



New England News

2019 Annual Meeting Edition

NEAAPA Newsletter

Gene Dean Of Fiesta Shows Will Be Inducted Into Hall Of Fame

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. – Gene Dean, owner of Fiesta Shows/Dean Enterprises, Seabrook, N.H., will be inducted into the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA) Hall of Fame on Tuesday, March 19.

The ceremony will take place during NEAAPA's 106th Anniversary Education Conference & Annual Meeting at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel here.

"It's a nice honor after all of these years in the amusement business," Gene said of the accolade.

With more than a half-century in the industry, Gene got his start at Salisbury Beach, Mass., where the family once operated 38 games and a few rides at the seaside resort community.

"Dad (late Gene Sr.) got his start there in 1935," he recalled. In the 1967, Gene's father branched out into the carnival industry with the purchase of Fiesta shows with business partner, the late Jack Flynn.

"I joined the carnival operation in 1970," Gene said of that venture.

Today the show, touted as New England's largest carnival, carries more than 70 rides and plays a regional route spanning 35 weeks.

"I can't wait to get out of bed in the morning and go to work," he said of the industry he came to admire as a youngster.

Yet, he readily admits "the amusement park was my first love" of his career.

"One thing in the park business is that it took them three to four days to set up a Tilt (Tilt-A-Whirl ride), whereas on the carnival it takes only four hours," he said in comparing the two businesses.

While he still enjoys visiting the midway operation and carrying on the show's tradition with son, E.J., Gene is also known for his charitable work in local communities as well as daily tennis games

(See HALL OF FAME, Page 2)



Gene Dean

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2019 Summer Meeting***

Hall Of Fame

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while wintering in Florida.

E.J. and his wife, Norma, also operate the famous Cream Puff Bakery at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Mass.

Gene and his wife of 52 years, Mary, enjoy spending time with their family, including grandchildren now being groomed in the family's enterprises

Member Parks Are Taking Part In Coasting For Kids

Two members of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions will take part in Coasting for Kids, an initiative to raise funds for Give Kids The World Village in Kissimmee, Fla.

Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, Middlebury, Conn., will hold its Coasting For Kids event on



Saturday, June 8, while Story Land, Glen, N.H., will do the fundraiser on Saturday, July 13.

Give Kids The World a storybook resort that provides children

with critical illnesses a week away from hospital stays and medical treatments to enjoy Central Florida's renowned theme parks.

Quassy and Story Land will offer morning exclusive ride times on their roller coasters for those who raise at least \$100 for Give Kids The World. In addition, those participants will be able to enjoy the other attractions at both properties following the coaster rides.

For more information about Coasting for Kids, visit http://support.gktw.org/site/PageNavigator/c4k_hmpg.html

For more information about Give Kids The World Village, visit <https://www.gktw.org/>

Those In NEAAPA Hall Of Fame

Since 1998, NEAAPA has inducted 42 people into the Hall of Fame. The past inductees are:

Roger Shaheen, Shaheen Enterprises
Anthony Pero, Ocean Beach Park
Edward J. Carroll, Jr., Riverside Park
Henry Bowen, Whalom Park
Edward J. Carroll, Sr., Riverside Park
Lawrence Stone, Paragon Park
Alton Lipkin, NANCO / Nancy Sales Co.
George Frantzis, Quassy Amusement Park
Anthony Sr. and Laura Berni, Canobie Lake Park
Claude and Stella Captell, Canobie Lake Park
Kasmir and Rita Ulaky, Canobie Lake Park
Kenneth and Violet Cormier, Funtown Splashtown
Tom Morrow, Canobie Lake Park
Ed Connor, Riverside Park
John Frantzis, Quassy Amusement Park
Robert & Ruth Morrel, Story Land
James P. & Eleanor R. Brady, Six Gun City
John F. Naughton, Naughton Insurance
Wayne McCary, Eastern States Exposition
Conrad Ferla, Rocky Point Park
Suzanne McHugh Piscitello, Canobie Gifts
Fred L. Markey, Dodgem Corp.
Kate Horner-Wall, Lake Compounce/Riverside Park
Anthony Berni, Jr., Carl Berni, Christine Ulaky,
Raymond Captell, Canobie Lake Park
Alan Ramsay, CLM Entertainment
Robert Harkins, Six Flags New England
John & Elizabeth Bowen, Whalom Park
Normand & Cecile Dubois, Santa's Village
Myron Klayman, Paragon Park
Justine Brewer, Southwick's Zoo
George Frantzis II, Quassy Amusement & Waterpark

