

HOME OF THE TIMBER WOLF

*Worlds of Fun*  
KANSAS CITY

*Oceans of Fun*  
KANSAS CITY

For Additional Information, Contact  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



### **TIMBER WOLF RANKED SECOND BEST IN THE WORLD**

Kansas City, Mo. - The Timber Wolf, Worlds of Fun's new wooden roller coaster, has been ranked the number-two roller coaster in the world by coaster enthusiasts.

The results of the annual readers' poll were published in the August issue of Inside Track, the international newsletter for roller coaster enthusiasts. Worlds of Fun's wooden coaster was topped by only The Beast, located at Kings Island in Cincinnati, Ohio, which has held the number-one spot since it was built in 1979.

"The Timber Wolf is the surprise hit of the season, and I cannot recall a roller coaster generating so much national excitement in its first year of operation," commented Randy Geisler, president of the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE). "A great roller coaster relies on unrelenting excitement through steep drops, fast turns and great speeds; and the Timber Wolf succeeds as a great roller coaster on all levels. A lot of our members, who have ridden hundreds of coasters, are already saying it's their personal best roller coaster in the entire universe."

Other ranked coasters included the Cyclone at Astroland in Coney Island, N.Y., the Twister at Elitch's Gardens in Denver, Colo., and the Phoenix at Knoebel's Amusement Resort in Elysburg, Pa.

-more-

Timber Wolf  
Add One

"Nobody knows roller coasters better than the coaster enthusiasts represented in the readers' poll in Inside Track," commented Worlds of Fun General Manager John Hudacek. "We are thrilled that they consider the Timber Wolf the second best coaster in the entire world. And, we've not operated it a full season yet!"

Other comments about the Timber Wolf have ranged from "terrifying ecstasy," to "breathtaking," to "the scariest ride I've ever been on." One 70-year-old member of ACE said, "What Worlds of Fun has is what makes a great roller coaster. This is the way coasters used to be built."

Passengers on the Timber Wolf experience a 95-foot drop, hairpin turns, speeds of 53 mph, and an unusual 560-degree upward spiraling helix. These elements, combined with positive and negative G-forces, make the Timber Wolf a ferocious and unpredictable wooden roller coaster.

Worlds of Fun is open daily through Labor Day and weekends through October. Gates open at 10 a.m. Worlds of Fun is located on I-435 at exit 54 in Kansas City, Mo.

# INSIDE TRACK 1989 AMUSEMENT PARK READERS POLL

(continued)

Favorite unusual attractions: Wonder Wheel, Deno's, Coney Island. One of the most unusual of them all... a wheel where some of the cars remain stationary and some of the cars pass entirely through the center of the structure on tracks. An American classic; Derby Racer, Rye Playland. These fast moving antique horses go up and down and well as back and forth. Watching the operators defy gravity is half the fun; Waltzer, Blackpool Pleasure Beach. Exclusive to Europe, Blackpool's is rated the best; Superstar TV, Disney/MGM Studio Theme Park. Put yourself in the picture with prerecorded television personalities. Lots of fun if you're with a crowd, and Disney does it first class; Soap Box Derby Racers, Knott's Berry Farm. This classic ride is somewhere between a turnpike, a roller coaster and a steeplechase. Despite rumors that it's scheduled for removal, it continues to attract crowds and provide unique thrills.

Other favorites: Joustabout: Six Flags Great Adventure. Flying Scooters: Knoebel's. Skyride(s): Great Adventure. Double your pleasure, double your fun. Cuddle-ups: Coal Shaker, Hersheypark and Meteorite, Dorney Park. Splashwater Falls: Assorted Six Flags parks. Wet/Dry slides: Kings Dominion, Dollywood and Frontier City. Traver Auto Ride: Kennywood. Hell Hole: Conneaut Lake (practice your Spiderman imitation.) Skydiver: Boblo Island.



**BEST OF THE REST:** Best Waterparks: Action Park and World Waterpark, West Edmonton Mall; Best use of neon in a park: Lakeside Park, Denver. It's like stepping back into the 40's, and everything works; Best neon ride signs: Tumble Bug, Kennywood and THUNDERBOLT coaster, Riverside; Best neon signs for parks (hint: both need some repairs): Camden Park (pointing clown) and Joyland Park (clowns bowling toward each other); Best collection of vintage rides: Kennywood; Most courteous employees: Kennywood and Worlds Of Fun; Best Kiddielands: Geauga Lake (even a Kiddie waterpark!) and Kennywood; Best simulated ride: Star Tours, Disneyland; Most freedom of movement for riders: Wave Swinger, West Edmonton Fantasyland. Twist and shout!; Best use of limited space: Blackpool Pleasure Beach; Most Breathtaking Observation Tower: Space Spiral, Cedar Point (leaves you speechless).

**MOST UNIQUE HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES:** Check out the Brussel Sprouts Festival at Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Spinach Festival at Elitch's; Best Halloween parties: "Knott's Scary Farm" and Knoebel's "Phall Phunfest." Knott's goes all out, to the point of changing their name, re-theming entire rides and areas of the park. Knoebel's opens for an annual halloween party, where guests are encouraged to ride the PHOENIX in costume, and enjoy special rides through the Haunted Mansion; Best Christmas celebration all year long: Holiday World; Best Christmas celebrations at Christmas: Holiday In The Park, Six Flags Over Texas and WinterFest, Kings Island.

## INSIDE TRACK READERS FORTY FAVORITE ROLLER COASTERS

Here are the results, listed by coaster, park, location, (last year's chart position), and total number of votes received. Coasters receiving only one vote were not listed.

1	THE BEAST, Kings Island OH (1 last year)	567
2	TIMBER WOLF, Worlds Of Fun, Kansas City MO (New)	277
3	CYCLONE, Astroland, Coney Island NY (2)	268
4	TWISTER, Elitch's Gardens, Denver CO (3)	243
5	PHOENIX, Knoebel's Amusement Resort, Elysburg PA (8)	186
6	COMET, Crystal Beach Park, Crystal Beach ONT (4)	181
7	THUNDERBOLT, Kennywood, West Mifflin PA (5)	165
8	RIVERSIDE CYCLONE, Riverside, Agawam MA (6)	114
9	MAGNUM XL-200, Cedar Point, Sandusky OH (New)	108
10	HERCULES, Dorney Park & WWK, Allentown PA (New)	102
11	BIG BAD WOLF, Busch Gardens-Old Country, Williamsburg VA (9)	79
12	GIANT DIPPER, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz CA (10)	72
13	LE MONSTRE, La Ronde, Montreal QUE (7)	71
14	GRIZZLY, Kings Dominion, Doswell VA (12)	69
15	CYCLONE, Lakeside Park, Denver CO (16)	63
16	SHOCKWAVE, Six Flags Great America, Gurnee IL (15)	56
17	MINDBENDER, Fantasyland, West Edmonton Mall ALB (28)	53
18	LOCH NESS MONSTER, Busch Gardens-Old Country, Williamsburg VA (17)	52
	RACER, Kings Island OH (18)	52
19	GREAT AMERICAN SCREAM MACHINE, Great Adventure, Jackson NJ (New)	51
20	GRAND NATIONAL, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, England (19)	39
21	BLUE STREAK, Conneaut Lake Park PA (21)	28
22	TEXAS CYCLONE, Astroworld, Houston TX (11)	26
23	REVOLUTION, Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia CA (25)	24
24	BANDIT, Yomiuri Land, Tokyo, Japan (37)	22
	WILD ONE, Wild World, Largo MD (20)	22
25	COMET, Hersheypark, Hershey PA (34)	21
26	COASTER, Playland, Vancouver BC (27)	19
27	TEXAS TORNADO, Wonderland, Amarillo TX (23)	17
28	SWAMP FOX, Grand Strand Amusement Park, Myrtle Beach SC (31)	16
29	MINDBENDER, Six Flags Over Georgia, Atlanta (14)	15
30	BIG DIPPER, Geauga Lake, Aurora OH (32)	14
	BLUE STREAK, Cedar Point, Sandusky OH (29)	14
31	RACER, Kennywood, West Mifflin PA (32)	12
	RAGING WOLF BOBS, Geauga Lake, Aurora OH (36)	12
32	THUNDERHAWK, Dorney Park & WWK, Allentown PA (24)	11
33	SEA SERPENT, Mariners Landing, Wildwood NJ (37)	10
34	ROLLING THUNDER, Great Adventure, Jackson NJ (40)	9
35	DRAGON, Playland, Rye NY (22)	7
	VORTEX, Kings Island OH (13)	7
	WILDCAT, Lake Compounce Festival Park, Bristol CT (38)	7
36	COLOSSUS, Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia CA (25)	6
	REBEL YELL, Kings Dominion, Doswell VA (36)	6
	SCREAMING EAGLE, Six Flags Mid America, Eureka MO (37)	6
37	GEMINI, Cedar Point, Sandusky OH (30)	5
38	ROLLER COASTER, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, England (Not listed)	4
	ROLLER COASTER, Great Yarmouth, England (Not listed)	4
	SPACE MOUNTAIN, Walt Disney World, Lake Buena Vista FL (33)	4
	VIPER, Darien Lake, Corfu NY (38)	4
	Z-FORCE, Six Flags Over Georgia, Atlanta (Not listed)	4
39	DAHLONEGA MINE TRAIN, Six Flags Over Georgia, Atlanta (Not listed)	3
	RUNAWAY TRAIN, Great Adventure, Jackson NJ (Not listed)	3
	YANKEE CANNONBALL, Canobie Lake Park, Salem NH (40)	3
40	GREEZED LIGHTNING, Astroworld, Houston TX (Not listed)	2
	MATTERHORN, Disneyland, Anaheim CA (Not listed)	2
	THE BAT, Canada's Wonderland, Vaughn ONT (Not listed)	2
	WOLVERINE WILDCAT, Michigan's Adventure, Muskegon MI (38)	2

These defunct coasters also received more than one vote each, but were disqualified:

- COMET, State Fairgrounds, Dallas TX (Destroyed)
- CYCLONE, Crystal Beach ONT (Destroyed)
- GIANT DIPPER, Mission Beach CA (Standing, not operating)
- SHOCK WAVE, Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia CA (Being relocated to NJ)
- WILDCAT, Idora Park, Youngstown OH (Standing, not operating)

# TIMBER WOLF

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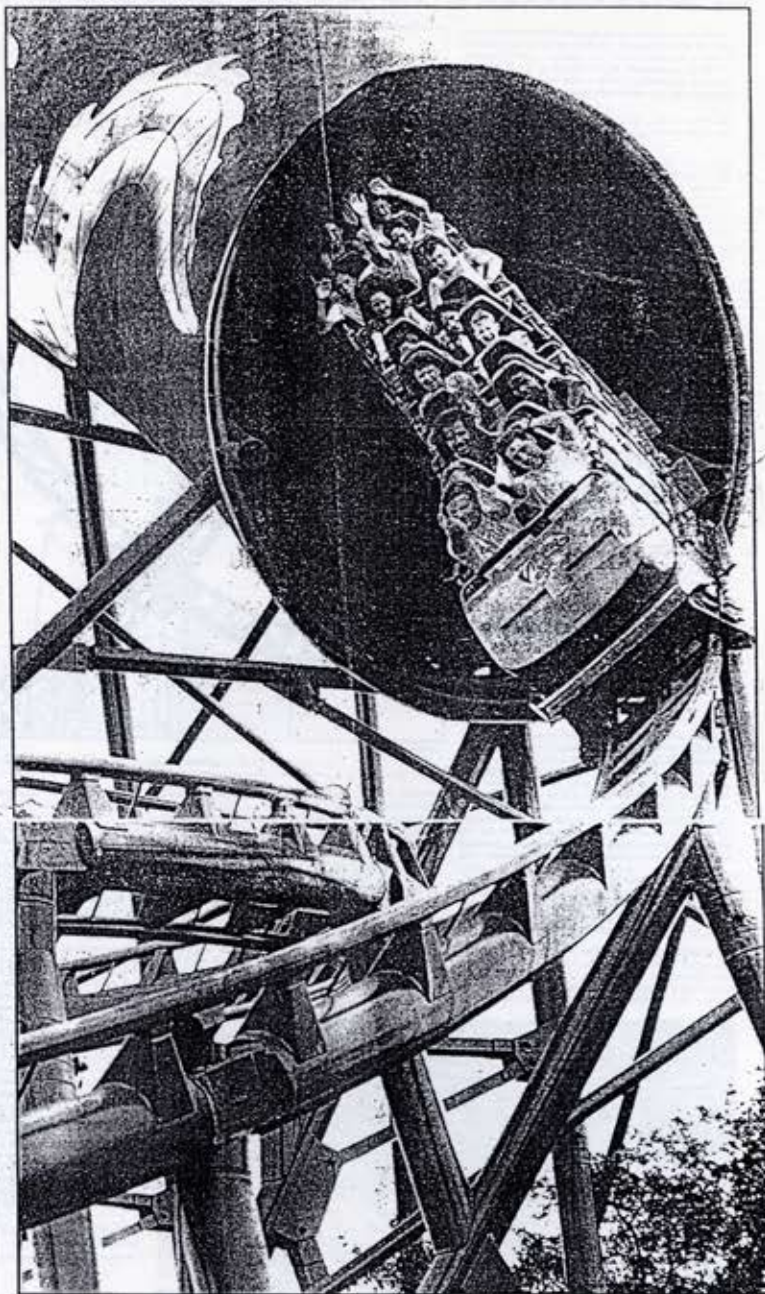
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## Palladian Journey

The subtle symmetry of the villas of Italy's Vicenza. By Susan Lumsden. Page 8.



The Villa Piovene, with its Palladian core, stands in a noted garden.



Plunging out of a tunnel on the Viper, the newest ride at AstroWorld in Houston.

## America, It's a Scream

Correspondent's Choice: From New Jersey to Silicon Valley, a guided tour for the fearless (and the fearful) of a dozen of the country's premier amusement parks. Counting the thrills, from a tame 1 to a stupefying 5. The food, of course, is fast, too. Pages 14 to 19.



## CORRESPONDENT'S CHOICE

## Coasting and Sliding at 12 of America's

## THE EAST

New Jersey  
Great Adventure  
Jackson

Before she used the Great American Scream Machine, a long, happy roller coaster that rises like a wiperblade massive above the entrance to the Six Flags Great Escape amusement park in Jackson, N.J.

Already, I was bored.

See, speed is fine. Heights, too. But turning completely upside down? Seven times? While traveling 58 miles an hour?

Waiting in line (an obligatory pastime here), I flashed back to my misbegotten youth in Asbury Park, N.J. For fun, friends and I would sometimes see how many consecutive trips it would take us to vomit our stomach contents before one of us became visibly nauseous. I was often the unlucky winner. Especially if the sales of my feet were aimed toward the sky for any length of time.

"If you don't like going upside down, you're not going to like this," said a young woman from Brooklyn Heights. "And you just had an ice cream cone," she added, with a worried look. "I purposely didn't eat anything."

Without a ride on the 17-story-tall Great American Scream Machine, billed as the tallest and fastest looping roller coaster in the world, Great Adventure might be a letdown. A Fair Adventure, as it is often called. A complete complex of concrete fun for the riders — 30 minutes to 90 minutes on weekends. The biggest disappointment, though, is the food. Visitors will go hungry if they cannot subsist on fast-food-quality fare and limited choices. And here, too, the wait is brutal: up to 30 minutes waiting for a hamburger.

"There are a lot of great rides, but we just don't want to wait in line," said Melissa Prothroome of Stoboken, N.J.

Indeed, there are plenty of adrenaline-pumping thrills here: the Parachuter's Perch, a 250-foot free-fall; Splashwater Falls, a clothes-soaking big-flume-style ride. And there's always the top trip through 200-acre Safari Park. And concerts ranging from Jerry Lee Lewis to Telly. And carnival games. In all, more than 100 rides, attractions and shows.

It is the vertiginous Great American Scream Machine, though, that makes the journey to Jackson worthwhile. With its precast-steel twists, corkscarer turns and curlicue loop-the-loops, it is perhaps the most frightening-looking roller coaster in the nation.

But, surprisingly, the two-and-a-half-minute ride is as subtle and as serene as a merry-go-round. (Well, almost.) An inextinguishable shoulder harness holds each passenger in place. And there is very little centrifugal force (the feeling that you're going to fly out of your seat).

More important, there is no motion sickness. Even when suspended upside down.

Now, if only the lines moved as smoothly.

**Getting There** Jackson, N.J., is an hour from New York City. Take Exit 7A on the New Jersey Turnpike or Exit 98 on the Garden State Parkway. Telephone: 201-626-3300.



'If you don't like going upside down, you're not going to like this,' said a woman from Brooklyn

**Admission** The general adult admission fee is \$23, \$16 after 4 P.M. Children 34 inches tall or less are \$13; children under 3 are free.

**Hours** From mid-April until Labor Day, the park is open Sunday to Thursday from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M., on Friday and Saturday to midnight. It is open weekends only until Oct. 26. NICK RAYO

Pennsylvania  
Dorney Park  
Allentown

Upright or down, wherever you wander in Dorney Park, you're never far from The Sound: that primordial squeal, accompanied by a pervasive clatter and ratchety basso profundo, that is the arts of passengers caught in the killer drop of a classic wooden roller coaster.

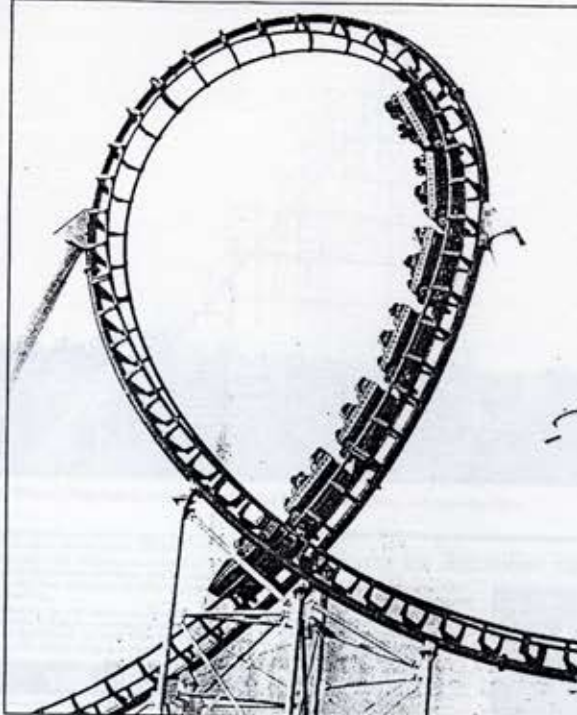
This season, thanks to the mighty new Hercules, the choices of animal shrieks are louder and more frequent than ever before in this venerable amusement park in a suburb of Allentown, Pa. Hercules, billed as the world's tallest wooden-framed roller coaster, induces on its riders a heart-stopping 157-foot plunge that offers the sensation of a flat-out nose dive, gliding into a banked 65-mile-an-hour turn that skims over the surface of the park's speedhouse lake.

The Hercules is so wholesome that you can still smile seaward from the 100,000 lbs of pressure-treated steel used to support its 4,000 lbs of track. Indeed, some parents may feel that a roller coaster isn't menacing enough unless it has an accent, evil-looking demeanor. At Dorney Park, they'll feel right at home just by strutting down the hill from Hercules to Thunderhawk, the park's classic 1922 roller coaster.

Like others of its generation, Thunderhawk beckons riders into its claustrophobic steel and concrete loading zone and, amid the obligatory demented clatter, flings passengers into 27-gale depths before ratcheting them to shrieking heights. Before concluding its sanctimoniously nutty ride, Thunderhawk subjects passengers to a fess of whumps, bumps and thumps, including two belly-splashing drops, one of 45 feet.

The 163-acre park also offers yet a third roller coaster — the all-steel, double-loop, 92-foot-high Laser — as well as a full complement of swinging Viking ships, splashing jet-boats, remote-control whips, sky bike space ships and Paratrooper flying gondolas. Tilt-a-Whirl is there, of course, as are bumper cars, as well as a smorgasbord of other, more tame and domestic pastimes.

Although it drew 1.7 million visitors in 1996, Dorney



The Great American Scream Machine at Great Adventure is 17 stories tall.

Park has a hometown intimacy. The clean, family-owned park has a low roadshow factor, and attracts a family crowd.

Food at Dorney Park is standard, high-staff, greasy or nagary amusement-park fare. From a budgetary and nutritional standpoint, it is understandable that many families bring their own, oil-elaborate, sandwich snacks to consume in the park's two dozen picnic groves.

On hot afternoons, those suffering from amusement hernium will want to grab their bathing suits and head up the hill to Dorney's sister principality, Wildwater Kingdom. There, they can cool off with the children in a dozen splash-happy water rides, as well as a football-sized wave pool and a crowded but wonderful Lollipop Lagoon for kids. Later, thrill-seekers can wind their way back to Dorney Park for an evening of violent motion and junk food under neon lights. This might include — why not? — another at Hercules. What could be more satisfying than the sound of roller-coaster music under the sharp stars of the Pennsylvania sky?

**Getting There** Dorney Park is 100 miles from New York City via the New Jersey Turnpike South to Route 18 West to Interstate 262 West to Interstate 78 West (which in Pennsylvania becomes Route 22 West) to the Cedar Crest Boulevard Exit in Allentown. Turn left at the top of ramp and go two miles. Telephone: 215-395-3724.

**Admission** A ticket to either Dorney Park or Wildwater Kingdom, including unlimited use of all rides — except Drive-It-Yourself Racecars and Boats, Bumper Boats, Tank Tag and Boat Tag, and Miniature Golf — is \$15.95, or \$8.50 for children 3 to 6 or adults over 61; admission is \$1.95 after 5 P.M. Combined admission to Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom is \$18.95, or \$11 for children 3 to 6 and those over 61. Reduced-rate, two-day combination passes for Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom are also available. Parking is \$1.50.

**Hours** Dorney Park is open from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. from April 21 to Labor Day. GLENN COLLINS

Virginia  
Water Country U.S.A.  
Williamsburg

A few miles down the road from Colonial Williamsburg's blacksmiths and craftsmen is a celebration of a 20th-century technological triumph: the plastic water slide. Water Country U.S.A., a 40-acre park, elevates those and inner tubes to Disney proportions. Assuming you don't mind parading for hours before strangers in a soggy bathing suit with your stomach bloated from cotton candy and snow cones, you'll enjoy a wondrous variety of ways to be soporific when wet.

This "family water park" attracts a standard amusement-park crowd, only wetter and more undressed. The grounds are clean, the staff is cheerful and the planes have anticipated most of your needs. You rent an inner tube or clothes locker, and you can buy a bathing suit if you've forgotten yours. The only irritating detail is the 50-cent payment you have to traverse barefoot between rides — some veterans come equipped with waterproof slippers.

Junk food aficionados will appreciate the lactated fried potatoes, the cream candy and the pistachio soft ice-cream cones covered with nuts, but the burgers and hot dogs are deeply unimpaired. While eating you can take in shows of diving and gymnastics and water clowning at the Aqua Theater. For little kids, there's the Pulling Pond, a wading pool with mushroom fountains and a yellow rain tunnel. For those who don't enjoy high-speed whooshing, there's Surfer's Bay, a huge pool with artificial waves, and the Rambling River, a slow current where you can float in an inner tube. And if you don't want to get wet at all, you can always stay clothed and just watch, but you'll have to wear an orange plastic wristband that marks you as a water watcher.

On a scorching summer Sunday, most waits for rides were no more than five to ten minutes. One of the most popular is the Amazon, a long slide on an inner tube that descends a winding chute with tunnels and a waterfall

by on a plastic sled on a platform. Then a river meanders you side-to-side, and you suddenly plummet for what. Then you barrel into it, splash, and skim across the water on the sled. You'll be forgiven if you chuckle out at the lameness — plenty of others have reached the platform, taken a long look, dropped their sleds and swamped bars down the stairs.

**Getting There** Water Country U.S.A. is three miles east of Williamsburg, Va., just off 144 east 578 on Route 10. Telephone: 800-343-7949.

**Admission** An all-day adult ticket is \$14.95, an evening ticket \$9.95. Children 3 and under are admitted free. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.

**Hours** Open seven days a week. From June 17 to Aug. 20, 10 A.M. to 8 P.M.; Aug. 21 to Sept. 4, 10 A.M. to 7 P.M.; Sept. 5 and 10, 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. MAIL HERE, PLEASE



A few miles from Colonial Williamsburg is a celebration of the 20th-century plastic water slide

Illustration by Robert Lindner

## THE SOUTH

Florida  
Adventure Island  
Tampa

There are none of the standard amusement rides at Adventure Island in Tampa, Fla. — no roller coaster or Ferris wheel. There is mostly just water. But, oh, what they do with that water!

At one end of the 19-acre park are the Runaway Rapids, a cluster of five water slides with names like River of No Return and Courageous Falls. They carry bathers along in a rush of water as they twist and turn for 200 to 300 feet down the outside of an artificial mountain and through tunnels made used the riders' measure which end is up, wind up dunked in a four-foot-deep pool.

At the other end of the park is the forbidding Tampa Typhoon, a giant water slide that shoots down from a height of seven stories. It is a heart-stopping ride, which at the beginning, is almost a straight drop down, giving the rider the terrifying feeling of being about to fly off into space.

Between those two attractions lie a host of other water events. In one large pool, a machine creates waves that constantly jolt bathers. Another pool is equipped with hand-held needles for knock-down, drag-out water fights. Still another, primarily for young children, has moving



Dashing down the torpedo tube at Water Country U.S.A., Williamsburg, Va.

## CORRESPONDENT'S CHOICE

## America's Amusement Parks

Continued From Preceding Page

Dive bar and ride the top-sounding Z Force ride.

**Getting There** Take Interstate 20 West to Six Flags Parkway. Telephone: 404-739-1400.

**Admission** \$20 a person; \$12.50 for senior citizens and children under 42 inches. Children 2 and younger admission free. Individual and family season passes available.

**Hours** Open in summer from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. Sunday to Thursday; 10 A.M. to midnight Friday and Saturday. Open Saturday and Sunday only from March 11 to May 21. Open daily March 21 to 31 and April 10 to 14 and then daily from May 27 to Aug. 27. Saturday and Sunday only Sept. 2 to Oct. 29. PETER APPELBOHM

### Texas Astroworld Houston

Houston is filled with people who pass Astroworld every day and don't go in. It's just too familiar, sitting there in the middle of residential Houston. Like New Yorkers and the Statue of Liberty, they think of Astroworld as something for someday or something for tourists.

But then an out-of-town guest shows up or the kids see an ad on TV, and the Houstonians learn that Astroworld is fun. And unlike the Statue of Liberty, the lines are usually short.

It is right next to the Astrozone and also next to Waterworld, a separate park, with nearly a dozen rides, the main purpose of which is to get participants soaking wet.

The park is wheelchair accessible, though not all rides can be ridden by people with disabilities. Strollers may be rented for \$1, and \$1 is refunded upon return. Nannies are available. You can even borrow a Kodak camera for a \$25 deposit.

At the entrance is an area that looks like the Main Street of Disneyland, only here it's called Americana Square. One shop sells only T-shirts, another only teddy bears, a third nothing but hats. There are food stands with everything from pizza to ice cream to foot-long hot dogs to po-boys and soups. There are tables aplenty, and every stand will warm a baby bottle.

Fear not, this will not be the only opportunity to eat. Food is sold all over the park. The snack bars are clean, and the park as a whole is clean — with staff everywhere sweeping, trash into dustbins. They should spend a bit more time cleaning cups and pizza crusts off tables, and the food tends to be expensive; a foot-long hot dog costs \$1.50.

There is more to do than eat; the park is divided into villages. In addition to Americana Square there are Nottingham Village, Oriental Village, Plaza de Fiesta, Western Junction, European Village, Alpine Valley, Candy Island (that's where the roller coaster is) and Enchanted Kingdom (all the rides here are reserved for toddlers and young children).

Nearly every village has a stage for comedians, dancers and marine animals, which perform in a big pool. Each also has game booths at which contestants choose all manner of things as targets to win stuffed animals. There are face painters and caricatures, and one cheerful young artist did an admirable job sketching a 4-month-old while he slept.

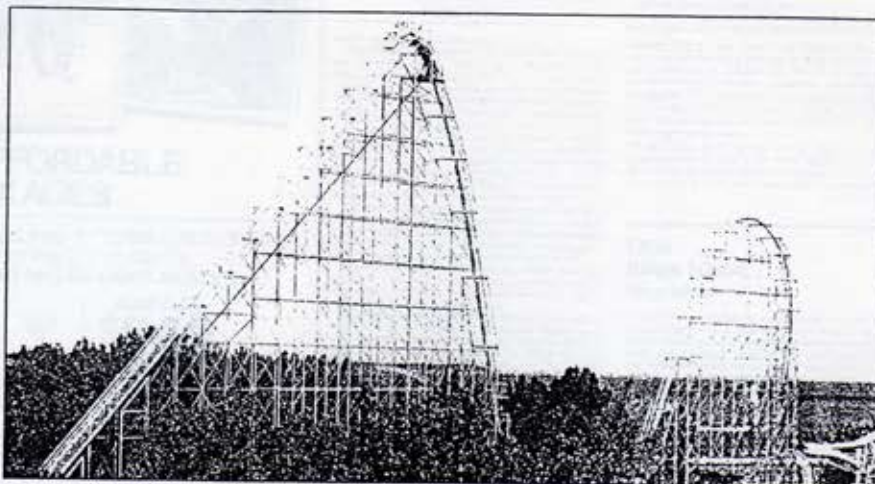
The big attraction is the rides. There are some lame ones — a 1962 DeSoto Carousel and a Skyneedle from which to view the park and the city.

For more adventurous rides, there are height requirements. For the Viper, the newest, a partially nautical roller coaster, and the Sky Screamer, riders must be 42 inches tall. For Greened Lightning, a loop-de-loop, they must also be 42 inches.

The screaming rides? One is the Sky Screamer, an elevator-like car that slowly climbs 128 feet — the equivalent of 18 stories — in about 10 minutes.

The other is the Texas Cyclone — always on the top-10 list of the American Coaster Enthusiasts, a Chicago-based organization of riders. It has a 95-foot drop at a 53-degree angle and reaches 85 miles an hour. You have to be at least 48 inches tall to ride it and 60 inches tall to sit in the last car.

The Cyclone, made of wood, is a mirror copy of the legendary coaster at Coney Island. So it is really a New York invention. But don't say that too loudly in front of too many Texans.



The 20-story Magnum is one of nine roller coasters at Cedar Point, in Sandusky, Ohio.

**Getting There** Leave the 610 Loop at the Kirby exit. The park is next to the Astrozone. Telephone: 733-789-5234.

**Admission** \$18.95, \$12.95 for those under 48 inches tall. An extra \$3 provides admission to Waterworld. The fee covers all rides, shows and attractions. Children under 2 admitted free.

**Hours** Open through Labor Day from 11 A.M. on weekdays, from 10 A.M. on weekends. Closing times vary from day to day; best to call first. Open weekends only after Labor Day. Closed January to March. LISA BELKIN

### THE MIDWEST

#### Missouri Worlds of Fun/ Oceans of Fun Kansas City

No one could say we were not forewarned. There were highway signs aplenty warning, "The Timber Wolf is out to get you!" It did.

The ferocious beast of a roller coaster collared us, shook us, and, after a wild two-and-a-half-minute ride, spit us out. My stomach seemed to lag far behind on the first 95-foot drop, but then hit bottom with a force reckoned at 2.85 G's.

This was my introduction to Kansas City's twin theme parks, Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun, their rides and water slides, their thrillers and, yes, even childen on a steamy Saturday when lines stretched far enough to require a half-hour wait, and a glaring sun pushed the temperature above 95 degrees. In our party were my wife, Helen; Joel Nance, a 12-year-old friend and guide, and myself.

The Timber Wolf opened April 1 and is the latest addition to Worlds of Fun. It is one of those increasingly rare creatures most beloved among roller coaster purists: rare creatures most beloved among roller coaster purists: track that twists and coils and spirals and even doubles back on itself atop piles of unpaired timber belted and bolted.

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### Reaching for the roller hall of fame

While heading the other way toward the Racer, a monstrous wooden roller coaster at Kings Island amusement park near Cincinnati, Donald Helbig's pace quickened and his expression brightened noticeably. "It's like a second home for me," Mr. Helbig said.

He was not kidding. Since mid-1981, this 26-year-old clothing salesman has ridden the Racer more than 8,000 times. That's an average of 2.85 times a day, five days a week, 52 weeks a year. His goal, which he expects to achieve next August, is to break 10,000 rides. That would make him the all-time record holder for the most trips on any coaster, according to the best guess of industry experts.

Mr. Helbig spends the majority of his free time on the Racer. Days, he sells professional sports uniforms at a Cincinnati clothing store. That gives him the entire evening — essentially from 6 to 11 o'clock — to head to Kings Island and rack up a few more trips on the wooden, as the Racer is called. Because waiting in line can take an hour or longer, Mr. Helbig can only fit in about four trips a night.

His decision to try to establish a coaster-riding record was at first a joke. While riding the Racer one day in 1981, he learned from an operator that the one-day record for the most trips was 96. Mr. Helbig set out to beat it. Although unsuccessful, he soon had a lot of free time since he was then working as a souvenir salesman at nearby Riverfront Stadium and baseball's Cincinnati Reds were on strike.

"The next thing I knew, I was coming here every day," Mr. Helbig recalled.

Ever since he first rode the Racer at age 18, Mr. Helbig has been going to Kings Island in rain or shine, through heat or humidity, every summer weeknight. Park officials all know him by his first name. The only time Mr. Helbig stops riding the Racer is to answer nature's call or to eat. Since undertaking his stab at coaster star-



Donald Helbig at home on the Racer, at Kings Island.

dom and eating the park's junk food, his weight — he's of medium height — has increased by almost 50 percent, to 175 pounds.

