturated the author's brain with complete multi-sensory overload. Everything was so fast, furious, and fun that the only way to describe the experience is "Wow! I don't know half of what happened, but it was awesome amazing fun whatever it was!"



Photo: David Lipnicky

After some scheduled social time, the park made the surprise announcement that they were dedicating Dragon's Revenge to ACE complete with a plaque in the form of a coat of arms that now resides on

the castle wall as patrons experience the ride's heavily themed queue area. Now, when is there an event when evening ERT is not the highlighted activity of the day? You would have guessed correctly if you said SchlitterCon. The evening ended with the first Hot Tub Party of the event. However, this was no ordinary Hot Tub Party; it was a SchlitterCon Hot Tub ACE Movie Party! Complete with free beverages, snacks, and adult beverages, the party kicked off with several comical, coaster related shorts featuring SpongeBob SquarePants and some of the insane ride promotion videos Jeffrey Siebert made just for ACE when he was the Public Relations of Paramount's Kings Island. With the snacks and drinks never ending, the featured attraction was the Pop-up Video version of the movie *Rollercoaster* that was first shown at Coaster Con XXV. What already qualified in and of itself as an outstanding ACE event was just the new stuff the park and Regional Rep Team (RRT) threw out there for the newly added day. In other words, this was really just the appetizer.



Photo: Jason Knutson

Sunday morning activities started at the Blastenhoff entrance with a quick check-in for the few who could not make Saturday's aquatic adventures. The park also provided Dragon's Revenge grand opening T-shirts,

which were even a surprise to the RRT. A great hot breakfast provided by the park included the addition of picante sauce for those choosing the breakfast burritos. Even the area's bees and hornets – which were more active this year and possibly attracted to the maple syrup – tried to join the party, as there was some good eating going down. Fifteen minutes before the park's opening, staff walked attendees to the Blastenhoff slide tower complex for the ACE exclusive first rides of the day on the award winning Master Blaster. ACE membership does have its benefits, as one could not avoid having

just a slight twinge of perverse pleasure in seeing the hundreds of faces from the general public after dashing up the hundreds of steps up the tower to get a no-wait ride on Master Blaster, only to find over a hundred people already in line. Nevertheless, the wait was not long for anyone on the tower at 10:00 a.m. as the experienced and efficient Schlitterbahn staff kept ride throughput at a high level.

As the park was fully open, ACEers and their friends were able to sample all that Schlitterbahn had to offer once again. However, those attending also had the opportunity to take a free SkyCoaster ride (arguably the most scenic SkyCoaster experience in the country), participate in the SchlitterCon V Scavenger Hunt, and take up to an hour to recharge at noon during SchlitterCon V (exclusive) Cookie Snack Break at the soon-to-open Schatze's Central Park. The early afternoon had most ACEers gathered for the Behind the Scenes Tram Tour with the effervescent Mr. Siebert performing once again as our exclusive behind the scenes tour guide. As it was a bit on the warm side (downright hot for anyone who resides north of the Mason-Dixon Line), the park provided free iced beverages with water and Powerade being the most requested. The tour – once again using the same trams that once operated at Universal Studios – gave a rarely seen peek at the Schlitterbahn corporate headquarters (including the surprise of free gift mugs available for the taking). Then the tour was off on Texas back roads as some ACEers put up their hands as the tram went over every train track crossing, and once again the tram pulled on to the Interstate 35 service road which is something you will never see happen at a Six Flags, Cedar Fair, or a Disney park! However, that meant we were close to the second tour stop – the headquarters of the New Braunfels General Store (NBGS International), the company that invented the Master Blaster technology and exclusively manufactures all the waterslide rides for all Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resorts. After the exclusive factory tour, which included the research and development area, it was a good time for the group photo. While it was not the region's most scenic locations, but who cares as the opportunity to have the group photo taken at a ride factory does not happen often. It was back on the tram ride on back roads and over train tracks back to the park.