NEAAPA Summer Meeting At Southwick's Zoo

Details coming in electronic newsletter



Welcome To 106th Conference And Annual Meeting

Welcome to Springfield, Massachusetts, home of our 106th Conference and Annual Meeting.

Wow! How the last two years have zipped by quickly. It was about two and a half years ago that I was sharing a ride to a monthly



**Dorothy Lewis,
NEAAPA president**

board meeting in Worcester, Massachusetts, when your incoming NEAAPA President Eric Andersen asked what was top on my list as then incoming president. Education was my answer.

I remember the answer came quickly as the subject has always been high on my

list as a member, FEC professional and industry speaker. Throughout my 28 years in the industry I contribute my success to education. Not necessarily conventional classroom-style but more importantly opportunities I have had to learn from my peers in settings like ours this week and throughout the country.

There are so many situations that we come together for traditional industry education on so many important subjects that help us grow our businesses, train our team, save us money, polish our guest service and keep everyone safe while keeping up with the latest governmental issues that affect our business.

The subjects we have exposure to are timely and relevant. More importantly, it is settings like this that we can have conversations with

(See **WELCOME**, Page 7)

Chieko Takes Helm At OABA

WINTER PARK, Fla. — Greg Chieko, a past president of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, is the new president and chief executive officer of the Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA).

Greg assumed his new position in February after serving as sales director for the Eastern States Exposition, (ESE) West Springfield, Mass., for more than two decades.

He replaced OABA President Bob Johnson, who retired after 24 years at the organization's helm.

"Greg's diverse professional, industry experience, proven leadership and business acumen gained at Eastern States Exposition coupled with his affable leadership style, make him the ideal CEO," said Jay Strates, chair of the OABA. "This is an opportune time for Greg to join the OABA and work



Greg Chieko



growth of this trade association."

Greg is no stranger to carnivals and fairs, as he has overseen midway operations at ESE, hosted industry fundraisers and regularly attended OABA events, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) expos and the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) where he served as a board member and chaired several committees. on.

"I am extremely honored to be named president and CEO by the OABA Board of Directors," Greg said. "I look forward to working with, and listening to, the many talented individuals in our industry in order to provide an association that fulfills the needs of its members."

with our board to accomplish our strategic goals as we approach the 55th year serving our members. I believe Greg's steady and thoughtful approach is exactly what we need to ensure the ongoing success and

Photo Highlights Of NEAAPA Members On



NEAAPA
Photos

Show Floor During IAAPA Expo In Orlando





Past Presidents

Seven past presidents of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions were on hand at NEAAPA's luncheon in Orlando, Fla., this past November. From the left are: Jason Freeman, Six Flags; Kevin Naughton, Naughton Insurance Inc., Providence, R.I.; George Frantzis II, Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, Middlebury, Conn.; Carl Berni, Canobie Lake Park, Salem, N.H.; Dave Sugrue, Ocean Beach Park, New London, Conn.; David Daly, Daly Cavanaugh, LLP, Wellesley, Mass.; and Greg Chiecko, president Outdoor Amusement Business Association. (NEAAPA photos)



Pamela Landwirth, of Give Kids The World Village, addressed the NEAAPA gathering (above) followed by a board meeting (right).

NEAAPA Luncheon Draws Crowd

The New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions' (NEAAPA) luncheon and board meeting during the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Expo usually draws a crowd.

The event held last November in Orlando, Fla., was no exception as more than 70 were on hand.

Guest speaker was Pamela Landwirth, president and chief executive officer of Kids Kids The World Village in Kissimmee, Fla.

The village is an 84-acre, nonprofit resort in Central Florida that provides week-long, cost-free vacations to children with critical illnesses and their families. \

Among those in attendance were seven past presidents of NEAAPA.