But Mr. Helbig does not seem to mind. He says that he rarely gets bored and that his employer and parents, who originally objected to his campaign, have taken to cheering him every time he passes a 1,000-ride interval.

And he has become something of a legend in these parts.

Mr. Helbig says that he will stop at 10,000 rides, if only to go on a diet and to meet a nice girl.

Even then, however, Mr. Helbig concedes he will be restless. Says he, "What will I do when I don't do that? What will I do with all the free time?"

ERIC N. BERG

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## CORRESPONDENT'S CHOICE

# Amusement Parks

Continued From Page 16

rolled together like marbles of giant Turkey Toys.

Blum, Midwest Enterprises, which owns and operates the two parks, says the Timber Wolf is its scarier ride, and it would have to agree. The first of two turns—"rough air"—is an embarrassment due to the resistance when the seat of the pacer breaks contact with the seat cushion, you lean far forward and almost keep going. Mike and I got out of the car, and I was a witness of dozens of ribs on coasters here and elsewhere, and the Timber Wolf is his favorite. Many others here seemed to agree. The lines for its waiting cars were longer than for any others, including even the Orion Express, a steel coaster with a 115-foot initial drop and a top speed of 63 miles an hour compared with the Timber Wolf's 51.

The new coaster is the centerpiece of a pair of parks that are notable for their cleanliness, where the emphasis is on family fun. And on the day we visited, both were filled with the fresh and friendly faces that we have come to take for granted after four years in the Midwest. Besides the Timber Wolf and the Orion Express, Worlds of Fun rides range from the Zamboni Express, a somewhat roller coaster, to the Fairy of the Forest, a full fall ride down a rushing waterway.

At neighboring Ocean of Fun, which has drawn guest, separate fee and parking lot, the favorite attraction is the Typhoon, a dual water slide that launches bathers down an undulating, 486-foot section at speeds up to 20 miles an hour but soon after the Timber Wolf and the Orion Express.

The Typhoon is the lead attraction among many, including three twisting and turning slides over 300 feet long, an 80-foot roller coaster, and a gently flowing, 800-foot circular stream of water filled with tubes, floaties, waders and swimmers.

Food is mostly of the fast-food variety, but the hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot dogs and corn dogs are good and inexpensive. Lanes of an enticing delicacy and the Inn of the Four Winds at Worlds of Fun offers buffet-style barbeque chicken and beef dinners at \$8.95.

Getting There Take Interstate 435, the belt that circles Kansas City, to Exit 34 on the northeast side of the city. Telephone: 816-434-4343.

Admission \$17.95, \$14.95 for children 11 and under at Worlds of Fun. At Ocean of Fun, comparable rates are \$13.95 and \$11.95. A combination ticket costs \$24.95. Hours Both parks open daily at 10 A.M. Worlds of Fun closes at 8 P.M. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 P.M. Friday and Saturday and at midnight Friday and Saturday. Ocean of Fun closes at 7 P.M. Monday to Friday and at 8 P.M. Saturday and Sunday.

WILLIAM ROBBINS

## Ohio Cedar Point Sandusky

"When they hit the seat—that's when they chicken out," Jack T. Fallex, director of operations at Cedar Point, was describing how dozens of people wait nearly two hours on weekends to ride the theme park's newest roller coaster, the Magnum XL-200, only to bail out at the last minute. What sounds like scurrying down the exit ramp is the sight of the Magnum's first hill—a stomach-churning, 20-story incline followed by a steep, 80-degree drop that hurries riders through the coaster's dips and curves at 70 miles an hour. It's no wonder many riders look like condemned convicts heading for the gallows when the Magnum begins its initial awesome ascent. "Sometimes, people are so afraid they scream bloody murder and I have to stop the ride and pull them off," Mr. Fallex added.

Opened last May, the Magnum symbolizes the latest attempt by Cedar Point to retain its self-proclaimed title as the nation's roller-coaster capital. The park, situated midway between Cleveland and Toledo, today boasts eight roller coasters. They range from traditional, rickety wood coasters such as the double-tracker Gemini to a gentle, "training" coaster for children to the Iron Dragon, billed as the only coaster in the Middle West in which riders travel most of the way suspended upside down.

Clearly, if you're coaster crazy, you'll adore Cedar Point. But the park has more to offer. Built on a 364-acre peninsula jutting out into Lake Erie, Cedar Point bills itself as a real resort featuring a campground, luxury hotel and marina. The basic entrance fee includes admission to the grounds and crowded white-sand beach. For an additional \$4.95 an hour, you can cool off at the park's water-slide complex, Soak City.

However, Cedar Point is, first and foremost, an amusement park whose primary attraction is the rides. And while coasters do reign supreme, if you are looking for a more genteel experience, there are four antique carousels. For children, Kiddieland which offers 18 rides designed for youngsters. There is also a wild animal show and Ocean, an aquarium and open-air stadium with a sea-lion and dolphin show.

On a hot summer day, lines at Cedar Point can be brutal. If you want to try the most popular rides, such as Thunder Canyon, a high-speed, turbojet, white-water rafting expedition from which you will emerge drenched, count on waiting at least 90 minutes. But you can amuse yourself by loitering to any of a number of bands that roam the midway. And Cedar Point's 3,000-member staff, mostly college students keep the park virtually spotless.

Special coaches include a park tour to watch a baby's birth or to help operate medicals, bathing suits to rent for 50 cents, and pet-sitting facilities for a modest fee.

Getting There Cedar Point is in Sandusky, Ohio, midway between Cleveland and Toledo. Take the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) to Exit 7 (Route 200). Follow the signs north on 206 to the park entrance. Telephone: 419-626-0636.

Admission The single-admission price for adults is \$10.95, for anyone four to 10 years old \$10.95, and children 12 to 15, seniors age 60 and over pay \$13.75, and children under age 3 enter free.

Hours Cedar Point operates from May 1 to Oct. 3. Depending on the day of the week and the time of the year, the gates usually open at 9 A.M. and the roller coaster operating at 10 A.M. and close at 10 P.M. or midnight. ERIC N. BERG

## Ohio Kings Island Kings Island

Each year, millions of visitors brave the heat of Kings Island in Ohio. And brave they need to be. The entire warden coaster is secluded—hidden from the rest of the park by dense, towering trees and rugged terrain that cuts off views from one part of the ride to the next. The result: You never know until the last minute what surprises await you. Riders might be a better word.

You start by racing through a 125-foot-long, underground tunnel after descending the safety track. Next come eight banked turns, some at 45 degrees, that hurt you against the side of your car. You lean forward through a full circle and a half before the speeds that can reach about 80 miles an hour and 500 ft/s as you will be sent flying off your seat. And if you're like me, you will leave with red marks on your hands from turning them into a vice grip around the safety bar.

For timid souls, the bad news is that Kings Island emphasizes knuckle-whitening rides like the Beast, Orion heart stoppers include the Racer, a twin-track coaster, one of whose trains runs backward. King Cobra, a looping coaster in which riders remain standing, and Veruca, a labyrinthine steel coaster that sends riders upside down through corkscrews and bootleggers. There's even a training coaster, called Beastie, for kids.

The park also has a tree-planting site, one devoted to nature enthusiasts. Kings Island's 75 landscapers, for instance, have turned the park into a gardener's delight. Over 250 hanging baskets can be found inside the gates. Brilliant displays of bedding plants line the midway. If you are seeking for a region from the crowd and more retreat to the rose garden.

You should also try the monorail ride through Wild Animal Habitat. Organized according to regions of the world, the habitat is a 180-acre preserve where more than 250 species—from otters to rhinos to bobcats and vultures—roam freely. Kings Island excels at breeding animals in captivity, so if you are lucky you may be able to see an animal give birth. And just outside the monorail station, stop at the park's collection of rare and endangered animals, including white snow fleas from the Himalayas, black penguins from Africa and Chinese flamingos.

Kings Island's amenities are fairly standard. The grounds and bathrooms are kept clean by an army of college students, all of whom seem so cautious. There is a pet-dog center, a baby-changing room, a computerized bulletin board where you can leave messages and a kiosk where you can rent a stroller or borrow a wheelchair. Lines, often an hour or longer, nonetheless keep moving.

Kings Island's food is undistinguished, but one item merits mention: the cheese curd, a brauker-style slush with authentic Canadian cheese and topped with granulated cheese and raw onion. Among the best of 11 live shows: "Dancer in the City," a tribute to dance around the world.

Getting There Kings Island is 30 miles north of Columbus, directly off Interstate 71, 20 miles south of Dayton and 80 miles south of Columbus. Telephone: 614-394-5600.

Admission General admission to Kings Island is \$18.95. Children 3 to 6 pay \$9.45. Children two and under enter free. Seniors 60 and over pay \$19.95. A two-day ticket, which must be used on consecutive days, also available, priced at \$26.95 for adults and \$13.45 for children.

Hours Open weekends in early April and switches to daily operation from late May through Labor Day. The gates open at 9 A.M. and close at 8 P.M. or 11 P.M., depending on the time of the year. ERIC N. BERG

## THE WEST

### California Knott's Berry Farm Buena Park

When Cordelia Knott served her first chicken dinner to paying guests at Knott's Berry Farm in 1934, she and her husband, Walter, could not have realized that 55 years later guests would follow the dinner by being zapped from 8 to 55 miles an hour in Montezuma's Revenge or by

## What causes accidents and how to stay safe



Daffy Duck warns riders at Astroworld.

People like to be scared on amusement rides, no one expects real danger. But accidents do occur.

An expert at the Federal Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 400 million people visit theme parks each year. Of the 1987 total, the commission estimates that 7,338 visitors were treated in emergency rooms for injuries on roller coasters, water slides, Ferris wheels, whirling rides and bumper cars. Sometimes unsafe behavior was involved.

The commission's information on fatalities, based only on cases reported to it through consumer complaints, indicates that from 1973 to June 1988, amusement park rides caused 83 deaths, according to Deborah K. Pinesworth of the commission staff. The causes of 37 of these deaths are known: structural or maintenance failure accounted for 14, rider behavior for 15, operator failure for 3 and combined causes for 3.

Staying safe requires common sense. Rules governing the size that a child should be in board a ride should be observed. Hammer and safety bars should be used. Drinking and riding is a mistake. Mr. Pinesworth said that safety experts often mentioned that riders had been drinking and fainted out of the car.

The commission says 16 states require job safety for the Federal Government but production (sic) rides inspectors at their place. BY T.V. WADE

## CORRESPONDENT'S CHOICE

## Amusement Parks



Shooting the heated waterfalls at River Ride, in Wild Waves, near Seattle.

plusing their own cockpit in the new XX-1 airplane ride. But the Knott's, one of the pioneers of the modern-day theme amusement parks, have had to keep up with the Disney's. So today what started out as a restaurant and then a fabricated ghost town for hours 20 miles south of Los Angeles is now 136 acres of rides, restaurants and entertainment. It is not the biggest park and the rides are not the scariest, but Knott's is a pleasantly landscaped park with its own character and one that is especially good for small children with its Camp Snoopy section of games and shows.

But for teens and teens at heart, there are plenty of thrill rides. One of the newest is the Biggest Rapids. The sign warns, accurately, "You will get wet. You may get drenched." Riders buckle into seats on a raft-like vehicle that spins, bounces and tosses through a raging white-water river and under waterfalls — invigorating on hot summer days but rather chilling during the evenings, which are usually cool in Southern California. A shop at the exit does a land-office business selling towels. Don't wear any good clothing or carry anything that might suffer from a soaking.

Knott's is busiest on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, when visitors wait an hour or more for the most popular ride. Weekdays are better, particularly in the evenings, when there are few lines and a wait, at most, of 15 or 20 minutes.

Knott's consists of five areas. Ghost Town, Fiesta Village, a re-creation of early Spanish California; the Roaring 20's, a simulation of a California amusement park of the 1920's; Camp Snoopy, the children's area based on the "Peanuts" comic strip; and Wild Water Wilderness, the newest area, meant to imitate the California wilderness that is fast disappearing.

Sooner or later most visitors wind up at Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant, which will serve the 1934 menu: cherry rhubarb appetizer, grasshopper salad, fried chicken, vegetable, hot buttered biscuits, slice of boysenberry pie and beverage. Price: \$8.75. No candidate for Michelin, but tasty and generous enough. Other restaurants in the park offer the usual fare: pizza, hamburgers, Mexican dishes.

Thus fortified, venture back to the rides. Oddly, in this age of high technology, the most popular is one of the oldest: the log ride. Riders board vehicles shaped like cut-out logs, which carry them along a log flume through realistic simulated scenes of logging days. Apart from the final water slide, this is not a thrill ride, you might get splashed a little.

For more of a stomach wrencher, try Monzoona's Revenge. This is a cross between a catapult and a roller coaster. You are fastened into a car, which is shot by an aircraft carrier mechanism into a high loop and then back, turning you upside down twice. The new XX-1 is meant to give the sensation of real airplane flights. It was out of order on a recent visit, but riders heard one of 20 open-air cockpits holding two people each, and use a stick to dip and barrel rolls as they fly through the air seven stories above ground. If that is not enough to make you lose your dinner, try the new Whirlpool, an unsettling but not frightening ride that spins you around in a setting decorated to give the illusion of riding beneath the surface of the ocean.

**Getting There** Go to 8015 Beach Boulevard in Buena Park, Calif., about 18 minutes from Disneyland in Anaheim and about a half-hour drive from downtown Los Angeles, depending on traffic on the Santa Ana Freeway, always problematical. Telephone: 714-226-5206 for recorded information, 714-227-1776 for questions. **Admission** \$19.95, \$13.95 for children 3 to 11, \$14.95 for people over 66, pregnant women and the handicapped. **Children 3 and under** admitted free. After 5 P.M. until Labor Day, the entry fee is \$12.95 for teens and children. **Hours** Open daily year-round: 10:30 A.M. to 1 A.M. Saturdays. From Sept. 5 to 8, 10 A.M. to 8 P.M. Saturdays. Sept. 9, 10 A.M. to 8 P.M. weekdays, 10:30 P.M. Saturdays and 8 P.M. Sundays. **ROBERT REINHOLD**

California  
Great America  
Santa Clara

The nose is a giveaway that something special is around the next bend, that particular kind of shrieking at the construction of the new roller coaster.

The squeals fill the air above the greener-than-green trees and bluer-than-blue ponds at the Great America amusement park here in Silicon Valley, about 45 miles south of San Francisco. And then, there it is: The Edge, the elevator shaft nightmare incarnate, and hundreds of people are actually lined up waiting to be scared witless.

The best thing about Great America is the rides, 22 of them, ranging from elaborate roller coasters to mild boat rides. The Edge is a real terrorizer, a two-and-a-half-second free fall in a steel cage, 66 feet of sheer vertical drop in a whirling 90 feet a second the waves the passengers' breakfast. No expectant mothers allowed, the Barker said.

The lanes for popular rides like The Edge are long on weekends, a half hour of idleness under the hot sun for a few seconds' thrill. And it is easy to be fooled, because lanes often snake through enclosed areas, doubling back and forth where they can't be seen or measured. It is best to try the big hits before noon, among these: Skyhawk,

new this year, a participatory flight ride where a control stick rotates the cabin 360 degrees.

Among the four roller coasters, beware the Demon. It begins with a swoop through a black tunnel and isolates four 360-degree loops, one with the cars on their sides. Near the entrance, where prospective riders can see the Demon and not just hear the screams of those on board, a huge, erratic boulder is covered with seals of chewing gum, abandoned lest they be swallowed.

Apart from the rides, Great America is predictable and plastic: Arcade-style games with plush animal prizes, but without the gritty charm of a small-town carnival. A double-decker carousel that the "Guinness Book of World Records" says is the tallest, but with characterless painted horses. A mock village green ringed by candy shops and music halls and a Yukon village with a trading post and a saloon — but none of the filmic details that make Disneyland work for adults as well as children.

The food is standard fare, at acceptable prices: Candy for \$1.45, soft ice cream for \$1.25, nachos for \$1.75. There are 36 restaurants or snack stands in all, with lines for all the greasy stuff and plenty of seats at the one true sit-down, use-your-credit-card place, which serves seafood.

The park also has two areas with rides and playgrounds for small children, Smoof Woods and Fort Fun, and a several elaborate shows, including an ice show, that play at intervals throughout the day.

**Getting There** The 100-acre park is on Great America Highway, just off Highway 101, five miles north of San Jose. Telephone: 408-988-1888.

**Admission** Tickets are \$18.95, which includes rides, but not games or food. Reduced rates for small children (ages 3 to 6, \$9.45; 7 and under free) and seniors (\$19.95). There is ample parking for \$1.

**Hours** Great America is open daily, 10 A.M. to 11 P.M., until Sept. 8, then weekends only until Oct. 1, when it closes until spring. **JANE GROSS**

Washington  
Enchanted Parks  
Wild Waves  
Near Seattle

Wild ocean surf, raging rapids and cascading waterfalls can be found in abundance throughout the Pacific Northwest, but the water temperature of these natural amenities can chill the nose of a snowman. That may explain why so many Northwesters flock to Enchanted Parks Wild Waves choosing comfort and manufactured water thrills over hypothermia and authenticity. The private park is a sort of Northwestern version of Disneyland, surrounded by tall fir trees and divided into two parts. One section is called Enchanted Village, a deep forested playground of children's rides and oversized fantasy figures. The other is Wild Waves, which has an enormous wave pool, a fast waterway for rafting and hundreds of feet of tubular slides that look like giant intestines. All rides and pools are heated.

On rare hot days, lines can be a problem with waits of up to 30 minutes at such attractions as the River Ride, in which you cartoon over a series of waterfalls on a one-person raft, or the Linedrive, a winding tube like an Olympic luge course. Both rides are fast but not heart stopping scary.

The way to avoid lines, though not crowds, is in the Wave Pawl, which tries to simulate the ocean with a four-foot high surf. Rafts or surfboards, both of which can be rented for \$2, are a must, and you can actually surf at one end of the huge pool.

Children age 7 and under will enjoy a smaller pool in the center of the park, shallow with a gentle downward current through several channels. Their parents can take turns soaking in one of two hot tubs on the periphery of the kids' pools, or lounge under apple trees (bearing real apples). The area is well supervised, as are the rides, watched by lifeguards in pink wetsuits.

Another large pool in the center of the park looks like Marine boat camp with just the fun stuff — overhead rafts, suspended nets, the standard obstacle course says — dangling over the water.

Perhaps the best ride, with the shortest lines, is above this pool. The Cannonball is a short, steep tube that spins out swimmers like peas from a straw shooter. The next best ride is the Bunka, a long, slippery slide with great turns throughout.

Wild Waves is generally clean and well maintained, although the dressing rooms are overly slippery and less sanitized than they could be. Food at the park is standard carnival fare: pizza, burgers, nachos and beer, served on a sundae above the rides.

**Getting There** Take Interstate 5 to the town of Federal Way, about 20 miles south of Seattle, and get off at Exit 142B. Go to the first traffic light and turn left on Enchanted Parkway. Go about a mile to 3620 Enchanted Park in Seattle. Telephone: 206-326-8828.

**Admission** Single entry fee of \$14.95, \$12.95 for children 3 to 9, allows all day access to both parks; toddlers and infants free.

**Hours** Open through Sept. 8 from 11 A.M. to 8 P.M., Sunday to Wednesday, 11 A.M. to 10 P.M. Thursday, Friday and Saturday. **TIMOTHY EGAN**

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**American LIBERTY TRAVEL**

FOR THE LIBERTY VACATION AND CRUISE CENTER NEAREST YOU, SEE THE BACK PAGE OF THIS SECTION.

# SEVENTEEN

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OVER 350 VERY HOT ITEMS**

**HOW TO HAVE  
A HAPPY HAIRCUT  
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**ARE YOU AND YOUR  
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**TOP THREE HAZARDS  
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**ROAD WARRIORS**

**GUYS & GIRLS  
WHO CRUISE**

**and  
Brother Beyond  
Salt-N-Pepa  
Tom Tom Club  
Yahoo Serious**



*totally*



# t

## heme parks—what's the attraction?



It's camp without counselors, high school without classes, the best place to ride out the endless summer. That's what

The Timber Wolf looks twiggy and gaunt, like miles of scaffolding, like the Eiffel Tower lying on its side. The Timber Wolf is a brand-new, definitely terrifying, fifty-mile-an-hour roller coaster at Worlds of Fun, a theme park on the outskirts of Kansas City, Missouri. When you watch the Wolf from a distance, it makes you giddy and scared all at once. You can hear the screams from half a mile away, along with the baritone clatter of the linked cars as they ski-whoosh out of sight.

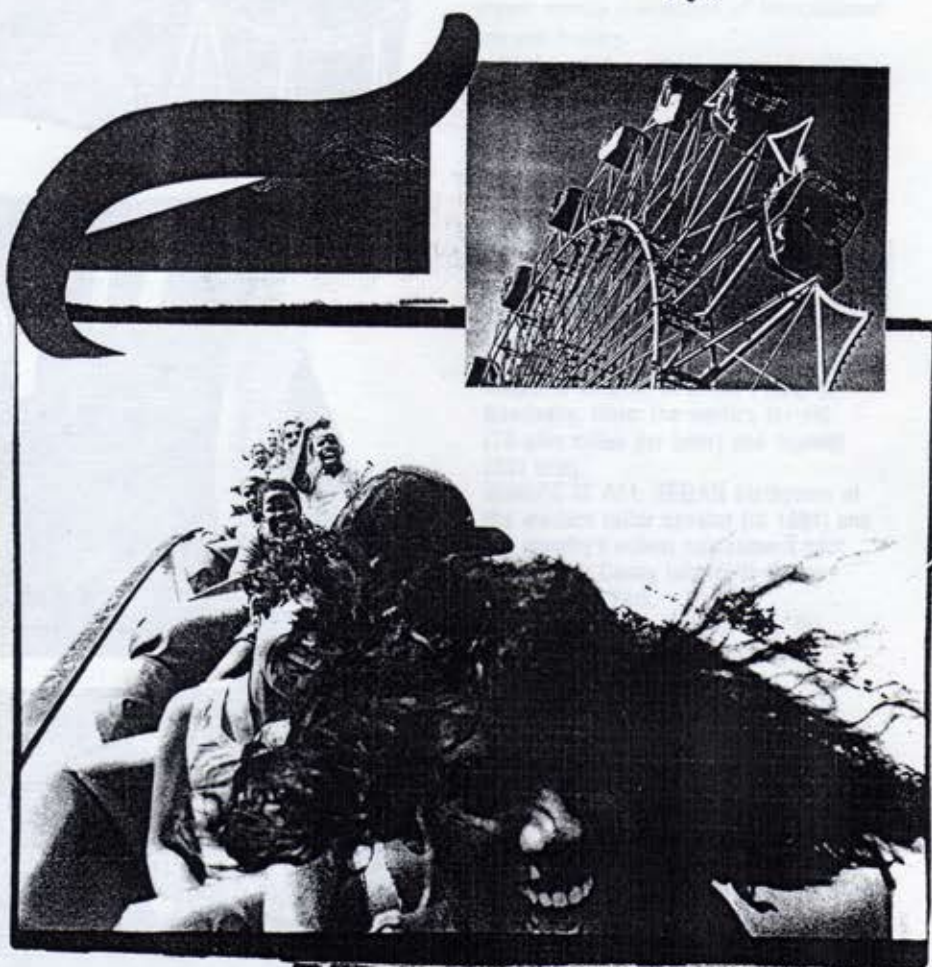
Understand the Timber Wolf, and you understand a good many things about theme parks and why millions of teenagers throng to them every year. It's not the pretty tulip and daffodil beds. It's not the cuisine. It's not really the dolphin-through-a-hoop shows and the serene tram rides through the trees. These may be *some* of the reasons 235 million people travel to America's six hundred theme parks every year (making parks the number one summer attraction in the country), but they aren't what give parks their thrill.

The thrill is in the rides.

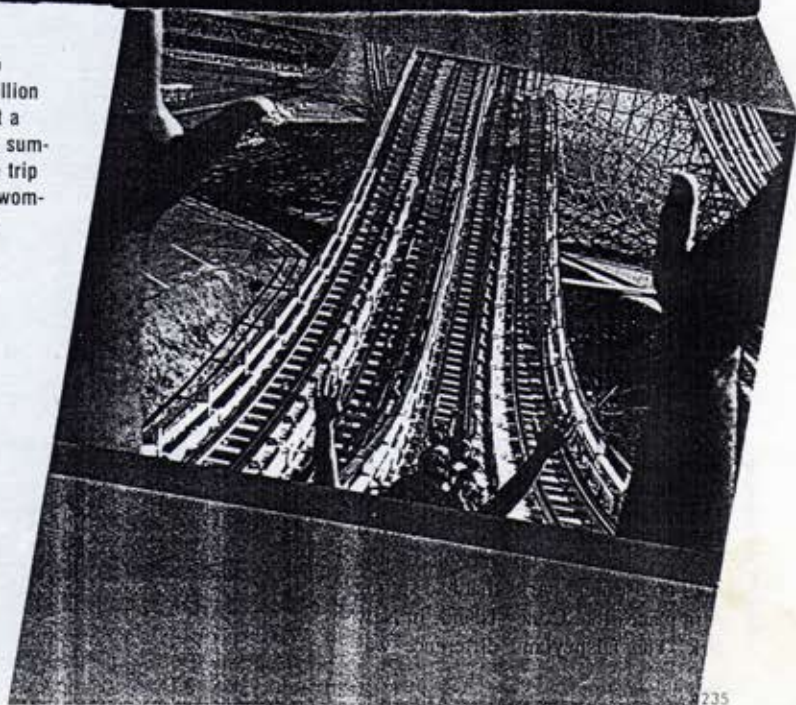
When you stand in line for the Timber Wolf, you hear the recorded sounds of wolves howling in the wind. Then you ride the thing. Think you're going to die. Scream. Feel sick. All that good stuff. Grip the harness bar so hard your knuckles turn vanilla, or throw your hands up high in the air. It's this kick, this danger fix, that accounts for the parks' real attraction.

As Randy Geisler, president of the American Coaster Enthusiasts, says, "A good coaster combines car racing, bobsledding, and (continued on next page)

**BY KATHARINE WHITTEMORE**



From coaster to coaster, 235 million people will visit a theme park this summer—that's one trip for every man, woman, and child in America.



# ARTICLE

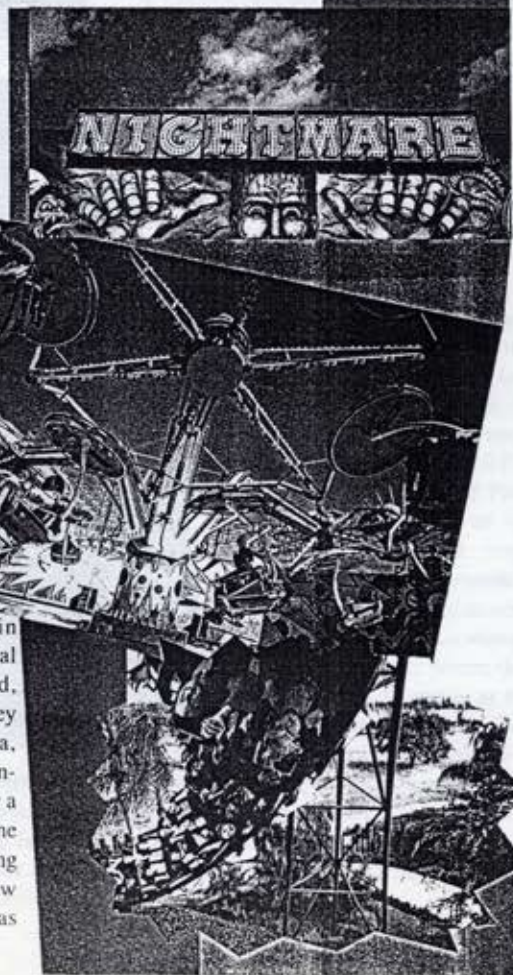
skydiving"—a combination that proves pretty much irresistible. "Teenagers want to do everything just to do it," says Sherry Roberson, nineteen, a guide at Six Flags Over Georgia, outside Atlanta. "All their lives Mom has been saying, 'Don't do that.' And now they can!" Jennis Gaskill, fifteen, describes the appeal another way: "You don't have any control."

As if that weren't good enough, the parks are a great place to hang out. A theme park is a lot like one giant singles



club for people under twenty. It's summer camp for counselors—no campers. It's high school without classes. Take Worlds of Fun, where about 70 percent of the attendees are teenagers. Worlds of Fun craves, needs, wants teenagers, and that's why they make such a big fuss over new and terrifying rides like the Timber Wolf.

Theme parks may not have been as popular ever before, but all this entertainment is not new. Essentially, the parks began to take off in the late '50s and early '60s as spin-offs of the enormously successful Disneyland, in Anaheim, California, the first real theme park. (Even today Disneyland, which opened in 1955, and Walt Disney World, in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, are the top two parks in terms of attendance.) And Disneyland was basically a cleaned-up, jazzed-up version of the small amusement parks that had sprung up in places like Coney Island, in New York. The Disneyland difference was



that the park was divided up into sections, and the sections were given themes. "A theme park is your basic amusement park," says Peter Irish, president of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions. "The themes are just what the park happens to be wearing."

Some places connect themes to locales. At Opryland, in Nashville, for instance, you'll see lots of country music influence. But most of the parks opt for a sort of vague, syrupy concoction of internationalism and history.

Worlds of Fun, which opened in 1973, is based on Jules Verne's book *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Balloons still inhabit the Worlds of Fun logo, though the rest of the park is pretty much like any other. As you stroll around, you cross from Scandi-

## THE RIDE STUFF

**COASTER WITH THE MOSTEST** The Magnum XL-200, at Cedar Point, in Sandusky, Ohio: the world's fastest (70-plus miles per hour) and highest (201 feet).

**WHERE IT ALL BEGAN** Birthplace of the modern roller coaster (in 1884) and the country's oldest amusement park (naturally): Coney Island, in Coney Island, New York.

**NO EXIT** World's longest ride: the 7,400-foot Beast, at Kings Island, in Kings Island, Ohio.

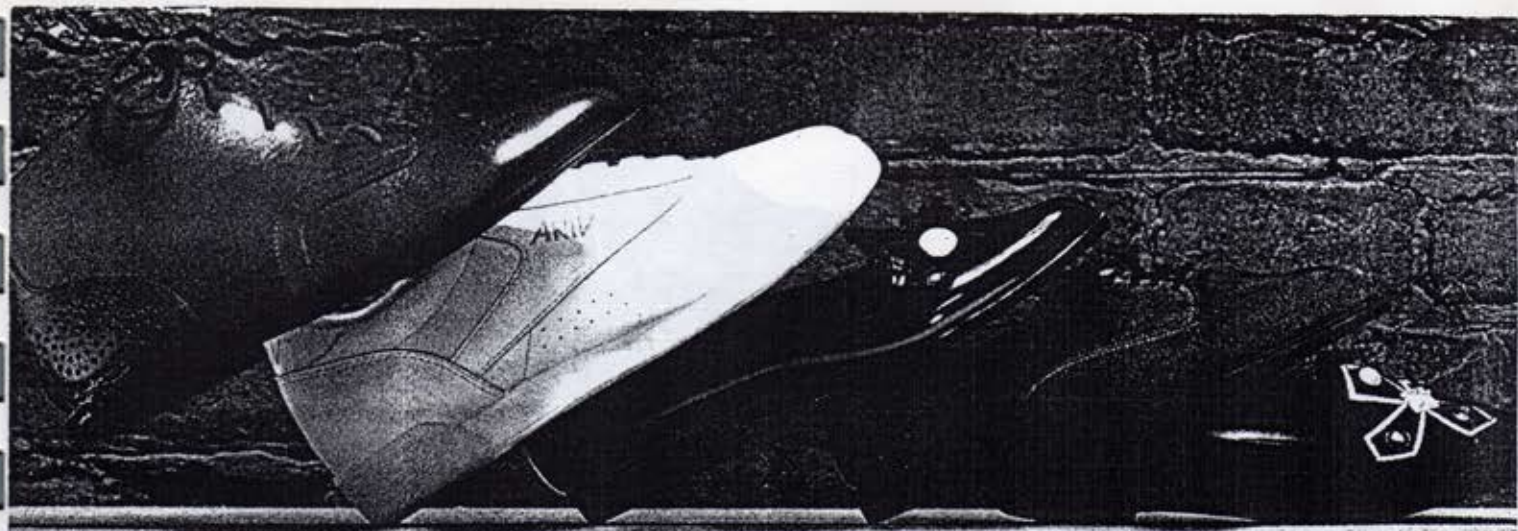
**SWEPT AWAY** Typhoon Lagoon, at Walt Disney World, in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, has the world's largest wave machine.

**REALLY AWESOME** The "most intense roller coaster in the universe" (according to the editor of *Roller Coaster* magazine): The Mindbender, at Fantasyland, West Edmonton Mall, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

—Curtis Pesmen

navia to Africa, from cutesy pastels to khaki-colored stucco, from oompah music to conga drums. The divisions all blend together, and you end up remembering where you are mostly by the names of the rides (The Viking Voyager, The Fury of the Nile).

