

The
Carousel

News & Trader

November 2010
Vol. 26, No. 11
\$5.95

SPECIAL IAAPA ISSUE:

***115 Years in Crescent Park, RI
for Looff's Magnificent Carousel***

***20 Years at Carousel Center Mall
for Syracuse, NY, 1909 PTC #18***

Beautiful Illions Armored Horses

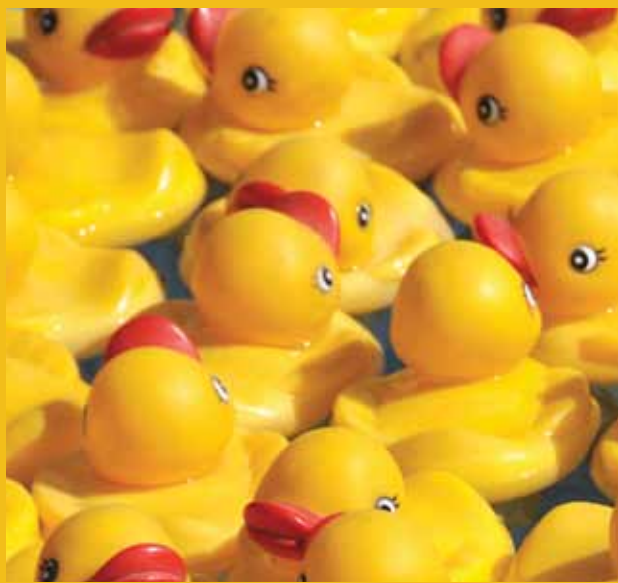
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1925 PTC. Last operated Kiddieland in Melrose, IL
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1900s PTC Carousel

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1900s Loeff Carousel

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1900s PTC Carousel

Rare 4-row unrestored carousel great for community project. Priced to sell. Restoration available.

1927 Dentzel frame from Rock Springs, WV

The last carousel Dentzel ever built with the trim still in original paint. Replacement animals available.

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Original steam engine with 24 animals and 2 chariots.

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All original animals. Currently up and operating looking for new home.

1900s PTC Carousel

A huge 4-row with all original animals. Restored and ready to operate.

1920s Dentzel Menagerie Carousel

All original animals. Deluxe trim. Currently in storage. Videos of it operating at its last location.

1920s Dentzel Carousel

Another huge 4-row machine, just like Disneyland's, with 78 replacement animals.

Allan Herschell Carousel

30 horses. New sweeps and platforms. Set up for outdoor use. Located on East Coast. Up and running; ready to go.

1920s Spillman

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ON THE COVER:



November, 2010
Vol. 26, No. 11

The carousel that Charles I. D. Looff once used as his showpiece, to showcase his work, celebrates 115 years in Crescent Park, Riverside, RI.

Photo by Roland Hopkins

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Allan Herschell Carousel



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The Carousel News & Trader

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Carousel Calendar

AUCTIONS

November 13, 2010

Auburn, IN. Norton's Annual Consignment Auction. Carousel figures, carnival rides, amusement park rides, full carousels, band organs and all related amusement equipment and collectibles. Consign early for maximum advertising exposure. Brochure deadline is Oct. 15. For information and consignment package contact Norton Auctioneers, www.nortonauctioneers.com, (517) 279-9063.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Nov. 15-19, 2010

Orlando, FL. 2010 IAAPA Attractions Expo. Orange County Convention Center. Visit www.IAAPA.org.

Nov. 20 - Dec. 23, 2010

Berkely, CA. *Christmas Fantasy.* Holiday light spectacular at the Tilden Park Carousel. Probably the best carousel Christmas light show in the country as the 1911 Herschell Spillman menagerie and surrounding grounds of the park are lit up with thousands of colorful lights for the holidays. Open evenings only, 5:30-8:30 pm. Call (510) 524-6773 for details.

Nov. 27 - Dec. 23, 2010

Santa Cruz, CA. *Santa Cruz Holiday Lights Train.* Ride vintage excursion cars, adorned with thousands of colorful lights, as they roll through Santa Cruz. Seasonal carols, hot-spiced cider, musical entertainment, and Santa and Mrs. Claus. Continue the merriment at Santa's Kingdom at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. Advance reservations recommended. Weekends through Dec. 23. For tickets and info, visit www.beachboardwalk.com.

Nov. 27, 2010 - Jan. 2, 2011

Burnaby, BC. *Burnaby Heritage Christmas 2010.* Enjoy the boughs, red bows and all the other old-fashioned ornaments and decorations throughout the village and farmhouse. Traditional entertainment, demonstrations, hands-on activities and exhibits from the early 1900s. Children's crafts, Father Christmas, and a whirl on the C.W. Parker Carousel. For information, www.burnaby.ca.

COAA AND AMICA BAND ORGAN RALLYS

May 21, 2011

Hanford, CA. Magnificent Pipes of Hanford. Antique carousel in town square. Historic theatre and church organs in town. Plenty of room for visiting organs. A fun event with a great food and a local homemade ice cream shop. For special hotel rates contact Dave Jones at visitHanford@att.net, or (559) 582-5024; (cell) 559-707-9983.

SEND US YOUR EVENTS!

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or email to roland@carouselnews.com.

Letters to the Editor

Bushkill, Long Carousel

Roland, I was impressed by your article in the September issue. This is important documentation. I have a comment on the Bushkill Park carousel(s). You indicate that the carousel dispersed/auctioned in 1991 was a PTC/ Dentzel. While it had animals from those companies (mainly Zalar and Cernigliaro, along with Muller), it was a Long merry-go-round, carved originally, mostly, by Leopold. It is still intact, but in storage. Tom Long made various substitutions over the years. Also, Bushkill Park had a 1920s vintage Allan Herschell (all wood) until 2004 when it, too, had to be sold. It is currently intact and in storage, also. A Long carousel was lost to fire in Seneca Park, Rochester, NY, quite a while before your chronology starts (about 1948), but it was originally George Long's (as mentioned in the Sept. issue, In Memoriam), and then Ted Long's. You did cite correctly that George Long's PTC in Seabreeze Park and Bob Long's Carmel/Looft in Eldridge Park have been replaced with reproduction animals. Again, a nice job of tracking these machines. – *Ron Long*

Happyland Dentzel in New York

Gray Tuttle called to point out that the Happyland Dentzel mentioned in last month's magazine as being missing from our lost carousel list, was misidentified as being in Maryland. Happyland was in Bethpage, NY. Gray is going to send some photos and a small story on the park for an upcoming issue.

More September Corrections

We heard from carousel expert, author, and historian, Barbara Williams with some corrections on the September Anniversary Issue. These arrived too late for the October issue, and some of Barbara's comments were attended to in October. These are the ones not attended to:

Page 28 - 1979 - Long Beach, CA - Looft; same machine as listed under 1980 as **Queen's Pike**, Long Beach, CA - Looft/Williams.

Page 30 - No Parker at **Ocean Park**, Los Angeles, CA in 1986. (*We'll have to dig deeper to see where we went wrong on this one.*)

Page 38 - **Carrousel Art**, not **Carousel Art**.

Page 39 - **Kaydeross** sold for \$150,000 not \$15,000.

Page 41 - **Jon Abbott**, not John Abbott.

Our thanks to Barbara for her keen eye in catching our errors.

October Band Organ Cover

Hi Roland, Your usage of images from my organ book and especially the front cover is much appreciated. I will show these at an organ event here on 16th October to organ owners. – Best wishes, Brian Steptoe

Our thanks to Brian for providing us with such a great cover shot for the issue.

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Dentzel



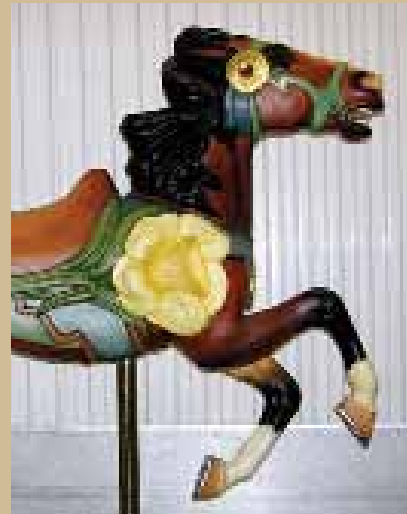
Circa 1915 Dentzel Jumper.
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C. W. Parker



"Lillie Belle" outside-row lead jumper with
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Spillman



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Herschell Spillman



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From Dan's Desk

Message from the publisher,
Dan Horenberger

These are little bits of information that come across my desk. Some will become bigger stories in future issues of the CN&T; others are just passed-along information.

It's time again for the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions "IAAPA" trade show in Orlando, FL, November 15 to 19.

This is a chance to see a lot of friends we only get to see once a year. We'll be in booth 3117, so please stop by and say "hi" if you're attending. If you look in the magazine, you will see other exhibitors and their booth numbers.

I've been home for a little while and had plenty of time to find things to write about for my Dan's Desk. Sorry to say that there is not much worth reporting on. Normally something is happening, but right now the whole amusement park and carousel world is at a stand still.

There was a little surge after the Government stimulus plan of a trillion dollars trickled down to cities. Some carousel projects got a few dollars but that money is all gone. Cit-



ies are broke, so spending on carousels is the last thing on their list. Amusement parks are waiting to find out how their tax and health care situation is going to lay out. Congress went to recess without any answers for any of us, so for the most part, we all are at a stand still until this health care and tax situation is finalized.

This isn't news to anyone reading this. Things are bad all over. The good thing is no carousels that I know of are in danger. If you know of one let me know and I'll do what I can to save it. Also the Euro is high right now, but their economy is just as bad too, so there is not a lot of interest in carousels going to Europe. Asia is another story. A lot of interest there, but since American carousels go counter clockwise it's bad luck there. It sounds funny but true. Things going counter clockwise are bad luck. I'm always getting asked if I can make the carousel go clockwise. I always tell any overseas interests that antique carousels are national treasures and not for export. We have plenty of new machines available for export.