Welcome

(Continued From Page 3)

other industry pros that live and breathe our same business lives.

How blessed are we to be in the same location with people who have many years of experience that are willing to share the ups and downs throughout their own journey. I remember years ago sitting at a roundtable session and the topic was redemption. It was John Frantzis who gave me new insight about how to pack a crane, a tip I still use today. We not only learn while onsite but it is nice to know that the NEAAPA family is just a phone call away when you have a question.

I am proud of the work our board has done these last two years stepping up our educational programs to bring our members critical information and sessions that impact their business.

Having IAAPA join us to present the latest on government relations and advocacy has been a welcome addition to our program.

Adding top-notch speakers like Louie Gravance and this year's Meagan Johnson lets you know that we are always striving to bring you the best right here in the New Region.

The addition of adding a second day and location for our Spring Leadership Conference allowed for the convenience of our members located in the southern part of New England. Our education committee worked overtime these past two years.

It is bittersweet for me as my term ends and I want to thank everyone for their continuous support and I can't go without thanking the man who first got me involved in this wonderful association, Alan Ramsay.

I hope you all enjoy this conference and remember that the person you get to be seated next two over the next couple of days is a wealth of knowledge and someone that will not only be your fellow NEAAPA member but a true friend.

Yours in NEAAPA,

Dorothy Lewis, president



More than 350 coats were donated during the event.
(Submitted photo)

Six Flags Collects Coats For Needy Families

AGAWAM, Mass. - Six Flags New England collected more than 350 coats to assist needy families during the holiday season.

Guests came from throughout New England to donate and share the warmth this holiday season with new and gently used coats varied in size and all benefited Square One in Springfield, Mass.

Square One provides a range of family-friendly education and support services that are unique to each child and every family served.

NEW ENGLAND'S ENTERTAINMENT ASSOCIATION

NEAAPA

Advocacy + Information + Networking

Send your news to:

secretary@neaapa.com

and ron@quassy.com for the Summer Meeting

Edition of New England News

Submission deadline: June 10

Tony Pero, 'Mr. Ocean Beach,' Dead At Age 97

NEW LONDON, Conn. - Anthony "Tony" N. Pero Sr., a past president of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA) and a member of the organization's hall of fame, has died at age 97.

Tony, affectionately known as "Mr. Ocean Beach," passed away on Monday, Jan. 28, 2019, at New London Rehab in Waterford, Conn.

Born Feb. 20, 1921, in New London to Nicholas and Ellen (Sullivan) Pero, he honorably served in the U.S. Navy as a Seabee during World War II. Upon his return from the war, he married his wife, Mary Collins Pero.

Tony worked at the Mystic Oral School for the Deaf before his career at Ocean Beach Park in New London.

For most of his life, he was known as "Mr. Ocean Beach" because of his accomplishments and dedication to the park. He worked his way from lifeguard to manager of Ocean Beach Park, a career that spanned nearly 40 years.

Famous Entertainers

He was instrumental in putting New London on the map by bringing in famous and renowned entertainers such as the popular bands of the "Big Band" era, as well as well-known country music artists.

The Ocean Beach Park Boardwalk was dedicated in his name in 1999 and the park honored him in recent years by holding Tony Pero Day.

In his retirement, Tony worked at Birch Plain Golf Course in Groton.

He was an active member in various organizations such as: New London Lions Club (Melvin Jones Fellowship Award recipient), Governor's Tourism Council, Navy League, New London City Councilor, New London Senior Center Advisory Board, Italian Dramatic Club, and Hospice Board of Directors.

NEAAPA President

He served as NEAAPA president in 1974 and was inducted into its hall of fame in 1999.

Tony is predeceased by his wife, Mary Pero. He is survived by his sons, William Pero and his wife Maureen of New London, Patrick Pero and his wife Bobbie of Salem, Robert Pero and his wife Dora of New London; daughters, Judith McAuliffe and her husband John of Cincinnati, Ohio, and Colleen Pero of New London as well as 14 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Besides his wife, Tony is predeceased by his son, Anthony Pero Jr., brother, Robert Pero, and sister Theresa Pero.