Like a McDonald's in Tokyo, most theme parks are virtually interchangeable. It's a sure bet, for instance, that there will be a water-splash ride, though the ride might be named Soak City (Cedar Point, in Sandusky, Ohio) or Frontier Chute-Out (Hersheypark, in Pennsylvania) or Thunder River (Six Flags Over Georgia) or Python Plunge (Worlds of Fun). Most parks have booths where you can have an antique-looking photograph taken, a recording studio where you can sing along with hits, and basically the same things to eat. (continued on page 238)



# WALK IS

*the Shoe Works*

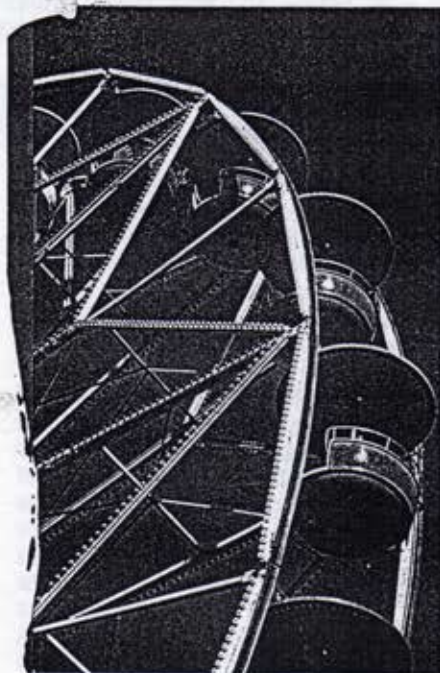
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## ARTICLE

continued from page 236



no matter what they call it. Every park has pizza, hot dogs, caramel corn, nachos, and sometimes fast food versions of local favorites—like Cedar Point's cheeseburger on a stick (really) and Sea World's fried shrimp.

It's also a sure bet that you'll see toss-a-softball or shoot-a-target games and people dressed up in giant bear or Gumby costumes. There are park logo T-shirts and biker water bottles and Budweiser mirrors for sale. And there's a show, staged on the hour, guaranteed to feature energetic, highly moussed young people singing and dancing to pop songs from the '50s and '60s.

Over the last twenty years, of course, there have been some new theme-park themes. One of the newest trends is *mallification*. Malls, after all, are the parks' stiffest competition for attracting teenagers. As fourteen-year-old Jill Everett, a patron at Worlds of Fun, says, "If it rains, we go to the mall. If it's sunny, we come here." That attitude has provoked the theme-park industry to consider combining the two venues into one. One place where this has already happened is at the West Edmonton Mall, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada—home of the Fantasyland Amusement Park. Here you have major retail stores *and* scary rides—and not just stuck elevators. Plus, the whole shebang is enclosed, which means no rainy day losses.

Another major wave of the future is movie-studio theme parks like Universal Studios Florida, scheduled to open in Orlando in May 1990, where visitors actually land *in* their favorite movies (in the water with *Jaws*, for example, or on the bike with *E.T.*). Disney's doing one, too, with the Disney-MGM Studios theme park, which just opened outside Orlando.

The standard-issue parks are doing everything they can think of to keep you coming, too. This means fresh rides, new booths, different shows. And many of them are hoping you'll come and stay—as employees. Two hundred thousand teenagers got jobs at theme parks last year, making the industry one of the largest seasonal employers of teenagers in the country. The pay isn't the greatest (at most parks you start at minimum wage), but there are plenty of worse places to work. Park employees often appear to be on a permanent busman's holiday; most of them say that if they weren't working at the park, they'd be hanging out there anyway.

LaToria Pointer and Lori Harmon, both seventeen, have each worked at Worlds of Fun for two seasons. They sell merchandise like small round sunglasses at an open-air shop. "At McDonald's they might say, 'Don't get smart with me,' and you have to take that *and* work indoors," says LaToria.

STOCKPHOTOS



# CHEAP

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"Here you meet so many new people, you work outside, and you get, well, more adventure." Says Lori, "I worked at a Safeway and hated it. Here the supervisors

are more on your level. You get free passes, you get to go to parties. It's just better." Other perks? "You meet millions of guys," says seventeen-year-old Shannon Coffey,

who works at Worlds of Fun.

The park social life can be pretty great. At Six Flags they hold "section parties" twice a month, where one part of the park is open for employees after hours. "People are dancing in the streets," says Sherry Roberson. At Worlds of Fun they have a huge dance floor covered by a tent where parties are held at the close of the day. There's always an employee eating quarters, like the Canteen at Six Flags, and you can tell they're good hangouts.

So, by and large, it's fun to work at these places. By and large. Sweeping is sweeping, for instance, no matter where you do it. And most parks want employees to look happy—all the time. As fifteen-year-old Reggie Rowland, a groundskeeper at Six Flags Over Georgia, says, "It gets so hot and dirty, especially with all the trash around the restaurants and the bathrooms. Sometimes it gets to me. And then a supervisor will see you and say, 'Let's see you smiling!'"

But in any case, you can meet hundreds of people your own age. You can make dozens of new friends. Not bad for a summer's work.

And theme parks are still the best place to get you and your adrenaline soaring and to pass a hot night courting controlled danger with your friends. Which is excellent for a summer's play.

## THEMES IN SEARCH OF A PARK

**MADONNARAMA** You've seen the video, now experience the theme park. Visit the **MATERIAL GIRL MUSEUM**, showcasing all the important moments—and hair colors—in her glamorous life. Go for a fun-filled ride in the **SPINNING BUSTIER CUPS** (there's room for the whole family!). Race around on the **ROLLER COASTER MARRIAGE RIDE**. Children under thirteen not admitted. **WEENIE WORLD** The mere thought of the Himalayan Bobsled Ride or Lightning Loops enough to make you lose your lunch? Then try this sanctuary devoted to the sissy in us all—a place where the roughest ride is the escalator at the **IT'S A MALL WORLD AFTER ALL** exhibit, where patrons wear harnesses just to buy a hot dog, where golden retrievers and gerbils run free at the **SPUDS MACKENZIE "WILD" ANIMAL PARK** (be sure to keep the car windows rolled up!). **MATERIAL WORLD** "All you need is greed" is the catchy catchphrase at

this monument to materialism. Once you bribe the bouncers to get in, you're on your way—riding the **BMW BUMPER CARS**, visiting the **HOUSE OF HORRORS** (theme: "A World Without VISA Cards"—chilling!). Hottest-selling souvenir: a shirt that reads, "Mom and Dad went to Material World and all I got was this lousy silk blouse." **THE KRANKY KINGDOM** Not in the mood to have your spirits lifted by a bunch of unbearably perky people? Don't worry. . . you won't be happy at this Shrine of Whine, designed with the perpetually peevish in mind. Long lines and outrageously expensive refreshments give bitter patrons plenty to complain about! Guaranteed to bring you down—**THE DEPRESSING COTTAGE OF SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS** (Grumpy, Surly, Crabby, Huffy, Puffy, Grouchy, and Terse). Or forego the "fun" altogether by going on a madcap **TYLENOL SCAVENGER HUNT**. A bad time to be had by all!

POST  
(HOUSTON, TEXAS)  
September 4, 1989

## ENTERTAINMENT

# Short-season parks seek new thrills

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ARLINGTON — A skeleton of what will be the world's tallest wooden roller coaster already rises above the trees at Six Flags Over Texas, and planners are concocting other gut-wrenching thrills.

Walt Disney Co. has splurged on a fantasyland of Hollywood diversions and acquired rights to many of the Muppets, who will cavort with Mickey and Goofy at Disney theme parks.

Bidders seeking Sea World may pay more than \$1 billion for Shamu, the killer whale, and other finned celebrities.

All this maneuvering reflects one common handicap in the \$4 billion amusement-park business: Mother Nature still calls most of the shots in a relatively short season that winds down after Labor Day. So, the search for new diversions never ends.

This summer, rain and heat kept many fun parks waiting for the crowds, although others reported a late surge to surpass year-ago levels.

Especially hard-hit were the 200 or so water parks, a fairly new entrant into the amusement game.

"Our June was just horrendous," said John Seeker, spokesman for Wet 'N Wild, a water park across the freeway from Six Flags in Arlington. "It's almost like summer never came."

Last year, the nation's 600 amusement parks reported more than 249 million visitors and operators surveyed in July said they expected about a 2 percent increase this year, taking the early season weather problems into account.

But prices also may be holding back attendance.

Admission to 27-year-old Six Flags Over Texas is \$19.95, on the high end of prices among regional parks.

"It's a little steep, especially when all four of us come," said Jackie Corley, who was visiting the park on a recent, 100-degree day.

"We'd think twice" about coming back if the price were increased, she said.

Even next year's scheduled de-

but of the \$5 million Texas Giant, a 4,920-foot long wooden roller coaster, might not be enough to overcome the price, she said.

Daughter Elisa, however, had a different view. She likes the park "because I can have fun."

Roller coasters are a big draw at the larger parks, and are frequently the main attractions.

Worlds of Fun in Kansas City, for example, has a much-ballyhooed new coaster this year — the \$3 million Timberwolf, and attendance is up 10 percent, park officials said.

The coaster recently was rated No. 2 in the nation in a survey by Inside Track, a publication for roller coaster enthusiasts.

"We just had to come to see it," said Sara Johnson of Topeka, Kan., at Worlds of Fun on a recent weekend with family members.

In Houston, at Six Flags-owned Astroworld, The Viper coaster also helped the park overcome early season doldrums brought on by Tropical Storm Allison and Hurricane Chantal.

There will be a new ride at Astroworld next year as well, but spokeswoman Debra Ford wouldn't reveal the nature of the attraction, except to say, "it's going to be a great thrill ride."

The newest generation of thrills involves motion simulation — rides that give passengers the feel of hurtling through space, or under water, or flying an airplane. They can cost from \$120,000 to \$2 million each, depending on the sophistication.

The smaller scale of the motion simulators — they don't require towering support structures — reflect a trend toward downsizing and regionalization.

"We're close to saturation. There's no major metropolitan area in the United States that doesn't have a park within easy driving distance," said Peter Irish, an official with the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, an industry group.

As a result, IAAPA trade shows include seminars on miniature golf, go-cart tracks, batting cages and



Post file photo

**Visitors enjoy a ride at Houston's Astroworld.**

arcades, Irish said.

Parks also are turning to concerts and other entertainment to draw people during slack times. An IAAPA survey this summer showed more than 30 percent of the projects planned for the largest parks were for entertainment.



# Rainy Weather Not Fun For Amusement Parks

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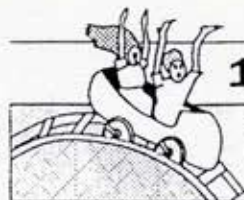
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"Our June was just horrendous," said John Seeker, spokesman for Wet 'N Wild, a water park across the freeway from Six Flags in Arlington. "It's almost like summer never came."

Others had a better time of it.

"We had one weekend in August, which is traditionally one of our biggest months, where we almost didn't even open. But despite all that we're well ahead of last year," said Ed Carroll,

See PARKS, Page 8



## 1988 Amusement Park Attendance

Rank	Park And Location	*Attendance (Millions)	Comments
1.	Walt Disney World/Epcot, Lake Buena Vista, Florida	25.1	•Even though attendance is down, this year's profits are the highest in the park's history.
2.	Disneyland, Anaheim, California	13.0	•This was the second best season ever. Profits hit an all-time high.
3.	Pier 39, San Francisco, California	10.5	•Record year for attendance.
4.	Sea World of Florida, Orlando, Florida	4.6	•Small decline representative of decrease in area tourism.
5.	Universal Studios Tour, Universal City, California	4.2	•Currently the second year of a three-year expansion project.
6.	Knott's Berry Farms, Buena Park, California	4.0	•No increase in attendance; the \$10 million Bigfoot Rapids is the major new attraction.
7.	Busch Gardens, The Dark Continent, Tampa, Florida	3.7	•Big year for two reasons, the two panda bears from China.
8.	Sea World of California, San Diego, California	3.4	•This was the park's 25th anniversary season coming off a record year in 1987.
9.	Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia, California	3.1	•Increase attributed to new Arrow Dynamics coaster, The Ninja.
10.	Kings Island, Kings Island, Ohio	2.9	•Second best year ever. Bad weather had a slight impact on attendance.

\*Attendance figures based on information provided by the park or other sources within the industry.

Source: International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions

AP

## Parks

From page one

general manager at Riverside Park in Agawam, Mass., which added six new water rides this year.

Crystal Beach was not so lucky. The 101-year-old park in Fort Erie, Ontario, Canada, just across the bridge from Buffalo, N.Y., said it will close its rides after this season, reflecting increased competition and dwindling crowds.

"This year we just took a nose dive," said president Joseph Blondillo. "A lot of it was because of the rainy spring. Then we started to lose numbers during the good weather."

Last year, the nation's 600 amusement parks reported more than 249 million visitors and operators surveyed in July said they expected about a 2 percent increase this year, taking the early season weather problems into account.

But prices may also be holding back attendance.

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"We just had to come to see it," said Sara Johnson of Topeka, Kan., at Worlds of Fun on a recent weekend with family members.

She her family said the park was expensive, but they regarded it as a special, once-a-summer outing and were willing to pay.

The newest generation of thrills involves motion simulation — rides that give passengers the feel of hurtling through space, or under water, or flying an airplane. They can cost from \$120,000 to \$2 million each, depending on the sophistication.

The smaller scale of the motion simulators — they don't require towering support structures — reflect a trend toward downsizing and regionalization.

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Parks also are turning to concerts and other entertainment to draw people during slack times. An IAAPA survey this summer showed more than 30 percent of the projects planned for the largest parks were for entertainment.

The parks are hoping to attract more customers like Paul and Paula Jarvis of Bowie, Md., who visited Williamsburg, Va.'s Busch Gardens along with their grandchildren.

"We like the shows," Paula Jarvis said. "We really don't go for the rides too much."

Regional does not mean less lucrative. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc. is selling its parks — four Sea Worlds, plus other smaller parks near its Orlando headquarters — and it is estimated the deal could bring the publisher \$1.5 billion, 23 times what HBJ paid for the three Sea Worlds it bought in 1976.

Bigger is still better as far as players like Disney are concerned, however.

With this year's addition of the new Disney-MGM Studios theme park in Florida and the announced purchase of rights to the Muppet characters last week, Disney's pursuit of new attractions has reached Barnum-esque proportions.

The Disney-MGM theme park is a \$400 million playground with diversions that range from do-it-yourself music videos to recreations of 1940s

FLORIDA TODAY  
MELBOURNE FL - SEPT. 10, 1989

### **Kansas City, Mo. Worlds of Fun/ Oceans of Fun**

The Timber Wolf, the ferocious beast of a roller coaster, collared us, shook us and, after a wild 2½-minute ride, spit us out. My stomach seemed to lag far behind on the first 95-foot drop but then hit bottom with a force reckoned at 2.85 G's.

This was my introduction to Kansas City's twin theme parks, Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun.

The Timber Wolf is one of those increasingly rare creatures most beloved among roller coaster purists: a woodie. It has two 24-passenger trains on 4,230 feet of track that twists and coils and spirals and even doubles back on itself. The lines for Timber Wolf were longer than for any others, including even the Orient Express, a steel coaster with a 115-foot initial drop and a top speed of 65 miles an hour compared with the Timber Wolf's 53.

At neighboring Oceans of Fun, the favorite attraction is the Typhoon, a dual water slide that launches bathers down an undulating, 400-foot incline at speeds up to 30 miles an hour.

Both parks open daily. Call 816-454-4545.

— *By William Robbins*

Details of Midwestern  
Coaster Revealed

New Eastern Riding  
Coaster Revealed

March, 1989

**New Coasters Rising***More Construction Pictures Inside!***Details of Midwestern Coaster Revealed**

Park representatives at ACE's Midwest No-Coaster Con (see related story) presented a wealth of information about the Midwest's new coasters to ride-starved attendees.

Despite frigid outdoor temperatures, no doubt many ACEers were thinking to an upcoming season spent at:

**Worlds of Fun**

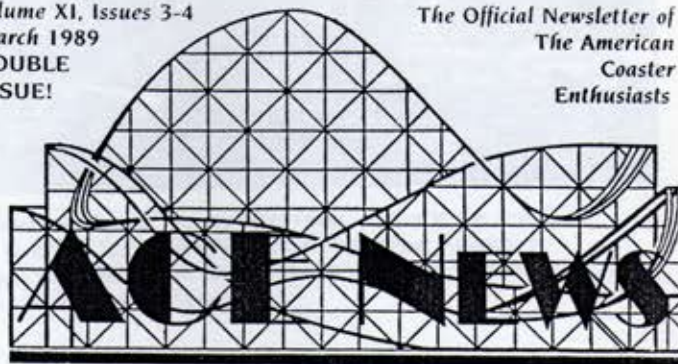
The first wooden roller coaster in Worlds of Fun's (Kansas City, MO) 17-year history has been named *Timber Wolf*.

Mark Pfefferkorn of Kansas City came up with the winning name, one of 7,000 unduplicated choices from 9,810 total submissions. He received a package of prizes worth \$5,000—and a seat on the coaster's inaugural run.

With construction moving rapidly along, that April 1 first run should be on schedule. The *Timber Wolf's* structure has been finished for awhile, and by late January the track was 80 percent complete and getting laid at a rate of 70 feet per day. About 40 construction workers toiled on

Volume XI, Issues 3-4  
March 1989  
DOUBLE  
ISSUE!

The Official Newsletter of  
The American  
Coaster  
Enthusiasts



Cedar Point's new *Magnum XL-200* will peak at 201 feet, making it the highest roller coaster in the world. This view from the top of the first hill illustrates the steep, 60-degree angle of descent riders will challenge as they speed along the track at more than 70 mph. The new roller coaster is slated to debut May 6, opening day at the Sandusky, Ohio, amusement/theme park.

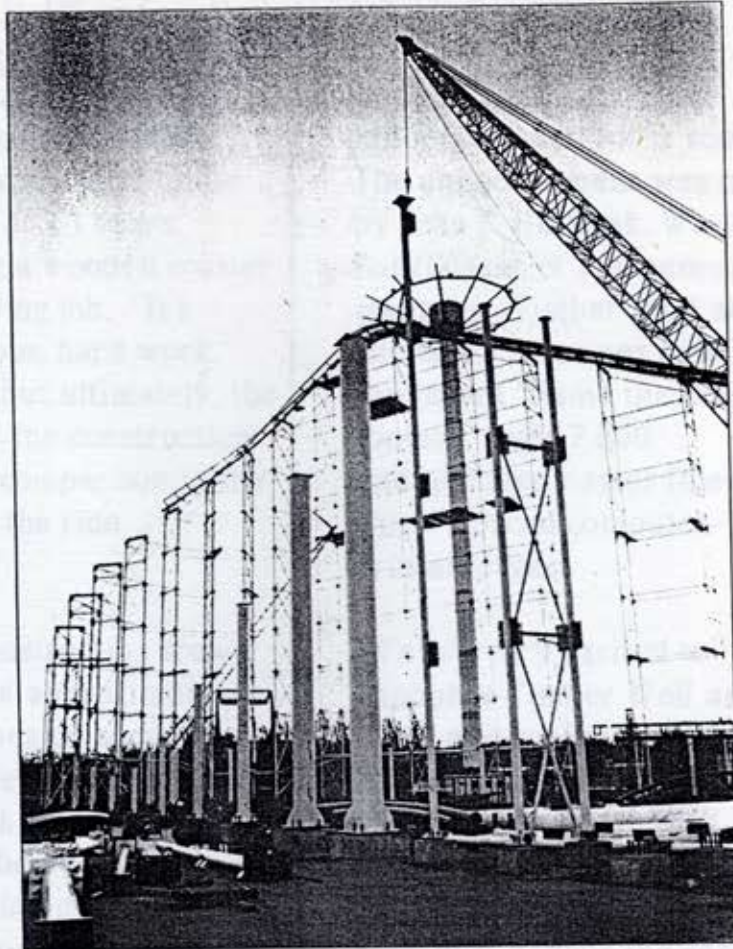
WORLDS OF FUN



Tracks twist everywhere as construction continues on the 4,230-foot-long *Timber Wolf* at Worlds of Fun. Worlds of Fun will be host site for ACE's 1989 Spring Conference, May 12-14.



Final work on the 95-foot drop of the *Timber Wolf*, the new woodie at Worlds of Fun.



The tallest and fastest looping steel roller coaster in the world, *The Great American Scream Machine* at Six Flags Great Adventure (Jackson, NJ), was topped off at 173 feet on January 20. Construction of the ride started last September.

the site in October; a crew of 27 was keeping things going throughout January.

Though the red PTC trains have not rolled over so much as an inch of the track (they're not even scheduled to arrive at Worlds of Fun until March 1), the ride already is raking in confident reviews from those associated with it.

Worlds of Fun General Manager John S. Hudacek said that the ride's name "best depicts the speed, ferociousness and unpredictability of the coaster." Builder Charles Dinn commented that though building a wooden coaster is "heavy, tedious, hard work . . . ultimately, the challenge of the construction will pale in comparison to the intensity of the ride experience. It's

an interesting, unique coaster."

Indeed. Foremost among *Timber Wolf's* eccentricities is an upward spiral in which the train rises sharply while banked to the right and slowing from 40 miles per hour to 20. Both that feature and the ride's "out-and-twister" track plan come from the unusual way the project was presented to designer Curtis Summers Inc. of Cincinnati. Worlds of Fun literally presented a "menu" of features they liked on other coasters and asked that as many as possible be incorporated.

Worlds of Fun recently clarified for us that the *Timber Wolf's* PTC coaster cars will have headrests. The ride itself will feature "near" negative "g's"—close to weightlessness—not any "actu-

al" negative g's.

Nevertheless, *Timber Wolf* promises to be a coaster with a personality all its own.

Worlds of Fun would be happy to put ACE members on their "Coaster Countdown" press release mailing list. If you'd like to get Worlds of Fun's *Timber Wolf* "newsletter" releases, send your name and address to Worlds of Fun, Coaster Countdown Public Information Supervisor, 4545 Worlds of Fun Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64161.

#### Six Flags Mid-America

As reported in Vol. XI, Issue 2 of ACE News, Eurkea, MO's Six Flags Mid-America is the new location of the 1986 Vancouver Expo *Scream Machine*. The newly

christened *Ninja* was delivered to the park in August 1988.

The 108-foot-tall, 2,330-foot-long steel ride will whip riders through a sidewinder, loop, double corkscrew and helix at speeds up to 65 miles per hour. The ride will be able to handle 2,000 guests per hour.

Riders who sampled the *Scream Machine* in Vancouver will notice some differences as they climb aboard the *Ninja*. Among the more noticeable will be a new type of locking shoulder harness and fluorescent-orange-painted headrests.

Though the park's opening date is April 7, construction delays have made it unclear whether *Ninja* will prove itself "The Black Belt of Roller Coasters" at that time.

# WOODEN COASTER TOPS-OUT

## at Worlds of Fun

The giant wooden roller coaster structure under construction at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground atop its 25 degree lift. From this highest point, passengers will plummet 95 feet toward the earth at 53 m.p.h., experiencing a G-force of +2.85.

The \$3 million coaster, one of Worlds of Fun's most ambitious expansions ever is scheduled to open April 1, 1989 when the park begins its 17th season.

The coaster ride, designed exclusively for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, combines the most thrilling and classic elements of the greatest roller coasters ever built. The 2 1/2 minute journey will feature a combination of breath-taking elements to create the most intense ride experience achievable.

Dinn Construction of Cincinnati, Ohio, selected for its world-renowned wooden coaster expertise, is the builder of the new ride.

According to Charlie Dinn, company owner and builder of coasters for 25 years, constructing a wooden coaster is a demanding job. "It's heavy, tedious, hard work," said Dinn. "But ultimately, the challenge of the construction will pale in comparison to the intensity of the ride experience."

The Dinn Construction crew, comprised of approximately 40 people, began surveying the site in September. The crew is working six days a week, nine hours a day. When completed, the coaster will be comprised of 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

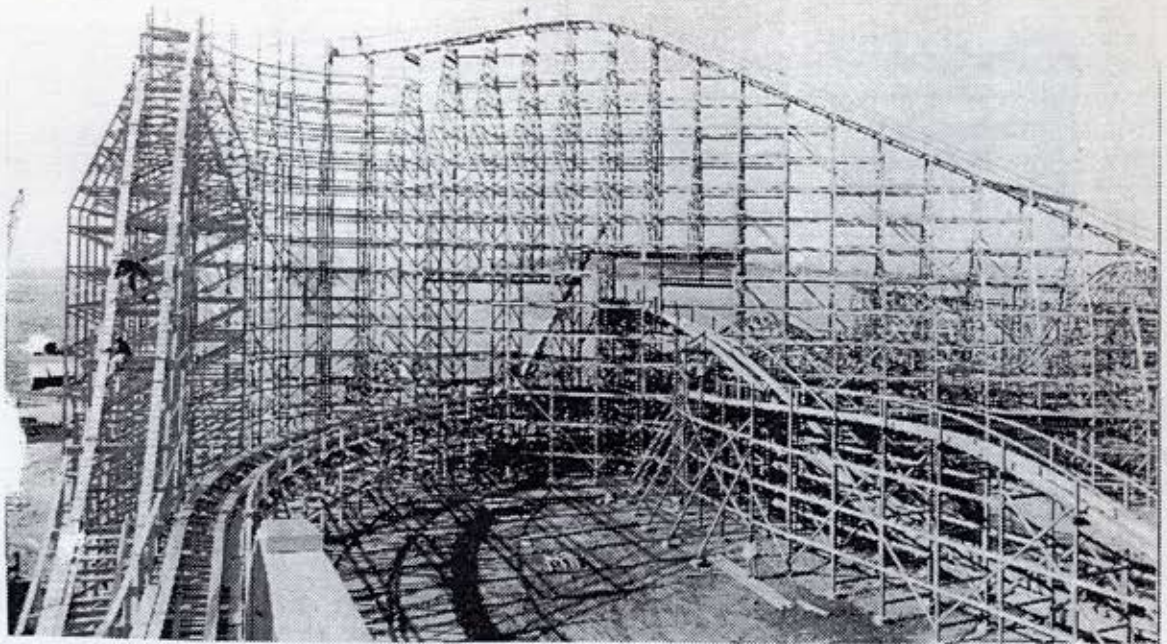
According to Sonny Harris, Worlds of Fun director of maintenance and construction, ride construction is on schedule. "We are extremely pleased with the progress of the coaster," stated Harris. "The mild weather and the expertise of Dinn Construction have kept us right on schedule to open the coaster in April."

Timber Wolf is the name selected from nearly 10,000 entries for Worlds of Fun's \$3

million wooden roller coaster. The announcement was made by John S. Hudacek, Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun general manager. Timber Wolf was one of 9,810 names entered in the recent "Name the Coaster" contest. Over 7,000 unduplicated names filled 188 single-spaced computer-printed pages.

"We are very excited to announce Timber Wolf as the name and congratulate Mark Pfefferkorn of Kansas City, Missouri for his winning entry," commented Hudacek. "We believe the name Timber Wolf best depicts the speed, ferociousness and unpredictability of the coaster."

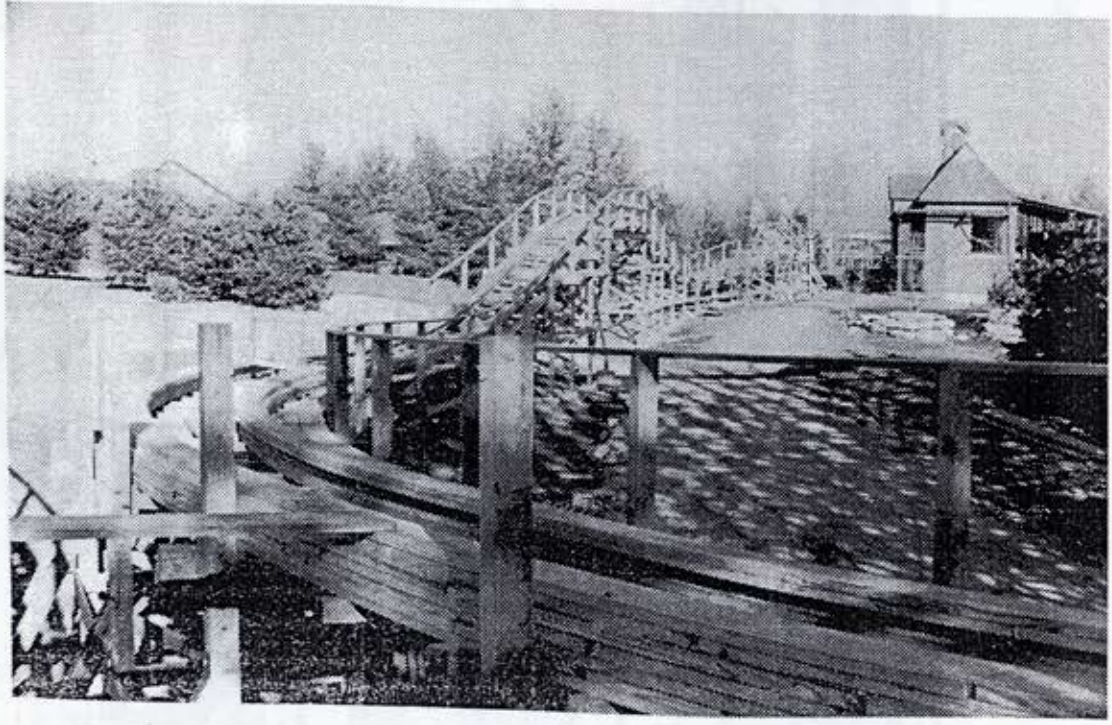
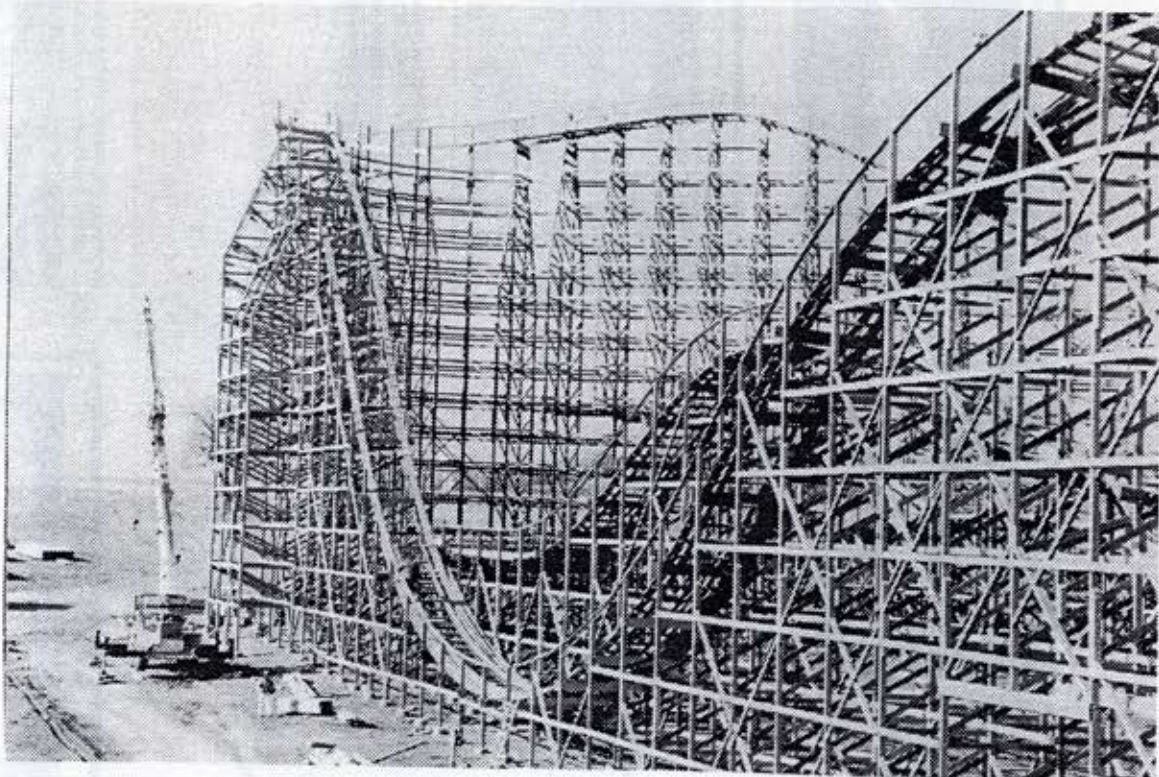
Construction of Timber Wolf is ahead of schedule. Its basic structure was completed recently when the last vertical bent was bolted, completely enclosing the superstructure. Construction workers are currently working on the final phase, bracing and tracking, to complete the ride for its scheduled opening on April 1, 1989 when the park begins its 17th season.



Worlds of Fun's Timber Wolf Coaster under construction in Kansas City, Missouri.

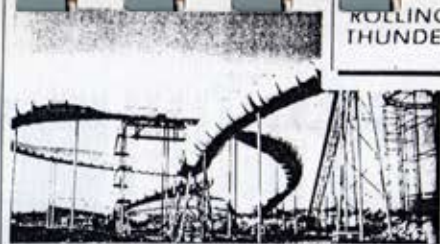
Credit all photos/J. Merritt







VALLEYFAIR, SHAKOPEE MN  
CONSTRUCTION JUST UNDERWAY



ROLLING  
THUNDER

SIX FLAGS GREAT AMERICA, GURNEE IL



CEDAR POINT, SANDUSKY OH



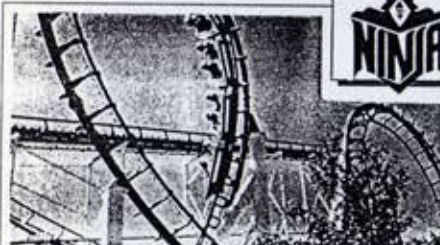
TREE  
TOPPER

UPPER CLEMENTS FAMILY THEME PARK, NOVA SCOTIA



TIMBER  
WOLF

WORLDS OF FUN, KANSAS CITY MO



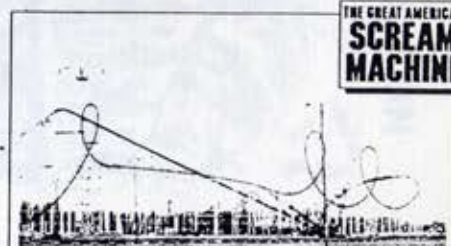
SIX FLAGS MID-AMERICA, ST. LOUIS MO



### UPDATE '89

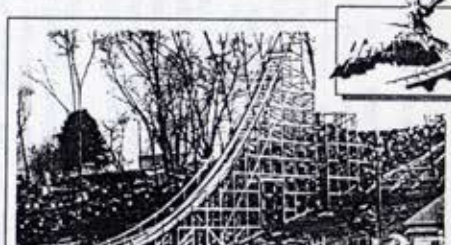
Coaster construction is well underway at twelve sites across North America this spring... and here's the rundown of what's on line for '89. In the three instances where rides have been moved from other parks and were not re-erected in their new locations at prestime, photos of the coaster in operation are shown. Just for the record, Opryland's CHAOS is being billed as a "coaster hybrid" and Dollywood's THUNDER EXPRESS is being referred to as a "runaway mine train".