We're going to be in a freeze until after the next election. Amusement parks are scared and city's hands are tied. Non profits aren't getting donations. Just not a lot of extra money for carousels.

The great thing is that 100 years from today, people will still be riding the same antique carousels that we are riding now – that were being ridden 100 years ago – still enjoying the great memories that have been passed down from generation to generation. Carousel memories are recession and depression proof.



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Looking for substantial figures to place on a historic operating carousel.
Carmel, Muller, Dentzel, PTC, S&G, Illions. Armored.



What Could It Be?

Dear CN&T,

I don't know if you can help me - I hope so. I have a very old half horse (that is a horse that has a flat back that I think was attached to the center of the carousel for decoration? I believe



it came off of the carousel at Indian Lake, Ohio, known as the Million Dollar Playground which closed in the 1970s. Or perhaps you might know who I could contact for help. Thank you,

Nikki Smith; nasmith4436@yahoo.com

Well, I took a wild guess that though it is flat, it was once two halves attached to make one three dimensional horse. Possible a decoration atop the carousel building? But why the external braces? Lourida thought those braces could indicate it was an old "Wonder Horse", or half of one, and the braces would have attached to the springs for rocking. Grey Tuttle looked at his photos of the carousel at Million Dollar Playground and saw no such decoration. He had no ideas as to what it was. So the jury is still out. Any ideas?

Dear CN&T,

A guest of mine sent me copies of this horse. It looks like a Mexican Carved Horse. What do you think?

Sincerely, Sandra Sanders; plymouthhouseinn@att.net; Plymouth House Inn (www.plymouthhouseinn.com)

Hi Sandra,

This comes from Lourinda Bray, avid collector, restorer, and researcher.

"I don't think it's Mexican. I don't remember any of those carvers putting bodies together like that with vertical planking. Might just be a one-of-a-kind thing someone carved in his garage, or it may have come from the Phillipines."

I could run some of the pictures of it in the next issue with Lourinda's comments and see if any of our other readers have ideas on it or have ever seen a similar figure.

Well... any ideas on this one?

– Roland

(Send replies directly or to roland@carouselnews.com)



Sizing up the job ahead at the Endicott Carousel.

New Cranks for Endicott Carousel

A few carousels found some money this year to get much needed mechanical work done. We were pretty busy all year working on carousels coast-to-coast – that's what you do in a recession, get back to the bread and butter – in our case, the grease. Included in the work was a new ring gear for Crescent Park and new crankshafts for PTC #18 in Syracuse. See stories on these carousels inside this issue.

We also installed new crankshafts for the 1929 Allan Herschell menagerie in Endicott, NY.

One of the 6 Broome County Carousels, Endicott is very well maintained. The carousel animals all looked great, and now you can count on a nice smooth ride.



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Notes from Marianne...

By Marianne Stevens
Carousel Historian, Co-Author
of "Painted Ponies."

I've always loved the pretty horses on the old carousels. I guess the eye is naturally attracted by their beauty. I admit I liked the armored horses the best; all of that intricate carving was wonderful. What talent it took to create and carve an armored horse.

That being said, and the fact that I'm retired and no longer spend my time sanding, carving and painting these lovely horses anymore, I find myself wondering about obscure facts that come to mind about old carousels.

Looking through the new Painted Ponies calendar, I was struck by the beauty of the Illions armored horse shown there, and started to wonder how many of his armored horses still exist. My final count was seventeen.

This is rather surprising as the Feltman-style horses are well over one hundred years old. And there are at least two of them on an operating carousel – Nunley's. The rest are in collector's hands.



B&B armored Illions



From the Rod Link Shows courtesy of Lourinda Bray.

The is the list I came up with:

Feltman-Style

Feltman Carousel	(Summits)
Feltman Carousel	(Prosperi)
?	(Nunley's Carousel)
?	(Nunley's Carousel)
Ponchartrain Beach	(Bray)

Stubbman-Style

Fun Forest Carousel	(Freels)
Stubbman Carousel	(Corona Park)
Sunset Park	(?) <i>Lincoln Head</i>
Fun Forest Park	(?) <i>Lincoln Head</i>
Atlantic Beach Park	(NECM) <i>Lincoln Head</i>
Stubbman Carousel	(B&B) <i>Lincoln Head</i>
Riverside/Agawam - 3	(Six Flags) <i>1 Signature</i>
Mangels Show Room	(Schott) <i>Signature</i>
Willow Grove Park	(Kuchar)
Rod Link Shows	(Bray)
Kister Carousel	(Columbus Zoo)

Perhaps some of my friends can fill in the blanks here. I'll be waiting to hear from you.

Cheerio, Marianne



Ponchartrain Beach Illions courtesy of Lourinda Bray.



From the Stubbman Carousel on Coney Island, now in Corona Park, Flushing Meadows, NY.



Feltman Carousel armored Illions in the Summit Collection.



This beautiful Illions horse was last on board the mixed carousel at Fun forest Park in Seattle, WA. It is now owned by the Freels Foundation and is featured in the 2011 Painted Ponies Calendar. Photo by Bill Manns.



A perky Agawam Illions with a different design.



Columbus Zoo, formerly the Kister Carousel, Coney Island.



Signature armored from Mangels Showroom to Mr. Yount's Carousel, now owned by George Schott.



Another gorgeous Illions from Riverside Park, Agawam.

Riding With The Rabbit

By Richard Concepcion

US Amusement Park Memories Fading...



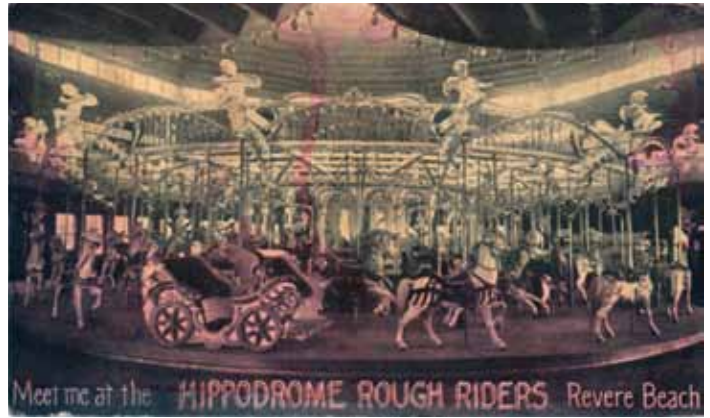
Last month I wrote here about how the last complete landmark and historic amusement park near me could be threatened with closure in the coming years. It never ceases to amaze me how many amusement parks have come and gone in my area alone around the New York City region (not to mention around the country) over the past century. I've mentioned some of the famous and major ones in my previous column, but there were so many more parks that were either smaller, or were around for such a short time that they have been long forgotten. The only notice of their prior existence has either been images of faded post-cards bought and sold by collectors (or more recently published in softbound books such as the "Images of America" series) or the similarly fading memories of those who have lived during that era.

People didn't travel far to visit amusement parks at that time; they visited local places and often took local public transportation there. With brand-name theme parks dominating the landscape nowadays, their patronage is more likely regional in scope and often nationwide and even international. Such places are spaced out a lot further apart than the parks of old, and long car drives, charter or public buses, and even airlines bring the fun-seekers to their gates.

Still, the number of amusement parks both modern and legacy has remained relatively stagnant over the past couple of decades. In the United States, we still lose some old parks, yet newer ones either don't materialize or open then fail soon after.

So what kind of destination entertainment has shown tremendous growth during that same period of time? Casino gambling! Once solely the exclusive offering of Las Vegas, then came Atlantic City on the New Jersey shore, followed by proliferation on Indian reservations and more recently, horse racing tracks. Everywhere throughout the NYC region you have tour buses making tracks for Atlantic City, with those services now being joined by coaches serving casinos in Connecticut and Pennsylvania.

That thought has always bothered me. Why is it that more gambling casinos are being built but not amusement parks, and that we continue to lose what we have of the latter? The economic reasons are apparent, but are there social reasons too? Are purely adult "sin" pursuits more desirable and therefore profitable, while innocent amusement recreation for families and all ages too much of a financial liability and drain on infrastructure?



Revere Beach, north of Boston, MA, was once home to some great carousels including the Rough Riders.

Building gaming casinos for the most part has not exerted pressure on existing amusement parks to convert – with two notable exceptions.

When casino gambling was brought in to revive the aging seaside resort of Atlantic City, it did lead to the closing of most of the remaining amusement attractions on the piers. Of the two more famous piers there, the Million Dollar Pier was turned into a shopping mall. The other was the Steel Pier – after being destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt with concrete to support a sports complex idea that never materialized, then served as the heliport for Trump's Taj casino, and then in the '90s was leased out to become an amusement park again. However, a few years ago, the developer sought to close the park down and redevelop the pier into condos and upscale shopping. At present, the Steel Pier amusement park continues to operate.

Closer to home though, just floating the idea of bringing in casino gambling had devastating effects on Coney Island under the Koch administration. Land speculators bought into the shrinking amusement zone and sat on their vacant lots hoping to flip them at a profit, while preventing current amusement operators from expanding or potential operators from setting up anew.



Atlantic City's Steel Pier Amusement Park continues to survive despite the constant threat of redevelopment.



Though Ohio's Idora Park is long gone, its carousel lives on and will spin again beneath the Brooklyn Bridge.

Ironically enough, in recent decades, Las Vegas has sought to widen their tourist appeal to include families with kids, as several casinos tacked amusement parks and rides onto their properties.

Back here on the East Coast though, Atlantic City has instead decided to try luring in clothing shoppers by unveiling The Walk, a strip of retail outlet stores stretching from the bus terminal to the rail terminal, to partly make up for the loss of gamblers to casinos in Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

As for amusement parks in Atlantic City – the resort still would rather refer those fun-seekers to Playland and Gillian's Wonderland Pier in Ocean City and Morey's Piers in Wildwood.