After a few more hours for attendees to enjoy Schlitterbahn (or take a rest in their hotel rooms at the resort), it was off to dinner at the Rapids Pavilion where Texas BBQ was the feast of the evening. Jeffrey - flanked by a healthy complement of park managers - greeted



Photo: Krystal Olexey

ACE once again, went over the logistics for the evening, and announced the team of Stacy Bernal, Nate Laughlin, and Jake Garbellotti as the SchlitterCon V Scavenger Hunt winners. The team received a custom Schlitterbahn gift-pack including eight tickets, beach bag, polo shirt, cap, flip-flops, water bottle, two anniversary magnets, key chain, and other park items. After a raffle and auction to raise money for the ACE Museum and Archives fund, the park then asked the RRT to come up to the front of the Pavilion where the park announced they were making another \$1,000 donation to the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives. Jeffrey explained the donation shows the waterpark's belief in a national roller coaster museum and was a thank you to ACE and the South Central region



Photo: Jason Knutson

for being such good friends to Schlitterbahn. That wonderfully generous donation, plus money raised from raffle and auction amounted to a grand total of \$1,252 – the third in SchlitterCon V’s trifecta of records.

Next up was another evening ERT, this time with the exhilarating assembly of water rides found in the resort’s Blastenhoff Tower section. While equal numbers attacked the Black Knight enclosed waterslide, ganged-up for insane the Wolfpack water-raft slide, and tried to teach the top rated Master Blaster a thing or two, many took advantage of no crowds (and bigger waves) in the Torrent Tidal-Wave River down below. Besides the astounding collection of amazing top-notch water rides, it was equally incredible how blasted fast an hour can go by! Luckily, SchlitterCon nights never end with the night ERT – we were not even close!

Armed with enough tubes, glo-sticks, glo-stick “glasses,” other glow-in-the-dark accessories, soft drinks, and adult beverages to arm a Mardi Gras water-brigade, Jeffrey and park staff led attendees to the banks of the Comal River to embark on the second annual Schlitter-Con Night-time River Float. For the majority who could easily get past being in near total darkness, a few mosquitoes, rushing down one spillway, and the possibility of brushing up against an indigenous plant or snake, nothing is better than just chilling out on a peaceful river with friends and a frosty beverage where the cool water is soothing your tired feet and body. Admittedly, the experience may not be for everyone, but this is what many hard-core coaster aficionados now consider not just the most unique, but possibly the best activity of any ACE event, anywhere. While a minority was slightly disappointed this year’s float was a bit shorter, most felt the 45-minute version was a more appropriate span than last year’s 60-75-minute expedition.

It was then back to the Riverbend Hot Tub for SchlitterCon V’s Hot Tub Party #2. This time the park brought back the very popular

Luau theme that debuted last year – complete once again with a plethora of tasty desserts, soft drinks, and free adult beverages. The park also brought back the talented - and just so right - steel drum band. Throw in over 160 happy ACEers, their friends, and a Dragon’s Revenge watermelon sculpture, and you are set for a fantastic time. The party lasted until nearly midnight with both ACE and park staff just having a great time together. This was a remarkable ending to what has quickly become one of the most remarkable events in all of ACE. Considering SchlitterCon V only set ACE members back \$25, but included three meals, 2-days park admission, a free SkyCoaster flight, 2 ERTs, First Master Blaster Rides of the Day, two Behind the Scenes Tours, a free Dragon’s Revenge T-Shirt, two souvenir gifts, and enough beverages to make anyone happy - how could it not be?



Photo: David Lipnicky



Photo: Judi Allen



Photo: Jason Knutson



Photo: Jason Knutson

Clockwise from top: 1.) Members enjoy some hot tub time as Schlittercon comes to a close. 2.) Assistant regional rep Scott Connor with Schlitterbahn’s amazing Jeffrey Siebert. 3.) ACEer Gus Bilderback helps out by serving ice cream. 4.) Arlington members Jeremy and Krista Baskin check out some of the kiddie slides.