Donations may be made to the Ocean Beach Clock Tower Fund, 15 Masonic St., New London, CT 06320 or to the Center for Hospice Care, 227 Dunham St, Norwich, CT 06360.



Tony Pero shown next to the Ocean Beach Park Boardwalk plaque honoring him at the New London, Conn., attraction. (Submitted photo)

Morrow Social Always A Highlight During IAAPA Expo



Event Sponsors

The New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA) held its annual Tom Morrow Dinner & IAAPA Social during November's International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Expo in Orlando, Fla. The evening gala was held at Maggiano's Little Italy and sponsored by a number of NEAAPA members. The sponsors in attendance were (from the left): Michael Marra-Powers, Premier Rides; Chris Bourgeois, Rhode Island Novelty; Christian Gainer, Santa's Village; Michael Mancini, Neptune-Benson / Evoqua; Joanna Guy, Premier Rides; Michael Amaro, IALDA; Tim Timco, S&S Worldwide; Sara Seay, Premier Rides; Tom Tessitore, National Ticket; Dorothy Lewis, XpressPosts.com; Anthony Berni III, Canobie Lake Park; Kaz Ulaky, Canobie Lake Park; Ed Reeder, Uncommon USA; and Gary Slade, *Amusement Today*. The dinner honors the late Tom Morrow, a past president of NEAAPA and operations manager at Canobie Lake Park, Salem, N.H., who became affectionately known as "Mr. NEAAPA" for his years of dedication to the association. A record turnout of 140 attended the event. (NEAAPA photos)



NEAAPA Secretary Ed Hodgdon (left) and Michael Amaro, a member of the International Amusement & Leisure Defense Association from the law firm Amaro Baldwin LLP, hold a bottle of special NEAAPA wine Amaro presented to NEAAPA during its annual Tom Morrow Dinner. During and after dinner photos below reflect the good time had by those in attendance.



Manufacturers & Suppliers News



Can't Beat This Street's Name

HOLLY HILL, Fla.—It might not be the most majestic of historic images, but roughly four decades of manufacturing the famed Whac-A-Mole arcade game is arguably a historic achievement.

That milestone of mallets was on the agenda for an official honor from the Holly Hill City Commission in the form of a resolution renaming part of 15th Street as Whac-A-Mole Way to commemorate the most famous product manufactured at Bob's Space Racers Inc., the longstanding company at 427 15th St.



Portable Version Of New Ride

SBF/Visa Group of Italy, represented in North America by Rides4U, Somerville, N.J., displayed its new trailer-mounted Crazy Cabs mini break dance ride during the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Expo in Orlando, Fla.

In addition, SBF/Visa had a large version of its popular spinning coaster on the show floor, which was sold to a New Jersey park.

Firestone Expands Team

NEEDHAM, Mass. — Firestone Financial, a subsidiary of Berkshire Bank, announced plans to expand their carnival and parks finance team to meet increased customer demand and industry growth.

Sal Cifala, one of Firestone's most experienced lenders, will join Rich Gockelman on the carnival and parks team. Cifala will also continue to lead the amusement, vending, and gaming industries.



Sal Cifala

"Sal has been a trusted advisor to his amusement and vending customers for over 20 years," said Tom Varriale, senior vice president of sales and marketing. "He'll bring that same level of expertise to his carnival and parks customers, helping them to grow their businesses."

Cifala joined Firestone in 1996, working in credit and asset management before starting in sales in 2002. As the assistant vice president of sales for the amusement, vending, and gaming industries, he manages strategic relationships with customers, manufacturers, distributors, and operators. With his expanded role, Cifala will bring that same service level to carnival and parks customers.

"I look forward to working with new and existing carnival and park customers," said Cifala. "Rich has done a tremendous job helping his carnival customers with their financial needs and I look forward to partnering with him to meet the increasing demand."

RWS Has New Partnership

LONG ISLAND CITY, N.Y. - RWS Entertainment Group (RWS), a full-service production company that creates award-winning custom entertainment, live events, and brand experiences worldwide, announced a new partnership with Germany's largest amusement park, (See RWS, Page 11)



Manufacturers & Suppliers News

RWS

(Continued From Page 10)

Europa-Park, for a seven-stop audition tour spanning from Eastern Europe to New York City.