Recently, a fellow Coney Island supporter posted on the CIUSA bulletin board, mentioning his European travels and how many old historic amusement parks across the Atlantic from us are still thriving. He writes "The Netherlands still has its De Efteling, Copenhagen its Tivoli Gardens and Pa Bakken (the world's oldest amusement park), Budapest has its Vidam Park, and England its Blackpool.

But why has the United States lost their so many of their historic and iconic parks such as Paragon Park, Revere Beach Park, Idora Park, Playland at the Beach, Boblo Is-



Wildwood-By-The-Sea, New Jersey. Like Revere Beach, MA, Wildwood, NJ, was the host to a number of fine carousels.



Shortly after a complete restoration, the Boblo Island Park Illions was sold piecemeal at auction after the park changed ownership. The park, like the carousel would also soon disappear. Postcards courtesy of Lourinda Bray

land Park, Euclid Beach, Riverview, White City, and most recently, Chicago lost their 80-year-old Kiddieland Park.

Those of us in the United States are forced to live off of faded old postcard views and memories.

After two world wars, Europe still has their treasured parks and they prosper; and you can visit them and wallow in their timeless grandeur. But, we in the United States, seem to continue to toss our treasures aside.

Indeed, we must not gamble away our treasured parks and playlands as we cannot ride our memories.

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Carousels Go Green

MERRY-GO-ROUND MUSEUM IN SANDUSKY SWITCHES TO ALL LED CAROUSEL LIGHTING



The Merry-Go-Round Museum in Sandusky, Ohio, made the energy conscious change to LED lighting for their carousel this year. With approximately 365 lights on their 3 row Allan Herschell mechanism, the museum has noted a savings of around \$150 a month on their electric bill. Imagine the savings on a large park machine boasting 1,000 lights or more.



MGM Museum Curator, Kurri Lewis aptly demonstrates how many curators it takes to screw in 367 light bulbs.



The LED lights show no visual compromise in the appearance of the antique machine, (except for the two missing.)

The Mall Marked its 20th Year with Free Rides on the Historic Carousel

Restoration Efforts Bring 1909 PTC #18 Back to Original Glory



Susan Germain photo

On October 15, 2010, PTC #18 and the Carousel Center Mall celebrated 20 years in Syracuse, NY. Longer for the carousel.

By Susan Germain

Special to *The Carousel News & Trader*

As far as restoring carousel figures goes, the better a figure is originally constructed will determine its overall durability, especially after it's been in use for 80 to 100 years. Some companies used the best cuts of wood, laminating together large quality boards to construct their figures, while others used every little scrap of wood lying around, disregarding grain or strength. PTC was in business 25 years and their figures vary in construction over that time just as much as the carving styles vary.

PTC #18 represents "middle" quality of construction. Good wood was used, but in smaller pieces and relatively softer strength when compared to later period PTCs like #50. They're a step below a Dentzel, but above Illions. PTC #18 has held up remarkably well considering it's seen 101 years of rider abuse.



PTC #18 chariot, yet to be restored. Behind it, the Artizan band organ with No. Tonawanda facade. Eric Fabbro photo



(Before above; After right). I realize this mousy gray is a difficult formula to ascertain, but this poor guy was just painted in increasingly darker layers of black.

Some people dislike the long, sourpuss faces of the horses from this time period of PTC carving. I love their doleful expression (especially the middle row), the curly layered manes, the clever trapping detail, and the huge size of the outer row figures.

As for the quality of carving, there is always a difference between the outside-row carvings, and the apprentice carved inside-row on PTCs. The inside carry flatly carved tails, chisel slips and even design mistakes. (I've always been amused by the design phenomenon of "floating" saddles not connected to the girth and this PTC is full of them).

Although I can't claim to have painted very many of PTC #18's figures during it's initial restoration, I definitely have a personal bond with them. This carousel was in process



(Before above; After right). Another example of just not knowing technique. The operators and myself have nicknamed all the badly touched up dapples as "lizard" horses. It's expected as knees, ears & noses are bumped & scraped, they evolve a shade or two deeper when repeatedly touched up. But a green polka dotted rump?



Note the difference in metallic paint vs real leaf. It's not all that expensive, just a more laborious technique. It's completely worth doing, for the resulting sparkle.

of restoration when I first came to R&F Designs as an apprentice. It also had last operated within 10 miles from my home in upstate New York. I first learned original painting techniques on these figures and most likely painted all the hooves, manes and tails to practice. The first complete horse I ever painted is on this machine, taking me from an apprentice to educated carousel painter. A black horse too, the single most difficult color to paint as every newcomer soon finds out.

That restoration is now over 20 years old. During that time, several people have had a hand in the ride's upkeep, but none of them with credentials specific in historic carousel preservation. At some point, an unidentifiable matte poly "top coat" was used on these figures. This top coat resists sanding, but instead has separated and peeled in large



I can't tell you how painful it was to paint that teal saddle, but there would be an outcry if I took it upon myself to change it to leather brown. That's why it's called "restoration" and not "creative painting".



(Before above; After right). This pale palomino outside row horse had faded considerably from sun exposure despite the darkened yellowing varnish. Blue or green are typical color choices for a palomino but I admire the original color choice of more unusual peach saddle and lavender purple blanket. If you make 'every' horse with strong dark colors, they fight for your eye as they spin past.

sheets. The paint touch ups did not blend and are visible several feet away, making the horses look "dirty". In places where colors or patterns could not be deciphered, they were universally painted a turquoise blue, changing the authentic color scheme of the original restoration considerably.

A quick side note on colors: I'm always asked what "historic colors" mean. When you've seen carousel horses in original colors, hopefully you document them in some way. I use photographs, matching paint chips, then mix the color



The inability to match color correctly is evident in the large areas of opaque darkened color (left), looking splotchy and "dirty". The figures are originally painted in such a way that touch ups can be easily blended to cover superficial damage. If serious repair is required, you repaint the section or "quarter". This is why most "quarters", are light or dark where they meet. Above right shows the kind of touch up performed on these figures. Dark filler should never show through the paint and obviously the wrong type of paint was used. Because of this, all figures require full repainting instead of simply continuing touch ups.



Instead, if you create a mixture of light, dark, strong and soft combinations there is an overall harmony and visual flow of the machine. Luckily, I had an original 8 x 10 photo of this horse when it had first been restored, so I knew exactly the colors to reproduce. Photos by Susan Germain

from the several "pure" pigments available in Japan Oils of the time period and keep them in a book. I usually note which pigments, but mix the percentage by eye. Even with the most diligent investigation, you may be documenting faded or altered colors anyway – you just do your best. When you have to paint similar style figures that were previously stripped (as in the case of PTC #18) you have that

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(Before above; After below). A blank painted silver shield just begging for decoration.



I have found a few inner and middle row horses on this machine that sport "Dentzel-like" straps and trappings, making me wonder if any former Dentzel employees worked at PTC during this time, (although the majority of blanket shapes scream E. Joy Morris). Several outside row horses sport Carmel/S&G-like dragons and tassels further confusing carver identification.

book of colors as reference. These colors will vary from company to company just as much as style and time period. I'm constantly referring to the formulas in my books of "original colors" from hundreds of pieces I've documented over the years.

So PTC #18 is in the process of having its colors brought back to what it looked like after its initial historical restoration by R&F Designs. This requires several techniques; There are entire areas faded almost to beige where to indicate color, I must look on the inside and scrape under the pinstriping. Wherever I'm finding gold or silver paint applied, I'm replacing it with gold & aluminum leaf. There are several places, like the chariot steps, that are worn down to the primer – photo research shows they were green faux painted marble. I'm so grateful for the exceptional wood re-

pair the staff at R&F Designs did on these figures. It's such good quality and durable, these figures only need a fresh paint job after being ridden 364 days a year for 22 years. Remarkable restoration workmanship.

When I visit the PTC Factory building in Germantown, I imagine these figures, all in a row, waiting for each stage of sanding, priming, painting and varnishing. Now that's all being done again, only in the back, secret hallways of the Mall. Riders seem to gravitate towards the shiny refurbished horses on the platform while the duller dark ones await their turn. It's a privilege to be a part of PTC #18's professional working life.

New Crankshafts for Century Old Ride as Carousel Center Mall Celebrates 20 Years

By Dan Horenberger

The Carousel Center Mall contacted us about getting their carousel ready for its 20th anniversary and making the carousel ADA compliant.

Since the installation, the carousel never had all of the crankshafts working correctly. Many were broken and the State of NY ride inspectors tagged others as not usable.

Brass Ring Entertainment was brought in to make all new crankshafts. The first step was having the inspectors pass our drawings. All of our drawings needed to be stamped by a certified Mechanical Engineer. It's not a problem for us since most states require this prior to the manufacturing of new parts.

Engineered precision crankshafts.

We made the new crankshafts at our shop and then the ordeal started. It's just a casual 2,800 mile ride to Syracuse from our shop. Three days and we were there, ready to go. But, unlike most jobs, the carousel is in a mall. No day time work for us. We get to start our workday at 10 p.m., when the mall closes. Then, the next issue is that the carousel is on the second floor. Every part had to go up an escalator. Glad we didn't have to bring the whole carousel in that way. But a few trips up and down and the parts are at the carousel.

Since we didn't want to move the crankshaft gears from



Key-way slots being milled on site at the mall.



The new crankshaft is up and ready to be tied in.

the original shafts, we cut the shafts and spliced our new shafts to the original crankshaft gear. To do that we had to bring in a portable milling machine from the shop and milled the key-way slots on site, at night while the mall was closed. The mall wanted to keep the carousel open every day, so we had to work piece-by-piece to get the job done, day-after-day one crankshaft at a time.

The carousel had never been timed or balanced so when we were done not only did all of the animals finally jump up and down, but did it with ease. No one at the mall had ever seen it work 100% in the last 20 years.



The new crankshafts went up the escalator and the old cranks came down. Not much else for the Brass Ring crew to do when working in a mall.