## Schlitterbahn Will Debut A New Christmas Event In 2008!

By David Lipnicky



Schlitterbahn will debut a new event, Hill Country Christmas, on November 28, 2008. The event will capture the magic of Christmas with more than one million lights, real ice-skating, more than 50 light sculptures, snow, three dazzling shows, crafter village, sledding, train display, and Santa himself. (We Texans are glad that Santa now has a new winter headquarters in New Braunfels. It is just too cold at the North Pole or Santa Claus, Indiana during winter.)

Schlitterbahn New Braunfels, summer home to the world’s best waterpark, will transform the original Schlitterbahn into a dazzling evening spectacular making this a new must-see holiday family tradition featuring more than 1 million lights, real ice-skating, sled run, sculpted life-size lit nativity scene, Candy Cane Lane light tunnel. Schatze’s Winter Wonderland, train display, Santa’s Workshop, Rudolph’s Reindeer Barn, and Winter Wassail Hot Tub will also be part of the Christmas mix. The park will offer multiple shows including Scrooge’s Haus, Christmas Reflections: A River of Lights Spectacular, Holiday Illuminations, plus live entertainment. Those who like to shop and eat will not be disappointed as the event will include the Christmas Shoppe, Crafter Village shopping, festive food, and (of course) Santa himself!

Schlitterbahn’s Hill Country Christmas event opens for weekend operation (Friday – Sunday) beginning Friday, November 28. The event is open daily December 19, 2008 through January 4, 2009 (except Christmas Eve and Christmas Day). The park opens at 5pm. Closing times will vary. Tickets available at [www.schlitterbahnchristmas.com](http://www.schlitterbahnchristmas.com) are \$14.99 for general event admission and \$12.99 for children, ages 3 – 11 and seniors 55 years or older. Taxes are not included in the ticket prices. Parking is FREE! NOTE: Operating hours, dates, and attraction availability are subject to change.



Thanks to the low humidity of the panhandle, the track is still in very good condition and still awaiting reassembly sometime in the future. After several photos and trying to figure out what various pieces were, it was time to return to Joyland for a little free time before dinner.



Photo: David Lipnicky

As dinner time approached, members made their way over to the picnic pavilion where a meal of chicken strips, catfish and all the trimmings awaited. During dinner the owners of Joyland, David and Kristi Dean, came and spoke to the group and thanked everyone for coming. David Dean gave an update on the park and the future of *Greezed Lightnin'*. Due to ground water issues, getting *Greezed Lightnin'* running again has been a lot more work than originally thought. David informed the group that the park is not

giving up on the ride and they are working on alternative foundation solutions to try to get the much loved ride running again in the future. Before leaving the pavilion, Kristi Dean donated three Daredevil Drop t-shirts that would later be used as prizes for the miniature golf tournament in Amarillo.

Due to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday, there was no evening ERT this year but instead ACEers were able to stay in the park and watch the City of Lubbock's fireworks show in Mackenzie park or head back to their hotel to get some extra rest before getting up early Saturday morning for the tour of Larson.

Saturday morning started bright and early for those that had stayed in Lubbock overnight to make the 45-minute drive to Plainview. Arriving at Larson International, everyone was treated to breakfast tacos and a beverage while waiting for everyone to arrive. Two tour groups were lead through the Larson facility and observed where over 100 Super Loop rides have been manufactured as well as drop towers, aviators and flying scooters. Before leaving the Larson facility everyone got the chance to take a spin or two on a Super Loop that was set up on the grounds.



Next up was a short drive over to a couple buildings where Larson is storing items for the future ACE museum as well as the *Greezed Lightnin'* cars and launch system. Several trains from various roller coasters as well as two large

sections of *Texas Cyclone* track, cars from Wildcatter and many other smaller items could be seen and photographed. Something new for the event this year was a trip to downtown Plainview where Larson is storing more items for ACE in a climate controlled building. Boxes and boxes and boxes could be seen lining the edges of

the room. These boxes contained items such as tickets, brochures and blueprints from various rides and parks. Spread around the room were several other items ranging from the front of one of the original *Rattler* Morgan trains to plates and mugs. Unfortunately time was going by fast and before everyone knew it, it was time to hit the road for the rest of the drive to Amarillo.