Over the course of three months, RWS will recruit singers, dancers and actors at the top of their craft for the park's wide variety of live entertainment programming.

In addition to casting services, RWS will also produce innovative new programming for Europa-Park, upholding the park's status as a year-round, one-of-a-kind getaway destination. Europa-Park is considered Europe's best kept secret due to the high quality of entertainment it produces.

"This partnership aligns with our company's mission of expanding the RWS international presence by connecting our New York City Broadway creatives with a European audience," stated Ryan Stana, founder and CEO of RWS. "We look forward to magnifying Europa-Park's global platform by recruiting top-notch talent from around the world."



New Coaster Takes Shape

TAMPA BAY, Fla.— Tigris, a new launch coaster at Busch Gardens here, is slated to open this spring.

Premier Rides, Baltimore, Md., is the designer of the ride, touted as being the tallest launch coaster in Florida.

Tigris will stand 150 feet tall and incorporate more than 1,800 feet of track when completed.

For more information about Premier Rides, visit www.Premier-rides.com.

Photo courtesy Busch Gardens Tampa Bay.

ESE's Donna Woolam Honored By FFA

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. — Eastern States Exposition's Director of Agriculture, Donna Woolam, of South Windsor, Conn., was recently selected to receive the Honorary American Future Farmers of America (FFA) Degree.

This award is given to those who advance agricultural education and FFA through outstanding personal commitment. The National FFA Organization works to enhance the lives of youth through agricultural education.

Without the efforts of highly dedicated individuals, thousands of young people would not be able to achieve the success that, in turn, contributes directly to the overall well-being of the nation.

The Honorary American FFA Degree is an opportunity to recognize those who have gone beyond valuable daily contributions to make an extraordinary long-term difference in the lives of stu-

dents, inspiring confidence in a new generation of agriculturists. Members of the National FFA Organization's board of directors approved the nomination.

Woolam received the award at the 2018 National FFA Convention & Expo during an onstage ceremony last fall here. All recipients received a certificate and medal, and their names will be permanently recorded.

The National FFA Organization provides leadership, personal growth and career success training through agricultural education to 669,989 student members who belong to one of 8,630 local FFA chapters throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The organization is also supported by 344,239 alumni members in 2,051 alumni chapters throughout the U.S.

Eastern States Exposition hosts The Big E, the seventh largest fair in North America, alongside 120 shows and events throughout the year.



Donna Woolam



Living Shores Aquarium Takes Shape In Glen, N.H.

GLEN, N.H. - Progress continues on the new Living Shores Aquarium, being constructed adjacent to Story Land here.

Main exhibits will feature Sting Rays, Lorikeets, Chain Catsharks and Cleaner Fish along with tropical reef and local eco system exhibits. Guests will have the opportunity to interact through touch tide



pools and a fully immersive aviary where you can feed

Lorikeets.

“We are thrilled to bring an all new indoor, hands on experience to the area” said Eric Dziedzic, general manager of Story Land and Living Shores Aquarium. “Marine life education and conservation is extremely important and we hope

to provide an avenue to learn, interact and appreciate the bodies of water and the species that surround us.”

Living Shores Aquarium will also offer a full retail shop and a 150 seat Italian restaurant, Pasta Mia. Pasta Mia will be a family friendly, quick service restaurant with both indoor and outdoor patio seating. Both Living Shores Aquarium and Pasta Mia will operate year round once open.

Living Shores Aquarium, just steps from Story Land, is the newest Palace Entertainment attraction with an anticipated spring opening.

With more than 32,000 square feet of tide pools, hands-on exhibits and educational experiences, guests will spend their day interacting with marine life from a variety of habitats.