The real reward for us came when the job was done. We we're too tired to care any more, other then it was done. Then, the public come in to ride, and noticed the difference. Their telling the mall they could tell the difference made those long, painful nights go away pretty quickly. We all have options on how to make a living. Seeing the public's smiling faces on a carousel we just repaired makes us remember why carousel restoration is the road we chose.

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The Park Closed in 1979, But the Carousel was Saved Intact, In Place 115 Years in Crescent Park for Looff's Magnificent Carousel



Charles I. D. Looff established a summer residence nearby Crescent Park in 1886. He placed his first carousel in the park in 1892 and moved his shop and family there in 1905.

By Ray Simmons

(Great-grandson of Charles I. D. Looff)

Special to The Carousel News & Trader

The Charles I. D. Looff carousel at Crescent Park in Riverside, Rhode Island, stands as the magnificent crown jewel of the dozen or so survivors from over 40 carousels that Looff created during his 42 year career. Although the amusement park closed in 1979 after a 93 year run, the refurbished carousel still operates today on its original site, 115 years after its creation.

Crescent Park and the Charles I. D. Looff Carousel

It all started in 1886, when with a reported capital of 65 dollars, George Boyden signed a five-year lease for the land east of the Bullock's Point Hotel in Riverside, RI, and started building an amusement park. He would name it Crescent Park after the crescent-shaped bathing beach.

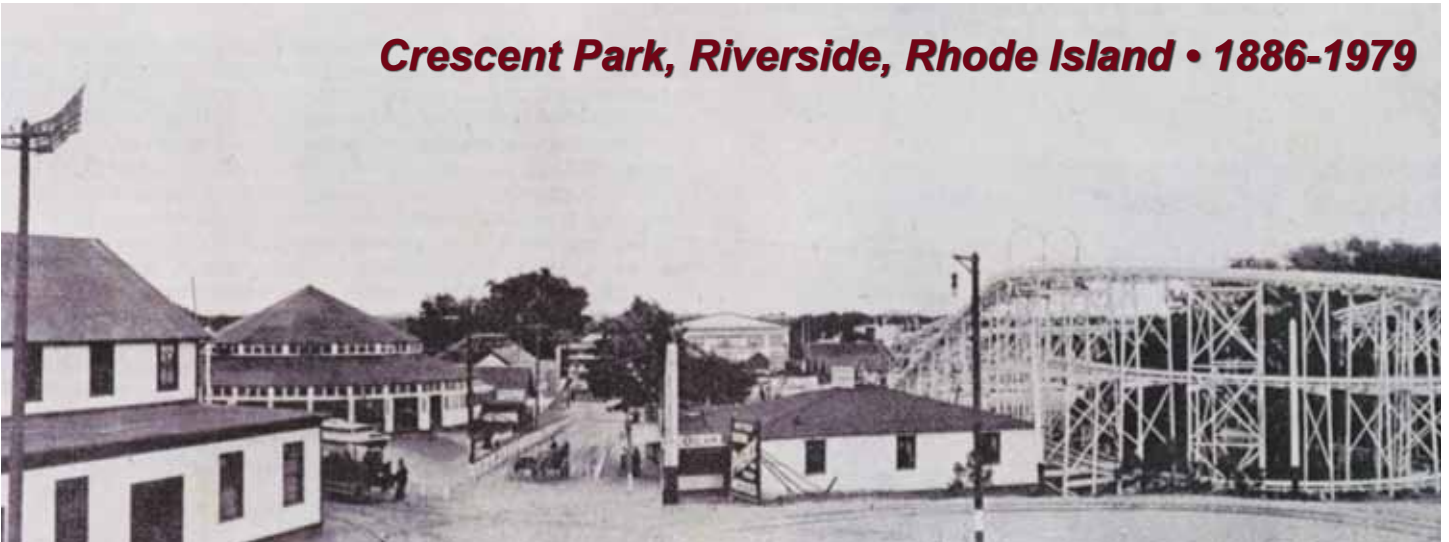
Boyden went on to buy the 40-room hotel on the waterfront and renamed it the Crescent Park Hotel. A large shore dinner hall was built next to the hotel.



Looff used his second Crescent Park carousel as a show-piece to sell prospective customers.

The park would soon spread out on 50 acres overlooking glittering Narragansett Bay on the west, and picturesque Bullock's Cove on the southeast.

Crescent Park, Riverside, Rhode Island • 1886-1979



Crescent Park, c. 1898 shows the Loeff carousel before the onion dome was added. The building to the left was the Crescent Park Inn; it served food and beer. The Shore Dinner Hall was further left, on the water. You can see one of the trolleys between the Inn and the carousel. The midway runs east-west between the white fences (where the horse and wagon are). The gable roof behind the carousel would become the Penny Arcade. The large white building in the center distance is the Alhambra Ballroom. The coaster is a Thompson scenic railway, I think. The park's main coaster was near the ballroom. The small white building next to the coaster is an ice cream stand which would later house the famous McCusker's Pop Corn and Taffy concession.



The Loeff family at the Crescent Park merry-go-round, c. 1905-1910. From left; Charles, I. D Loeff, his wife, Anna (Dolle) Loeff, oldest son, Charles, Helen (my grandmother), Emma (of Spokane fame), William, and youngest son, Arthur.



The crowded beach in the early 1900s. A sign to the left reminds that there are "Bathing Suits to Let".



Shoot the Chutes in the early 1900s.

In the early years, the most popular attractions at Crescent Park included:

- Shoot the Chutes, a water slide featuring large wooden boats,
- Witching Waves, a ride where folks ride in cars on a moving floor,
- Bamboo Slide, a wooden tower with a spiral slide,
- Flying Eagle, a circular swing ride,
- Flying Toboggan roller coaster,
- Miniature railroad,
- Steeplechase, with racing wooden horses,
- Penny arcade and fun house,
- Balloon Ascension, a hot-air balloon ride,
- Pony track

Archive photos in this article courtesy of Arthur Simmons, Ed Serowik and the Crescent Park Carousel Archives.



The Bamboo Slide and Music Hall in the late 1800s.



A large crowd outside of the Steeple Chase; late 1800s.



The Flying Eagle was popular at the turn of the century.



Charles I. D. Loeff

In 1886, two years after Boyden's Crescent Park was established, Charles I. D. Loeff, master-carver and carousel builder, established a summer residence nearby.

Loeff, whose given name was Karl Jurgen Detlef Loeff, was born in a town called Bad Bramstedt in Schleswig Holstein, Denmark in 1852. He traveled to America in 1870 and settled in Brooklyn, NY. His father, Jurgen Detlev Christian Loeff, was a master blacksmith. Young Loeff probably changed his first name to Charles when he entered the U.S., and as to his middle initials, the most logical explanation is that an immigration clerk mistook the J in Jurgen for an I. (In Old German script they look identical.)

I remember my aunt Dorothy telling me that when she heard Loeff's middle names she would giggle because they sounded funny to her. So, he became forever known as Charles I. D. Loeff. Settling into an apartment on Green Street in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, young Loeff found work as a wood carver in a furniture factory. He also worked as a ballroom dance instructor, where he met a pretty girl named Anna Dolle. They began dating, and were married in 1874. They would have six children; three girls, Anna, Helen, and Emma; and three boys, Charles, William, and Arthur.

Working at home in his spare time, Loeff carved wooden horses and animals and little by little assembled his first merry-go-round in 1875. The 27 horses and other animals stood two-abreast on a simple platform. The primitive animals were of slightly different sizes and looked whimsical. A simple wooden bench, in which people could sit, was mounted on the platform. The ride was illuminated with kerosene lanterns. (Thomas Edison's first light bulb would not be produced until four years later in 1879.)

A drummer and a flute player provided music for the



At the Crescent Park carousel with the mushroom dome installed, (standing from left) Charles, Anna, Emma, Helen, Arthur and William. Charles, Jr. seated left?



The interior of the Alhambra Ballroom at Crescent Park. Loeff was a dance instructor at a ballroom in Brooklyn where he met his wife, Anna Dolle.

customers on this first ride. A metal ring-arm, hung on a pole outside the ride, fed small, iron rings for eager riders to grab. A canvas tent-top protected the riders from the weather. The machine appeared to be man-powered. Some of the early carousels were horse or mule-powered, but from photographs, there does not appear to be enough room for a horse to walk around on the inside of Loeff's first machine.

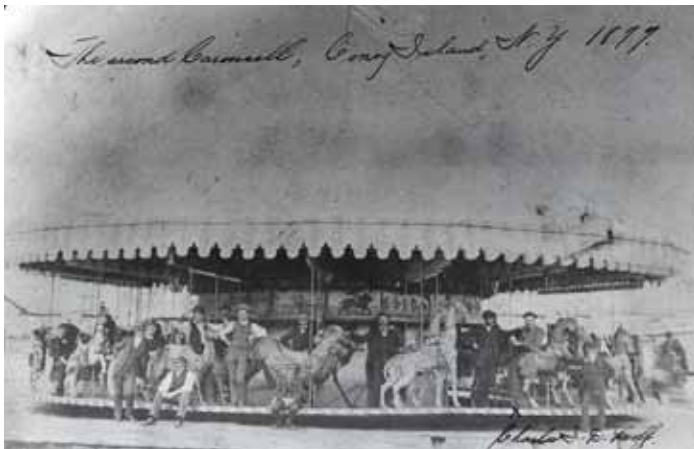
Loeff was able to sell his creation in 1876 to Vandevier's bathhouse complex (later called Balmer's Pavilion) at West 6th St. and Surf Ave. in New York's fledgling amusement area known as Coney Island, (soon to become the premier amusement resort in America). This was Coney Island's first merry-go-round. The original carousel's fare was five cents. A photo of the ride shows Charles I. D. Loeff standing proudly between two horses wearing his ever-present brown derby. A sign in the center of the ride reads "Charles Loeff's Carroussel." (Unfortunately, Loeff's historic first merry-go-round would burn down in the Dreamland fire of 1911.)