As ACEers arrived at Wonderland Park in Amarillo, it was quickly realized that a common route many used to get into the park no longer existed. Instead of driving through Thompson park, many members that have been to Wonderland numerous times

drive in the back of the park near *Texas Tornado*. This year, those that attempted to do that were greeted by *Hornet* and a large drop tower sitting in the middle of the parking lot, blocking the path to the park entrance. Everyone eventually made their way through Thompson park and met at the back entrance of Wonderland to wait for the special VIP hand stamp that would allow rides on *Texas Tornado* and *Fantastic Journey* which normally aren't included on the pay one price admission. After getting stamped, everyone made their way up the ramp to the *Texas Tornado*. With such a small group, everyone was able to get many rides on *Tornado* before the ride opened to the public, many of them without ever stopping in the station as the operator just allowed the train to roll through.

After ERT ended, it was decided to push back the miniature golf tournament to 4 p.m. to allow attendees time for lunch or to check in to their hotel. Several of the group decided to give regional rep Curly's #1 place to get a burger on a coaster trip (Top 10 list, Holiday 2007 Queue Line Chronicle) a try. A 10 minute drive was all that was needed to Blue Sky on I-40 West of downtown Amarillo to see why this was Curly's #1 burger place.



Upon returning to the parking lot it was time to meet up for the miniature golf tournament. Most ACEers that have played this course before will agree that some of the holes are very frustrating, but at the same time fun. Everyone got together in groups of four and started the course at different holes in order to speed up the tournament. After balls getting stuck in places they shouldn't, balls in the bushes, and balls nearly going into the parking lot, the tournament came to an end. After regional rep Curly totaled up and double checked all the scores Jeff Braziel, Jeffrey Seifert, and Daniel Bunye were declared the winners and given a Joyland Daredevil Drop t-shirt as their prize.

After the frustrating but fun golf tournament, it was time to relax in the picnic pavilion and get ready for a tasty Tex-Mex dinner. Most of the group made their way to the pavilion a bit early just to hang out and relax while waiting for the fajita dinner to be served. The owners of Wonderland, Paul and Paula Borchardt came out to chat with the group before dinner was served. Once everyone had their fill of fajitas, Paul talked about the new area of the park which is still under construction.



Three new rides are being added, one of which is the former *Mayan Mindbender* from AstroWorld which has been painted green, constructed outdoors, and named *Hornet*. The other two rides are AstroWorld's *Chance Yo-Yo* (Gunslinger) and a

55 meter Moser drop tower which traveled with Conklin Shows. After the short talk, it was time to walk over to the construction area and get a tour and update on the progress of all the new rides. Once inside the construction area, attendees were able to get up close and personal with the new attractions, especially *Hornet*. Since *Mayan Mindbender* was an indoor in-the-dark coaster, few people have ever seen the layout until now. ACEers could be seen taking dozens of photos of the ride as well as taking photos of each other sitting on the track. Several group shots were taken as well. While the majority of the structure is assembled, there is still a lot of electrical work to do to get the ride up and running. After everyone had their fill of photos it was time to head out of the construction area for a bit of free time before the final ERT of the event.



The evening's ERT was on all three coasters—*Texas Tornado*, *Big Coaster*, and *Cyclone*. As at Joyland, the group stayed together and traveled from coaster to coaster, riding each one as a group ending up with rides on *Cyclone* to end the evening. Even though the

ERT was over, anyone that has been to this event before knew that the evening wasn't over yet. It was time to head back over to the picnic pavilion for some of Paul's frosty adult beverages. For one final time, the group was able to sit together and chat while enjoying

margaritas before heading out of Wonderland and ending yet another successful and super enjoyable West Texas Roundup.

While they aren't the largest parks and don't have the biggest or fastest coasters, they are certainly some of the most charming parks around. It is obvious from talking to the owners at both parks that they truly love what they do and do everything they can to keep their parks and rides in great shape for families to enjoy. It is also obvious how much Larson International loves what they do and being a part of the amusement industry by providing so much of their storage space for ACE to use to store items for the future ACE museum.