**Construction scene at Living Shore Aquarium in Glen, N.H.
(Submitted photo)**



Foreigner To Rock The Big E

One of the most popular rock acts in the world, Foreigner, will bring its formidable musical arsenal, including the No. 1 global hit, “I Want To Know What Love Is,” to The Big E’s xfinity arena Sept. 29 in West Springfield, Mass. Foreigner’s 1977 self-titled debut album produced their first hit, “Feels Like The First Time,” as well as “Cold As Ice” and “Long, Long Way From Home.” The album Double Vision followed, as did a string of hits like “Urgent,” “Juke Box Hero” and “Waiting For A Girl Like You.” (Submitted photo)

Registration Is Open For Races At Eastern States Exposition

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass.—Registration is open for the 5K Run/Walk and the Big 5K Scramble at the Eastern States Exposition here. The Aug. 30 event kicks off the 2019 Big E season.

The Big 5K Scramble is a course with Big E-themed challenges around every corner. This family-friendly event also includes a Kids Fun Run for ages 10 and under. The race day will finish with an awards ceremony and party on the Storowton Tavern patio.



A number of races will be held Aug. 30 at the Eastern States Exposition. (Submitted photo)

Kids Fun Run: 6:30 p.m. / FREE

Dash down the Avenue of States with mascot Krisp-E, the quick chick! Registration is free with the donation of a new or gently used book.

Big 5K Road Race: 6:45 p.m. / \$30

Compete in a 5K through the fairgrounds on our USAFT-certified course. Cash prizes will be awarded to the first, second and third place male and female finishers. Medals will be awarded to the first place male and female finishers in each age division.

Big 5K Scramble: 7 p.m. / \$40

Add some fair flair to the 5K by participating in the Scramble. Scramble challenges will be announced soon. Cash prizes will be awarded to the first place male and female finisher. Be sure to dress in your Big E

best as team and solo runners will have an opportunity to win The Big E Spirit Award for a VIP day at the fair.

Registration for all races, including a virtual race and post-race buffet reservations, is now open. The first 500 people to register will receive a T-shirt, a single-day admission ticket to The Big E, free drink ticket and Big E swag. Visit TheBigE.com/TheBig5K or Racewire.com for more information and to register.

The 2019 edition of The Big E is slated for Sept. 13-29.



Officiating At Wedding Ceremony

NEAAPA President Dorothy Lewis (left), an ordained minister, officiated at the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. Bouremia at Urban Air Trampoline and Adventure Park in Orange, Conn., in December. The bride is food manager at the business. (Submitted photo)

Faces Of The Rainforest Opens At Roger Williams Park Zoo



PROVIDENCE, R.I.—Roger Williams Park Zoo has officially opened its eagerly awaited exhibit – Faces of the Rainforest.

“It is with great excitement that we announce today the opening of this magnificent new exhibit, providing all our guests with the opportunity to experience the South American Rainforest here in Rhode Island,” Dr. Jeremy Goodman, executive director of the Rhode Island Zoological Society/ Roger Williams Park Zoo, said at opening ceremonies in November.

Dr. Goodman continued, “We began this project in November

Faces of the Rainforest building at Roger Williams Park Zoo (above) and one of the many birds inside (below). (Submitted photos)



2016 and have watched our plans become reality. We know many of our guests watched as we went from a very active construction site to the beautiful building we open today.”

Additionally, Goodman stated, “I am so thrilled that visitors will have the opportunity to experience a free-flying aviary, get close to a number of species, and truly learn about the indigenous monkeys, birds, amphibians, and reptiles of the Amazon Rainforest.”

Faces of the Rainforest is the first major project in phase one of a 20-year master plan originally unveiled in 2015. The zoo re-

ceived initial funding for this project as part of the Clean Water, Open Space and Healthy Communities Bond passed by voters in 2014.

Faces of the Rainforest is a completely immersive experience for every guest from the time they enter the building until the moment they leave the yard of the exhibit.

At first glance, the 9,820-square-foot structure with the lavish flora and splendid fauna, indigenous to the Amazon Rainforest, will awe visitors.

Upon closer inspection, guests will view photos of the men, women, and children who live in the South American rainforests. However, as visitors leave the area the FACES they will see will be their own image reflecting back in a large mirror honing the message that we are ALL Faces of the Rainforest.

Roger Williams Park Zoo is Rhode Island’s premiere tourist attraction. As leaders in conservation and animal care, the zoo creates engaging experiences that empower guests to join us in conserving wild life and wild places.