1895 Looff Four-Row Carousel
Crescent Park, East Providence, RI

Photo circa 1967 courtesy of the Crescent Park Archives
(Ed Serowik carousel keeper, shown)



Looff's second carousel, the second carousel on Coney Island, was a three-row menagerie installed at Feltman's Beer Garden on Surf Ave. in 1877.

Elated by his first sale, Looff started work on a second machine, a three-abreast ride, which would include chickens, giraffes, camels, goats, a hippocampus and other animals besides horses. The ride was complete with ring-arm, tent-top, and two more-elaborate chariots. He sold it in 1877 to Charles Feltman, the inventor of the "American Hot Dog." Looff installed the ride at Feltman's Beer Garden on Surf Avenue at Coney. When the ride was damaged in the West Brighton fire in 1899, Feltman commissioned two men; Marcus Illions and William F. Mangels to rebuild the fire-damaged machine. Many of the Looff animals were salvaged and included in the reconstructed carousel.

Charles I. D. Looff set up his merry-go-round factory on Bedford Avenue and began to hire some of the talented European carvers in New York. John Zalar from Austria, Charles Carmel from Russia, Marcus C. Illions from Lithuania, and Solomon Stein and Harry Goldstein from Russia were some of the master carvers that worked for Looff over the years. Looff's brother-in-law, Fred Dolle, became a manufacturer of carousels by building the platforms and mechanical parts of the ride and populating them with animals from Looff and other carvers.

Crescent Park's First Carousel

At Crescent Park, Looff was contracted by George Boyden, in 1892, to build a merry-go-round at the head of the 400' pier that jugged into Narragansett Bay. A three-abreast machine was produced in Looff's Brooklyn factory and transported to Riverside, RI. The carousel was the first attraction that the hordes of people swarming off the riverboats would see. It was an instant success. In 1893, electric trolleys begin to transport people from Providence, Rhode Island's capital, to the park. That same year, Chicago's World Exposition and its giant Ferris wheel opened.

In 1895, Looff, originator of the "Coney Island-Style", constructed a second carousel on the Crescent Park midway, across Bullock's Point Avenue from the pier. This is the famous carousel that still operates at its original location today. Housed inside a classic Looff "Hippodrome," a large fourteen-sided building with an onion-shaped cupola atop



Looff's first carousel at Crescent Park, c. 1893.

the roof, the ride consists of 61 gallant horses, a camel, two double-bench dragon-chariots, and two single-bench serpent-chariots. Decorative mirrors, sporting hand-carved cherubs, hide the center pole. Composition acanthus leaves embellish the outer edges of the faceted mirrors. Sunlight shines through the multi-colored clerestory windows and strikes the prismatic mirrors, creating a sparkling flood of varicolored light from above.

Shiny brass poles hang from the ride's overhead sweeps to support the fifty-foot wooden platform. After catching rings from the ring arm, riders throw them into the gaping mouth of a jolly clown-face painted on a big canvas mounted over a wooden ring box. Catching a "gold" ring, actually brass, gives the lucky person a free ride. Rows of wooden benches circle the ride inviting people to rest and watch the galloping steeds. A ticket booth greets visitors as they enter the open doors surrounding the building. Vents at the roof's peak allow the natural air circulation to cool the building during the hot summers. Originally, the ride was powered by steam from the park's steam plant located near the midway. Later, power was provided by a 15 horsepower, 550 volt, 3-phase electric motor. The power from the motor was transferred by a long leather belt to the gear mechanism that moved the ride.



Looff's second carousel at Crescent Park, still standing today, shown here, c. 1900.



The Crescent Park Ruth and Sohn model 38 band organ. This photo by John Caruso is the same photo cropped and used on the cover of the Oct. '08 C&NT.

A grand Ruth and Sohn model 38 organ, built in Waldkirch, Germany and imported by Loeff, produced carousel music heard the length of the midway. Topping the organ's ornate façade is an angel with a harp. Cherubs playing cymbals flank the angel. Three manikins housed in niches represent the three graces. Originally, the organ made music from large rotating wooden cylinders which had small metal pins projecting from the surface, activating little wooden fingers to open and close air valves producing the musical notes. Later, the organ was converted to operate with a folded-cardboard system. Still later, the organ was converted to a Wurlitzer 165 system using paper-roll music.

Loeff's young daughter, Helen, my grandmother who was born in Germany, traveled by steamboat from New York to the Crescent Park pier every weekend during the summer months to operate the merry-go-round. Staying in a small summer cottage, Helen ran the ride all weekend and returned back home to Staten Island on the Sunday night ferry.

In 1898, *The Providence Journal of Commerce* stated that Crescent Park was the largest shore resort in the world under the proprietorship of a single person.



Canvas clown awaiting the rings.



Elaborate, playful trappings are common on the horses.

There were estimates that 50,000 to 75,000 people visited the park on Saturdays and Sundays during the height of the summer season.

In 1901, Colonel R. A. Harrington bought Crescent Park. Harrington also purchased Rocky Point Park across the bay in Warwick, which he had been leasing. Col. Harrington built a 310' by 120' exhibition hall at the eastern end of the midway. The first exhibition held in the new hall was the 1902 New England Association of Arts and Crafts Exposition. The event's program proclaimed, "This Exposition will surpass any ever before in New England." It also declared, "This is the Only Place in New England that the United States Government has exhibited." More than 1,500,000 attended the exposition. The population of Providence at this time was only 180,000. The exposition building later evolved into a music hall, roller skating rink and finally the famous Alhambra Ballroom.

Charles I. D. Loeff's eldest son, Charles, born in 1881, filed for a U. S. patent for an invention to improve the opera-



Paintings, mirrors and cherubs make up the rounding boards at Crescent Park.



The pier at Crescent Park would bring visitors from Staten Island and elsewhere, including Loeff's daughter, Helen, who would operate the carousel on the weekends.



Full profile of the armored horse on this month's cover.

tion of carousels. "The object of the invention was to provide a new and improved merry-go-round arranged to give the seats a uniform up-and-down motion and without requiring much driving power." He received U. S. Patent No. 703,801 on July 1, 1902.

Charles I. D. Loeff Factory Moves to Rhode Island.

In 1905, Charles I. D. Loeff moved his factory from Brooklyn to Riverside, RI, after the City of New York condemned his property to construct a city park. He set up his workshop in an addition that he built onto the north side of the carousel hippodrome building.

Shop workers would do the foundry work on the bottom floor while the wood carving was done on the second floor. Here, Loeff created carousels for the many amusement parks that were springing up throughout New England. He converted the Crescent Park carousel to jumpers and used it as a showpiece for prospective customers to pick out the styles of horses that they wanted for their own ride. During this period, Crescent Park would become known as the "Coney Island of the East".

In Rhode Island, Loeff placed rides at Providence's Roger Williams Park, Warwick's Rocky Point Park, Portsmouth's



Upon moving his shop to Crescent Park, Loeff would convert the majority of the horses to jumpers and use the carousel as a showpiece for prospective clients.

Island Park, Pawtucket's Slater Park, Misquamicut's Atlantic Beach, on the Narragansett Pier, and in Newport.

Massachusetts had its fair share of Loeff machines. He installed the first merry-go-round at Lincoln Park in Dartmouth, and constructed rides at Salisbury Beach, Whalom Park, and in Fall River.

Connecticut hosted Loeff carousels at Savin Rock in West Haven, and at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven. Canobie Lake Park in Salem, NH, got a Loeff ride. New York enjoyed Loeff carousels at Coney Island, Half Moon Beach, Canoga Lake, and Staten Island's Midland Beach and South Beach. New Jersey proudly displayed Loeff merry-go-rounds at Young's Million Dollar Pier in Atlantic City, on Casino Pier in Seaside Heights and in Keansburg. Texas would become home to two Loeff carousels: Fair Park in Dallas, and Rosen Heights in Fort Worth. Other Loeff carousel locations would include Oklahoma and Canada.

In January, 1909, Helen Loeff, my grandmother, married Charles A. Simmons, a local jeweler, in Riverside. Together, they operated the Crescent Park Carousel. Charles I. D. Loeff built a large stone house next to the railroad tracks, a mile and a half north of the park, near the Riverside Square. He stored finished carousel horses in the three large garages and shipped them directly by train around the country.

Loeff Factory Moves to California

Charles I. D. Loeff traveled extensively while installing his amusement rides. On a trip to California, he was excited by the possibilities of the West coast. So, in 1910, Loeff, his wife, Anna, and sons, Arthur and William, moved to Long Beach, CA, leaving their son Charles and daughter, Helen, to manage their Rhode Island operations.

From his Long Beach factory, Charles I. D. Loeff built amusement parks, carousels, roller coasters, and other amusement rides for resorts along the West coast. In Seattle he built an amusement park at Alki Point. He installed the Dipper roller coaster next to his Santa Cruz carousel. Loeff and his youngest son, Arthur, built the Santa Monica Pier



Early 1900s postcard shows the Circle Swing, left, the carousel building, and in between, Loeff's workshop.



Aerial view of Crescent Park in the 1930s. After moving to California in 1910, Looff would create The Pike in Long Beach, Natatorium Park in Spokane, WA, and the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk among other amusement parks.

complete with a Looff carousel, Whip, Blue Streak coaster and the world's largest circle swing.

Looff's youngest daughter, Emma, meanwhile, moved to Spokane with her husband, Louis Vogel, and operated Natatorium Park and their Looff carousel, which was carved in the Crescent Park workshop. The carousel was a wedding gift to the Vogels.

After the Riverside factory ceased operation, the Looff family converted the upper floor of the workshop into temporary living quarters. This was a Looff tradition. For example, Charles I. D. and Anna lived above the Pike carousel in Long Beach, and the family had previously lived behind the Midland Beach merry-go-round. This is where Dorothy Simmons, Helen's daughter, was born.

Charles I. D. Looff Dies

Charles I. D. Looff died in Long Beach on July 1, 1918 at age 66, leaving his estate to his wife, Anna. Son, Arthur, took over the California operation. Arthur originated a fas-



The 1901 Exhibition Hall turned Alhambra Ballroom, would host Tommy Dorsey and all of the "big bands" through the 1920s, '30s and '40s. Shown here c. 1960s.