Photos/logs (clockwise from top left): Valleyfair; Ron Wörzek, Fred Schmidt; Upper Clements Family Theme Park; Mark Wyatt, Mark Wyatt; RIVER CREEK MINE RIDE; Dollywood; Opryland; Gary Slade; LIET SCREAM; Gary Slade; SCREAM MACHINE; Mark Wyatt, Chris Paul



THE GREAT AMERICAN  
SCREAM  
MACHINE

SIX FLAGS GREAT ADVENTURE, JACKSON NJ



DORNEY PARK, ALLENTOWN PA



ASTROWORLD, HOUSTON TX



SIX FLAGS  
FLASHBACK!

SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS, ARLINGTON



OPRYLAND, NASHVILLE TN



THUNDER  
EXPRESS

DOLLYWOOD, PIGEON FORGE TN

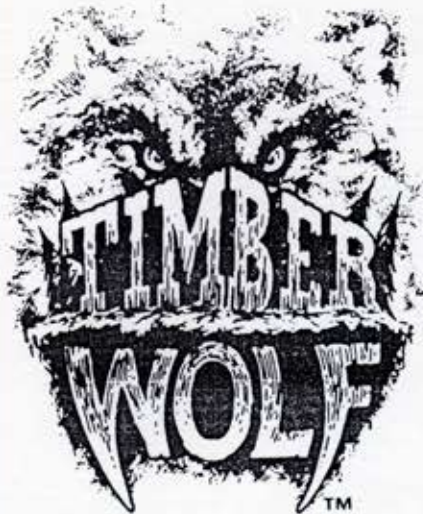
INSIDE TRADE

March, 1989

BOOK



## TAKE A RIDE ON



**Jeff Merritt**

On Friday, March 31, Kansas City's Worlds Of Fun held a "Private Screaming" to preview its new TIMBER WOLF wooden roller coaster (Dinn/Summers/PTC) for a crowd of appreciative media personnel and ecstatic amusement park enthusiasts. The following day, April 1, the ride was opened to the general public as the park began its 17th season. Located on seven acres of land in the expanded Americana section of the park, the TIMBER WOLF utilizes the same boarding station which was previously used for the EXTREMEROLLER (EXT) Arrow corkscrew. The coaster extends southward and wraps around the Pandamonium and Americana sections of the park, and this beautiful setting provides numerous vantage points for viewing and photographing the ride. At night, the coaster is especially beautiful, featuring chaser lights on the first hill and dramatic floodlighting.

The TIMBER WOLF performs like an untamed beast in the woods. The six-car trains which have been painted red, with orange to yellow striping, fly sinuously around the high-speed drops and curves, and the numerous and intense negative G forces have necessitated the addition of safety belts to the PTC trailer-type coaster cars.



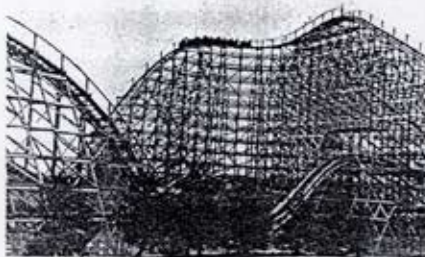
WORLDS OF FUN'S new TIMBER WOLF negotiates the "bobs" turn.

Like its namesake, the TIMBER WOLF is a cunning beast which is full of surprises. The start is so fast that the entire train is on the lift before it finally catches the chain. After leaving the chain, the WOLF swoops around a left-hand turn, and even before the turn is completed, begins a 92-foot first drop at a 50-degree angle. Back seat riders are thrown to the right, lifted from their seats, and remain

airborne during the entire plunge.

On the much shorter second drop, the TIMBER WOLF becomes vicious - some would say rabid - as it plunges, pops riders from their seats, and slams them down in the valley. Climbing, the TIMBER WOLF slices through the lift hill and flings riders into the wicked "bobs" turn. Here, front seat riders are catapulted from their seats, then thrown to the left as the train banks right and drops. Back seat riders do not leave their seats, but experience tremendous side thrust as the train negotiates the turn.

Following the bobs turn, the train races over another powerful negative G hill, then blasts into the 540-degree upwards helix. Banking right and climbing, the train completes the first 180-degrees at maximum speed, grinding riders into their seats. The second 180-degrees is also satisfyingly fast; however,



by the last 180-degrees, the TIMBER WOLF begins to pant somewhat, giving riders a grand pause to think over what they have just experienced, or to worry about what lies ahead.

After reaching the top of the helix, the WOLF regains speed by plunging over a short, steep drop then flies over another negative G hill. Here, the coaster gracefully lifts riders from their seats only to slam them down as it burrows under the lift hill and bobs turn. Speeding around a sweeping left-hand turn, the WOLF then loses ferocity as it climbs a high camel back hill. Slinking down the other side, it resumes its pace as it snarls through the lower level, 180-degree turnaround.

(Continued on Page 3)



FIRST DROP of the WOLF. All photos: Jeff Merritt

May, 1989

mail include: BOB API (NY), ALEXIS BERRY (NY), Roy Brashears (MD), Mike Chew (CA), Tim Cole (CA), Dave Rockenbaugh (IL), Andrew Hine (England), Mike and Celia Horwood (Canada), Rudy Krueger (CT), Jim Lang (IN), Bill Linkenheimer (PA), Jeff Merritt (KS), Lou Ann Reem (PA), Donna Sasser (NJ), Lisa Scheinin (CA), Marlon Scott (FL), Pat Shannon (PA), Derek Shaw (PA), Larry Wasserman (OH), Ron Witzek (IL), and the corporations, parks, and organizations specifically named throughout. We thank you for your continued input.

## Datebook

May 12-14

### ACE SPRING CONFERENCE

Worlds Of Fun (MO)

Three ERT's, admission to the park Saturday and Sunday, and an opening night party are included in the weekend's festivities. Registration postmarked after April 29: \$35 (ACE) and \$45 (non-ACE). Info: ACE News or P.O. Box 8226, Chicago IL 60680.

Friday May 19

### ACE SANTA CRUZ OUTING

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk (CA)

Northern California ACE Regional Representative Dave Escalante is organizing an outing at Santa Cruz to celebrate the BIG DIPPER's 65th anniversary and enjoy the other attractions on the boardwalk (we're talking about the rides, guys...). Info: ACE, or Dave at 408/279-8963.

May 20-21

### RIDERS ON THE STORM

Lakeside and Elitch's (CO)

6 PM (both days). The unpredictable weather during this time of year has provided an excuse for an annual weekend of coaster riding on two of the country's best: Lakeside's CYCLONE and Elitch's TWISTER. A "stormin" good time is planned, and interested "phenomenologists" are urged to contact Jerry Vargo to join in the fun. With enough interest, ERT may be added. Info: 303/233-7180 (day), 303/988-4453 (eves), or write 1625 S. Iris Way, Lakewood CO 80226.

May 27-28

### WNYCC COASTERFEST '89

Kennywood and Idlewild (PA)

WNYCC's annual gathering will be held in western Pennsylvania this year, and includes ERT on Kennywood's RACER and JACKRABBIT, and Idlewild's ROLLO COASTER. If enough people attend, ERT on the THUNDERBOLT may be added. Registration: \$30/person includes POP's at both parks, ERT's and a picnic dinner at Kennywood. Info: Harry Sykes 412/775-3098 or Thad Lewandowski-Richard Koppelman 814/456-4586.

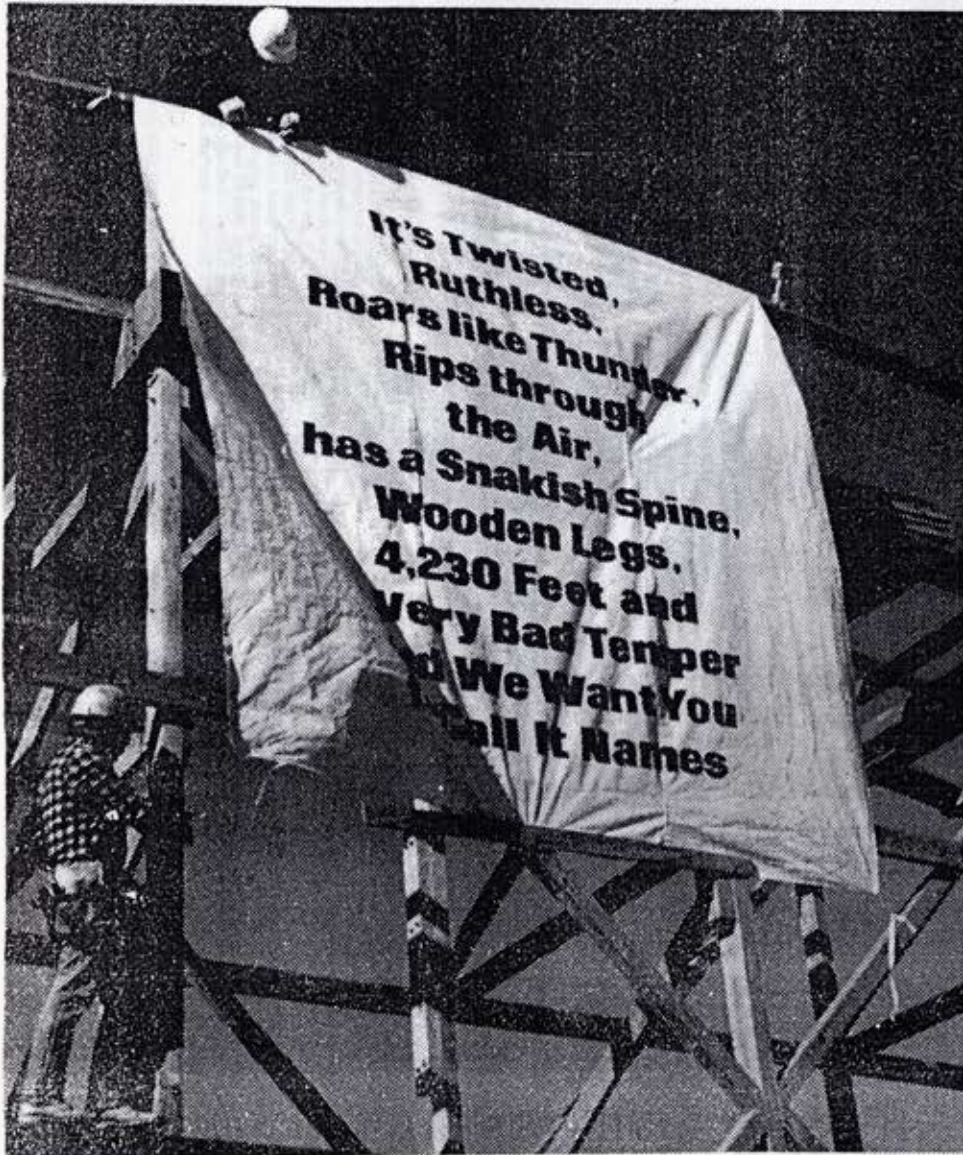
Saturday June 3

### WNYCC BLUE STREAK BASH '89

Conneaut Lake Park (PA)

11:45 AM. \$7.50 (\$10 if postmarked after May 20, and \$3 for Season Pass holders) buys you an all-day ride and slide pass for Conneaut Lake Park, plus admission to an exclusive two-hour ride session on the BLUE STREAK coaster after the park closes. Info: Richard Koppelman, 724 East 6th St., Erie PA 16507.

# "Wooden Wonder" planned at Worlds of Fun



Worlds of Fun this week announced one of its largest expansions ever and asked area residents to help name the new wooden roller coaster.

Worlds of Fun might be renamed World of Wood this spring following completion of a \$3 million, old-fashioned roller coaster.

And the giant amusement park wants area residents to help name the contraption.

The winner whose name is selected will receive four round-trip airline tickets to anywhere Braniff Airlines fly in the continental United States, \$1,000 in cash, a 1989 Worlds of Fun Family Season passport for four, a 33 volume set of encyclopedias from Encyclopedia Britannica, a commemorative plaque bearing the winning contestant's name at the roller coaster site and a seat on the inaugural coaster ride.

Only that last might be hard to take.

Park officials in ceremonies Thursday showed media members

around the site for the 4,230 foot coaster. They explained that the whole idea of a wooden coaster is that it is less secure than the park's several steel ones.

"This ride will be the culmination of years of research and study of the greatest roller coasters ever built," said park general manager John S. Hudacek. "World renowned experts have combined thrilling and classic elements to create the most intense ride experience achievable."

In short, it should scare the "you know what" out of you.

The idea is that wood makes noises as it shakes. Steel is secure and quiet. Wood rattles and rolls.

In other words, if the Orient Express doesn't get you, try this one.

The ride, one of the largest expansions in

Worlds of Fun's 17 year history, is designed for continuous "terror" (that's their word) over its 2½ minute length. It starts with a nearly 100-foot plunge then continues to twist and turn, including two complete circles where G forces will nearly triple.

For the less brave, there is always the naming contest. "Wooden Wonder" has already been suggested. "Splintered Snake" might be another. If you have one of your own, visit participating J C Penney Stores in the area or mail a 3 x 5 postcard with the entrant's name, address, city, state, zip, residence and business phone, signature and suggested name to: Worlds of Fun Coaster Contest, P.O. Box 7558, Kansas City, Mo., 64116.

And get ready for April 1 when the park opens with the new coaster.

SUN NEWSPAPERS  
(SHAWNEE MISSION, KANSAS)  
November 16, 1988



**TIMBER WOLF:** This striking art design for Worlds of Fun's newest attraction was created by the Berstein Rein agency of Kansas City, company Art Director Jim Pailott said Friday while at a special preview of the roller coaster. The logo can be seen on posters and billboards, and in television and newspaper ads. The ride, however, can only be seen at the park.

## Timber Wolf provides 'white-knuckled terror'

By Jack Miles  
Editor

I'm like most sane people, at least when it comes to roller coasters. Don't care for 'em.

Oh, sure, it's fun to watch other people ride them. Love a good laugh at them.

Wise men fear to tread where cattle go first, or something like that.

Anyway, when Worlds of Fun extended an invitation to ride Timber Wolf at a "special screaming" Friday, I figured right away how to handle it — watch, from afar.

Because I had passes for two, I invited along a friend, Rob Grace, a former Excelsior Springs resident who lives south of the Great Divide. Rob's a freelancer who did the color work on the Timber Wolf logo, which was designed by the Berstein Rein agency, so I figured he'd like a first-eye look at the beast he'd helped promote.

He came along with the same idea I had — Ride it? No way.

There were maybe a couple hundred people in the park when we arrived, all wandering the tar-topped walkways toward the \$3 million monster, like lemmings bound for the sea.

We looked up 100 feet to Timber Wolf's highest point, heard the screams of 24 people plunging almost straight down at more than 50 mph, and turned to each other with looks that repeated our previous, mutually respected decision.

No way.

Ate lunch while listening to the racket

of the roller coaster some 25 yards off. About every three minutes, two dozen people screamed like the loonies they surely had to be to get on that thing.

After lunch, I got permission to jump a fence and took what I considered to be a strategic position to get a few photos. I snapped off several, but felt disappointed.

The pictures lacked zip. What I really needed was to ...

No way, I told myself. Took a few more photos. Watched the cars sail along the track. Remembered what it was like about six years ago when I roared the Screaming Eagle at the Six Flags near St. Louis.

I survived that ride. Why not this one? It only lasts 150 seconds.

Just 2 1/2 minutes.

I told Rob why we (I wasn't going alone) should ride it.

"No way," he said. Rob can be so predictable.

We wandered along the path that led out of the park, and toward the Timber Wolf entrance.

"C'mon," I said.

"You're kidding."

I'm not sure why, but Rob acquiesced.

We waited in the staging area with other people listening to recorded sounds of a wolf howling insanely — perhaps the wolf had been on the coaster.

But I honestly didn't feel nervous

standing in line. I knew what I wanted, after all, and I am a professional.

Camera in hand and with the strap wrapped securely around my arm, I didn't think a thing about the seat belt and bar that closed protectively over us.

Last car. Good for pictures, I thought. Learned later that it's the car that "goes in the air on a roller coaster," according to somebody at the office.

The feeling in my stomach confirmed it.

There was a gentle little ride out of the staging area. No jitters. Had to get that picture and lifted the camera, trying to focus on people in the lead car.

Riding up the first hill, watching clouds linger in a blue sky through my viewfinder, I waited, ready to snap the photo.

Actually, it was me that snapped.

To say we rode over the crest of that timber mountain would be accurate, but hardly descriptive of the feeling.

We fell over it. The viewfinder wound up somewhere against my forehead — forgot all about taking photos.

Held on for dear life.

Had I made that last life insurance payment? Would I see my wife and 4-

year-old daughter again?

Just get me off this thing! My eyes opened again when we rode a straightaway. Tried to regain composure. Figured on a quick photo to save face.

Another dip followed, and another. I felt like a dip, myself. Why do I do these things?

The raging, white-knuckled terror ended gently enough. Sort of like riding a tornado and then softly landing in Munchkin Land.

Everyone was smiling, maybe because they'd survived.

As we headed toward the staging area, I finally managed to snap a photo, and not a particularly good one.

Somehow that didn't matter. I found that like everyone else, Rob included, I was smiling, laughing.

All of which probably says something profound about the human condition, but I won't bother to speculate.

"Want to ride it again?" Rob joked.

He knew the answer.

No way!

## Back to basics: a wooden coaster

### Worlds of Fun wants terror at each turn

By Ward W. Triplett III

Staff and entertainment writer

The wooden roller coaster was only a blueprint design this spring when it gave Worlds of Fun General Manager John Hudacek his first thrill.

The designers, the best in the business, had six top rides behind them. They were working from a vision that park management had created from more than 50 rides across the country, trying to blend the very best parts of the very best rides.

When they were done, Hudacek said, builder Charles Dinn told park officials that this would be the most exciting ride he had ever put together.

And designer Curtis D. Summers, looking at the combination of lifts, speeds and gravity changes he had twisted into the thing, told them he wouldn't be on it.

"That's when I knew we had something," Hudacek said Tuesday at Worlds of Fun.

Thanks to compliant weather, the roller coaster, which will be named in a public contest to be announced later, is going up fast at the southwest corner of the theme park.

Its double helix and several lengths of track already are visible from Interstate 435. The departure station is completed and stands in shade east of the helix. The remains of the EXT roller coaster are stacked to the south. That old ride, still drawing good business when the park closed in late October, had to go down so the new one could take full advantage of the terrain.

The wooden coaster, the biggest attraction built at Worlds of Fun since the Orient Express was completed in 1980, should be ready by April 1, on opening day of the park's 18th season. It won't be the fastest roller coaster at the park because its top speed will be 53 mph; the Orient Express reaches 65. It won't be the tallest because it will rise 100 feet, 15 feet less than the Orient Express.

But it will be the only wooden ride, and it is designed to give riders a thrill at every turn, climb and dip. Because of its camelback humps and weird angles, even the straightaways won't be straightaways.

"The idea is to stimulate at every moment, maximize the thrill," Hudacek said. "So many new rides going up talk about being the largest or the longest, but that was really insignificant to us. On a lot of them, after the first drop, they're pretty boring. We wanted to maintain the terror at every second."

Hudacek and other Worlds of Fun officials looked around the park five years ago and decided it needed a classic, wooden roller coaster. Besides being a modern monument to the origins of amusement park rides, wooden roller coasters are the overwhelming favorites

of groups such as the American Coaster Enthusiasts, he said.

There are more than 500 roller coasters in the country, but only 88 of them are wooden. The Worlds of Fun ride is one of just two being built for next season. The other is at Dorney Park in Allentown, Pa.

Worlds of Fun set aside \$3 million to build it and flew staff members to the best wooden rides in the country for research. Susan Longmire, the park's director of marketing, found that her ride on a wooden design in New Jersey was vastly different from those on the steel Orient Express and Zambezi Zinger.

For one, she said, a wooden coaster makes creaking noises, probably from all the bending, shaking and rattling going on. After all, some of the supports are nailed together.

"A steel coaster like the Orient is exciting, but it's a very smooth ride," Longmire said. "On that (wooden) one, it felt like something had gone wrong. You sense that you're going out of control."

And the Worlds of Fun ride, she noted, will be much larger than the one she was on.

Woody's dimensions and ride details are intimidating. It will have 4,230 feet of wooden track. With track and structure, it will consume 680,000 board feet of lumber, 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and seven acres of land.

Dinn's company has about 20 men working on the ride, and Worlds of Fun is providing up to 20 more. The crews plan to get 1,200 concrete piers, on which the wood frames are based, all in before winter.

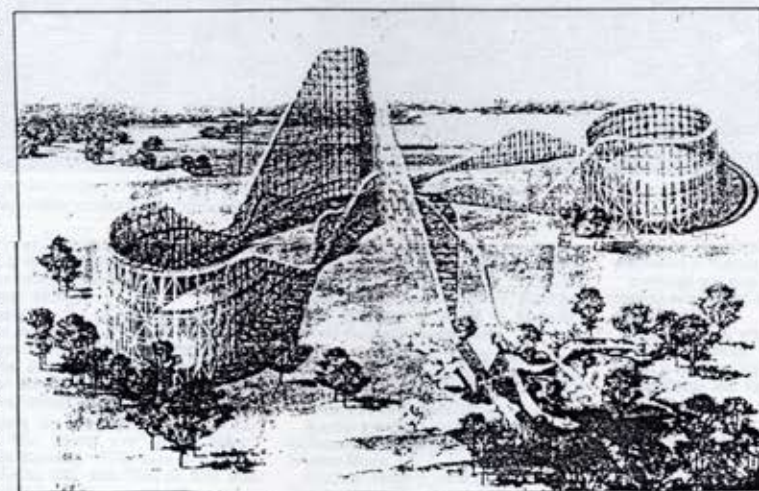
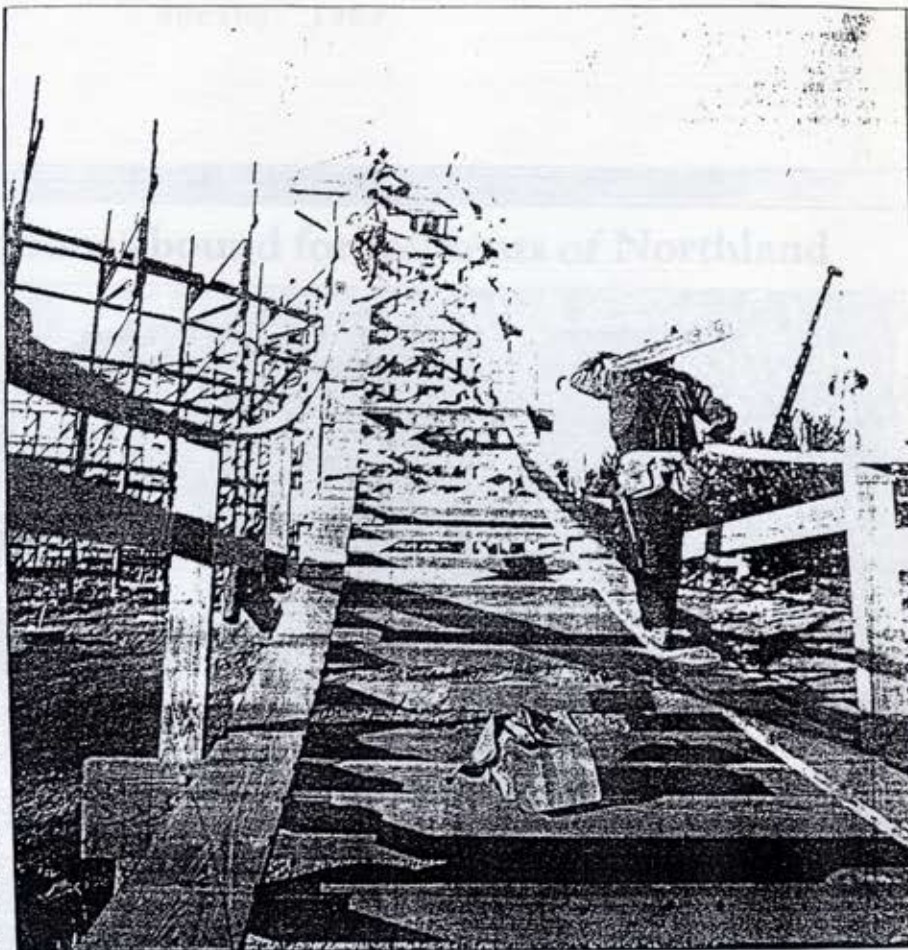
On the ride, two trains will leave the station for a 100-foot climb at a 25-degree angle. Then, after hitting a tight corner at 14 mph, the train will swoop down 98 feet to its first valley, going 52.55 mph on a 50-degree slope. The speed on a roller coaster seems like 150 mph in a car, Hudacek said, and the degree of slope means the coaster train will be leaning toward the ground. It creates a positive G-force of 2.85, which, loosely defined, means your stomach will sink to your toes.

The cars then hit another turn at 31 mph and use kinetic energy to reach the helix. They will spin twice through the 120-foot loop, banking sharply to the right, and then cut through a humped straightaway at 39.9 mph.

The speed will reach 48 mph down that stretch, at the end of which the train will hit a high bank; negative gravity force on that is supposed to create a feeling of weightlessness. The coaster will be going upward of 30 mph until the very last turn, then it heads back around to the station.

It is designed to be a delight for thrill seekers. Hudacek and Longmire agreed

See Coaster, pg. 2D, col. 3



The wooden roller coaster going up at the southwest corner of Worlds of Fun will be named in a public contest to be announced later. An artist's rendition (left) shows the camelback humps and weird angles designed to "maintain the terror" throughout the ride. (photo above by Lauren Chapin/special to The Star)

## Coaster

(continued from pg. 1D)

that it's not possible to build a ride that will scare off coaster enthusiasts. In fact, because of the underground grapevine on

such things, Longmire said Worlds of Fun had already taken calls from out-of-state riders looking for details and opening dates.

It is also Worlds of Fun's stab at a legend. Hudacek thinks the ride could be a name maker for the park, especially in conjunction with the Zambezi Zinger and

the Orient Express. The new wooden roller coaster will be at the center of Worlds of Fun's 1989 promotional campaign, which starts this month with the naming contest.

Hudacek plans to be among the first to ride the monster, along with the winner of the naming contest and the 22 others who can

fit in a train.

"I hope I'll feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment when it opens, and that we've brought to Kansas City one of the most exciting and safe rides in the world," Hudacek said. "But then we'll go to work on the next project."

Entertainment

## Entertainment options abound for residents of Northland

By Don Bradley  
and Steve Everly  
staff writers

**N**orthlanders don't have to cross the Missouri River to find the bright lights of entertainment.

With several theater groups, two symphony orchestras and a smorgasbord of dining and dancing establishments, residents and visitors are offered a steady supply of opening nights and last calls.

While the Northland's number of night spots is smaller than south of the river because of the smaller population, the area still offers premium entertainment, said Marilyn Schweitzer, president of the Northland Chamber of Commerce.

"We have some very excellent entertainment sources north that should be taken advantage of," she said.

One area of entertainment the Northland can boast about is its two symphony orchestras. The Northland Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia of Greater Kansas City both play regular concert seasons that are free of charge.

The Philharmonia of Greater Kansas City is based at Park College and plays its concerts in the Graham Tyler Memorial Chapel on the campus of Park College in Parkville.

The Northland Symphony Orchestra, which has been around for more than 21 years, performs a regular series of concerts at Park Hill High School, 7701 N.W. Barry Road, Kansas City, North.

Theater productions also frequently are offered in the Northland.

The Bell Road Barn Players have been performing since the mid-1950s, and the Northgate Community Theatre is entering its sixth season.

There are community theaters in Liberty and Excelsior Springs, and the theater departments at Park College and William Jewell College in Liberty also have regular theater seasons.

Sandy Goehring, president of the Northgate Community Theatre, said she doesn't think the various groups will suffer from competition.

"I think there are enough theatergoers up here to go around," said Goehring.

The theater puts on its productions in the Northgate Community Center, 2117 N.E. 48th St., Kansas City, North.

Upcoming productions include "Trip to Bountiful."

The theater group that has been around the longest is the Bell Road Barn Players, which was founded by Barbara and the late Jenkin David. He was a drama teacher at Park College and started the playhouse for his students and daughters.

Bob Stewart, the president of the group's Board of Directors, said a range of productions would be offered in the David Theater, 4200 Riverside Drive, Riverside.

"We are opening our 35th season with



A major attraction at Worlds of Fun is the Orient Express roller coaster. The ride reaches a speed of 65 mph and completes the 3,470 feet of track in about 2 1/2 minutes.

"Our Town," which is our signature play . . . it is the fifth time we've done it and (it) has become identified with our group, process," he said.

This year, the group will perform a double season with shows on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The first season will be March through June and the second season will begin in September and run through November.

Among the planned productions besides "Our Town" are "Mary, Mary," "Damn Yankees," "The Lion in Winter," "She Loves Me" and "Side by Side with Sondheim."

For Las Vegas-type entertainment and smorgasbord dining, there is the Gold Buffet, 503 E. 18th Ave., North Kansas City. So far, a December show is

planned and other dates may be added.

If country music is your favorite, check out the Farris Opry in Richmond, which puts on a show every Saturday night. The Opry is at 203 W. Main St., just off the Richmond square.

A new addition is North Town Opry with Friday and Saturday night performances at the Paradise Theatre, 408 Armour, North Kansas City.

Special guests at upcoming shows will include Hank Thompson, Bill Carlyle and Warner Mack.

Another country music attraction is Buddie Boswell's Union Mill Opry on Route B, two miles north of Edgerton. The country and hillbilly show has been around for about 15 years.

Stars of country and other styles of

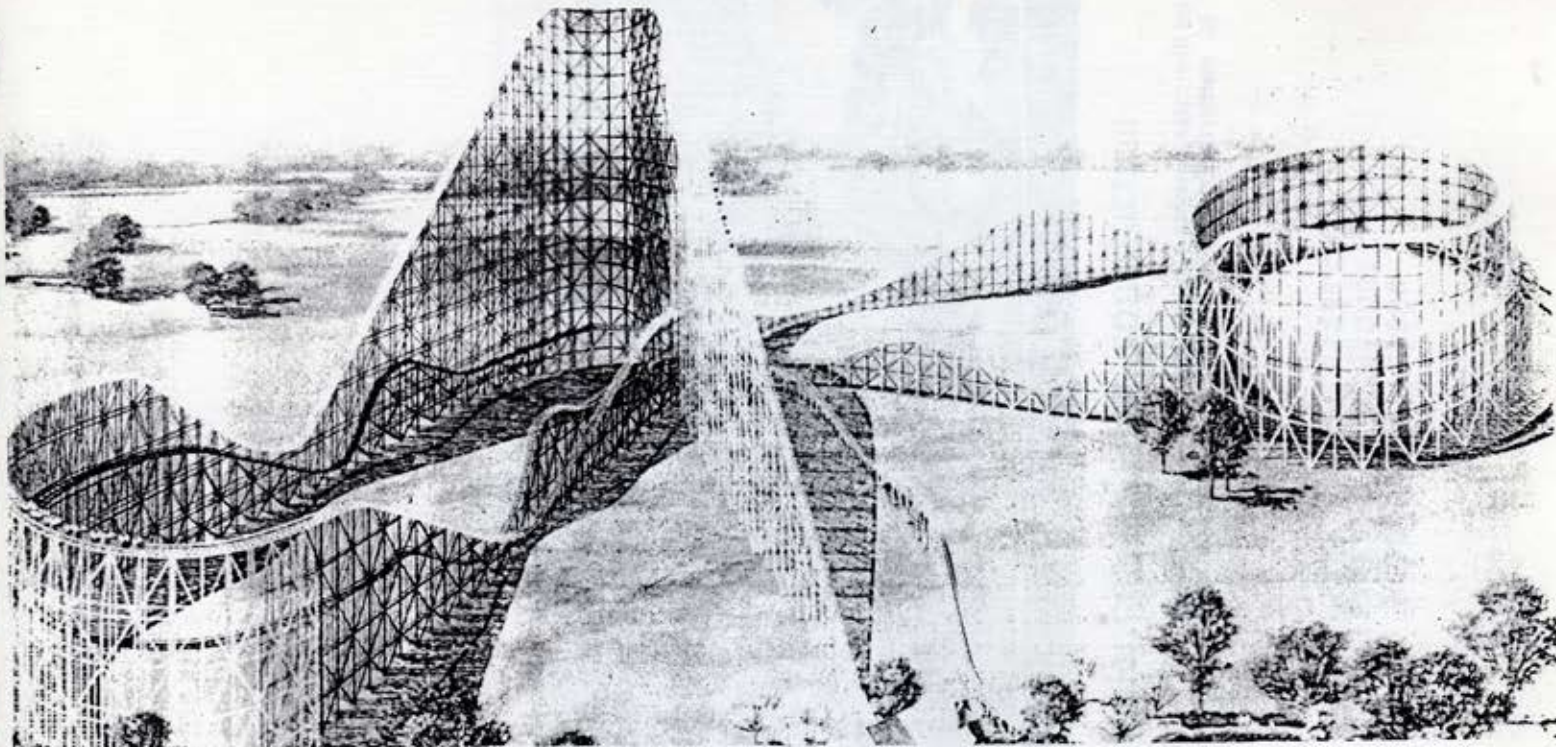
music also perform at the Forum Amphitheatre at Worlds of Fun.