Roger Williams Park Zoo is supported and managed by the Rhode Island Zoological Society and owned by the City of Providence. The zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and certified by American Humane.



IAAPA Foundation Aims To Shape New Industry Leadership

By **RON GUSTAFSON**
Editor, New England News

Bobbie and Tom Wages have been on a mission since 2016 to help shape some of tomorrow's leaders in the global attractions industry.

As co-executive directors of the IAAPA Foundation, the husband and wife team lead an enthusiastic charge to bring new blood into a business that serves up healthy portions of fun and excitement.

"We work with students and others who are interested in getting into our industry," Tom said of the organization.

And there are - perhaps - no better ambassadors for this undertaking than the Wages. The daughter of late industry icon Charley (Charles) Wood, Bobbie grew up in the amusement park business.



Tom and Bobbie Wages

Wood was referred to as the "grandfather of the American theme park" as his Storytown U.S.A. in Queensbury, N.Y., was one of the first properties to incorporate themes into its attractions.



Tom joined the Wood organization in the 1970s and went on to become general manager of another Wood property, Fantasy Island, Grand Island, N.Y., before returning to Lake George as president of the Great Escape

Theme Park – the rebranded Storytown.

He later took a post with Kennywood Entertainment Company as general manager of Lake Compounce in Bristol, Conn.

Though retired from the daily rigors of amusement park life, the couple have remained active with IAAPA. Both served as treasurers of the organization and Tom as its board chairman in 1986.

Changes Made

Founded in 2010, the IAAPA Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, was originally established to do research and studies related to the industry.

During a 2015 IAAPA Board of Directors meeting, it was determined that the foundation would take a new direction in moving toward cultivating new leadership for the attractions industry.

Foundation chair Jane Cooper, president and chief operating officer of Herschend Family Entertainment, presented the revised mission to the IAAPA Board of Directors, which Tom was serving on at the time.

"I came home and asked Bobbie if she wanted to help with the new initiative, which she did," Tom recalled. "We immediately called Jane and she spoke to the IAAPA Foundation board to get its support for our involvement."

The Wages are quick to point out that success stories related to the foundation's work keeps them "juiced" about the tasks at hand.

"When working with students, it's very exciting to see them participate and watch their eyes open about the prospects of getting involved in our industry," Tom said of the foundation's agenda.

"One of the things we have been working on at numerous locations is job shadowing," Bobbie added. "We have also invited students to attend student forums at expos (IAAPA trade shows). They have the opportunity to listen to industry executives explain how they got into the business. The students really eat it up and then go on the show floor."

Taking It To The Streets

During one of the IAAPA events in Amsterdam, Netherlands, students were eager to listen and learn while exploring the expo floor.

(See **FOUNDATION**, Page 16)

Foundation

(Continued From Page 15)

"The next thing we knew, security was asking us to leave as the convention hall was being closed for the day," Bobbie said of the exchange. "The lively conversations between a few industry experts and students spilled into the hallway and we were booted out of there as well."

The group made its way to the sidewalk, where the dialogue continued.

"These experiences are certainly life-changing for some young people - we see that as they have the opportunity to speak with industry executives and see the expo," Tom asserted.

The foundation also focuses on colleges and universities that have programs to develop disciplines essential to the attractions industry.

Rosen College of Hospitality Management, an academic college of the University of Central Florida located in Orlando, is a prime example of an institution that achieves just that.

Success Story

"We are the only organization to offer scholarships exclusively for students who are following the attractions management track at Rosen College," Bobbie said of the foundation's outreach. "We have had the opportunity to bring scholarship winners to IAAPA Expo in Orlando and monitor their progress as they work toward getting into the industry."

As a measure of the success attributed to the scholarship program, the Wages said four out of five recipients are currently working in the business, while one is still in school.

Among them is Frank Hamedl.

During a summer break from Rosen College he drove from his home in New York's Hudson Valley to Connecticut's Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, where he became part of the rides department.

His willingness to learn, along with keen attention to detail, quickly led to his being promoted to a manager of the rides staff, a position he held until graduating from Rosen in 2017. He also played an important role on the property's safety committee.