Crescent Park's famous Shore Dinner, including a whole lobster, was just \$1.90 in the mid-1920s, up from an earlier menu showing it at just \$1.75. For another dime, you could work it off with a ride on the carousel. By the 1960s the lobster shore dinner had shot up to all of \$4.00.

ination-type game, called Lite-A-Line, at the Long Beach Pike. He also built a beautiful miniature golf course in Long Beach, called Shady Acres because of the luxurious trees and foliage.

Also in 1918, Looff's son, Charles, bought Crescent Park after Col. Harrington's death. (I'll refer to him as Charles, Jr. only to make it less confusing).

Charles Looff, Jr. made numerous improvements to the park. He built a new shore-dinner hall, replacing the old one on the banks of scenic Narragansett Bay. This dining facility could feed up to 2,000 people at one time. Numerous businesses and labor groups all over southern New England came to Crescent Park for their annual employee's summer outings. The famous Rhode Island Shore Dinners and Indian-Style Clambakes included old fashioned Rhode Island clam chowder, clam cakes, steamed clams with drawn



butter, fried or baked fish with French fries, cole slaw, sweet corn, white and dark bread with creamery butter, sliced watermelon, and a half Maine lobster for just over one dollar.

Charles, Jr. designed and built a Rivers of Venice boat ride consisting of two-seater boats which traveled through a long, dark tunnel passing exotic exhibits. Young lovers made this ride very popular. He installed a wax museum, called the Eden Musee, on the midway. In the 1920s, he opened up the floor of the Alhambra Ballroom by installing huge wooden trusses in the roof and removing the numerous slim columns throughout the building. From the roaring '20s, through the 1930s and into the '40s famous "big bands" such as Les Elgart, Tommy Dorsey and Russ Morgan played the Alhambra. Charley Weygand and his Orchestra played for 27 years as the house band.

A double brother/sister marriages took place in the Looff family when Charles, Jr. married Emma Simmons, the sister of Charles Simmons, who had earlier married Helen Looff.



This aerial view of the midway shows the plane ride in the center, and the roller coaster.

Charles, Jr. designed and built an excursion boat and named it the "Miss Looff", in memory of his younger sister, Anna, who died at age twenty as the result of a traffic accident in New York. He laid out the patterns for the ribs of the craft on the floor of the ballroom. The gasoline-powered vessel was 150' long, 30' wide and had an 11.7' draft. Inside there was a 100' long dance floor. The "Miss Looff" carried passengers up and down Narragansett Bay from the pier, while the bathing beach alongside the pier continued to be crowded on weekends.

In 1925, Charles Looff, Jr. became ill and died at age 44. Beacon Manufacturing Company, manufacturer of the famous Beacon Blankets, took over ownership of the entire Crescent Park property except the carousel, which was still owned by Charles I. D. Looff's widow, Anna. When Anna died in 1930, the Crescent Park carousel was purchased from Anna's estate by Helen Looff and her husband, Charles Simmons, for \$7,500.

While the Great Depression caused turmoil in America, the amusement industry struggled on.

In September, 1938, just after my first birthday, the Great New England Hurricane and Tidal Wave demolished the Crescent Park pier, some of the rides and buildings, and the southern half of the giant wooden roller coaster. Renowned roller coaster builder, Eddy Leis, rebuilt the coaster the next year, making it shorter and faster. Steel cables anchored to large concrete "dead men" reinforced the wooden structure on the tight, diving turns. Unfortunately, during World War II, a U. S. Navy sailor was killed when a cable snapped and, like a horsewhip, clipped him in the head.

The pier was rebuilt, and even though the steamboats were long gone, Phil Gladue's sleek speedboats would take customers for a spin on the bay. Then, in 1954, Hurricane Carol devastated the pier one last time. It was never rebuilt.



The parent to the modern bumper cars, the Dodgegem ride enjoyed a heyday lasting from the late 1920s through to the 1950s.

Crescent Park gets new owners

In 1951, a group of park concessionaires led by my father, Arthur R. Simmons, and Frederick J. McCusker, bought Crescent Park for \$325,000. Arthur Simmons had operated several midway games and a shooting gallery. Fred McCusker's family operated the famous McCusker's Pop Corn and Salt Water Taffy stand.

During the winter, my grandfather, Charles Simmons, supervised the maintenance of the merry-go-round. The gears were greased and adjusted. The long leather belt that transferred power from the electric motor to the gears was checked for wear. The hand-carved horses were carefully touched-up by Dominic Spadolla, Ed Serowik, and Lenny Miner using Japan paint. "Little" Joe Kdan, who ran the ride daily for many years, kept the building painted and clean. Andy Fales maintained the Ruth and Sohn band organ. Mr. Nowicki, from Connecticut, came in and did the more extensive repairs on the organ. Every spring, I helped wash the horses with soap and water, polished the brass poles, and cleaned the mirrors and windows.



Located at the head of the midway, between the carousel and the roller coaster, Fred McCusker would profit enough from his Block Island Taffy to buy the park along with Arthur Simmons and other concessionaires in 1951.



Ed Serowik (left), just 16, worked on the horses; Andy Fales (center) worked on the organ and Charles Simmons in 1952.

My grandfather showed me how to clean the steel rings for the ring-arm in a barrel-shaped device that revolved and tumbled the rings in kerosene-dampened sawdust until they regained their shine. During the summer, I work as a ring-boy, using a wire hook to pick up rings that fell on the floor. This is one of the few carousels in the country that still uses steel rings in addition to the brass ring.

As a young boy, I would play in the old Loeff workshop. I remember the big, ugly furnace on the lower floor. The floor was dirt. Lengths of metal rods hung on the side wall. An old wooden cylinder from the band organ lay decaying in one corner. An unfinished side of a double dragon-chariot lay against a wall along with the dragon's head. Barrels of nails and screws were bunched together in one area. I played with wood clamps imprinted with "Chas. Loeff". There was a little door that opened into the pit area under the carousel. I would crack the door open and lay there watching the horse's poles go up and down as the ride turned round and round. When the ride was closed, I would crawl under the ride to retrieve lost rings. During this time, my grandparents and aunt lived on the renovated second floor of the shop.

I remember my grandmother telling me that some of the carvers covertly took her father's horse patterns with them when they moved on to other shops. This may explain why



A dragon or serpent head that never made it onto a carousel.



A gold eagle stander on the Crescent Park carousel today.

there is so much similarity between different manufacturer's carousels. She also told how Charles I. D. loved animals, especially bears.

1950s-'60s At Crescent Park

During the 1950s and '60s, many improvements were made to the Crescent Park midway. A dark ride, called the Riverboat, was built out of the lumber salvaged from the roller coaster that was torn down due to high maintenance costs. An 1860s Train Ride, a Roundup, a Wild Mouse, Turnpike Ride, and an aerial Sky Ride were added to the existing rides, which included the roller coaster, Ferris wheel, Whip, Dodgem, Silver Streak, Bubble Bounce, Tumble Bug, Rocket Ship and Pretzel.

Kiddieland was spruced up and expanded. Long time ride foreman, Ally Olsen, and his assistant, Ed Serowik, kept the rides running smoothly. There was, however, one unfortunate accident that occurred when the shaft on the Roundup ride sheared, dropping the wheel onto the midway. Luckily, there were only a few minor injuries.

In the summer of 1951, there was a "Penny Scramble" for the kids. My grandfather stood in the back of a pickup truck and threw handfuls of pennies to the crowd of scram-



Arthur and his "Penny Scramble" in the days when a handful of pennies could actually buy you a bunch of fun.



Another eagle stander at Crescent Park.

bling kids all along the midway. Sadly, Grandpa Simmons died the next winter in Miami at the Johnson Apartments where they always spent a few months vacation.

A candle-pin bowling alley at the rear of the Alhambra Ballroom was converted by my father, Arthur, in 1952, into a luxurious cocktail lounge named the "Colonnade" for the rows of classic Greek Ionic columns that surrounded the outside of the ballroom and lined the inside of the lounge.

Free entertainment was offered on the midway on Sunday afternoons. Entertainers included: The Three Stooges (Moe, Larry, and Curly Joe), Ken Curtis who played Festus Hagen on *Gunsmoke*, singers Bobby Vinton and Brian Hyland, Joe E. Ross who played Officer Gunther Toody on the TV series, *Car 54 Where Are You?*, Alvin Childress and Spencer Williams also known as Amos and Andy, and Jackie Coogan who was Uncle Festus on *The Adams Family*. Teresa Brewer appeared for the Miss Rhode Island Red Head contest singing her hit song, *The Rhode Island Red Head from Pawtucket*. It was a thrill for me to personally meet and talk with the many celebrities who appeared at the park.

In the mid-1950s, a polio epidemic reduced park attendance to a minimum. In 1955, Disneyland in Anaheim, California opened, ushering in a whole new era in outdoor entertainment, the theme park, while the old-time trolley parks were becoming outdated.

Crescent Park Changes Hands Again

In 1966, a group of Providence investors led by Melvin Berry purchased Crescent Park, including the carousel. Unfortunately, they tore down the Loeff workshop in an attempt to improve the park entrance. In 1969, the Alhambra Ballroom burned to the ground in a fiery inferno and business started to slump. In 1979, Crescent Park was sold at auction. Soon after, fire destroyed the southern part of the midway. Another fire, in 1984, leveled the Shore-Dinner Hall. The remaining buildings, excluding the merry-go-round, were finally torn down to make room for a housing development.

Loeff Carousel is Saved

My wife, Beverly Simmons, gained the interest of our friend, Gail Durfee, in the fate of the carousel. As a result, the *Save Our Carousel* committee was formed by Gail, Jobel Tracy, Richard Lund, Linda McEntree and Robin Peacock to prevent the breakup of the carousel. After a five year struggle, aided by attorney, Sister Arlene Violet, a Roman Catholic nun, and activist, Rose Larisa, the renovated carousel, owned now by the City of East Providence, reopened in 1984. The carousel was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites and Places. The Rhode Island General Assembly proclaimed the carousel "The State Jewel of American Folk Art" in 1985. The restored merry-go-round was designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service in 1987. The National Carousel Association gave the carousel its NCA Historical Carousel Award in 1994.