Bookings are now being made for the coming season and concert dates will be announced later.

Worlds of Fun, which opens April 1, is south of Interstate 435 and N.E. 48th Street in Kansas City, North.

For dining and dancing pleasure, the Northland offers a wide-ranging choice of establishments, from the country rock sounds of the 55 Chevy Lounge, 10125 N.W. Missouri 45, Kansas City, North, to the more mellow offerings of the Airport Hilton Plaza Inn, 8801 N.W. 102nd St., Kansas City, North.

WYANDOTTE WEST  
(KANSAS CITY, KANSAS)  
December 1, 1988



## Wouldn't it be scary?

*A new wooden roller coaster — the only kind, according to aficionados — will roll at Worlds of Fun when it opens April 1. The ride will be 1,000 feet short of a mile and will reach 53 miles per hour, producing a G-force of nearly three.*

DISPATCH-TRIBUNE NEWSPAPERS  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
November 16, 1988

## *Name sought for new roller coaster*

What do you call a wooden roller coaster that is more than 4,000 feet long, goes 53 miles an hour, includes a 95-foot drop and lasts two and a half minutes?

That's what Worlds of Fun would like to know. The theme park is having a contest to name its new \$3 million roller coaster, which is currently under construction on seven acres in the Americana section.

John Hudacek, Worlds of Fun general manager, said the new wooden roller coaster is one of the largest expansion projects in the park's 17-year history.

"This ride will be the culmination of years of research and study of the greatest roller coasters ever built," Hudacek said. "I cannot wait to see the faces of the first riders. They will have enjoyed 2-1/2 minutes of out-of-control, breathless terror."

Specially designed for Worlds of Fun

by Curtis D. Summers Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, the roller coaster includes 1,200 concrete piers, 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

The ride begins with a 25-degree climb to 100 feet above the ground, then turns a tight corner and plummets 95 feet, reaching a speed of 53 miles per hour, while allowing riders to experience a plus-2.85 G-force. The coaster also makes two complete high banking circles within a 120-foot spiral.

The ride, which will have an hourly capacity of 1,200 persons, is scheduled to be completed on opening day, April 1, 1989. About 10 per cent of construction has been completed, Hudacek said.

"Words cannot adequately describe the wooden coaster experience," he said. "The natural sway of the wood, the creaking and clicking sounds as the wheels and the track connect, even the scent of pine."

The ride name will be selected through the public naming contest. Entry forms are available at all J.C. Penney stores in the Greater Kansas City area, or persons may mail a 3-by-5 postcard with their name, address, city, state, zip code, residence and business phone, signature and suggested roller coaster name to Worlds of Fun Coaster Contest, P.O. Box 7558, Kansas City, Mo. 64116.

The winner will receive four round-trip airline tickets to any Braniff Airlines destination in the continental United States, \$1,000 cash, a 1989 Worlds of Fun family season passport, a 33-volume set of Encyclopedia Britannica and a seat on the inaugural ride.

A commemorative plaque bearing the winner's name also will be placed at the roller coaster site.

All entries must be received by Dec. 9. For more information, telephone 454-4444.

## New attraction at Worlds of Fun to fill riders with terror

When Worlds of Fun opens its gates to the public next spring, the park will be minus seven acres of vacant property, and plus 680,000 feet of lumber.

A new wooden roller coaster is being constructed at Worlds of Fun which will combine new technology with the terror of a roller coaster made of wood.

In a press release, Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun General Manager John S. Hudacek said that using wood to make the roller coaster adds an element of terror.

"The natural sway of the wood, the creaking and clicking sounds as the wheels and the track connect, even the scent of the pine you are likely to catch, contribute to a truly one-of-a-kind experience," Hudacek said.

The estimated cost for constructing the roller coaster is \$3 million. The specially designed roller coaster is under construction now in the Americana section of the park, and should be ready to receive passengers when Worlds of Fun opens for its next season April 1.

The ride should be able to accommodate 1,200 riders per hour. A ride on the roller coaster is projected to take two and a half minutes.

The roller coaster is to reach speeds of 53 miles per hour, carrying its passengers 100 feet above the ground.

The wooden roller coaster was designed especially for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers, Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio. Its builder is the Charles Dinn Corporation, Cincinnati.

According to Worlds of Fun officials, the wooden roller coaster will not lack excitement and the thrill of terror, but does lack a name.

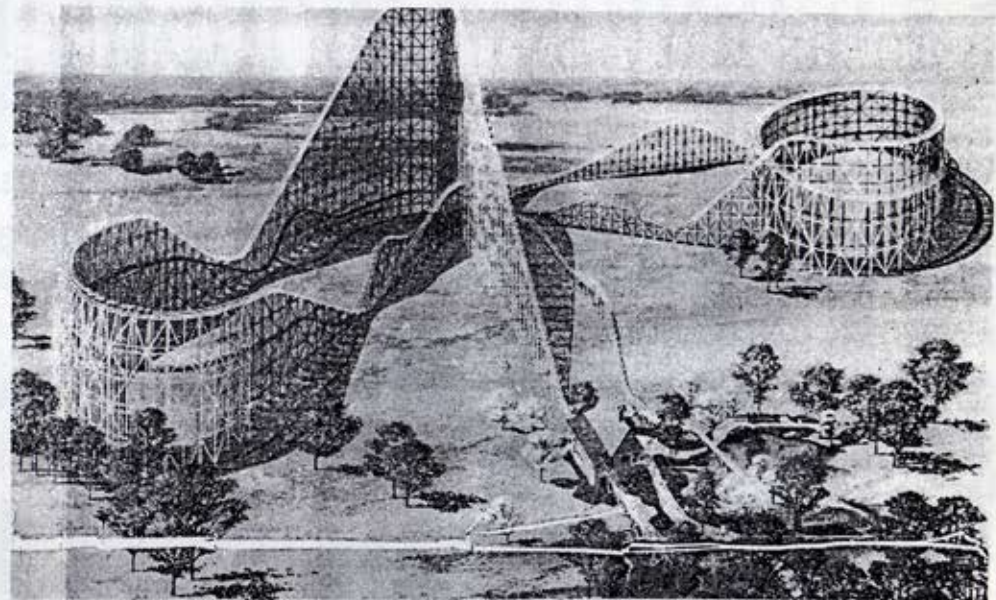
The ride's name will be selected through a public naming contest.

Individuals can complete an entry form available at participating JCPenney stores in the Kansas City area. Or those interested

can mail a 3x5 postcard with their name, address, city, state, zip code, residence and business phone, signature and suggested roller coaster name to: Worlds of Fun Coaster Contest, P.O. Box 7558, Kansas City, Mo. 64116.

Entries must be received by Friday, Dec. 9.

The winner will receive four round-trip airline tickets to anywhere Braniff Airlines flies in the continental United States, \$1,000 cash, a 1989 Worlds of Fun Family Season Passport for four, a 33-volume set of encyclopedias from Encyclopaedia Britannica, a commemorative plaque bearing the winning contestant's name placed at the roller coaster site, and a seat on the inaugural coaster ride.



### Wooden roller coaster under construction

When Worlds of Fun opens next April, a huge, wooden roller coaster will be the new attraction. The roller coaster is currently under construction in the Americana section of the park.

PLATTE COUNTY GAZETTE  
(PARKVILLE, MISSOURI)  
November 23, 1988

# Wooden roller coaster coming to Worlds of Fun

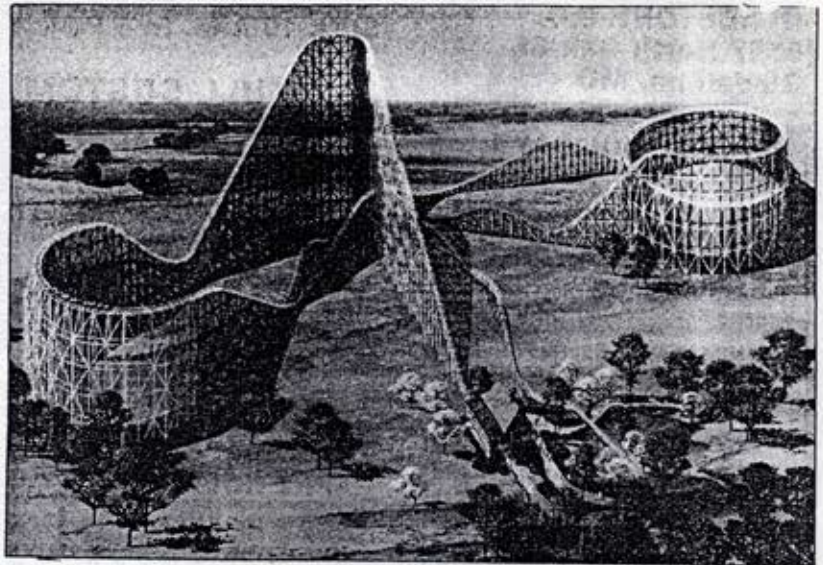
Kansas City's Worlds of Fun announced recently that a \$3 million giant wooden roller coaster is currently under construction on a seven-acre tract in the Americana section of the park.

According to Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun general manager John S. Hudacek, the 4,230 foot wooden coaster represents one of the largest expansion projects in Worlds of Fun's 17 year history. The public is being invited to participate in a naming contest to determine the name of the new coaster.

"This ride will be the culmination of years of research and study of the greatest roller coasters ever built. World-renowned experts have combined thrilling and classic elements to create the most intense ride experience achievable," commented Hudacek. "I cannot wait to see the faces of the first riders. They will have enjoyed two and one-half minutes of out-of-control, breathless, terror."

Specially-designed for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers, Inc. of Cincinnati, the coaster utilizes the natural terrain of the site. The two and one-half minute ride features a combination of thrilling elements including a 95 foot drop and two complete circles within a 120 foot helix.

The journey begins as the coaster train takes its passengers out of the sta-



A gigantic wooden roller coaster headlines Kansas City's Worlds of Fun's expansion package for the coming 1989 season. The new coaster will accommodate over 1,200 guests per hour and features 4,230 feet of wooden track over an expanded 7 acres in the Americana section. During the two and one-half minute journey riders will plummet 100 feet toward the earth, race around high-banking curves and crisscross through the wooden structure while cresting hills and valleys at speeds of up to 53 mph. Worlds of Fun, located at I-435, exit 54, in Kansas City, will begin its 17th season Saturday, April 1, 1989.

tion for a 25 degree climb to 100 feet above the ground, then turns a tight corner and plummets 95 feet toward the earth at 50 degrees, reaching a speed of 53 mph while allowing riders to experience a +2.85 G-force.

Suddenly the train lifts its passengers upward for a near negative G-force of .01, then slams into a high banking curve to the left, and careens downward at speeds reaching 49 mph, and a G-force peaking at +2.73.

Cresting hills and valleys, the train speeds through the awesome wooden structure, then

races into the helix where twice it spirals through a 120 foot loop while banking severely to the right.

The train dives out of the helix enduring a +2.48 G-force, speeding into a series of hairpin curves before barreling through a dark tunnel that brings the train into the brake system before coasting into the station.

The new ride's completion date is set for Worlds of Fun's opening day, April 1, 1989. Presently the coaster is nearly 30 percent complete. According to its builders, Charles Dinn Corp. of Cincinnati, the super-

structure will be comprised of 680,000 board feet of lumber, 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 1,200 concrete piers.

"Words cannot adequately describe the wooden coaster experience," Hudacek explained. "The natural sway of the wood, the creaking and clicking sounds as the wheels and the track connect, even the scent of pine you are likely to catch, contribute to a truly one-of-a-kind experience."

Park officials announced that the ride name would be selected via a public naming contest. Those persons interested in the naming contest may complete an entry form available at participating J C Penney stores in the Kansas City area or mail a 3x5 postcard with the entrant's name, address, city, state, zip code, residence and business phone, signature and suggested roller coaster name to: Worlds of Fun Coaster Contest, P.O. Box 7558, Kansas City, Mo. 64116.

ANTIOCH PUBLICATIONS

November 16, 1988



## Name that ride

Roller coaster fans, take heart—fast-beating heart. Worlds of Fun is building a new wooden roller coaster that will sport such thrilling elements as a 95-foot drop and two complete circles within a 120-foot helix. Riders will experience a +2.85 G-force at 53 miles per hour, diving out of hairpin curves.

The amusement ride needs a name, though. Persons interested in the naming contest may complete an entry form available at J.C. Penney stores in the Kansas City area, or they can mail a 3x5 postcard with the entrant's name, address, city, state, zip code, residence and business phone, signature and suggested roller coaster name to: Worlds of Fun Coaster Contest, P.O. Box 7558, Kansas City, Mo. 64116.

The winner receives four round-trip airline tickets to anywhere Braniff Airlines flies in the U.S., \$1,000 cash and a 1989 Worlds of Fun family season passport. Entries must be postmarked by Dec. 9.

THE KANSAN  
(KANSAS CITY, KANSAS)  
November 13, 1988

# Worlds of Fun building new ride

## \$3 million project one of park's biggest

By United Press International

KANSAS CITY — Worlds of Fun is in the process of building a \$3 million giant wooden roller coaster in the American section of the amusement park, officials announced Thursday.

The 4,230-foot coaster represents one of the largest expansion projects in the park's 17-year history, said Worlds of Fun general manager John Hudacek. The coaster, which is nearly 30 percent complete, is expected to be ready for operation when Worlds of Fun opens April 1.

The new ride, to be built on a seven-acre tract, will be the culmination of years of research and study of the greatest roller coasters ever built, said Hudacek.

"World renown experts have com-

bined thrilling and classic elements to create the most intense ride experience available," he said.

"I cannot wait to see the faces of the first riders. They will have enjoyed 2½ minutes of out-of-control, breathless terror."

The coaster, which has yet to be named, will utilize the site's natural terrain, including a 95-foot drop and two complete circles within a 120 foot helix. It was designed by Curtis D. Summers Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Even with the completion of the new ride, the Orient Express will remain the park's fastest roller coaster, with its peak of speed at 65 miles per hour. The new coaster will peak at 53 mph.

The new coaster construction will bring to 140 the number of total acres developed by Worlds of Fun.

Lee Derrough, president of Hunt Midwest Enterprises Inc., which owns the park, said nearly \$50 million

has been reinvested into the park since it opened in 1973, more than doubling the initial investment.

Officials also announced Thursday that the name of the new coaster will be selected through a contest open to the public.

There are 88 operating wooden roller coasters in the country, with one under construction in Pennsylvania.

"Words cannot adequately describe the wooden coaster experience," Hudacek said. "The natural sway of the wood, the creaking and clicking sounds as the wheels and the track connect, even the scene of the pine you are likely to catch, contribute to a truly one-of-a-kind experience."

"Best of all, our wooden coaster will combine the nostalgic old-time thrill with today's advanced high-technology."

# \$3 million ride to debut at Worlds of Fun

Worlds of Fun is set to expand and will offer something special to its visitors in 1989 when the new season begins. The 1989 expansion package, which will cost three million dollars, will feature a new wooden roller coaster, manufactured by Charles Dinn Corporation of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The new ride, a state-of-the-art in roller coaster design, was built exclusively for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers, Inc., also of Cincinnati. The ride is the most ambitious expansion

project in Worlds of Fun's seventeen year history.

The new roller coaster is a wooden structure with 4,230 feet of wooden track. The ride features a combination of the most thrilling elements available in coaster design including a 95 ft. drop, two complete high banking circular tracks within a 120 ft. helix, and a bow tie formation of three crossovers through the giant structure.

**Features of the roller coaster:**

**Maximum speed — 53 mph**  
**Maximum G-force — +2.85**

**Top of Lift — 100 feet above ground**

**Track length — 4,230 feet**

**Capacity — 1,200 rides per hour**

**Elapsed Ride Time — two minutes-30 seconds**

**Train — 4 people to a car, six cars to a train**

**Acreage — 7 acres in the expanded American section of the park**

**Construction requirements — 1,200 concrete piers; 15 tons of nails; 80,000 bolts; 680,000 board feet of lumber**

The 2½ minute journey begins as the coaster train

takes its passengers out of the station for a 25 degree climb to 100 feet above the ground, then turns a tight corner and plummets 95 feet toward the earth at 50 degrees and 53 mph allowing riders to experience a +2.85 G-force.

Suddenly the train lifts its passengers upward for a near negative G-force of .01, then slams into a high banking curve to the left, and zooms downward at speeds reaching 49 mph., and a G-force eaking at +2.73.

Cresting hills and valleys,

the train speeds through the awesome wooden structure, then races into the helix at a speed of 44 mph where twice it spirals through a 120 ft. loop while banking severely to the right.

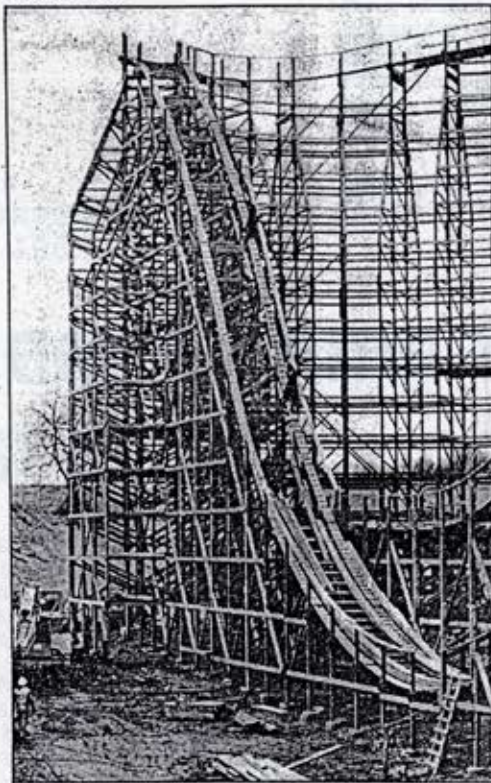
The train dives out of the helix at a speed of 40 mph with a +2.48 G-force, travels through the wooden structure into a circuit of sharp curves before entering a hairpin curve and a 180-degree turn that brings the train into the brake system before coasting into the station.

## Worlds of Fun names wooden coaster Timber Wolf

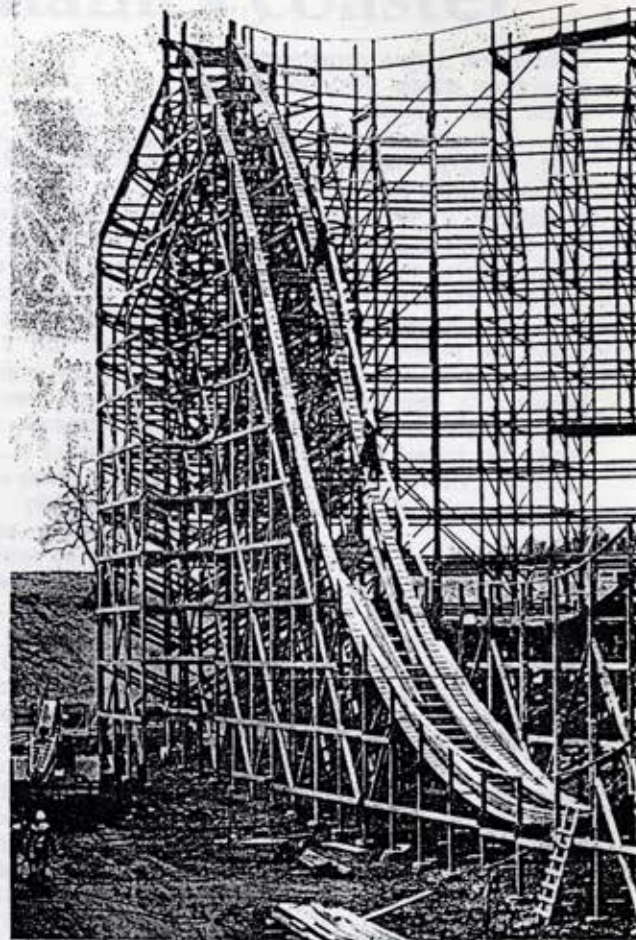
PLATTE COUNTY NEWS GAZETTE

January 18, 1989

Named



**TIMBER WOLF** is the name selected from nearly 10,000 entries for Worlds of Fun's \$3 million wooden roller coaster. The announcement was made recently by John S. Hudacek, Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun general manager. Timber Wolf is one of 9,810 names entered in the recent "Name the Coaster" contest. The winner was Mark Pfefferkorn of Kansas City.



Kansas City - The highest bent is placed 100 feet above the ground on the giant wooden roller coaster structure currently under construction at Worlds of Fun. From this point the coaster train will plummet its passengers 95 feet towards the earth at 53 mph. The new coaster features a combination of thrilling elements including sharp-banking turns intertwined in the giant wooden structure. The \$3 million ride, one of the park's largest expansions ever, is scheduled to open on April 1, 1989 when the park begins its 17th season. Worlds of Fun is located at I-435, exit 54, in Kansas City.

Timber Wolf is the name selected from nearly 10,000 entries for Worlds of Fun's \$3 million wooden roller coaster. The announcement was made by John S. Hudacek, Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun general manager. Timber Wolf was one of 9,810 names entered in the recent "Name the Coaster" contest. Over 7,000 unduplicated names filled 188 single-spaced computer-printed pages.

According to Hudacek, the name selection was an extensive process. The final selection was based on the results of public opinion research. "We are very excited to announce Timber Wolf as the name and congratulate Mark Pfefferkorn of Kansas City, for his winning entry," commented Hudacek. "We believe the name Timber Wolf best depicts the speed, ferociousness and unpredictability of the coaster."

Pfefferkorn was proclaimed the winner of the recent contest and received a package of prizes totaling \$5,000, including four round-trip airlines tickets to anywhere Braniff Airlines flies in the continental United States, \$1,000 cash, a 1989 Worlds of Fun Family Season Passport-for-four, a 33-volume set of encyclopedias from Encyclopedia Britannica, a commemorative plaque bearing his name to be placed on the coaster site, and a seat on the inaugural coaster ride.

Construction of Timber Wolf is ahead of schedule. Its basic structure was completed recently when the last vertical bent was bolted, completely enclosing the superstructure. Construction workers are currently working on the final phase, bracing and tracking, to complete the ride for its scheduled opening on April 1 when the park begins its 17th season.

# It's a Timber Wolf: Park names coaster

KANSAS CITY STAR  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
January 12, 1989

By Ward W. Triplett III  
arts and entertainment writer

**T**he pride and joy of Worlds of Fun's 1989 season, a 4,230-foot-long, \$3 million wooden roller coaster, has been officially named Timber Wolf.

The name was among 9,830 suggestions submitted to the theme park since its contest was announced Nov. 12. For the winner, Mark Pfefferkorn of Kansas City, it means four round-trip tickets anywhere Braniff Airways flies, \$1,000, a family season passport to the park, a set of encyclopedias, a plaque proclaiming him the name-game champion and a seat on Timber Wolf's first ride when Worlds of Fun opens at 10 a.m. April 1. He was to receive the prizes today.

The choice was made Monday, two days after the final vertical pine timber used to construct the frame went up, said J. David Holt, corporate director of marketing for Hunt Midwest Enterprises Inc., which owns Worlds of Fun. Construction is nearly a month ahead of schedule because of mild winter weather.

"The name has some mystery, speed and a personality to it," Holt said. "It sounds like it would

be sometimes angry, sometimes out of control, which is exactly what most people feel about wooden roller coasters."

The selection process took three stages, Holt said. After the contest ended Dec. 9, Worlds of Fun officials went through 188 pages of computer printouts and came up with 200 possibilities, which they narrowed to 80.

Next, employees in the ride's target age group—13 to 24—and the Bernstein-Rein advertising agency picked six finalists, which Bernstein-Rein tested at three area shopping malls. Timber Wolf came out the clear winner, Holt said.

Many names were submitted more than once, Holt said, but the computer listed only the first time each was submitted. That meant "Timber Wolf" might have been submitted many times, but the computer rejected any submission after Pfefferkorn's, Roth said.

About 340 entries featured some form of the word "wood," including Woody Bully, Wacky Woody, Wild and Woody, Wood You Dare, the Wood in Only, Wooden Windjammer, Wood-a-Rama and Wonder Wood.

THE KANSAN  
(KANSAS CITY, KANSAS)  
November 27, 1988

## 132 Park needs name for ride; contest is now under way

Worlds of Fun has announced that the \$3 million giant wooden roller coaster is currently under construction on a seven-acre tract in the Americana section of the park.

According to Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun general manager John S. Hudacek, the 4,230 ft. wooden coaster represents one of the largest expansion projects in Worlds of Fun's 17-year history. The public is being invited to participate in a naming contest to determine the name of the new coaster.

Specially-designed for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, the coaster utilizes the natural terrain of the site. The 2½-minute ride features a combination of thrilling elements including a 95-foot drop and two complete circles

within a 120-foot helix.

The new ride's completion date is set for Worlds of Fun's opening day, April 1, 1989. Presently the coaster is nearly 30 percent complete. According to its builders, Charles Dinn Corp, Cincinnati, the superstructure will be comprised of 680,000 board feet of lumber, 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 1,200 concrete piers.

The coaster has an hourly capacity of 1,200 guests and increases the total land development of 140 acres.

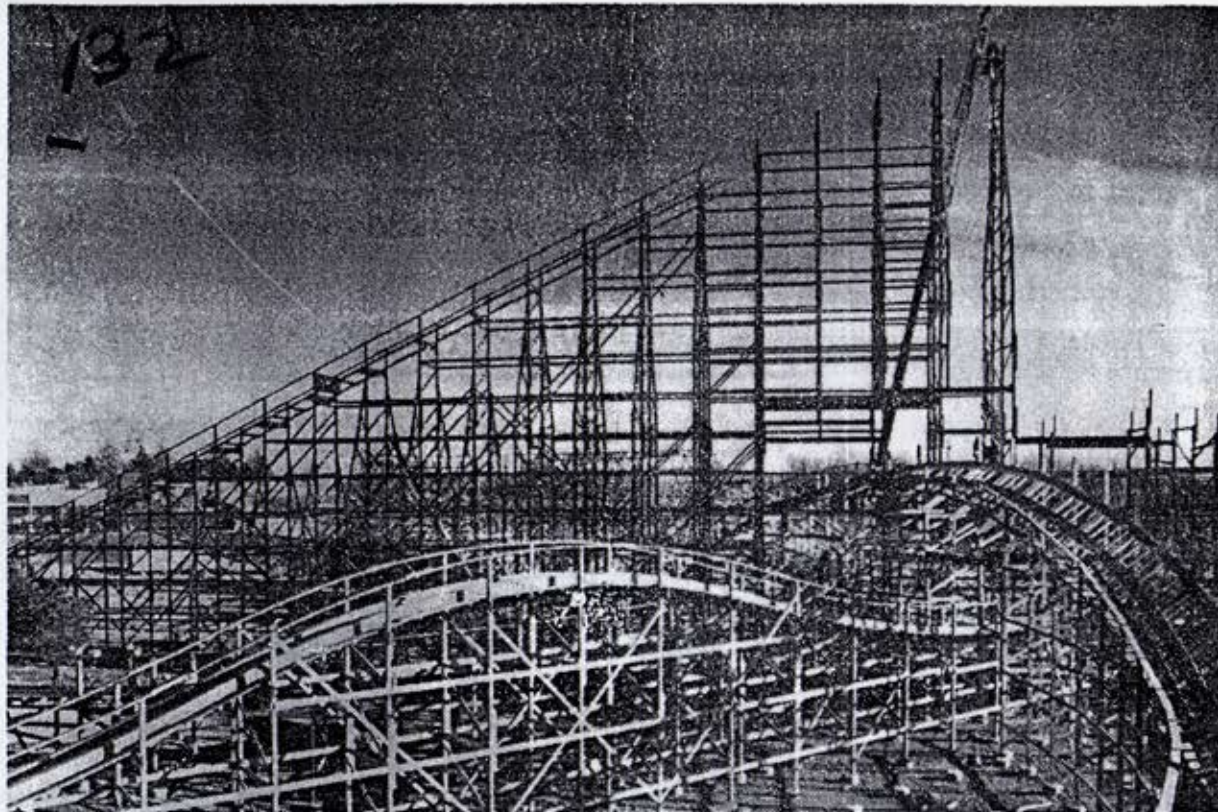
Park officials announced the ride name would be selected via a public naming contest. Those persons interested in the naming contest may complete an entry form available at participating JC Panney stores in the Kansas City area or mail a 3x5 postcard with the entrant's

name, address, city, state, zip code, residence and business phone, signature and suggested roller coaster name to: Worlds of Fun Coaster Contest, P.O. Box 7558, Kansas City, Mo. 64116.

The winner will receive four round-trip airline tickets to anywhere Braniff Airlines flies in the continental United States, \$1,000 cash, a 1989 Worlds of Fun Family Season Passport for four, a 33-volume set of encyclopedias from Encyclopaedia Britannica, a commemorative plaque bearing the winning contestant's name placed at the roller coaster site and a seat on the inaugural coaster ride. All entries must be received or postmarked by Friday, Dec. 9.

For more information, call the Worlds of Fun phone at 454-4444.

ATCHISON GLOBE  
(ATCHISON, KANSAS)  
January 3, 1989



THE HIGHEST BOARD is placed 100 feet above the ground on the giant wooden roller coaster currently under construction at Worlds of Fun. The \$3 million ride is scheduled to open April 1.

## Park to feature wooden roller coaster

The giant wooden roller coaster under construction at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground atop its 25 degree lift.

From this highest point, passengers will plummet 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph, experiencing a G-force of 2.85.

The \$3 million coaster is scheduled to open April 1 when the park begins its 17th season.

The 2½-minute coaster ride was designed exclusively for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Smmers Inc. of Cincinnati.

Dinn Construction of Cincinnati is

building the new ride. Charlie Dinn, company owner and builder of coasters for 25 years, said constructing a wooden coaster is a demanding job.

"It's heavy, tedious, hard work," Dinn said. "But ultimately, the challenge of the construction will pale in comparison to the intensity of the ride experience."

The construction crew, comprised of about 40 people, began by surveying the site in September. Working six days a week, nine hours a day, workers have finished two-thirds of the ride. When complete, the coaster will be comprised of 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

According to Sonny Harris, Worlds of Fun director of maintenance and construction, ride construction is on schedule.

The coaster name will be chosen from the public "name-the-coaster" contest which concluded Dec. 9 with 9,810 entries. More than 7,000 unduplicated entries filled 173 single-spaced computer-printed pages. According to John S. Hudacek, general manager of Worlds of Fun-Oceans of Fun, the response exceeded their greatest expectations.

Park officials are in the process of selecting the winning name which will be announced next month.



CHANUTE TRIBUNE  
(CHANUTE, KANSAS)  
December 30, 1988

The highest bent is placed 100 feet above the ground on the giant wooden roller coaster structure currently under construction at Worlds of Fun. The \$3 million

ride features a combination of thrilling elements, including sharp-banking turns intertwined in the giant wooden structure.

## Coaster climbs to new heights

The giant wooden roller coaster structure under construction at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground. From this point, passengers will plummet 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph. The \$3 million coaster is scheduled to open April 1 when the park begins its 17th season. The ride, designed by Curtis D.

Summers, Inc., Cincinnati, combines the most thrilling and classic elements of the greatest roller coasters ever built. The 2 1/4 minute journey will feature a combination of breath-taking elements to create the most intense ride experience. WHEN COMPLETE, the coaster will be comprised of 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber. The coaster name will be chosen

from the public "name-the-coaster" contest, which concluded on Dec. 9 with 9,810 entries. "The public response was magnificent," said John S. Hudacek, general manager of Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun. "The overwhelming number of people participating is proof positive that people from throughout the Midwest are as enthusiastic as we are about this wooden coaster."

### Coaster construction 48

Construction crews climb sky-high to complete "Timber Wolf," the giant wooden roller coaster being built at Worlds of Fun in Kansas City, Mo. The construction workers are shown completing the final section of handrail, which will encompass the 4,230 feet of wooden track. The track itself is comprised of even layers of one and a half-inch thick wooden boards overlaid with steel. The \$3 million roller coaster is scheduled to be finished when the park opens its 17th season on April 1. Photo courtesy Worlds of Fun)

KANSAS CITY STAR  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
January, 1989

## Worlds of Fun hopes new ride will be ticket to attendance boost

By Scott Hettrick  
staff writer

**W**orlds of Fun officials are hoping the new giant wooden roller coaster, Timber Wolf, will help draw as many people to the park this summer as the Orient Express roller coaster did when it opened in 1980.

That year, attendance jumped 8 percent, to an all-time high of more than 1.4 million visitors—a record that still stands.

Park attendance for 1988 was 1.2 million, down more

than 100,000 guests from 1987.

Susan Miller, public relations supervisor, said rainy spring weekends and the summer drought were responsible for the decline in guests.

The Kansas City, North, amusement park draws about 60 percent of its business from outside the metropolitan area. Miller said that since the drought affected the farm industry, it ultimately had an impact on the number of visitors from rural areas.

Conversely, Oceans of Fun, Worlds of Fun's sister amusement park, had its best year

ever in 1988, drawing more than 300,000 customers.

The Timber Wolf, a 4,230-foot-long, 2½-minute ride, already has drawn public response, at least from roller coaster aficionados.