In 2017 he was named Mr. Golden Ticket, an honor bestowed for the annual Golden Ticket Awards presented by *Amusement Today* (AT). Each year AT recognizes college students who plan to pursue a career in the amusement industry and are employed by the Golden Ticket Awards host park.

These individuals exemplify the spirit and integrity of the amusement industry by promoting the cornerstones of safety, service, courtesy and cleanliness at the highest level, while consistently exceeding job expectations. This is an annual designation by AT to promote education in the field of hospitality.

Today Frank works fulltime for Universal Orlando Resort.

"It's really a great story," Bobbie said of Frank's success. "The idea of connecting universities and colleges to the industry is really working worldwide. We are working with them on curriculum as well as exchange programs."

At the past IAAPA Expo in Orlando - held each November - there were nearly 60 educators in attendance.

"It was fun to see them connect there, be guest speakers and work together at roundtable discussions," Bobbie said of the event. "We are also encouraging industry executives to be executives in residence at universities to

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Success Story

Frank Hamedl was a manager of the rides staff at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, Middlebury, Conn., and a recipient of an IAAPA Foundation scholarship. Today he works at Universal Orlando Resort. (Quassy photo)



Gwendolyn Quezaire-Presutti as Harriet Tubman. (Submitted photo)

Harriet Tubman Performance At ESE Museum

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass.— Storowton Village Museum's annual First Person Presentation this year focused on Harriet Tubman. The museum brought living historian Gwendolyn Quezaire-Presutti and her performance of "I Can't Die But Once" to its historic Union Meeting House in January at the Eastern State Exposition here.

The aim of the performance was to take a closer look at the woman who inspired many during and after her lifetime. To the enslaved, Tubman was Moses leading them to freedom; to their slaveholders, she was a thief and trickster.

Tubman was a fearless visionary who commanded an elaborate system of scouts and spies during abolition years. She often gave speeches before and after the Civil War, as a way of raising money for her humanitarian causes.

Quezaire-Presutti's presentation took the audience back to 1887, during one of Tubman's speeches in a meeting hall addressing friends and supporters. Toward the end of the presentation, Quezaire-Presutti answered questions as Tubman before switching to a short talk about researching her subject as an actor.

Quezaire-Presutti, a committed scholar of African American Diaspora Studies, began performing in 1997 at The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures as an Educational Interpreter.

Foundation

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share their professional experiences."

Looking Ahead

"People need to know about and understand the foundation," Tom said of the organization's goal of getting more student and industry engagement. "We have a great board and Jane Cooper has really pushed us from the get-go. She is the driver (of the board) and supporter of what we do."

"We really are making a difference with multiple institutions now involved," Jane said of the efforts. "We always need funding to continue the progress we've made, not only academically, but also in getting more of our industry experts involved."

"We're geared up to help students train to be the next generation of industry leadership," Tom continued. "As with any career, when you come out of college with a focused degree, it gives you a leg-up in the job market."

He concluded in saying: "In looking ahead, we'll continually look for more ways to serve our mission."

For more about the IAAPA Foundation visit:

<http://www.iaapafoundation.org>

(Editor's note: This article appeared in the February edition of *Amusement Today* and is being reprinted with permission.)

Two Coasters Rated Among The Top 50

When it comes to presenting world-class roller coasters, member properties of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions know how to get it done.

ElloCoaster, an online magazine dedicated to roller coasters, theme parks, and "other thrilling diversions," announced recently that two New England attractions were rated among the top 50 wood coasters on the planet.

ElloCoaster
2018
Wood Coaster Poll



The results of the poll placed Boulder Dash at Lake Compounce, Bristol, Conn., at No. 7 and Wooden Warrior at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, Middlebury, Conn., at No. 40.

The next balloting starts in November, according to ElloCoaster Editor Jim Winslett.

To see the complete results of the 2018 ElloCoaster poll, visit www.ellocoaster.com.

Member Properties Serve Up Yuletide Cheer



Edaville Family Theme Park (above) in Carver, Mass., during holiday season. (Submitted photos)



Yuletide scene at Storowton Village Museum (above) at Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Mass., and an ice sculpture and welcoming soldiers at Six Flags New England in Agawam, Mass. (Submitted photos)