This summer, after a new ring gear was installed by Dan Horenberger of Brass Ring Entertainment, the magnificent Crescent Park Charles I. D. Loeff carousel opened for the 115th consecutive season. Ed Serowik, his son, and grandson, have been keeping the merry-go-round in shipshape condition for many years, and there will be many more years of delight in Riverside as the magic of Charles I. D. Loeff lives on.



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New Ring Gear For 115 Year Old Looff



BEFORE - Hard to imagine just how many riders these old gears spun around in 115 years. They did well to go as long as they did. The old gears were cut in half and recast in two pieces, saving the carousel from having to come down.

By Dan Horenberger

Publisher, The Carousel News & Trader

Our job at Crescent Park started when we got a call from Oliver Barrette Millwrights, Inc. of Providence, RI, for a carousel gear replacement. They had been taking care of the Crescent Park carousel for over 30 years, handling all of the mechanical issues with no problems. They said this replacement was a little beyond their ability.

I said no problem, we do carousel gears all of the time, not to worry. Then we saw the problem – dual facing 48” 78 tooth bevel gears with 18 pinion gears sandwiched in between. This was not just any other carousel gear.

Then the next problem was that it was a one piece gear. There is no way to take it off the pole without taking the whole carousel apart.

But, this wasn't our first time on a gear like this. We knew we could cut the original gears in half and make new ones in two pieces. So, the project was on.

Mr. Barrette and Ed Serowik waited for us to arrive. The outside temperature was about zero that day, with a wind chill California people don't ever want to think about. With no heat in the building, we had the gears down in one day. Two days in this weather wasn't going to happen. My crew wanted out of there as fast as we could, and working hard kept us warm.

Once the old gears were down, out, and back home, the real fun started – making opposing bevel gears in two pieces with pinions in between and no room for error. These gears have to work together. One bevel gear attached to the center pole to make the horses go up and down and the other to keep the machine in time. All of this fitting together, with no room for error in the 22 different pieces. Even a few thousandths of an inch off makes the next pinion not work in relation to the other.

I have to say, this was one of the most challenging gears we've ever made. To take a huge, one piece gear and make it a two piece gear, so the carousel doesn't have to be disassembled is a challenge enough. To make two, two-piece 48-inch bevel gears fit together is another thing.



AFTER - The new gears taking shape. One more quarter to go and this carousel will be ready for another 100 years.

I think a little smoke was coming out of the ears of my engineers and the back of the computers, but we got the information from the original gears to the computers and cut the new precision steel gears.

We have to thank Ed Serowik and Mr. Barrette for their help. As with anything of this complexity, and 3,000 miles from our shop, things arise.

We found a lot of issues with the carousel, from being in the same place for 115 years, without ever being taken apart that had to be addressed. But in the end, everything was done as good as factory new, and ready to run for the next 100 years.

To know the last person to work on that gear was Mr. Looff himself was amazing. 115 years without ever being touched. This was also one of the first jobs for a second generation Brass Ring employee, Eric Fabbro, the son of Scott Fabbro, who has 30 years of carousel restoration experience. Working with Ed Serowik (who has close to 60 years at this carousel), and his son and grandson just shows how generations of history and knowledge can be passed along.



The old gears (left) cut free from the machine. The two new two-piece, forged and hardened steel ring gears (right) rest on the floor of the carousel building. Now to get them up the pole and into place.

CN & T READERS GO ROUND

Fred's Special Gift to Deanna: A Fictional Portrait of their First Carousel Ride **Fred and Deanna Roth Celebrate 50 Years**



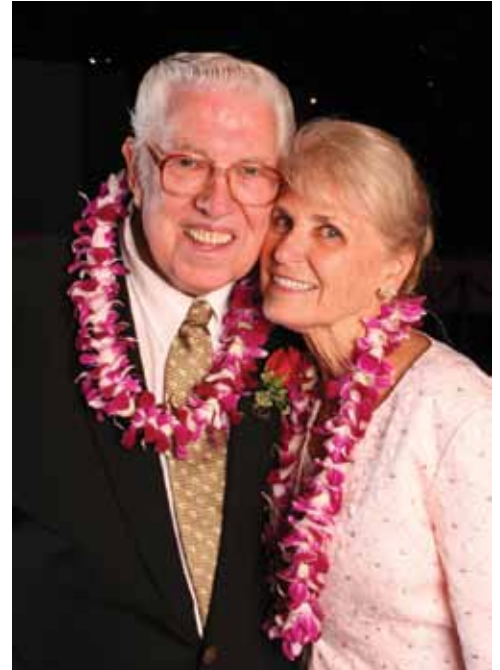
This painting represented what it would have been like had they met 15 years earlier in 1943. Fred is presenting Deanna with a blue balloon, her favorite color, and taking her on their first ride on the "merry go round for life". This was the first time she had seen, or known, about the painting which was done by artist, David Nance. She was overwhelmed when she saw it.

LOS ANGELES, CA – Saturday, August 13, 1960 was the beginning of a lifelong adventure for Fred and Deanna Roth. In addition to true love and dedicated teamwork, part of the key to a successful union is common interests and passions. These two certainly fulfilled all those requirements. Their love of beautiful things abounds.

The Roth's shared interests run from rare antique 1950s American sports cars, to coin operated musical and amusement devices, to carousel art and finally, anything Deco.



The Roth family (from left); Kiersten, Chris and Michelle Roth, Fred and Deanna Roth, Lisa Bernhardt, Randy Barker, and Christopher Bernhardt.



Fred and Deanna Roth display the flower leis given to them by their son, Chris, and his family. On their honeymoon a fraternity brother had sent them similar leis.

The two have spent every available spare hour immersed in these interests. As they were rounding the corner toward that 50 year mark, Fred had only one regret. That he had not been with Deanna even longer.



The painting done by David Nance, depicted Fred's dream of being with Deanna for their whole life. He had seen an artist in the '60s who had painted this for other couples, and had always wanted it done for the two of them.



Each table had guests from a different facet of the Roth's lives. This table had those couples who were involved in antique automated musical instruments, including various types of fairground paraphernalia. Top Row (from left); Frank and Shirley Nix, Dan Horenberger and Carrie Strasburger, Herb and Rochelle Mercer. Bottom row; Bill Blair, Diane and Dick Reidy.

With the help of his friend, CN&T Publisher Dan Horenberger, Fred commissioned artist, David Nance, to paint life the way he wished it had started for the two of them.

What fun it would have been to have rolled the calendar back 15 years from their initial meeting so he could take Deanna, as a little girl, on her first merry-go-round ride. They loved and owned carousel animals, as well as riding them, whenever the opportunity presented itself at parks all over the United States. It made perfect sense, in his mind, to have taken her on that first ride when she was just four, and he was six.



The Petersen Automotive Museum welcomes Fred and Deanna.

When the initial sketches were presented by Mr. Nance, Fred could not keep his eyes dry as David had "nailed" it. Over the next three months, he did manage to keep Deanna from finding out about the project.

The presentation was made the evening of their 50th anniversary, which was held with a group of over 100 friends and relatives, at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles, CA. Needless to say, Deanna was overwhelmed when presented with the painting, which now hangs in their entryway. Here's hoping they can continue to ride that "merry-go-round of life" for many more years to come.

Antique cars and antique carousels have always seemed to get along. For more information on Fred, Deanna and Chris Roth and their love of vintage sports cars, visit their website at www.AmericanSportsCars.com. For information on the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles, CA, visit www.petersen.org.

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Poligon® Structures Protect Many of America's Finest Carousels PorterCorp™ Announces New Millennium Trellis



Poligon Millennium Trellis with Chicago Bench.

By Brooke DeBoer

Special to The Carousel News & Trader

HOLLAND, MI – PorterCorp™, the makers of Poligon® shade shelters, recently unveiled The Millennium Trellis, a new addition to Poligon® shade shelter products, offering the best in precision cut components, high design, and affordability in standard and customized shade shelters. For over 30 years, Poligon® has served the needs of master city planners, landscape architects, and designers with tubular, hidden bolt-together steel structures that provide protection from the elements. Poligon® structures are among the most aesthetically pleasing and best quality in the industry.

The new Millennium Trellis product joins the current trellis series from Poligon®, which includes flat / gabled trellises as well as curved and pitched trellises. The Millennium Trellis combines a comprehensive design package of customizable frame heights and lengths with Poli-5000 powder-coated steel frame to provide the best trellis shelters available on the market for parks, public gardens, athletic complexes, amusement/water parks, commercial and residential developments, health/educational facilities and more.

The company is now offering integrated benches, plant-climbing panels, three styles of truss end options, wind-screens, and custom columns on the new trellis design. New optional features include complimenting steel flag, corbel ornamentation (customizable) as well as your choice of twenty-eight standard powder-coat colors (custom colors are available). The entire product offering is available at www.poligon.com.



Poligon flag ornamentation detail is customizable to suit your needs – great for your own logo, a sponsors logo, or anything else you see fit.

PorterCorp™ designs, engineers, and manufactures the leading line of tubular steel, fabric and wood shelters, gazebos, and pavilions. The Poligon® line offers many attractive standard models ranging from small shade structures to large activity centers. All Poligon® products include the most durable frame finish available, Poli-5000®, a multi-step finishing system using a Super Durable TGIC powder top coat finish. All PorterCorp™ products, including The Millennium Trellis, meet numerous ASTM specifications including the rigorous 5000-hour salt spray test, UV resistance, and stain resistance.



The Empire State Carousel building in Cooperstown, NY, blends right in with the old-world charm and architecture of upstate New York. Who would ever guess this was a pre-fabricated Poligon structure?