The American Coaster Enthusiasts of Chicago will hold their annual conference at the park in May, Miller said.

The Timber Wolf, in the park's Americana section, will cost \$3 million, compared with \$4 million pricetag for the Orient Express. Miller said the new ride was cheaper because it is made of wood.

But the addition of a major new attraction every four or five years does not always mean there is a significant increase in park attendance. In fact, attendance decreased in 1984 when The Fury of the Nile, a water ride, was built.

"We don't expect to get to the 1980 figures," Miller said.

But Worlds of Fun officials expect at least a 5 to 8 percent increase over last year, she said.

Worlds of Fun enjoys an 80 percent visitor-return rate, which Miller describes as "one of the highest rates of any park

in the nation."

She said decisions concerning what rides to offer are based on the age of visitors.

While teen-agers are the "strongest market, they just aren't out there in great numbers," Miller said.

She said park officials try to tailor most of their rides and attractions to things in which every member of the family can participate.

"We need to make sure we add the right attraction," Miller said.

KANSAS CITY STAR  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
February 20, 1989

## Oceans, Worlds of Fun offer all types of chills, spills, thrills

By The Star's staff

**W**et fun or dry fun.

Thrills or spills.

Those are the basic choices offered by Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun—two adjacent theme parks that form a family entertainment complex covering more than 225 acres on Interstate 435 in Kansas City, North.

Worlds of Fun offers more than 130 rides, shows and attractions, such as the Orient Express, Viking Voyager and Fury of the Nile rides and a 5-acre children's section called Pandamonium. This year a 4,230-foot wooden roller coaster, The Timber Wolf, is being added to the Americana section.

Oceans of Fun features water slides, a wave pool and a swim-up bar for adults.

This is the 17th year of operation for Worlds of Fun, which more than 20 million visitors have visited. The 8-year-old Oceans of Fun had its 2 millionth visitor last season.

Worlds of Fun also has a schedule of top-name entertainers who perform in the Forum Amphitheatre, an outdoor theater that can accommodate 4,500 persons. Standard admission to these and other shows is \$2 (tax included).

Visitors to both parks buy daily passports that entitle them to take advantage of all rides, shows and attractions.

This year, a single day will cost \$17.95 (plus tax) at Worlds of Fun and \$12.95 (plus tax) at Oceans of Fun.

For \$24.95 (plus tax) visitors can buy a combination two-day passport that offers them a full

day at each facility (within a four-day period).

Season passports cost \$45.95 (plus tax) at Worlds of Fun and \$35.95 plus tax at Oceans of Fun.

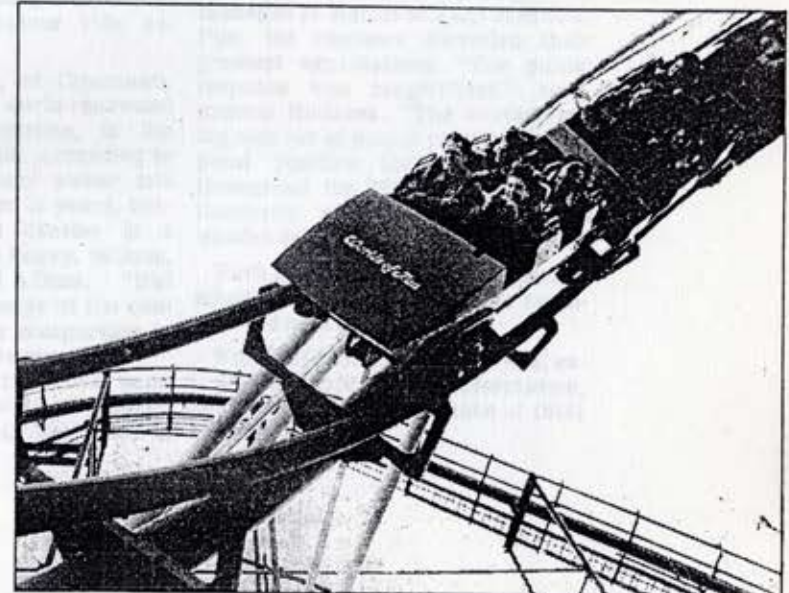
A combination season passport for both parks costs \$81.90. Prices are subject to change.

Children 3 years old and younger are admitted free.

Parking is \$3 a vehicle, but there is no charge to park a bus.

In the spring and fall, Worlds of Fun is open only on weekends, but the two parks are open every day through the summer. Oceans of Fun begins its season in late May. Both parks open daily at 10 a.m.

For more information about passport prices and park hours at Worlds of Fun, call 454-4444. For information on Oceans of Fun, call 459-WAVE.



Roller coasters and more can be found at Worlds of Fun. (file photo)



The highest bent is placed 100 feet above the ground on the giant wooden roller coaster under construction at Worlds of Fun.

## Worlds of Fun Builds Giant Wooden Roller Coaster Framework

KANSAS CITY — The giant wooden roller coaster structure under construction at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground atop its 25 degree lift. From this highest point, passengers will plummet 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph, experiencing a G-force of +2.85.

The \$3 million coaster, one of Worlds of Fun's most ambitious expansions ever, is scheduled to open April 1, 1989, when the park begins its 17th season.

The coaster ride, designed exclusively for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers Inc., of Cincinnati, Ohio, combines the most thrilling and classic elements of the greatest roller coasters ever built. The two and a half minute journey will feature a combination of breath-taking elements to create the most intense ride experience achievable.

Dinn Construction, of Cincinnati, Ohio, selected for its world-renowned wooden coaster expertise, is the builder of the new ride. According to Charlie Dinn, company owner and builder of coasters for 25 years, constructing a wooden coaster is a demanding job. "It's heavy, tedious, hard work," said Dinn. "But ultimately, the challenge of the construction will pale in comparison to the intensity of the ride experience."

The Dinn Construction crew, comprised of approximately 40 people, began by surveying the site in

September. Working six days a week, nine hours a day, workers have finished two-thirds of the ride already. When complete, the coaster will be comprised of 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

According to Sonny Harris, Worlds of Fun director of maintenance and construction, ride construction is on schedule. "We are extremely pleased with the progress of the coaster," stated Harris. "The mild weather and the expertise of Dinn Construction have kept us right on schedule to open the coaster next April."

The coaster name will be chosen from the public "name-the-coaster" contest which concluded on Dec. 9 with 9,810 entries. Over 7,000 unduplicated entries filled 173 single-spaced computer-printed pages. According to John S. Hudacek, general manager of Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun, the response exceeded their greatest expectations. "The public response was magnificent," commented Hudacek. "The overwhelming number of people participating is proof positive that people from throughout the Midwest are as enthusiastic as we are about this wooden coaster."

Park officials are in the process of selecting the winning name to be announced next month.

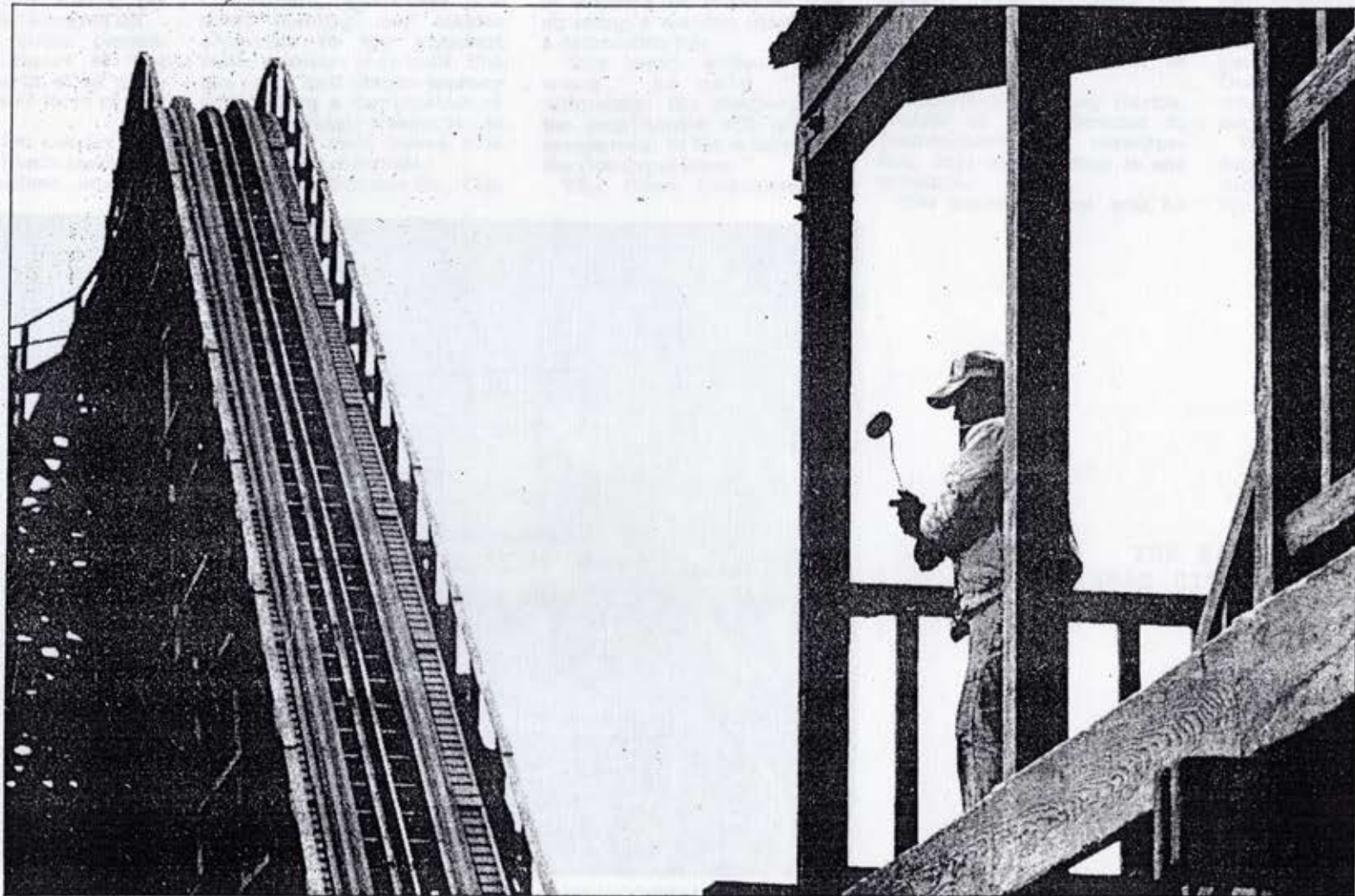
Worlds of Fun is located at I-435, exit 54. For more coaster information, call the Worlds of Fun phone at (816) 454-4444.

ROLLA DAILY NEWS  
(ROLLA, MISSOURI)  
December 28, 1988

WOODEN COASTER REACHES HIGH POINT

KANSAS CITY TIMES  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
March 14, 1989

## Roller roller



Fred Blocher/Staff

The new Timber Wolf wooden roller coaster at Worlds of Fun is getting a coat of paint, some landscaping and other final touches in preparation for its opening on April 1. The roller coaster is 4,230 feet

long and took 680,000 board feet of lumber. Because they creak and groan, wooden coasters are more frightening than steel ones, and the Timber Wolf was designed to maintain the terror every second.



# Wooden coaster reaches high point

132  
The giant wooden roller coaster structure under construction at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground atop its 25 degree lift.

From that point, passengers will plummet 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph, experiencing a G-force of plus 2.85.

The \$3 million coaster, one of Worlds of Fun's most ambitious expansions ever, is

scheduled to open April 1 when the park begins its 17th season.

The coaster ride, designed exclusively for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers Inc. of Cincinnati, combines the most thrilling and classic elements to the greatest roller coasters ever built. The two and a half minute journey will feature a combination of breath-taking elements to create the most intense ride experience achievable.

Dinn Construction Co., Cin-

cinnati, selected for its world-renowned wooden coaster expertise, is the builder of the new ride. According to Charlie Dinn, company owner and builder of coasters for 25 years, constructing a wooden coaster is a demanding job.

"It's heavy, tedious, hard work," he said. "But ultimately, the challenge of the construction will pale in comparison to the intensity of the ride experience."

The Dinn Construction

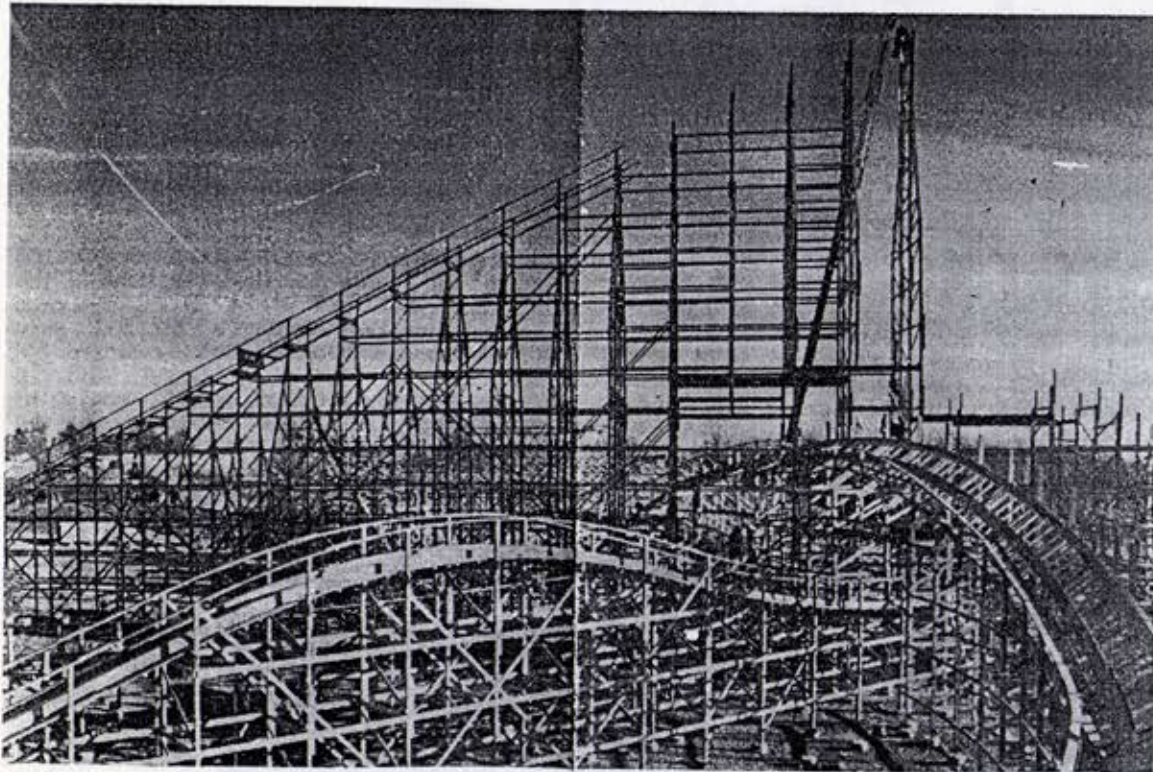
crew, comprised of about 40 people began by surveying the site in September. Working six days a week, nine hours a day, workers have finished two-thirds of the ride already. When complete, the coaster will be comprised of 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

According to Sonny Harris, Worlds of Fun director of maintenance and construction, ride construction is one schedule.

The coaster name will be

chosen from the public "name the coaster" contest which concluded on Dec. 9 with 9,810 entries. More than 7,000 unduplicated entries filled 173 single-spaced computer-printed pages. The response exceeded expectations, John S. Hudacek, general manager of Worlds/Oceans of Fun, said. The winning name will be announced next month.

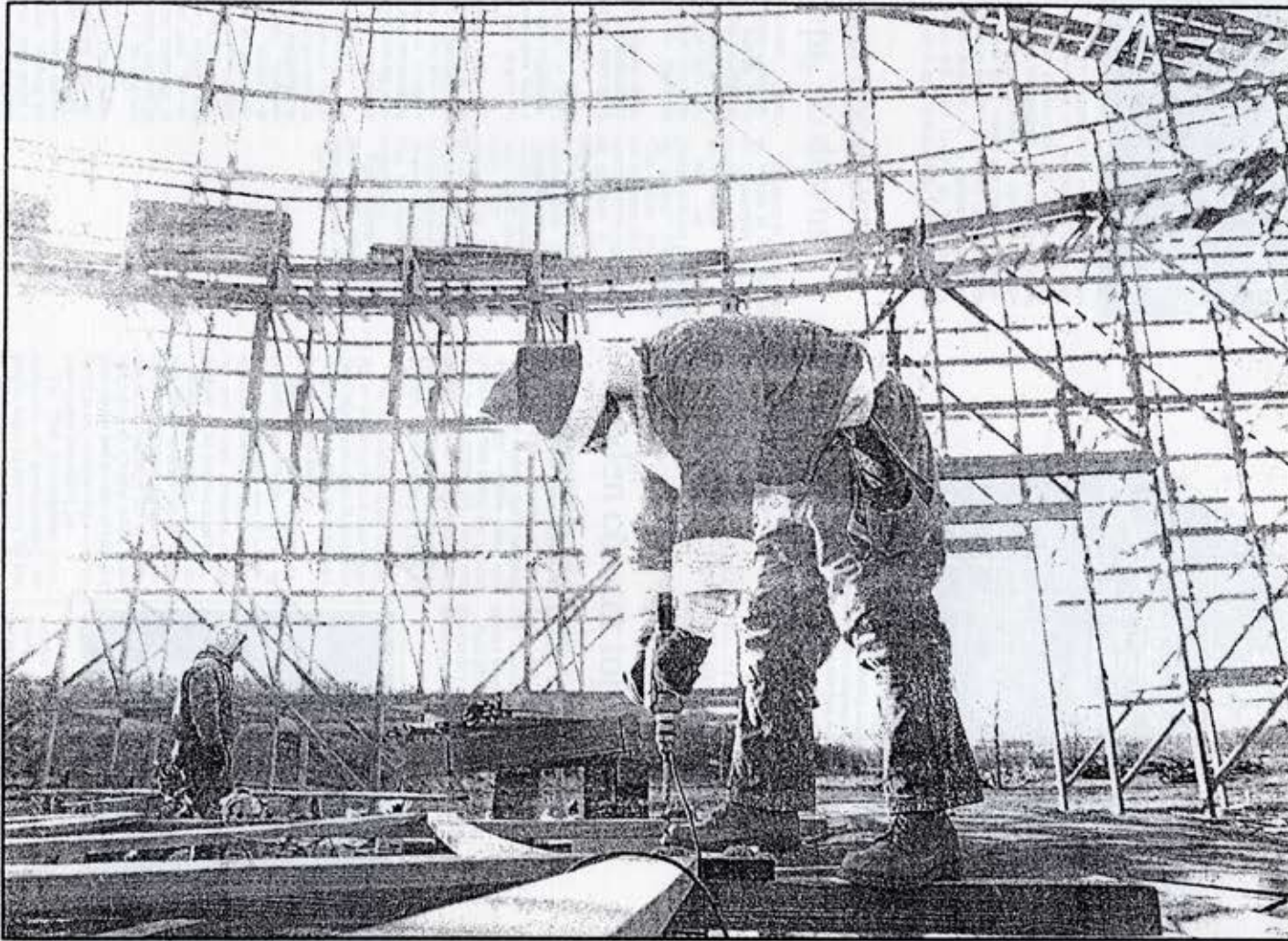
Worlds of Fun is located at Interstate 435 and Exit 54. For more information, call Worlds of Fun at 454-4444.



The highest bent is placed 100 feet above the ground on the giant wooden roller coaster structure currently under construction at Worlds of Fun. From this point the coaster train will plummet its passengers 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph. The new coaster features a combination of thrilling elements including sharp-banking turns intertwined in the giant wooden structure. The \$3 million ride, one of the park's largest expansions ever, is scheduled to open April 1 when the park begins its 17th season.

THE KANSAN  
(KANSAS CITY, KANSAS)  
January 1, 1989

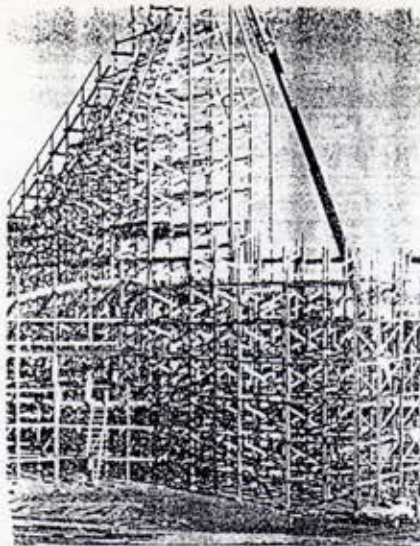
KANSAS CITY STAR  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
December 20, 1988



## **Santa's labor**

*Dave Simmons of Excelsior Springs, a carpenter employed by the Charles Dinn Corp., gets into the Christmas spirit as he works on the new roller coaster at*

*Worlds of Fun. Simmons said he showed up for work Friday in the yuletide costume to give everyone a seasonal lift. (staff photo by Jim McTaggart)*



**ON HIGH:** The highest point is placed 100 feet above the ground on the wooden roller coaster structure under construction at Worlds of Fun. From this point the coaster train will plummet its passengers 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph. The truck, lower right, draws attention to the enormity of the structure. The \$3 million ride, one of the park's largest expansions, is scheduled to open April 1 when the park begins its 17th season. Worlds of Fun is at Interstate 435, Exit 54, in Kansas City.

## Coaster construction has ups, no downs

The wooden roller coaster structure under construction at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground atop its 25-degree lift.

From this highest point, passengers will plummet 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph.

The \$3 million coaster, one of Worlds of Fun's most ambitious expansions, is scheduled to open April 1 when the park begins its 17th season.

The coaster ride was designed for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers Inc. of Cincinnati. The 2½-minute journey will feature a combination of breathtaking elements to create the most intense ride experience achievable.

Dinn Construction of Cincinnati, selected for its wooden coaster expertise, is the builder. According to Charlie Dinn, company owner and builder of coasters for 25 years, constructing a wooden coaster is a demanding job.

"It's heavy, tedious, hard work," Dinn said. "But ultimately, the challenge of the construction will pale in comparison to the intensity of the ride experience."

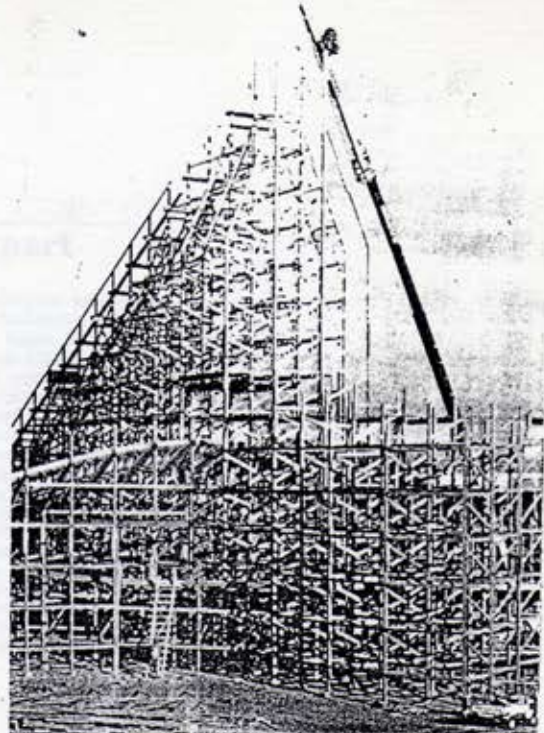
The Dinn Construction crew, comprised of approximately 40 people, began by surveying the site in September. Working six days a week, nine hours a day, workers have finished two-thirds of the ride. When complete, the coaster will be comprised of 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

According to Sonny Harris, Worlds of Fun director of maintenance and construction, ride construction is on schedule.

"We are extremely pleased with the progress of the coaster," Harris said. "The milder weather and the expertise of Dinn Construction have kept us right on schedule to open the coaster next April."

The coaster name will be chosen from the public "name-the-coaster" contest which concluded Dec. 9 with 9,810 entries. More than 7,000 unduplicated entries filled 173 single-spaced computer-printed pages. According to John S. Hudacek, general manager of Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun, the response exceeded expectations.

Park officials are in the process of selecting the winning name to be announced next month.



**A FOREST OF LUMBER** is being assembled at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun as a giant wooden roller coaster takes shape. The coaster reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground. From that point the coaster train will plunge its passengers 95 feet towards earth at 53 miles per hour. The \$3 million ride, one of the park's largest expansions ever undertaken, is scheduled to open April 1, 1989, when the park begins its 17th season.

NEBRASKA CITY NEWS-PRESS  
NEBRASKA CITY, NEBRASKA)  
December 29, 1988

## Wooden coaster tops-out

The giant wooden roller coaster structure under construction at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun reached its highest point recently when the last wooden plank was placed 100 feet above the ground atop its 25 degree lift. From this highest point, passengers will plummet 95 feet toward the earth at 53 mph, experiencing a G-force of +2.85.

The \$3 million dollar coaster, one of Worlds of Fun's most ambitious expansions ever, is scheduled to open April 1, 1989 when the park begins its 17th season.

The coaster ride, designed exclusively for Worlds of Fun by Curtis D. Summers, Inc. of Cincinnati, Ohio, combines the most thrilling and classic elements of the greatest roller coasters ever built.

Dinn Construction of Cincinnati, Ohio, selected for its world-renowned wooden coaster expertise, is the builder of the new ride. According to Charlie Dinn, company owner and builder of coasters for 25 years, constructing a wooden coaster is a demanding job.

The Dinn Construction crew, comprised of approximately 40 people, began by surveying the site in September. Working six days a week, nine hours a day, workers have finished two-thirds of the ride already. When complete, the coaster will be comprised of 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

The coaster name will be chosen from the public "name-the-coaster"

contest which concluded on December 9 with 9,810 entries. Over 7,000 unduplicated entries filled 173 single-spaced computer-printed pages.

Park officials are in the process of selecting the winning name to be announced next month.



*The highest beam is placed 100 feet above the ground on the giant wooden roller coaster structure currently under construction at Worlds of Fun. From this point the coaster train will plummet its passengers 95 feet towards the earth at 53 mph. The new coaster features a combination of thrilling elements including sharp-banking turns intertwined in the giant wooden structure. The \$3 million dollar ride, one of the park's largest expansions ever, is scheduled to open on April 1, 1989 when the park begins its 17th season.*

KEARNEY COURIER  
(KEARNEY, MISSOURI)  
December 29, 1988

# The Wolf man

## Amiable designer is an expert

By Ward W. Triplett III

arts and entertainment writer

**C**urtis D. Summers shakes people up for a living.

Summers runs an engineering and architectural firm in Cincinnati, and he has worked on his share of office buildings, schools and banks. He even designed the College Football Hall of Fame building in Ohio.



Curtis D. Summers

But before and around all that, Summers, a 1951 graduate of Kansas State University in Manhattan, designs roller coasters.

"I didn't even know what an amusement park was in those days," said Summers, who was born in Sedan, Kan. and grew up in Abilene.

"In fact, in 1955, when I was on active duty in the Navy, they sent me to Civil Engineers school in Los Angeles. My uncle out there calls me up and says 'Curt, there's a new park called Disneyland opening up, do you wanna go?' I said sure, but I didn't even know what he was talking about."

Summers' company specializes in wooden coasters, although he has designed whole amusement parks.

"I will not downgrade steel coasters. It's like comparing a Mercedes to a Porsche," Summers said. "It's just a different ride, and they both have a lot to offer. But I like the nostalgia and the feel of a wood coaster."

It's also good business. Summers said parks could get more "bang for their buck" from wooden coasters because they can be built to specifications. A steel ride would be manufactured in a factory, and the park has to take what it gets.

Summers was able to use the uneven terrain of the Timber Wolf site to build in the many dips the park requested. He was also able to design his first reverse helix, and route the tracks just enough for the ride to weave through itself. He's also proud of the lift, which was built on the highest point available.

Summers took a job with an architectural firm in Cincinnati right after college and happened to get assigned a structural engineering job on that city's old Coney Island park. He impressed the developers of a replacement park, Kings Island, and they hired Summers after his stint in the Navy to help that project. Summers still designs yearly additions

to the park.

He has since designed amusement parks in Richmond, Va.; Kings Mill, Ohio; Elgin, Ill.; and Charlotte, N.C. This year, a park of his design will open in Pakistan, and he is working out arrangements to do one in China.

As far as individual rides go, Summers said computer technology had made his job easier. When he started working on coasters in 1960, it took a crew of 10 six months to complete a working design. Now, assistant Dennis Starkey programs a computer to calculate and match degrees and speeds for the safest possible ride. Projects of Timber Wolf's size now take four people 2½ to 3 months.

Summers, who is 60, doesn't pass up a chance to ride one of his own creations.

"I think in the building-design profession, you can have this two-dimensional picture in your mind of what the final product will look like, but it still amazes you when it appears in the flesh," he said. "When I ride (the Timber Wolf), I'm going to be telling myself, 'So this is how that particular curve feels.'"

Builder Charles Dinn, who has worked with Summers on six other coasters, is proudest of this latest monster. As a brisk wind zipped through the unfinished queue house last week, Dinn was smiling with each successful test run and the ecstatic reactions of test riders.

"This is one impressive looking roller coaster," said Dinn, whose company also put up a wooden coaster in Allentown, Pa., this year. "When you leave here (the queue house), that's a really great view. The one in (Allentown) is a lot like this one, but this one's better."

Worlds of Fun began running sandbag tests on Timber Wolf three weeks ago. And while other rides were run about an hour a day for employee training, the Wolf underwent four to six hours of tests a day. Dinn and park supervisor Sonny Harris were listening for the slightest unusual sounds but could find little wrong on this day.

Harris thought enough of the Wolf to invite his 16-year-old grandson, Jeff Whitsell, up from Odessa, Texas, to try it out. Jeff was one of several people riding up to five times an hour.

"I thought it was better than the Orient Express," Jeff said. "The first time you come up a hill, you just come off your seat. I've never been on a wooden roller coaster before, and it's better because you get the sound of wood and the speed. It's just more exciting."

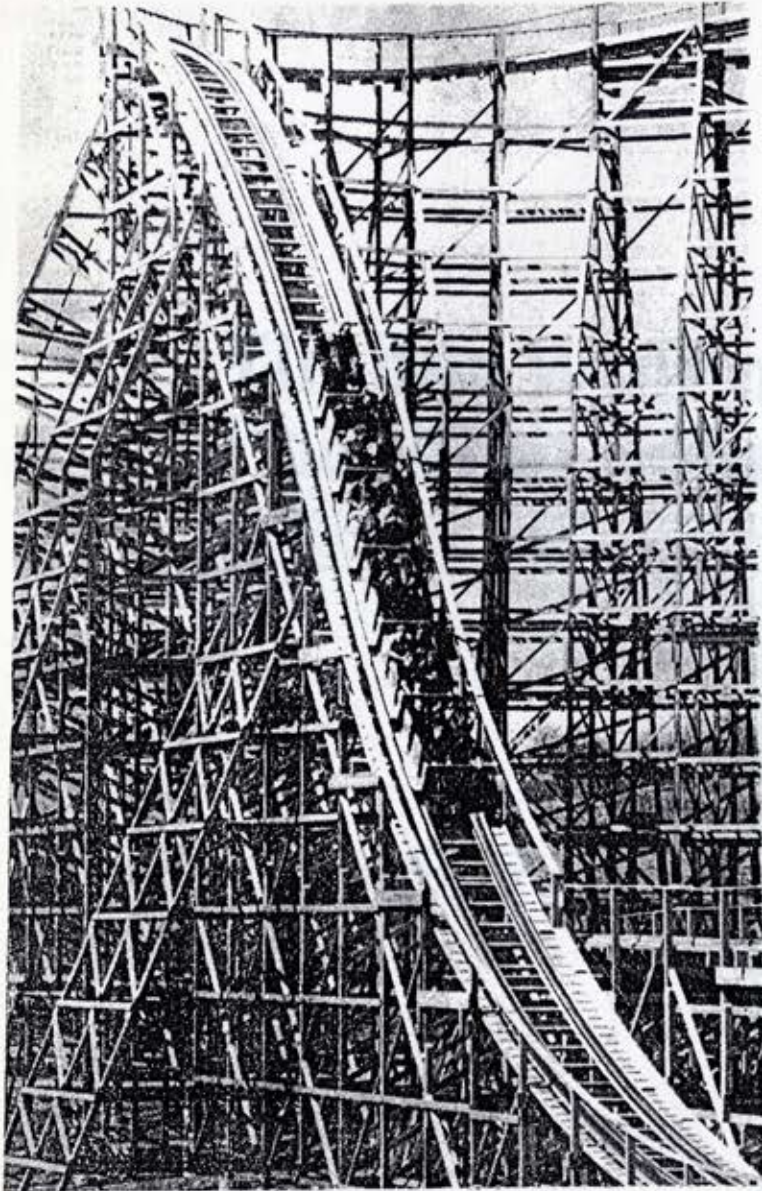


Photo courtesy Worlds of Fun

**Timber Wolf.** Worlds of Fun's new \$3 million wood roller coaster, Timber Wolf, was let loose on April 1, 1989 when park opened its 17th season. The 4,230-foot coaster takes riders up 53 mph while they experience a 95-foot drop, hairpin turns and unusual 560-degree helix. Riders can experience Timber Wolf weekends through May 21. Daily operation begins on May 21. Worlds of Fun is located on I-435 at exit 54 in Kansas City, Mo.

## 'Out of control feeling' provided by Worlds of Fun's newest ride

By Christopher Hines  
Of The Examiner

It climbs to a height of 100 feet and, cracking and swaying, plunges the rider into the past at speeds in excess of 50 mph.

It was out of a sense of nostalgia that officials at Worlds of Fun decided to construct the amusement park's first wooden roller coaster, the Timber Wolf, said John Hudacek, the park's general manager.