If you haven't been to these parks try to make it a point to attend the next West Texas Roundup in either 2010 or 2011. You won't be disappointed.

A special thanks to Kristi and David Dean of Joyland, Jeff Novotny and the crew at Larson International, and Paul and Paula Borchardt of Wonderland who all helped make this another successful event.



Group photo next to *Hornet*.

Photo: Paul Borchardt

## Regional Web-Service Spotlight - Improved E-Mail Sign-Up/Update Form

Your RRT has upgraded our E-mail Sign-up & Update tool, so our members now have full control once again as to how (and even if) the RRT communicates with them through our free regional E-Blast service.

[www.acesouthcentral.org/Updates/signup-new.php](http://www.acesouthcentral.org/Updates/signup-new.php) is THE place to go if you need to update your E-mail address with the RRT.

### Dave's Top 10 Things about the West Texas Coaster Round-up

10. The nation's most difficult (and hilarious) Miniature Gold Tournament courtesy of Wonderland.

9. The refreshingly down-home, but candid Joyland discussions and Q&A sessions with owners David & Kristi Dean (Joyland).

8. The Larson International Factory Tour.

7. Seeing for one's own eyes that Astroworld's *Greezed Lightnin'*, while temporarily dormant, was not silenced by a blowtorch or sold for scrap (Joyland).

6. The most unique steel-looper/coaster train combo in the United States (the *Texas Tornado* @ Wonderland).

5. Mystery ERT at Larson International, as we never know what ride will be for us to experience until we arrive.

4. The best Wild Mouse combo west of the Mississippi – the rare and untamed *Mad Mouse* @ Joyland and the equally unique and raucous rambunctious *Cyclone* @ Wonderland.

3. The tour of the ever-growing ACE Museum and Archive pieces (Larson International).

2. The refreshingly laidback vibe of Joyland, Larson, and Wonderland that is shared with your friends (and park patrons) where all day is essentially like ERT.

1. Sitting back with margaritas and soft drinks for a friendly chat of coasters, parks, and the industry with Wonderland owner Paul Borchardt.





## ACE Coobrila Nite

Article by Tim Baldwin  
Photos by S. Madonna Horcher

ACE South Central members were treated to a wonderful summer evening on July 25. Six Flags Over Texas hosted a special evening for enthusiasts showcasing their Coobrila production and the brand new *Tony Hawk's Big Spin*.

Great hospitality has had strong roots at Six Flags. Turning back the years to almost ACE's beginnings, the park was an early host of an ACE convention, Coaster Con 4 in fact. Gary Slade, one of the earliest regional reps, built a relationship with long-missed Six Flags giants Bruce Neal and Bob Bennett. Over the years, this special bond has flourished with subsequent management, reps, staff, and members. It's been one collective group of friends that respect and support each other. This certainly was evident as Six Flags just "invited us over" for a summer evening.

The night started well with a reception featuring nifty snacks and a very cool bag of goodies that Six Flags lavishly offered to ACE members. If it blinked, flashed, or glowed, it was probably tucked inside the bag of favors. How nice, and totally generous.

After some welcomes, greetings, and comments from both ACE and the park, attendees were treated to their own little show within the reception room as a few of the performers came in just for us and showed us their talents and fielded a few questions from the audience. It was nice personalized treat.

If that wasn't "red carpet" enough, ACEers had their own reserved seats in the VIP area of the amphitheater. The nice cushioned seats on a warm evening made for a cozy social, great views, and fun pic-

tures. From there, the performers dazzled in this wonderful summer production of elaborate costumes, snazzy music, whimsical ambience, and fantastic (and suspenseful!) acrobatics.

Once the park had cleared, everyone moseyed over to the park's newest coaster, *Tony Hawk's Big Spin*. A few in attendance had yet to ride the latest spinner from Gerstlauer (at least at this park), and some were returning to the coaster once again for an all-you-can-spin ERT. Top it off with more beverages and pink things (chocolate dipped with sprinkles, no less) and it was a hoot.

