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May 12, 2003

**PLAYLAND CELEBRATED IT'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY
Let the Season-Long Celebration Begin!**

A mix of the old traditional family fun and entertainment along with a host of new surprises kicked off Playland's 75th Anniversary Celebration on Opening Day, Saturday, May 10, at Playland Park in Rye.

Since 1928 when the park first opened its gates and became the first planned theme park in America, Playland has been providing the best in fun and entertainment for families in Westchester and throughout the tri-state area. This season-long tribute to this National Historic Landmark kicked off with a parade, free entertainment, ride specials and a historic journey at each of the park's original rides.

Opening Day festivities began at the Fountain Plaza at 11 a.m. with performances by a strolling band and other entertainers, including a magician and mime. Visitors will be greeted by Coaster the Dragon and other favorite Playland costumed characters and vintage 1928 costumed characters throughout the day, and there will be an antique car display reminiscent of the early days of the automobile.

At 11:30 a.m., the Port Chester High School Marching Band accompanied dignitaries, staff, and Coaster the Dragon as they make their traditional march from Playland's upper circle to the Fountain Plaza. The parade was followed by an opening ceremony and ribbon cutting with County Executive Andy Spano. As part of National Tourism Week, County Executive Spano presented a proclamation to declare May 10 "See America Day" in Westchester County.

Throughout the day, a strolling band and other entertainers made the rounds in the park. Beginning opening day and throughout the season, 1928-style characters will entertain guests with historical facts and trivia at the park's historical rides including the Dragon Coaster, Carousel, Derby Racer, the recently refurbished Old Mill, and the Whip.

Coming Attractions

Playland will introduce two new rides, a new train, new bumper cars and a state-of-the-art stage. Dates of ride openings and the stage will be announced.

New Rides

New rides this season will feature the Crazy Mouse Coaster at the north end of the main park. Reminiscent of Playland's former Wild Mouse Coaster, this coaster will make riders feel as if they are approaching the edge of the track only to make sharp twists and turns. Children and adults will enjoy riding in the colorful mouse cars on this family thrill ride. The Jungle Jammin' gorilla-themed ride will be added to Kiddyland for children and parents to enjoy.

The New Playland Express Train will premier this spring, with a locomotive that is a replica of an original 1863 C.P. Huntington. The train ride area will be themed to include special park locations as the train "leaves" Playland and "travels through" Westchester County and New York City. The ride is also accessible to the handicapped.

Over 50 new Auto Scooter (Bumper Cars) cars, which are replicas of old-fashioned cars and feature a comfortable lap bar instead of a strap, will premier this season.

Music Tower Stage

Playland's new Music Tower Stage will also make its debut, featuring a new state-of-the-art stage that will include new sound, new seating, a professional stage and the high quality of family entertainment that has been a hallmark at the park for the past 75 years.

Walk of Fame

Corporations, families and individuals will have the opportunity to become part of the park's history by purchasing an engraved paving stone for the new Playland Walk of Fame, located near the fountain at the park's main entrance. Cost is \$150, and proceeds will be used for additional programming and entertainment during the 2003 season.

The Tradition of Free Entertainment Continues

Playland will feature daily musical revues, puppet shows, strolling entertainment, and band and costumed characters, beginning June 13. Daily performances will be held through Labor Day.

Free weekly fireworks will be displayed every Wednesday and Friday evening in July and August, as well as July 3 and 4. All shows begin at 9:15 p.m.

Free Big Band Concerts are held Friday evenings on the Boardwalk at the dance floor overlooking Long Island Sound, from July 11 through August 8, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Name entertainers take to the new Music Tower Stage for Playland's Free

Concert Series, Thursday evenings from July 31 through August 28 at 8 p.m. Entertainers will be announced.

Amusement Park Schedule

Playland will be open Saturdays and Sundays at noon, beginning May 10. On Friday, May 23, the park will open from 6 p.m. to midnight, with openings at noon on Saturday, Sunday and Memorial Day Monday. Beginning May 28, Playland will be open Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Fridays from 10 a.m. to midnight; Saturdays from noon to midnight; and Sundays from noon to 11 p.m. Beginning Saturday, June 21, the park will be open Tuesday through Sunday at noon and closed Mondays except holidays through Labor Day, Monday, September 1.

Ride and Parking Fees

Admission and entertainment at Playland are always free. Car parking is \$5 Tuesday through Friday, \$7 on weekends, and \$10 on holidays. Ticket books are \$21 for a 24-Ticket Book, \$17 for a 16-Ticket Book and \$9 for an 8-Ticket Book. Rides are 2 to 4 tickets each. Group sales of 20 or more are available.

Other Attractions

The Playland Boardwalk Museum features exhibits, photographs and memorabilia designed to enhance a visitor's park experience. The Museum houses a vintage fire engine and old cars from the Caterpillar, the Flying Scooter and the Dragon Coaster, along with old steamship tickets, souvenir postcards and other items.

Other popular attractions at Playland include the Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary, lakeside picnic areas, rowboat and pedal boat rentals, kayaking, a boardwalk and pier that stretches the length of the park, a miniature golf course, many name brand food stands, outdoor seafood restaurant, and private catering facilities.

Beach and Pool

Playland Beach will be open weekends from May 24 through June 15. The Beach will open daily from June 21 through Labor Day. The Beach is open from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. with no admittance after 6 p.m. Beach admission is \$3.25 for adults, \$1.50 for children 5-11, and infants are free. Fees are reduced by 50% during twilight swimming from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Playland Pool will be open Saturday and Sunday June 14 and 15 and then daily from June 21 through Labor Day from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. with no admittance after 6 p.m. Pool admission is \$4.50 for adults, \$2.50 for children 5-11, and infants are free. Fees are reduced by 50% during twilight swimming from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Camp Playland

The Camp Playland day camp program will be offered again this summer for 7- to 12-year-olds. Camp Playland utilizes all of Playland's unique

facilities including the amusement park, ice casino, pool, miniature golf course, Edith G. Read Nature Sanctuary and Playland Lake. Six one-week sessions begin July 14.

Playland is owned and operated by Westchester County and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation. Playland Park is known as America's first totally planned amusement park and was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1987. The park's original art deco structures have been preserved, as are the park's seven original rides that are still enjoyed by visitors today.

Playland is located in Rye, New York and can be reached via the New England Thruway (I-95), Playland Parkway exit 19. For more information, call 914-813-7010 or visit Playland at www.ryeplayland.org.

www.westchestergov.com