"This was a great opportunity to provide a thrill that only an American wood roller coaster can provide," he said. "The click-it-clack sound of the steel wheels against the wood rail, combined with the natural sway of the wood and the exhilarating speed give you that out-of-control feeling."

The park unveiled its newest, \$3 million attraction Friday. Building it required 1,200 concrete piers, 15 tons of nails, 80,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber.

Hudacek said the Timber Wolf paid tribute to that which spurred the development of the amusement park, the wooden roller coaster.

The roller coaster's designer, Curtis Summers, a Kansas native, says the Timber Wolf is his 17th wooden

roller coaster, and he's been designing them for the past 25 years.

"The wood has a nostalgia for the olden days," he said. "The wood does give more of a sensation that steel doesn't offer; it's not so smooth."

Over the screams and clickety-clack sound from the cars as they zoomed, curved and plummeted, Summers said, "The great thrill today is to see a lot of people having fun. It's something that has gone from mind to paper and then has been built."

A member of American Coaster Enthusiasts, Jan Kiser of Olathe, Kan., said she intends to ride the Timber Wolf a thousand times by the end of this year's season and describes it as one of the best roller coasters she's ever ridden. Kiser says she has ridden 102 roller coasters around the world, including 48 wooden ones.

"It's the anticipation you get," she said. "You feel less restrained in a wood roller coaster."

Kiser described Coaster Enthusiasts as a fun group that likes to travel to different parts of the country and the world to ride coasters and judge a thrill.

"This coaster reminds me of those great roller coasters of the '30s and

'40s," she said. "Those were the greatest coasters ever built."

She said Timber Wolf was full of surprises that fulfilled all her expectations.

"You think you're going one way and it jerks you the other way," she said. "And it spirals up and instead of down."

Summers said he used computers to aid in the design of the Timber Wolf and combine his experiences in the construction of previous wooden roller coasters. This allowed him to take the design to limits never before considered possible.

"In the actual operation, wood is a very forgivable material..." he said. "The beauty of wood is that it is more adaptable."

The Timber Wolf takes the rider on a two and a half minute course that includes speeds of 53 mph, a 95-foot plummet at 50 degrees at a G-force of more than 2.85. Cresting hills and valleys, the train speeds through the wood structure, then races through the helix at a speed of 44 mph where twice it spirals through a 120-foot loop while banking severely to the right. The front car of the train provides the best view, but the back car snaps its unsuspecting passenger high into the air.

# Timber Wolf makes "howling debut"

By Brad Deichler

Timber Wolf! That's the name of the newest ride at Worlds of Fun, and what a ride it is. Timber Wolf is one of the United States' largest wooden roller coasters.

The roller coaster, which is nearly a mile in length (4,230 feet to be exact) reaches speeds of up to 53 miles per hour. However, the speed is not as hard to deal with as is the maximum

G-force of the ride, which is plus 2.85. For part of the ride your face is pushed into strange contortions that only a mother could love.

The ride begins with a slow ascent toward a 100-foot hill. However, once the roller coaster turns the corner at the top of the hill it's time to hang on for your life because there's no slowing down until the ride cruises to an end almost two minutes later.

The ride is designed so that the rider is thrown airborne periodically. A seat belt holds the rider down, but there is enough speed generated by the roller coaster to allow passengers to be thrown from their seats about 10 inches on certain peaks. (Some of the thinner passengers, myself included, had a few close calls where it looked as if we might be leaving our cars completely.)

The rider is, of course, tucked safely into his car and it did not appear that there was any way a person could actually be thrown from his car, but the rider could easily come away from the ride with that impression.

The roller coaster is an impressive sight, having been designed by a reknowned leader in the field of roller coasters. The entire cost of the new ride is about \$3 million, and the coaster contains 1,200 concrete piers, 15 tons of nails, 60,000 bolts and 680,000 board feet of lumber, all situated on seven acres.

The capacity of the ride is 24 riders in the six cars, and the roller coaster circles the entire route 1,200 times per day.

Following is a description of the ride provided by Worlds of Fun: The 2½ minute journey begins as the coaster train takes its passengers out of the station for a 25 degree climb to 100 feet above the ground, then turns a tight corner and plummets 95 feet



**TIMBER WOLF** — The new Timber Wolf wooden roller coaster at Worlds of Fun is

shown in the above photo. The roller coaster cost \$3 million to construct, and it is almost a mile in length.

toward the earth at 50 degrees and 53 miles per hour allowing the rider to experience a plus 2.85 G-force.

Suddenly the train lifts its passengers upward for a near negative G-force of .61, then slams into a high banking curve to the left, and zooms downward at speeds reaching 49 miles per hour, and a G-force peaking at plus 2.73.

Creeping hills and valleys, the train speeds through the awesome wooden structure, then races into the helix at a speed of 44 miles per hour, where twice it spirals through a 120 foot loop while banking severely to the right.

The train dives out of the helix at a speed of 40 miles per hour with a plus 2.48 G-force, travels through the wooden structure into a circuit of sharp curves before entering a hair-pin curve and a 180 degree turn that brings the train into the brake system before coasting into the station.

Worlds of Fun is now open for the season and the Timber Wolf is running full time at the park.

BONNER SPRINGS-EDWARDSVILLE CHIEFTAIN  
(BONNER SPRINGS, KANSAS)

April 6, 1989



### Thrilling ride...

Kansan Photo by Chris Brown

Cindy Norton and Mike Rood get the thrill of their lives while riding the new wooden roller coaster at Worlds of Fun Friday. The coaster, titled Timber Wolf, is constructed of 4,230 feet of wooden track and features a combination of the most thrilling elements available in coaster design including a 95-foot drop, two complete high banking circular tracks within a 120-foot helix, and a bow tie formation of three crossovers through the giant structure. Timber Wolf made its debut Saturday when the park opened for the summer season. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

## Worlds of Fun dedicates new ride

48 Kansas City's Worlds of Fun dedicated the Timber Wolf, a \$3 million, giant wooden roller coaster, on Saturday, April 1, the opening day of the park.

The Timber Wolf is Worlds of Fun's longest roller coaster and represents one of the largest expansions in the Kansas City park's history. The 4,230-foot ride features a combination of thrilling elements including a 95-foot drop, speeds of 53 mph, hairpin curves and an unusual 560-degree helix.

Opening day comments about the Timber Wolf range from "awesome," to "breathtaking," to "the scariest ride I've ever been on." One local coaster enthusiast, who claims to have ridden

over 100 different coasters, rated the Timber Wolf as one of the most exciting he's ever experienced.

Other opening day activities included a parade; a launch of giant helium balloons carrying 10 certificates for free season passports to Worlds of Fun; and a ribbon-cutting by Jack Steadman, chairman of Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun and Mark Pfefferkorn of Kansas City, Mo., who submitted the winning entry, Timber Wolf, in a "name the coaster" contest.

Worlds of Fun, entering its 17th season, has entertained over 20 million guests since the park opened in 1973.



### Timber Wolf

The Timber Wolf, Worlds of Fun's new coaster, constructed of wood, is the park's newest addition for thrill addicts.

## Park dedicates new coaster

Kansas City's Worlds of Fun amusement park dedicated the Timber Wolf, a \$3 million, giant wooden roller coaster April 1, the opening day of the park this year.

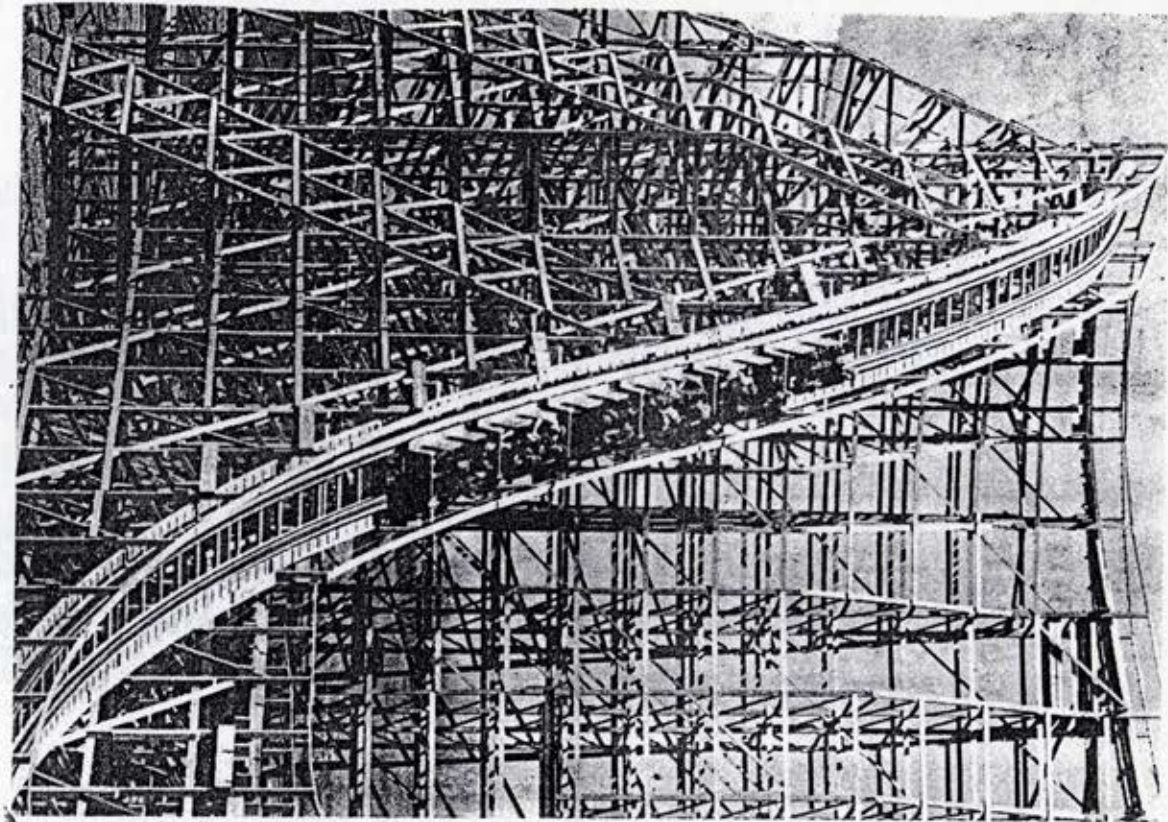
The new coaster is the park's longest roller coaster, and represents one of the largest expansions in the park's history. Park officials said the 4,230-foot ride features a combination of

thrilling elements including a 95-foot drop, speeds of 53 miles per hour, hairpin curves and an unusual 560-degree helix.

Worlds of Fun, entering its 17th season, has entertained more than 20 million guests since the park opened in 1973.

Worlds of Fun will be open weekends through May 21. Daily operations begin May 27. The park is located on I-435 at exit 54 in Kansas City, Mo.





## Timber Wolf

Worlds of Fun's new wooden roller coaster, the Timber Wolf, was let loose April 1 when the park officially opened its 17th season of operation.

POST-TRIBUNE  
(JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI)  
April 23, 1989

THE KANSAN  
(KANSAS CITY, KANSAS)  
April 9, 1989

# New ride dedicated; 17th season begins

Worlds of Fun dedicated the Timber Wolf, a \$3 million, giant wooden roller coaster on Saturday, April 1, the opening day of the park.

The Timber Wolf is Worlds of Fun's longest roller coaster and represents one of the largest expansions in the Kansas City park's history. The 4,230-foot ride features a combination of thrilling elements.

Opening day comments about the Timber Wolf ranged

from "awesome," to "breathtaking," to "the scariest ride I've ever been on." One local coaster enthusiast, who claims to have ridden more than 100 different coasters, rated the Timber Wolf as one of the most exciting he's ever experienced.

Other opening day activities included a parade; a launch of giant helium balloons carrying 10 certificates for free season pass-

ports to Worlds of Fun; and a ribbon-cutting by Jack Steadman, chairman of Worlds of Fun/Oceans of Fun, and Mark Pfefferkorn of Kansas City, Mo., who submitted the winning entry, Timber Wolf, in a "name-the-coaster" contest.

"Since Worlds of Fun opened in 1973, nearly \$50 million has been reinvested into the park, almost tripling the initial investment," Worlds of Fun president Lee Derrough

said at the dedication ceremony. "We are delighted that both Lamar Hunt and Jack Steadman have maintained a strong reinvestment philosophy, evident in the Timber Wolf."

Worlds of Fun, entering its 17th season, has entertained more than 20 million guests since the park opened in 1973.

Worlds of Fun will be open weekends through May 21. Daily operations begin Saturday, May 27. The park is

located on I-435 at exit 54 in Kansas City, Mo.

# Worlds of Fun awaits the howls of response to Timber Wolf

By Ward W. Triplett III  
arts and entertainment writer

**W**orlds of Fun officials are projecting a turnout of 6,000 when the theme park officially opens its 17th season on Saturday. They expect most of those people to hike to the Americana section, where the new Timber Wolf awaits. (See the review on Pages 18-19D.)

(The park will be open for a preview from 5 to 10 p.m. today as part of a promotional event sponsored by radio stations KYYS-FM and WDAF-AM. Only 2,500 people will be admitted; tickets cost \$10 at CATS outlets today or at the gate tonight. Parts of the Oriental, Bicentennial and Americana sections will be open, as well as some rides, including Timber Wolf.)

Call it daring, call it a challenge, or call it just stupid, but people will wait in long lines for a chance to get rocked aboard a roller. Those too timid, nervous or sane to ride it will bend their necks to watch it twist and shake the brave.

So getting people to the ride once they get to park isn't going to be that hard. But as the summer heat rises and families from across the Midwest fall into vacation mode, Worlds of Fun is banking on the Wolf to pull more people to their 220 acres in Kansas City, North.

"The roller coaster gives us a lot of options we have never had before," said J. David Holt, corporate director of marketing for the Hunt Corp., which operates Worlds of Fun.

Options such as this: Any new ride would appeal to the young, and the target market of the Timber Wolf is the 14-to-24 age group. But the park thinks this new ride also might appeal to older people who would otherwise attend only if escorting children.

"We could have promoted it strictly on nostalgia," Holt said. "The older coasters were all wood, and it's a fact that most people do not forget the roller coaster they grew up with."

But a whole group of young adults grew up after wooden coasters gave way to steel ones. Normally, Worlds of Fun figures that people between college age and parenthood aren't likely to consider an amusement park as an entertainment vehicle. Now they can try a new kind of ride they haven't been on before.

The Hunt Corp. invested more than \$3 million in the Timber Wolf and is spending about \$2.5 million to make sure all kinds of people know about it.

On Wednesday, billboards were revealed that had been partly covered since March 13. They warn of a Timber Wolf loose in the vicinity, as do the ads on television and radio that have been running since March 19.

**"There is the perception of danger and fear, and that is a unique part of wooden roller coasters. A lot of people love to challenge and overcome that fear."**

—J. David Holt of the Hunt Corp.

On Monday, the TV commercials will change. Instead of howling, you'll hear the physical sounds of a roller coaster. Those ads will run throughout the summer, gradually including quick shots of the coaster in action.

"The (marketing) strategy is based very much on the same kind of attractiveness and interest that a horror movie holds for a lot of people," Holt said. "There is the perception of danger and fear, and that is a unique part of wooden roller coasters."

It's actually a very safe, very sophisticated ride, Holt said, but "that fear is there because of the rattling and because the structure moves a little bit. A lot of people love to challenge and overcome that fear."

The recognition campaign started with the naming contest last December. Production costs for the early ads came to about \$130,000, much of which was spent on commercials shot at a small state park in Wisconsin using two trained wolves flown in from Los Angeles. They were real expensive puppies, costing about \$10,000 for two days work.

"I remember that everybody was extremely cold except the wolves," Holt said. "They loved it. But what we ended up with was worth every dime."

Holt said 40 percent of the park's business came from outside the metropolitan area. Usually out-of-town advertising doesn't start until June, when families are more likely to travel. However, potential customers in a target market triangle marked by Omaha, Neb., Wichita, Kan., and Des Moines, Iowa, will start seeing Timber Wolf spots in mid-April.

But Worlds of Fun officials are really pinning their hopes on good weather and enthusiastic crowds before Memorial Day.

"It was said in one meeting that the name of the ride is not important: If it's a good ride, people will hear about it, and we

could call it the Garbage Can and people would still want to get on it," Holt said. "Now, no one was willing to take that risk with the

name, but it's true that the most important element is that people like it and tell other people about it."

KANSAS CITY STAR  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
March 31, 1989

# Rolling and coasting during Friday lunch hour

Lunch hour usually ranks right up there as the favorite part of my day. Last Friday's, however, may have qualified as the best lunch hour (or two) of all time.

I got to ride Timber Wolf. Four times. Timber Wolf? Unless you were away from a television set, radio, newspaper or billboard the past week or so, you're no doubt aware Timber Wolf is the new wooden roller coaster at Worlds of Fun. Never let it be said members of the news media are unwilling to accept a free ride. Last Friday, Worlds of Fun held a "Private Screaming" on behalf of the press. Several hundred journalists and invited guests were given an opportunity to experience first-hand the amusement park's newest ride. Who am I to turn down such an opportunity? Free lunch and a roller coaster ride to boot? Count me in.

I've been fascinated with roller coasters ever since having the daylight scared out of me during a nighttime ride on a beast known as "Mister Twister." I was 12 or 13 at the time, old enough to venture beyond the realm of tilt-a-whirls, scramblers and octopi. What better opportunity to move up to the big time than on Mister Twister, a new wooden roller coaster at Denver's Elitch Gardens?

The train's climb up Twister's first hill and into the night sky was scary enough. I wanted off. Please let me off. And, I distinctly recall the white-knuckle terror I experienced as that coaster train plummeted down the first drop, slammed me back into my seat on the next hill and then rocketed around those turns. Most vivid in my mind, however, was when the train unexpectedly went into a tunnel strategically placed over one of Twister's "double speed curves." Enveloped by darkness, screams and the roar of the coaster, I thought life as I knew it had ended. What a ride! I immediately got back in line to experience it again.

After Friday, I'm convinced Timber Wolf rates right up there with Twister. I didn't experience the sheer terror I did on my first-ever roller coaster ride, but the new wooden coaster at Worlds of Fun is a thrill. And that, any roller coaster fan will agree, is what the ride is all about.

• What helped make Friday's visit to the Timber Wolf so enjoyable was absence of a crowd. I hate standing in line, even for roller coasters. This was probably the only chance I'll ever have to experience Timber Wolf with virtually no wait.

• With the wait at a minimum, my riding buddy and I took to Timber Wolf four times, including riding in both the front and back seats. My vote goes for the front. Nothing beats the view coming off the lift and looking down that naked incline of the first drop. My companion opted for the back seat. He liked the way the rear of the train whipped around curves.

• Don't let us roller coaster connoisseurs fool you. There's not a bad seat on Timber Wolf, be it front, back or middle.

• A little brag from this 35-year-old kid. I made one run on Timber Wolf without holding on. Look, Ma, no hands!

• I'd heard the Timber Wolf track was "rickety." Wrong. The track itself is rock solid. It's the ride that gets a bit shaky.

• We talked to a couple of guys Friday who belonged to a roller coaster club. They gave Timber Wolf a "7" or "8" on a 10-point scale." According to them, that's excellent.

• I questioned the wisdom of these so-called roller coaster experts. They claim to be strictly wooden coaster fans who wouldn't go out of their way for a steel coaster. Excuuuuse me. Worlds of Fun's imposing steel coaster, the Orient Express, is a whale of a ride. Who cares if the track is on steel or wood?

• Timber Wolf doesn't have any loop-the-loops like the Orient Express. That doesn't diminish the thrill. Unlike the Orient Express, where riders are pinned to their seats by locking, overhead restraints, Timber Wolf offers the simple "security" of seat belts and a restraining bar. It makes a difference going down that first hill. Hold on!

• It's hard to compare Timber Wolf to the Orient Express. They really are two distinctly different rides. On the whole, I give the edge to the Orient. Barely. That first drop on Orient Express is a thriller, and there's virtually no let-up throughout the ride. Four upside down loops are enough to hold my interest.

• Timber Wolf's best moments are definitely during the first part of the 2½-minute ride. The second half of Timber Wolf is pretty tame, almost

## Write Offs

Steve Hale  
Editor



anticlimactic.

• The worst part of Timber Wolf is the taped recording they play in the waiting area. It's non-stop growling, howling and whistling wind. Gets old in a hurry.

• Timber Wolf is located in Worlds of Fun on the site that once was home of the EXT, The EXT

roller coaster is no more.

• Instructions to Timber Wolf rider include keeping arms and hands inside the cars. Smart advice. Some of those wooden beams come pretty close to the track.

• I read a newspaper story Sunday that said a beautiful view of the Kansas City skyline could be seen from the top of Timber Wolf's first hill. Who was looking? My eyes were riveted to the track.

• I like to yell when I'm riding a roller coaster. Don't exactly know why, but I do. On Timber Wolf however, I couldn't ever force a yell during the drop on the first hill. Seems my heart was always up in my throat.

• Why did I expect this new wooden coaster to be painted white? Tradition, I guess. Anyway, the natural wood of Timber Wolf is really beautiful.

• I hope, as should all Kansas City roller coaster junkies, that Timber Wolf helps diminish the long lines at the Orient Express and vice versa. The shorter the wait, the better.

SUN NEWSPAPERS  
(SHAWNEE MISSION, KANSAS)  
April, 1989

# STAR PREVIEW

March 31-April 6

*How  
frightening  
is it?*

Page 18D

# TIMBER WOLF



(staff photo by Joe Ledford)



### Miracle man

*Rocker Eddie Money just keeps hanging on and working hard, and hits such as "Walk on Water" just keep coming.*

Page 25D



### Marvelous year

*Ivan Neville didn't need the help of his famous father or uncles to have the kind of year that makes a performer's name.*

Page 22D

The review: This new wooden roller coaster is (mostly) brutal and wonderful

By Bill Gaspard

Staff writer

Here, rising above the horizon in the southwest corner of Worlds of Fun, sits the behemoth, the Timber Wolf. It is graceful in its shape and glistening in the setting sun, and I am transfixed by its beauty.

What, you may wonder, is the big deal? This is, after all, just a roller coaster. No, it is a wooden roller coaster, which is rare, like a comet blazing across the northern sky.

I am a sacristan of the wooden coaster and bear witness to its superiority with unwavering fealty.

Timber Wolf—what a great name!—is nestled in the hills of the Americana section at the back of the park, an amalgam of wood, nails, bolts, concrete and metal track. Unlike most wooden coasters, it is unpainted and, thus, somehow more pure.

Waiting to board one of the two new trains, you have a feeling of déjà vu. This, you realize, is the old queue house for the EXT, the small, feckless steel coaster that was forced to abdicate its ground for its more regal cousin.

A glance to the left as you're chugging up the 100-foot lift allows you to take in the full horror of the ride that awaits you. At the top of the lift, the city skyline, such as it is, sits dead ahead. If you can manage an "Exorcist"-style swivel of the head, you can probably see a half-dozen surrounding counties. The first drop—a precipitous 95 feet at 50 mph—interrupts whatever sightseeing you had in mind and lifts you slightly off your seat. Like a cartoon character, you seem to hang stationary for a moment while the train beneath you speeds on.

And so begins a dazzling, brute voyage along Timber Wolf's immaculate track. And although the ride will not end with the promise of its beginning, there is the matter at hand: a fast-approaching piece of track that appears to be sitting on its side.

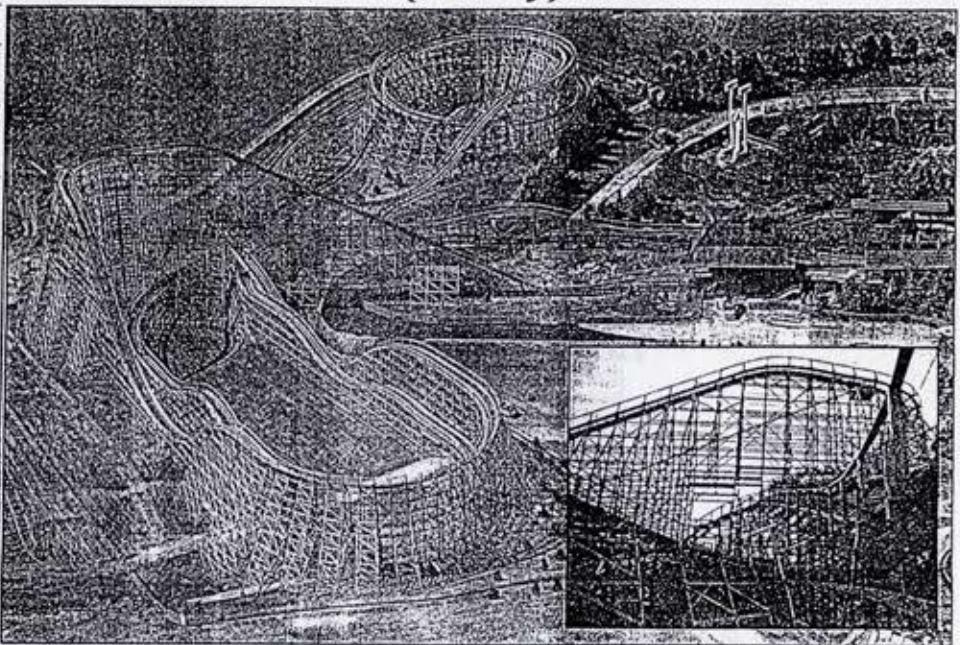
Coming out of the drop, the coaster rockets up a hill and hits a high, banked curve, ramming you back in your seat and rattling the brain. Then comes the grand surprise, a double dose of G-force as the train careens down a hill and then shoots through the lift supports like a raging river into a steep bank that begins a climb up a double helix.

G-force, which alternately pins you to your seat and makes you feel weightless, definitely is something to be reckoned with on Timber Wolf. I "caught air"—that moment you lose contact with the seat—at least five times.

In real size, Timber Wolf has impressive numbers: 680,000 board feet of lumber, 4,230 feet of track, 1,200 concrete piers, 80,000 bolts, 15 tons of nails, a maximum speed of 53 mph, a maximum G-force of +2.85 and a nearly 2½-minute ride. It was designed by Curtis D. Summers (see the accompanying story) and built by Charles Dinn, both of Cincinnati, Ohio. They have built a half-dozen wooden coasters together, including two of the best in the country: the Beast at Kings Island in Cincinnati and the Wild One at Wild World, near Washington in Mitchellville, Md.

So what is the significance of Worlds of Fun's building a wooden coaster—rinking more than \$5 million in construction and promotion costs to do so? Certainly that must stand out in the minds of the park's bean counters. But to those of us who love roller coasters, it offers that rare option of having a woody in your backyard. And, even though it is projected to fatten their attendance figures about 8 percent, for that we owe Worlds of Fun a nod of gratitude.

Wooden coasters have survived a campaign of destruction that nearly made them extinct. In the 1920s, nearly 2,000 wooden coasters existed. Today there are just under 300, and Timber Wolf is one of only two woodies being



A view of Timber Wolf in the Americana section of Worlds of Fun and (inset) the coaster on a level stretch (staff photo by Joe Ledford)

built in the United States this year. Many of the classics have been destroyed, their legend surviving only by word-of-mouth among coaster enthusiasts. Our society's fascination with advancing technology and the latest gizmo has fostered a mindset that a coaster is best judged by the number of times it turns you upside down.

While steel coasters can be fun—Worlds of Fun's Orient Express and Zambezi Zinger are two of the finest in the country—for my taste they are too geometric, too aerodynamic. They make quiet whooshing sounds and are fat with hydraulics and braking systems. Strapping into some of them is like submitting to bondage.

But the wood ones are lean and usually have no braking systems between the lift and the end of the ride (other safeguards are built in to keep the trains from meeting each other on the track). They smell of grease and wood. The wood vibrates and makes loud creaking noises. The wheels screech on their tracks as if the train were out of control. They nearly reek of nostalgia.

Still in the helix, the Timber Wolf continues spinning upward at a good clip. Caught leaning the wrong way on one of 17 rides I took, I lightly clonked heads with a teen-ager riding next to me. We barely noticed amid all the hubbub. At the top of the helix, at almost exactly the halfway point, the train slows considerably having lost most of its upward momentum. At that moment, inexplicably,

the ride softens. Timber Wolf loses its bite. Not just for a moment of needed rest, but for the entire second half of the ride.

The ride is a touch schizoid, a sort of reverse Jekyll and Hyde. The first half of Timber Wolf has been built in the spirit of Harry Traver, a legendary designer who constructed coasters in their most fearsome form—a wild mix of startling hills, steep fan turns and unexpected spiral dips.

The second half of Timber Wolf seems all the more disconcerting after such a big opening. It's like a rookie phenom in baseball who follows a dazzling first year with a string of .250 seasons; a four-star restaurant meal so flavorful that it sends tears streaming down your cheeks followed by a pudding for dessert. Anticlimactic, certainly. But it cannot diminish the thrill of what went before.

It isn't exactly fair to judge the speed of the coaster's second half at this point. The cars and the track are just getting acquainted. And the train, when I first rode, was far from being fully loaded with passengers, the extra weight promising to add momentum. Plus as the summer sun heats up, the grease on the train wheels will begin to thin, offering less resistance and a noticeably quicker ride. By mid-July, when Kansas City really begins to bake, I suspect the speed of Timber Wolf will heat up right along with it.

But speed isn't the only thing that makes the back half of the ride a curiosity. There is also a problem with the design. The pacing is stagnant, essentially devoid of the intensity of

the first half of the ride. The hills are consistently shallow and the turns parrot those of the first half, but lack both their surprise and speed. In many ways, Timber Wolf is much like the American Eagle, a Summers-designed ride at Six Flags Great America outside Chicago. Architecturally stunning, it too starts off with a mountain of promise but unravels halfway through the ride.

Still, this is the opinion of a coaster junkie. I like my elixir strong. People like me will spend the back half of the ride reveling in the first half, but may still find it nerve-racking.

One rider who had never set foot on any coaster—ever—emerged from the train after more than two minutes wondering if he would spontaneously combust, legs wobbling and looking something like a ghost abruptly resurrected from its repose. He asked Charles Dinn, the ride's builder, if they planned on putting something soft down for people to fall on when they got off the ride. Dinn smiled broadly. That's music to any coaster builder's ears.

Opening day

Worlds of Fun theme park will be open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. The park is to be open weekends only through Memorial Day, when it opens for daily operation, but opening and closing times are subject to change. Admission is \$17.95 plus tax.

The scream test

By Bill Gaspard

Oh, coasters have cost me plenty. Everything from peer respect and tons of bucks to a near-broken engagement after an ill-timed Fourth of July trip to Coney Island—thick with elbow-jabbing, jaw-flapping New Yorkers—to ride the legendary Cyclone.

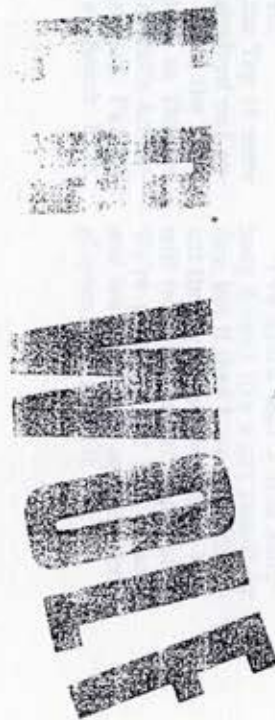
And I have ridden most of the coasters between Chicago and Denver to the east and west, Des Moines and Houston to the north and south.

Among these coasters, in terms of sheer beauty Timber Wolf ranks second, just behind the American Eagle at Six Flags Great America (north of Chicago in Gurnee, Ill.).

In terms of ride, Timber Wolf ranks third behind the Texas Cyclone at Houston's Astroworld and Mr. Twister at Denver's Elysee Gardens.

As on most coasters, a ride in the front seat is considerably different from a ride in the back. Timber Wolf's front car affords a great view coming off the lift as well as that split second of "hang time" on the first hill as you wait for the rest of the train to cross the hump. Or there's the back car—the "whip" car—for those who like their ride sans mercy. The middle of the train offers the mild version of the ride.

I found Timber Wolf's back car to be the superior ride.



KANSAS CITY STAR  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
September 1, 1989

## Timber Wolf is second in coaster-fans Top 10

By Ward W. Triplett III

arts and entertainment writer

**T**he Timber Wolf, the wooden roller coaster opened this spring at Worlds of Fun, has been voted the second-best coaster in the world by the international coaster enthusiast newsletter, "Inside Track."

The newsletter's annual poll placed the new ride just behind the Beast at King's Island in Cincinnati. Both were designed by Curtis D. Summers, a graduate of Kansas State University in Manhattan, and constructed by the Charles Dinn Co.

Three new coasters were in the top 10. Worlds of Fun was the site of a convention of 250 coaster enthusiasts in May, and that group was a major contributor to the magazine poll.

Randy Geisler, president of American Coaster Enthusiasts, said in a release from Worlds of Fun: "A great roller coaster relies on unrelenting excitement through steep drops, fast turns and great speeds, and the Timber Wolf succeeds as a great roller coaster on all levels."

Other rides in the Top 10 were the Cyclone at Astroland on Coney Island in New York; the Twister, Elitch Gardens in Denver; the Phoenix at Knoebel's Amusement Resort, Elysburg, Pa.; the Comet at Crystal Beach Park,

Crystal Beach, Ontario; the Thunderbolt at Kennywood in West Mifflin, Pa.; the Riverside Cyclone at Riverside, Agawam, Mass.; the Magnum XL-200, Cedar Point Park in Sandusky, Ohio; and the Hercules at Dorney Park in Allentown, Pa.

It is the first time Worlds of Fun has had a coaster ranked in the list, which covered both steel and wooden coasters.