ACE can't thank Six Flags Over Texas enough for a nice night out. Their friendship is amazing and we appreciate each and every courtesy bestowed to us that evening from all the various departments. A special thanks to Sandra Daniels, now moved on to the corporate level for taking an ACEer's random suggestion and running with it. Thanks to Sharon Parker and her great PR staff for arranging the details of the evening, and to General Manager Steve Martindale for giving the event a thumbs up and being part of the evening.



## Nuts & Bolts (Items in Brief)

Although the May-June edition of ACE News covered the opening, we would be remiss if we did not make at least a mention of the April 19 opening of *Goliath* at Six Flags Fiesta Texas. Stacy Bernal and Heather Johnson managed to get the first two spaces on the queue line for the opening and both rode the park's newest B&M over 30 times that day. The park promises the RRT that *Goliath* will play a giant role in the Fiesta Fest ERT package next month.

The RRT has posted sneak peek screen captures in 'Regional News' section of the [www.ACESoutcentral.org](http://www.ACESoutcentral.org) homepage of the planned regional website redesign (version 2.0) that is scheduled to make its debut next year.

### Congratulations to the following Amusement Today 2008 Golden Ticket Awards winners from the South Central region:

- Fiesta Texas - Best Shows (a winner for the 10<sup>th</sup> straight year!)
- Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort (New Braunfels) – Best Water park (their 11<sup>th</sup> win in a row!)
- Schlitterbahn Galveston Island – Best Indoor Waterpark
- Dragon's Revenge / Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort (New Braunfels) - Best New Waterpark Ride
- Master Blaster / Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort (New Braunfels) - Best Waterpark Ride

### The following are the highest placing coasters from the South Central region in the annual rankings:

- Steel – #24 *Titan* / Six Flags Over Texas
- Wood – #28 *Texas Giant* / Six Flags Over Texas

Go to [www.amusementtoday.com/8002gta090308.html](http://www.amusementtoday.com/8002gta090308.html) to see the Amusement Today Golden Ticket Bonus Section on-line.

**Thank You!** The Regional Rep Team would like to thank the following people: Jeffrey Siebert, Terri Adams, Lisa Holder, Angela Flourmoy, and Jana Faber of Schlitterbahn; David & Kristi Dean of Joyland Amusement Park; Jeff Novotny of Larson International; Paul Borchardt of Wonderland Park; Sharon Parker, Kendall Kelton, Olivia Litchfield, Steve Martindale, Sean Lynch, & Xander Lee of Six Flags Over Texas; Ben McTyre, Crystal Evans, Ryan Gardner, Darren Dalton, & Steve Skains of Fiesta Texas; Tim Anderson & Jay Wilson of Kemah Boardwalk; Fran Stephenson & Toni Davila of SeaWorld San Antonio; Rusty Fitzgerald, Melanie Linnear, Errol McKoy, and the rest of the State Fair of Texas staff; Robbie & Sally Bell of Bell's Amusement Park; John Odum of Six Flags Parks; Gary Slade, Sammy Piccola, Paul McDonald, & Janice Witherow of *Amusement Today*; Melinda Ashcraft of Six Flags Over Georgia; Tim Baldwin; Jeffrey Seifert; S. Madonna Horcher; Steve Benham; Kari Lipnicky; Krystal Olexey; Mike, Dawn, & Zach Robinson; Russell Rakowitz; Stacy & Robert Bernal; Heather Johnson; Charlotte & Steven Schroeder; Polly & Alan Nichols; Sean & Cheryl Shaver; Robby Austin; Paul McKinney; Dan McPartland; Kevin Lipnicky & Sarah Simmons; Phil Pan; Jeff Braziel; Reagen Pocsik; Mark Davidson; Bill Linkenheimer III; Jerry Willard; Barry Maness of ACE's Southwest region; Robert Ulrich of ACE's Southeast region; Jeff Mast of ACE's Heart of America region; ACE President Mark Cole; and ACE Immediate Past President Carole Sanderson.