Another impressive Polygon carousel pavilion is at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, WA. The glass curtain walls are easily opened up on warm, sunny days, or closed tight to protect the historic 1918 PTC #45 carousel inside.

Carousel Pavilions, Shelters and Gazebos for 34 years

The economics of installing a carousel can be daunting enough without the thought of Architectural and design fees, and the high cost of constructing a proper building to house the carousel. For 34 years, Poligon Park Architecture has been a leader in the design, engineering and manufacturing of carousel enclosures, shelters, pavilions and gazebos for City Parks, Zoos, Amusement Park and others. With



The rear of the pavilion shows the subtle addition of the attached function space, so critical to the success of a free standing carousel these days.

over 14,000 installations worldwide, Poligon is a preferred manufacturer of shelters throughout the world. Whether it is a standard model, or your own custom design, Poligon can manufacture a product to meet your needs. Poligon shelters are bolt together tubular steel frames, require no field welding, and are protected by the best powder coat finishing system in the industry. Before you call the architect for your next building, consider a unique prefabricated pavilion from Poligon. Visit them at www.portercorp.com.

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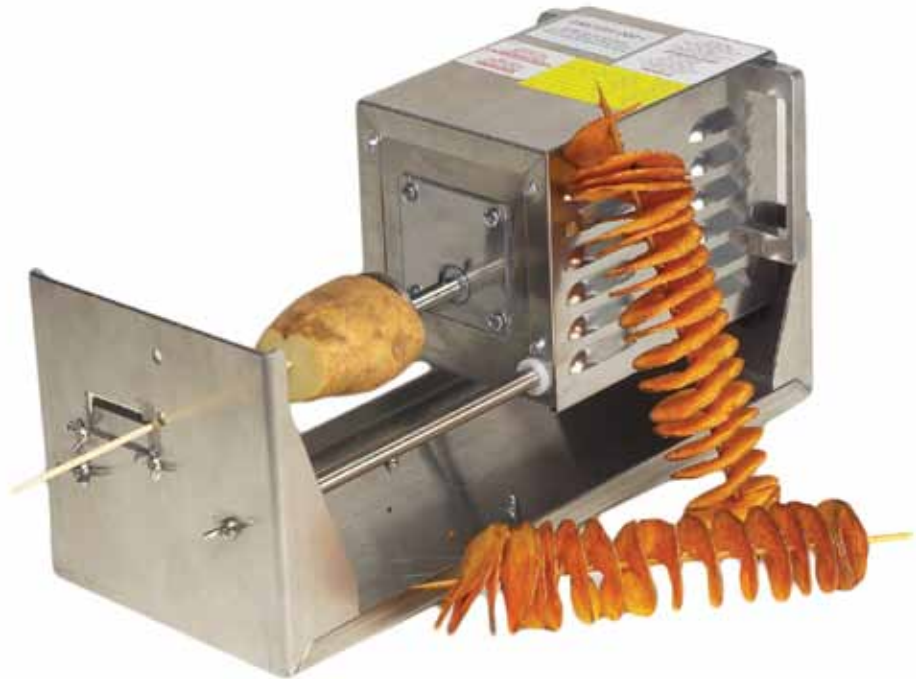
GOLD MEDAL UNVEILS SAVORY SWIRLS

CINCINNATI, OH – Concession sales are a critical component to any amusement operation. Hot dogs, popcorn and cotton candy are the proven staples, but to keep your concessions sales vibrant, you need to keep your offerings vibrant.

Since the 1930s, Gold Medal® has been providing new and improved ways to prepare and present everyone's favorite fair foods. The great thing about fair food is that just like a really good cup of coffee, no one minds that you are making 80% profit on your offerings if they are tasty.

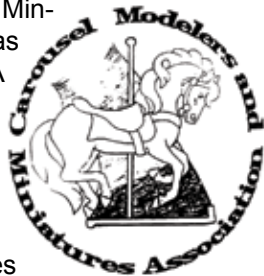
Fair foods are best kept simple, but they need to smell good, taste good and it helps if they are just plain fun to eat.

Gold Medal's new *Saratoga Swirls* are an irresistible, easy-to-eat snack with incredibly low food costs (approx. \$.22 without toppings), and average selling prices of around \$3.50. This makes it the perfect food for multiple locations/venues, as cus-



Carousel Modelers and Miniature Association

The Carousel Modelers and Miniatures Association (CMMA) has been reorganized. The CMMA was founded in 1986 for the purpose of bringing together modelers, miniaturists and woodcarvers interested in building operating miniature carousels.



CMMA membership includes the quarterly publication, *Horse Tales*, a membership directory and the hobby's greatest fellowship. The 2009 convention was held at the Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum.

The CMMA is now accepting 2010 memberships. Past CMMA members will be contacted with membership information. Membership dues are \$20 per year. Checks or money orders should be made out to the CMMA and sent to the CMMA secretary-treasurer.

If you are interested in carousel models, miniatures or woodcarving, please contact the CMMA for additional information. All inquiries or questions should be sent to Patrick Wentzel, CMMA secretary-treasurer, 2310 Highland Ave., Parkersburg, WV 26101-2920 or call (304) 428-3544, or email pwentzel@patrickwentzel.com.

tomers will line up to taste this tempting treat that they can't easily buy at every corner store.

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Friendly Wheelchair Lifts

By Dan Horenberger

One of the things I'm constantly asked about is handicapped accessibility. There are a number of prospective ramp and lift solutions available, and I've seen them all. They all have their own good and bad points.

Ramps have the problem of stopping the carousel in a specific area or "indexing" the carousel so it stops in the same place every time. We did indexing when we built the new carousel at Disneyland to replace the original 1920s Dentzel. They chose a built-in permanent handicapped area



A portable Adaptive Engineering Mobilift CX at the New York State Museum in Albany, NY.

and the carousel stops in the same place every ride so all they have to do is drop a ramp. This is great for accessibility but not great for the carousel. The animals closest to the entrance are obviously ridden more than any others and it puts extra wear and tear on that side of the platform. This form of solution is needed when you're doing millions of riders a year like Disneyland, but it's not so great if you have an antique carousel.

Most removable ramps require two operators to move and take a long time to set up and put away.

For years I've looked for a friendly lift. Something that could easily be rolled into position to lift a rider to the platform and just as easily be put aside when not in use.

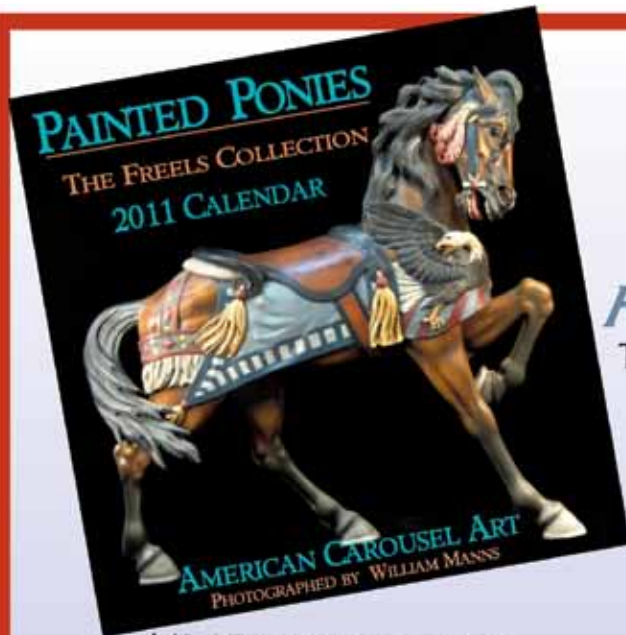


Finally, I found one that I felt I could recommend to my customers. The one shown here, built by Adaptive Engineering, is extremely easy to move and to use. Any single operator can do it. Once in place, the lift is just a simple crank of an arm and your rider is lifted. It is very well made with excellent materials. The lift also meets all ASME amusement ride handicapped codes for temporary access. Their website has a great video showing how it works. These lifts are sold world-wide for all sorts of situations, from commercial to personal home use.

I've seen a few of these in action and it's a piece of cake to operate. For any carousel that needs to find an option for challenged accessibility, this is a great choice. Take a look for yourself at www.adaptivelifts.com.

I hope this helps the carousel owners and operators looking for the answer to handicapped lifts.

If you have questions or concerns with your carousel and any OSHA regulations, ADA Accessibility Guidelines or other safety or operational requirements, contact Brass Ring Entertainment at (818) 394-0028 for consultation.



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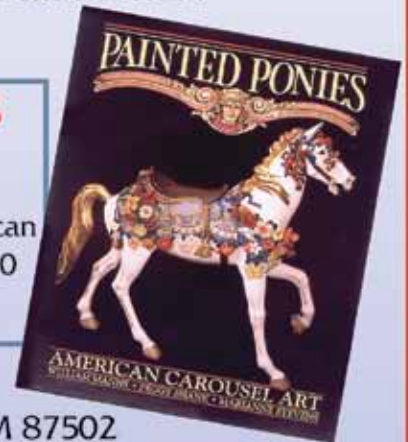
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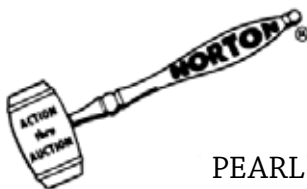
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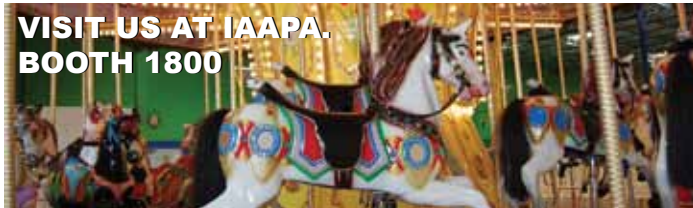
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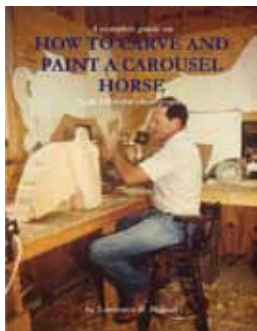
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