Lane Green, supervisor of public information, said the park attributed its 10 percent jump in attendance this season to the new ride. He said the Timber Wolf should carry its 1 millionth paid rider this week.

The same newsletter also judged other aspects of theme parks in categories ranging from Best Waterparks to Best Use of Limited Space. Worlds of Fun also won notice in the Most Courteous Employees category.

"We do think of that as an accomplishment," Green said. "They probably know theme parks better than anybody else, and that is an important part of the whole experience."

"I've heard that a ride somebody doesn't like won't ruin their day, but if they have an unpleasant time with the employees, that will leave the worst impression. We're proud to get (the notice), and we let all the seasonal employees know about it."



# K.C.'s fun park spurs tourism

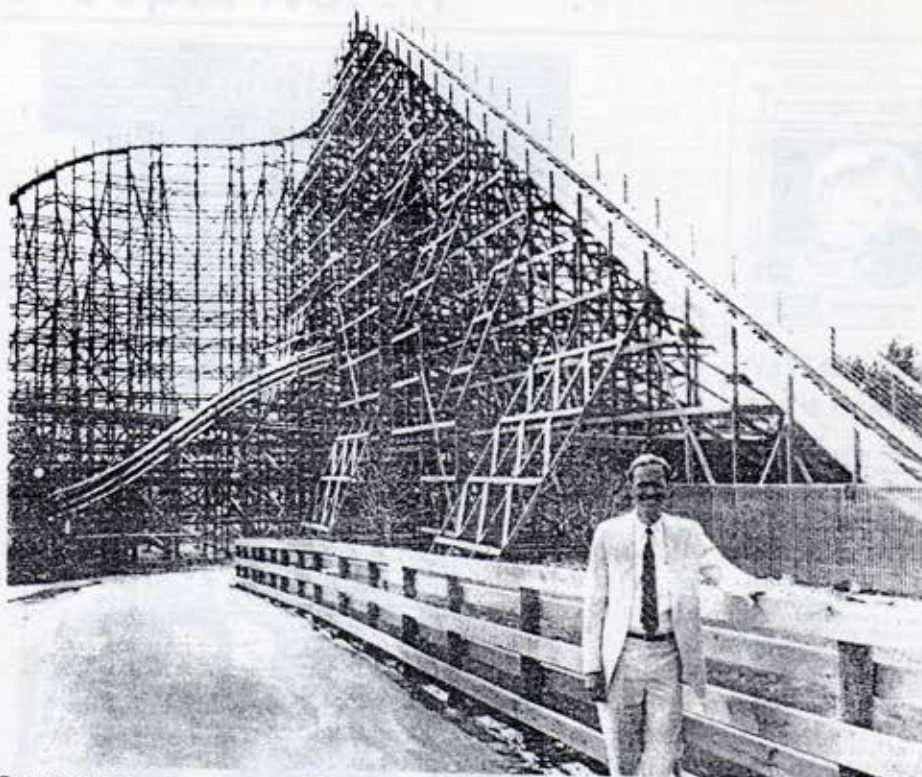
**O**n a typical summer weekend, Kansas City's Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun attracts more than 40,000 guests. By most standards this would signal a major event, but according to John Hudacek, Worlds of Fun general manager, providing a fun-filled day to the parks' visitors is routine.

"The thousands of guests who visit us each day consider their experiences at the park a special occasion. It is a part of our 130 permanent and 2,500 seasonal employees' daily routine to ensure that each guest's visit is a special experience," he said.

Visitors to Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun are not the only ones benefiting from this drawing power. In 1988 alone, the parks effected an enormous impact on Kansas City tourism, with 60 percent of the nearly 1.6 million guests traveling from outside a 50-mile radius of Kansas City. Translated into tourism dollars, this represents more than \$100 million in revenue for the metro area.

Worlds of Fun celebrates its 17th season in 1989. In 16 years, the parks have entertained more than 22 million guests of which 13 million have been tourists contributing more than one billion dollars in revenue to the Kansas City area.

"Kansas Citians have enjoyed Worlds of Fun and Oceans of Fun for so many years they consider it exclusively our entertainment complex," James Hutchinson, president of the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Greater Kansas City, said.



**SHOWING OFF THE TIMBER WOLF**— John Hudacek stands before Worlds of Fun's new \$3 million wooden roller coaster. With a height of 100', a speed of 53 mph, and a G-force of +2.85, it promises a thrill.

"They tend to overlook its broader appeal to tourists along with the revenue and overall benefits the parks add to the city."

Since 1973, the entertainment complex has provided employment to 47,000 young men and women with salaries totaling \$70.4 million. As the number one employer of youth in the Kansas City area, the parks have positively

affected the jobless rate and contributed significantly to the buying power among area youth.

The success of the entertainment complex is due in a large part to the philosophy of owners Lamar Hunt and Jack Steadman to continually reinvest the parks' success into building innovative attractions.



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DISPATCH TRIBUNE  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
June 7, 1989



Worlds of Fun got more than 10,000 entries when it asked the public to name its newest roller coaster. The winner got \$5,000 in cash and prizes, as well as immortality in the roller coaster biz.

The Timber Wolf is not the fastest wooden roller coaster in the world. Or the tallest. Or the longest.

Thank the dear Lord. Because if Worlds of Fun's new \$3 million shake-'em-up machine had been the teeniest bit faster, taller or longer, I'd have sacrificed a perfectly good lunch. As it was, I had to breathe deeply and think of a peaceful mountain stream.

Fifteen tons of nails are holding this sucker together, I kept repeating. Eighty thousand bolts and 680,000 board feet of the best Southern pine lumber money can buy. The facts became a chant, a sort of mantra, as the lead car jerkily ascended the roller coaster's lift.

Now that we've elected a president with a high Wimp Factor, I can unabashedly own up to the W-word. I take Dramamine before driving gravel roads. I won't light firecrackers on the Fourth of July. I can't stay in the same room with the dryer on spin cycle.

So I don't do roller coasters. Period. But the Timber Wolf is a block from our office; it looms on the horizon like some sleeping beast.

Mocking me.

I'm in the lead car, mumbling my reassuring facts about nails and bolts and concrete piers. I glance back on our way out of the loading house to the "chickies" exit that I'd surely have used to escape had I not been with a photographer who'd have blabbed it in our company newsletter. We're barely belted in, just a flimsy nylon lap belt, not the bar restraints, chains and crash helmets I'd prayed for. Deodorant kicks into overdrive as we crest the first hill.

"God have mercy! If I get off this alive I'll never say another cuss word agaaaaaaaaaaaaaaain," screams the pre-teen type behind me as we catch a glimpse of the 100-foot drop plummeting toward the bottom that lay ahead.

Stunning creature, this Timber Wolf, raw boards felt in their natural state, sprawling open before you like the jaws of death. Only a two-minute ride, my chins change. Two minutes, two minutes, two minutes.

The coaster rockets nearly sideways on a hairpin curve and we hurt toward a 50-degree double helix. The screech of wheels against track and clackety-clatter of wood combines with the whoosh of the wind at 55 mph to sound as ominous as an approaching tornado. The mountain stream I'd been visualizing has burgeoned into a tidal wave.

Although no one had chased me, the last half of the ride is considerably steeper than. Recovery time is appreciated, to be sure, after being lifted up-off the seat at least four times. We speed back to the loading house. "Speed back to the loading house."

"Speed back to the loading house."

"Speed back to the loading house."

"Speed back to the loading house."

Timber Wolf has a fairly low vomit factor.

Two trains holding 24 passengers will make that run 600 times a day during the summer. And they'll make it without me, thanks very much.

It should be said that not only is the Timber Wolf not the fastest or tallest roller coaster in the world, it is not even the fastest or tallest roller coaster at Worlds of Fun. Though advertisements complete with red-eyed wolves portray the ride as ferocious, the Timber Wolf is not as menacing as its tubular steel brother, the Orient Express.

Yet comparing the two roller coasters is like comparing a World War I biplane with the Concorde. It ain't the same animal.

Designed by Curtis D. Summers and built by Charles Dins Corp. of Cincinnati, who've collaborated on six roller coasters, the Timber Wolf was constructed during the winter, changing the Northland skyline week to week as it grew. The first passengers climbed aboard April Fool's Day.

Planted on the southwest corner of the park in the Americana section, the Timber Wolf replaces the EX-T, first called the Screamer. EX-T was dismantled last fall and shipped where all good roller coasters go when they die — Taiwan. Another Worlds of Fun attraction of years gone by was the Schatzboomer, a chivalricly named ride that opened the park in 1973 along with the Zamboni Zinger. A West German ride called back into the park.



## Through Irish Eyes

**Next time, buy a ticket**

First woman. Saunah Northlander Anita Gorman last week was the first woman to be named Kansas Citizen of the Year by the Kansas City Press Club, which has in the past shared that honor with heavy hitters the likes of Joyce Hall, Ewing Kautmas, Russ Davis, Thomas Hart Benton.

First woman to sit on a city council or school board. First woman to reach upper management in a company. First woman to lead a citizen's group. First woman to join Rotary. Any female who's seen battle in business or politics in the last two decades has probably found herself the "first woman" something. It's become a tiresome reminder of how often women have been shortshrined in the past.

Dr. Jeane Kirkpatrick is a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations whose "first woman" list of accomplishments could fill a book. Last month she addressed 1,200 women at a banquet in Kansas City with the same calm and assuredness you'd use to chat across the fence with your next-door neighbor.

Despite all her worldliness, Kirkpatrick was raised in Oklahoma and earned her first degree from Stephens College in Missouri. Her greatest wish at age 10 was not for a doll, but for a taurus. She and her husband of 34 years honeymooned at a political science conference.

Kirkpatrick said she was brought up to think that being a woman had nothing to do with what you could or could not achieve in life. That core belief helped catapult her to the rank of giant among diplomats in foreign policy — solely male terrain — even though her career had been spent as an educator.

And for her, being a woman didn't enter into it. Oh, OK, maybe once, Kirkpatrick said, she had to squelch her impulse as mother of three not to tell an unruly Syrian ambassador, "Go straight to your room!"

But she had to squarely face her values on what women can and cannot achieve, she confessed, when she was asked to consider candidacy for the presidency. "I realized that for the first time in my life, I was encountering an honest to God sex-role inhibition. I just couldn't see myself as president, so I said no... and encouraged Patricia Schroeder to run."



Her message was that women have to believe in themselves and give themselves a chance. She related the old story of Mr. Goldberg, who so badly wanted to win the state lottery that he prayed and prayed to God, making promise upon promise. The number was drawn, and he didn't win. Week after week, prayer after prayer, the same thing happened. Finally Goldberg bitterly told God he had lost faith, that he had given it everything he had with no word from Him. As he turned away, the heavens opened up and a perturbed voice boomed, "Give me a chance, Goldberg! Next time, buy a ticket!"

"Things have not changed enough for women. And things have not changed fast enough. But a great many opportunities have been opened. In politics today, the number of opportunities has not shrinks the number of women willing to pay the price to run for office, to participate in government, whether it's the state or federal Congress. The same is true of careers, for men."

You've got to buy a ticket to have your own play.



The Timber Wolf, Worlds of Fun's new wooden roller coaster, has been ranked the number-two roller coaster in the world by coaster enthusiasts in a readers' poll published in the August issue of "Inside Track," the international newsletter for roller coaster enthusiasts. Daring guests ride the 4,230-foot-long coaster which takes riders up to 53 mph while they experience a 95-foot drop, hairpin turns and an unusual 560-degree helix.

THE KANSAN  
(KANSAS CITY, KANSAS)  
September 3, 1989

## Riders rank new Timber Wolf 2nd

The Timber Wolf, Worlds of Fun's new wooden roller coaster, has been ranked the No. 2 roller coaster in the world by coaster enthusiasts.

The results of the annual readers' poll were published in the August issue of "Inside Track," the international newsletter for roller coaster enthusiasts. Worlds of Fun's wooden coaster was topped by only The Beast, located at Kings Island in Cincinnati, Ohio, which has held the number-one spot since it was built in 1979.

"The Timber Wolf is the surprise hit of the season, and I cannot recall a roller coaster generating so much national excitement in its first year of operation," said Randy Geisler, president of the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE). "A great roller coaster relies on unrelenting excitement through steep drops, fast turns and great speeds; and the Timber Wolf succeeds as a great roller coaster on all levels.

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Other ranked coasters included the Cyclone at Astroland in Coney Island, N.Y., the Twister at Elitch's Gardens in Denver, Colo., and

the Phoenix at Knoebel's Amusement Resort in Elysburg, Pa.

"Nobody knows roller coasters better than the coaster enthusiasts represented in the readers' poll in "Inside Track," said Worlds of Fun General Manager John Hudacek. "We are thrilled that they consider the Timber Wolf the second best coaster in the entire world. And we've not operated it a full season yet!"

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Worlds of Fun is open daily through Labor Day and weekends through October. Gates open at 10 a.m. Worlds of Fun is located on I-435 exit 54 in Kansas City, Mo.



Coaster enthusiasts from throughout the U.S. and Canada rode the Timber Wolf at Worlds of Fun. The American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) were at the park for a Spring Conference last week.

## Coaster experts converge on park

Coaster enthusiasts from throughout the United States and Canada converged on Worlds of Fun for three days of thrills this past weekend.

More than 250 members of the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) chose Worlds of Fun for their conference site because of the new \$3 million wooden roller coaster, the Timber Wolf. ACE members enjoyed exclusive day and night ride sessions on the park's new coaster.

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Other comments heard were "terrifying ecstasy" as well as "top notch...I'm moving to Kansas City." One 70 year old member said, "What Worlds of Fun has is what makes a great roller coaster. This is the way coasters used to be built."

Other ACE activities included a coaster film session hosted by eleven Kansas City area ACE members, a reception at a nearby hotel, a picnic at Worlds of Fun, and a private ride sessions on Worlds of Fun's other roller coasters — the Orient Ex-

press and Zambezi Zinger.

Worlds of Fun will be open weekends through May 21. Daily operations begin Saturday, May 27. The park is located on I-435 at exit 54 in Kansas City, Mo.

## Experts Call Timber Wolf World Class Coaster

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Daily operations for Worlds of Fun began on Saturday, May 27.

# Wooden coasters offer intensified illusion of danger

By ROBERTA J. PETERSON  
Capital-Journal special sections editor

In 1986, the number of steel roller coasters surpassed the number of their older, wooden counterparts for the first time. Coaster buffs as well as the simply nostalgic decried the passing of an era.

But in the intervening years, the "woodies" have staged a small but impressive comeback.

A few flourishing parks have purchased and transplanted old coasters to save them from the wrecking ball. An association was formed several years ago for the express purpose of saving Belmont Park's Giant Dipper in San Diego and restoring it to operational condition. (It is slated to open this summer.)

And a few new wooden roller coasters have been built in recent years in an attempt to combine the best of modern technology with the thrills of turn-of-the-century amusement parks.

Two new "woodies" were constructed this winter.

## Construction of the Timber Wolf required as much lumber and hardware as 30 average new homes.

The first is in Dorney Park, Allentown, Pa., where American Coaster Enthusiasts, an organization devoted exclusively to the enjoyment of roller coasters, will hold its national convention this summer.

The second is the Timber Wolf at Worlds of Fun in Kansas City, Mo.

ACE plans a conference in Kansas City in May for the purpose of sampling the nation's newest wooden coaster, which opened earlier this month.

Construction of the Timber Wolf required 680,000 board feet of lumber, 80,000 bolts and 15 tons of nails — enough to build 30 average new homes. The massive wooden structure spreads across seven new acres in the expanded Americana section of the park. The ride lasts two and a half minutes.

The Timber Wolf's track is 4,230 feet long. A train of six cars climbs to an initial height of 10 stories before detaching from the lift chain and plunging 94 feet at a 50-degree angle. The cars reach speeds exceeding 50 miles per hour and riders experience a 2.85 positive G-force.

Those statistics are very meaningful to coaster enthusiasts. To the average rider, the experience is best summed up in this manner: The steel roller coasters with their sideways turns and upside-down loops may look scarier, but wooden roller coasters just feel scarier.

Jeff Merritt, a 24-year-old coaster enthusiast from Overland Park, says the Timber Wolf ranks "very high" among all new and old wooden roller coasters.

"Of course, enthusiasts from this area are just thrilled to have any wooden roller coaster in Kansas City; it's something we had urged Worlds of Fun to build.

"But, we're very thrilled with the final result," said Merritt, who rode the new coaster on three different occasions, sampling both the front and back seats, the traditional test of a roller coaster.

"The amount of weightlessness experienced on this ride is phenomenal compared to other coasters. The seat belts are very necessary," he said.

He prefers the ride in the back seat, which he says is the best position on most coasters.

"The exception would be on the turn after the second drop when the cars cut through the coaster's structure, as well as in the helix, when the front is going faster than the back. In these two instances, the front seat provides the best ride," he said.

Merritt wrote a history of coaster development for Worlds of Fun's newsletter, and he explained that the construction of "woodies" contributes to their sensation.

"Most roller coaster enthusiasts feel the wooden coaster provides a superior thrill," according to Merritt.

"Steel roller coaster cars have nylon compound tires on their wheels which provide a quiet, smooth ride on tubular steel rails.

"In contrast, wooden roller coaster cars have bare steel wheels which run on flat steel rails bolted to a track bed consisting of seven layers of laminated wood, which creates a delightful cacophony when the ride is in operation.

"As the trains plummet and climb, the structure roars and rumbles like thunder, the coaster wheels clacking on the rails.

"As the cars negotiate the turns, the safety wheels often will make a screeching sound and, throughout the ride, the cars sway or bounce from side to side, giving the illusion of a derailment ...

"While a steel roller coaster is thrilling — like driving a car at high speed on a two-lane mountain highway — a wooden roller coaster seems downright reckless — more like racing down the side of the mountain in a wagon."

Merritt is a member of the National Amusement Park Historical Association.

"We go beyond just roller coasters to be interested in all aspects of amusement parks. And we have a historical bent. We research old parks as well as keeping up with the new ones," he explained.

His intense interest in the parks goes back to early childhood, he said.

"It's a fascination beyond the person who enjoys visiting amusement parks. I like everything about them — the machinery, the architecture and design of the parks and the evolution of specific rides," he said.

The assortment of national amusement park clubs started 10 to 15 years ago, he said. He has been a member of NAPHA since 1982, and is also active in The Historic Amusement Foundation, an organization working to establish a museum of antique amusement park rides. Called Electric Park, the attraction is scheduled to open in 1992 near Indianapolis.

The organizations' members range



This 95-foot initial drop is the first of many surprises on Worlds of Fun's new wooden roller coaster. The coaster, called the Timber Wolf, is the principal improvement for the Kansas City park's 17th season. It is one of two "woodies" in the nation that are new this spring.

from teenagers to seniors who remember some of the earlier, now defunct parks.

"I know of one very active member in her 90s. She rides the wildest rides and travels all over the country to sample them.

"People like her are a fascinating part of the clubs because they offer insight into the historical perspective," Merritt said.

Although he says he is "loyal to Worlds of Fun," his favorite amusement park is King's Island near Cincinnati. It was the first park to build a modern wooden coaster, initiating what has become something of a revival.

"And it has the best steel coaster as well. For some time after Worlds of Fun's Orient Express was built in 1980, it was the best in the nation, and it still ranks in the top 10 among steel coasters," Merritt said.

"But the same company that designed and built the Orient went on to build the Vortex at King's Island. It's everything the Orient is and more — with four loops, more track and faster turns. It's a great coast-

er."

For anyone seeking an amusement park-based vacation, he recommends a trip to King's Island with a sidetrip to Americana, an old park between Hamilton and Middleton in Ohio.

"It's very traditional and has a great early amusement park feeling. And it has an old wooden roller coaster that is so rough that I don't recommend sitting in the back seat. But the next-to-the-back seat offers a great ride," he said.

Closer to home, he highly recommends the Timber Wolf, which he says includes "lots of wonderful little surprises."

"There are more airborne sensations than in most coasters, and a couple of turns pop you out of your seat."

"The ride is almost violent in the back seat. And it will only get worse as the weather gets warmer," he added.

That may sound like a condemnation. But it's actually high praise coming from a coaster enthusiast.

Paul Mankil  
Staff Writer

The Southern Belle is world's  
longest roller coaster. The  
Tomb Raider is world's  
fastest roller coaster.

## The Timber Wolf: A Fierce 2-Minute Ride



By MARLI MURPHY  
Staff writer

The Timber Wolf is not the fastest wooden roller coaster in the world. Or the tallest. Or the longest. Thank the dear Lord. Because if Worlds of Fun's new \$1 million shake-'em-up machine had been the teeniest bit faster, taller or longer, I'd have sacrificed perfectly good lunch. As it was, I had to breathe deeply and think

of a peaceful mountain stream. Fifteen tons of nails are holding this sucker together. I kept repeating. Eighty thousand bolts and 680,000 board feet of the best Southern pine lumber money can buy. The facts became a chant, a sort of mantra, as the lead car jerkily ascended the roller coaster's lift.

Now that we've elected a president with a high Wimp Factor, I can unabashedly own up to the W-word. I take Dramamine before driving gravel roads. I won't light firecrackers on the Fourth of July. I can't stay in the same room with the dryer on spin cycle.

So I don't do roller coasters. Period. But the Timber Wolf is a block from our office; it looms on the horizon like some sleeping beast.

Mocking me.

\*\*\*\*\*

I'm in the lead car, mumbling my reassuring facts about nails and bolts and concrete piers. I glance back on our way out of the loading house to the "chicken" exit that I'd surely have used to escape had I not been with a photographer who'd have blabbed it in our company newsletter. We're barely belted in, just a flimsy nylon lap belt, not the bar restraints, chains and crash helmets I'd prayed for. Deodorant kicks into overdrive as we crest the first hill.

"God have mercy! If I get off this alive I'll never say another cuss word agaaaaaa-aaaaaaaain," screams the pre-teen type behind me as we catch a glimpse of the 100-foot drop plummeting toward the behemoth that lay ahead.

Stunning creature, this Timber Wolf, raw boards left in their natural state, sprawling open before you like the jaws of death. Only a two-minute ride, my chant changes. Two minutes, two minutes, two minutes.

The coaster rockets nearly sideways on a hairpin curve and we shoot toward a 560-degree double helix spiral. The screech of wheels against track and clackety-clatter of the wood combines with the whoosh of the wind at 55 mph to sound as ominous as an ap-

proaching tornado. The mountain stream I'd been visualizing has burgeoned into a tidal wave.

Although no one had clued me, the last half of the ride is considerably tamer, with gentler drops and less steep turns. Recover time is appreciated, to be sure, after being lifted up off the seat at least four times. We speed back to the loading house where I fight the impulse to kiss the concrete. After a personal chat with my stomach I am relieved to note the Timber Wolf has a fairly low vomit factor.

Two trains holding 24 passengers will make that run 600 times a day during the summer. And they'll make it without me, thanks very much.

It should be said that not only is the Timber Wolf not the fastest or tallest roller coaster in the world, it is not even the fastest or tallest roller coaster at Worlds of Fun. Though advertisements complete with red-eyed wolves portray the ride as ferocious, the Timber Wolf is not as menacing as its tubular steel brother, the Orient Express.

Yet comparing the two roller coasters is like comparing a World War I biplane with the Concorde. It ain't the same animal.

Designed by Curtis D. Summers and built by Charles Dinn Corp. of Cincinnati, who've collaborated on six roller coasters, the Timber Wolf was constructed during the winter, changing the Northland

WEDNESDAY MAGAZINE  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
June 28, 1989

# Coasters Compete for Screams in Roller Renaissance

By Paul Meskil

The New York Daily News

New York — America is undergoing a Roller Coaster Renaissance, with amusement parks all over the country spending millions of dollars on new rides designed to attract more screamers than ever before.

Two of the new thrill titans are competing for the title of "world's tallest and fastest roller coaster" — a coast never made by the Coney Island Cyclone, which was content to be known as the world's most famous and scariest coaster.

The new contenders for the heavyweight championship of the coaster circuit are the Great American Scream Machine, which began operating recently at Six Flags Great Escape in Jackson, N.J., and the Magnum XL-200, which made its debut May 8 at Cedar Point amusement park in Sandusky, Ohio.

Both steel structures claim to be the "tallest and fastest," although the 230-foot-high Scream Machine is 28 feet shorter than the 201-foot Magnum XL and a bit slower, with a maximum speed of "68-plus" miles per hour compared with "over 70" for the Magnum XL.

Arrow Dynamics of Clearfield, Pa., built both roller coasters as well as many other thrill rides, including the Matterhorn Bobsled at Disneyland. When questioned about which claim was correct, Arrow spokesman MelRee Zamorano said, "They're both right."

He said, "Each is the foremost roller coaster of its type. The New Jersey one is a looping coaster. It turns riders upside down seven times. Its the tallest and fastest coaster."

"The Magnum XL is not a loop. It has big hills and depths. It's faster than the Scream Machine but both can make that claim because they're

The Guinness Book of World Records lists the 246-foot-high Moonsault Scramble at Fujikyu Highland Park, Japan, as the world's tallest roller coaster. But members of the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE), an organization of 2,200 RC buffs in 16 countries, don't consider this claim valid. ACE President Randy Geisler of St. Paul, Minn., has ridden the Moonsault Scramble and found it somewhat disappointing.

"The cars are pulled up an incline but they don't go over the top," he said. "They stop several feet below the top and then roll backward down the incline. It was a very bizarre ride. We don't consider it the tallest roller coaster."

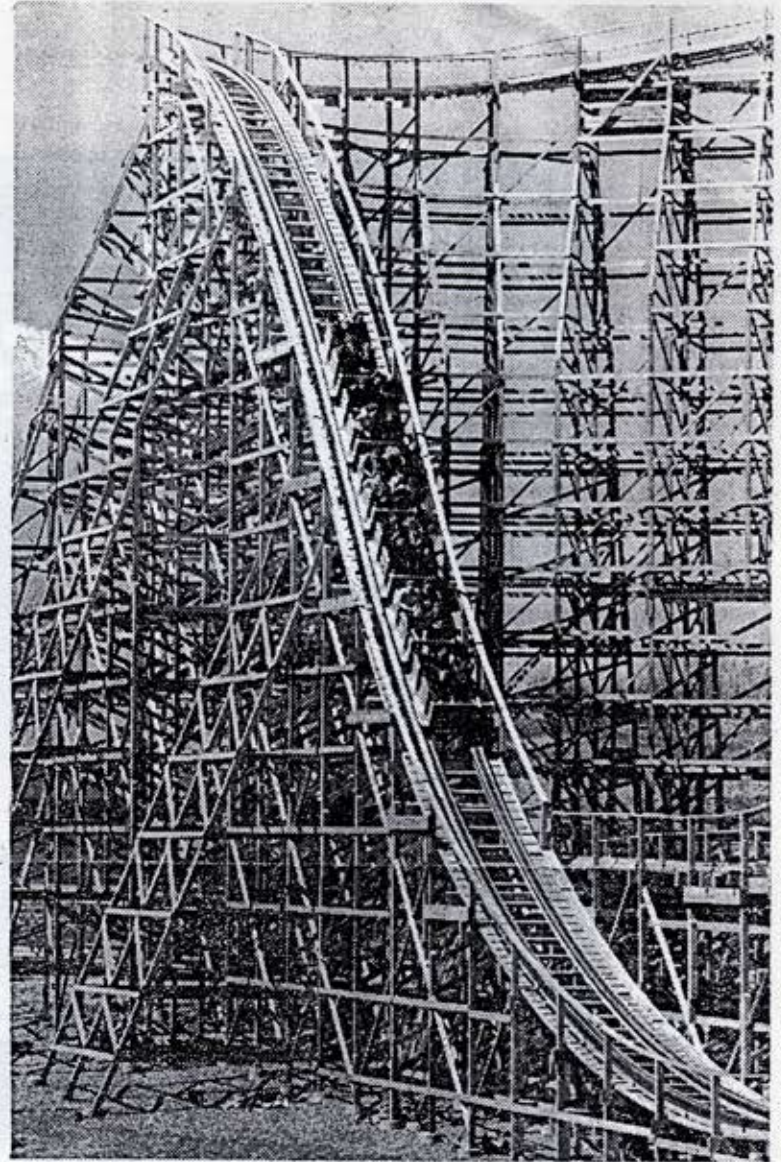
Both the Guinness Book and ACE rate The Beast at King's Island park near Cincinnati, Ohio, as the world's longest roller coaster. Its 7,400-foot track length incorporates 800 feet of tunnels and a 540-degree banked double turn.

Another record, not yet in the Guinness Book, is "world's largest indoor roller coaster." For the moment at least, this goes to the Mindbender, which opened recently in the West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

And Hercules at Dorney Park in Allentown, Pa., is billed as "the world's highest wood coaster." It opened May 6, terrifying riders with a 157-foot drop.

Opryland USA, a theme park in Nashville, Tenn., has just introduced Chaos, a \$7 million indoor ride described as a "coaster-hybrid" and "the first ride of its kind in the world." Built inside an eight-story building, the ride combines traditional coaster thrills with sights and sounds provided by modern audio-visual technology.

According to their respective press releases, the Scream Machine sends riders "plunging 155 feet down a 90-degree banked drop," and Magnum XL drops passengers from the top of a 201-foot hill at a 60-degree angle. The 60-degree incline, where coaster enthusiasts almost reach the point of no-return, has always been a feature of Cyclone, the rattling, roaring star of Coney Island's Astroland. Its big drop is a mere 85 feet, but the scary 60-degree slant makes it seem



Timber Wolf . . . opened in April at Kansas City's Worlds of Fun. The 4,230-foot wooden roller coaster features a 95-foot drop and speeds of 53 mph.

a lot longer.

"The Cyclone was never the highest or fastest roller coaster," said Astroland spokesman Milton Berger. "But it was always the best and is still considered the best."

"The Cyclone is the classic against which all other roller coasters are compared," said Paul L. Ruben, editor of RollerCoaster! magazine.

"It's a wonderful ride, consistently rated in the top 10.

An optical engineer who covers the coaster scene in his spare time, Ruben recently was in Kansas City, Mo., for the spring meeting of the American Coaster Enthusiasts. At Kansas City's Worlds of Fun, coaster fans rode Timberwolf, a new wood coaster, and also tried the park's steel coaster, Orient Express.

"We're seeing a roller coaster renaissance," Ruben said. "A decade ago, the number of riders was dwindling. Then things turned around. More and more people became interested, so the amusement parks began buying new rides, bigger, faster and safer than ever."

If you are interested in joining the coaster society, write ACE, P.O. Box 26, Chicago, Ill. 60680.

WORLD HERALD  
(OMAHA, NEBRASKA)  
June, 1989

KANSAS CITY TIMES  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
May 13, 1989

## A rollicking ride



Lauren Chapin/Special to the Times

Preparing for an up-and-down sensation, Bob Handkins (left) and Greg Grossius, both of St. Louis, sit back Friday and enjoy the ride on the Timber Wolf wooden roller coaster at Worlds of Fun. About 250

members of the American Coasters Enthusiasts are in Kansas City for a national convention. The group, which has 2,000 members in 16 countries, is dedicated to the enjoyment of roller coasters.

## Timber Wolf gets high ratings

"The Timber Wolf," Worlds of Fun's new wooden roller coaster, has been ranked the number-two roller

coaster in the world by coaster enthusiasts.

The results of the annual readers' poll were published in the August issue of *Inside Track*, the international newsletter for roller coaster enthusiasts, saying Timber Wolf was only topped by The Beast, at Kings Island in Cincinnati, Ohio, which has held the number-one spot since it was built in 1979.

Passengers on the Timber Wolf experience a 95-foot drop, hairpin turns, speeds of 53 mph, and an unusual 560-degree upward spiraling helix.

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LAWSON REVIEW  
(LAWSON, MISSOURI)  
September 6, 1989

## Timber Wolf roller coaster ranked second best in the world

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PLATTE COUNTY GAZETTE  
(PARKVILLE, MISSOURI)  
September 6, 1989

PRESS-DISPATCH  
(KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI)  
September 6, 1989

## Timber Wolf earns the No. 2 spot

It's not even a season old, but Worlds of Fun's wooden roller coaster, Timber Wolf, has been ranked the No. 2 coaster in the world by a group of coaster enthusiasts.

The results of the annual readers' poll were published in the August issue of *Inside Track*, a newsletter for roller-coaster fans. Timber Wolf was topped by The Beast, located at Kings Island in Cincinnati, Ohio, which has held the No. 1 spot since it was built in 1979.

The Kings Island coaster received 567 votes. Timber Wolf received 277 votes.

# Timber Wolf No. 2 in world, based on report

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turns and great speeds, and the Timber Wolf succeeds as a great roller coaster on all levels. A lot of our members, who have ridden hundreds of coasters, are already saying it's their personal best roller coaster in the entire universe."

Other ranked coasters included the Cyclone at Astroland in Coney Island, N.Y., the Twister at Elitch's Gardens in Denver, and the Phoenix at Knoebel's

Amusement Resort in Elysburg, Pa.

"Nobody knows roller coasters better than the coaster enthusiasts represented in the readers' poll in *Inside Track*," Worlds of Fun General Manager John Hudacek said. "We are thrilled that they consider the Timber Wolf the second-best coaster in the entire world. And we've not operated it a full season yet."

Other comments about the Timber Wolf have ranged from "terrifying ecstasy" to "breathtaking" to "the scariest ride I've ever been on." One 70-year-old member of ACE said, "What Worlds of Fun has is what makes a great roller coaster. This is the way coasters used to be built."

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## *Timber Wolf*

A readers poll published in the August issue of "Inside Track," an international newsletter for roller coaster enthusiasts, ranked Worlds of Fun's Timber Wolf second best in the world. Top ranking went to The Beast, located at Kings Island in Cincinnati, Ohio.

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