

The Theme Parks Around Us

Great Day-Trip Summer Getaways

Christopher Cussat

Well, summer is almost here and it is time to start planning those fun days you have been looking forward to all winter. Now that the temperature has consistently broken 60 degrees in Western Pennsylvania, the age-old question arises, "What is there to do?" Theme and amusement parks have always been favorite summer destinations. But this year, instead of only trekking out to your favorite park and riding your favorite ride, why not consider some of the other parks within 2-3 hours of Pittsburgh?

If roller coasters get your head spinning, there are a slew of new tracks right around the bend. Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio boasts the most roller coasters in the world. With 14 high-speed monsters in all,

Cedar Point will satiate even the bravest coaster-junkie. Their newest addition, Millennium Force, is the tallest and fastest roller coaster in the world!

At a staggering 310 feet tall, its \$25 million price tag obviously

bought a lot of thrills and excitement. If Millennium Force's 300-foot drop at an 80-degree angle and flying at a top speed of 92 mph over 6,595 feet of track does not make your stomach quiver or satisfy your need for speed, then perhaps you should consider a career with NASA. Also remember, you still have 13 more to go! The Millennium Force has helped Cedar Point break 10 world records, including: most roller coasters anywhere in the world and most rides anywhere in the world (68). Cedar Point is truly an amusement park of national and international attention. Luckily, for us, it is only 180 miles away. Cedar Point's 2000 season began in May and will be open daily through September 4 (Labor Day). For more information call (419) 627-2350 or visit www.cedarpoint.com.

This summer, HersheyPark, introduces its newest roller coaster — Lightning Racer. It is the only racing, dueling, double-track, wooden roller coaster in the country. It doubles your fun with double twists and towers, two cars running side by side and passing head-on, and the breath-taking Side-Swipe Alley and Waterfall! Lightning Racer's twin passenger trains lift simultaneously to a 90-foot drop, with speeds of over 50 mph. HersheyPark has eight world-class coasters and a total of 55 thrilling rides and attractions. In addition to land-based rides, HersheyPark is also the home of Tidal Force, the world's tallest splashdown ride. Other park highlights include: a complete water-park for kids and adults alike, Broadway-style dance reviews, dolphin and sea lion performances, and The Sweetest Parade on Earth. Kids will love the life-size Hershey Candy Characters. Check out HersheyPark Amphitheater's Summer Concert Series calendar for information on performances by some of the biggest names in music. In addition, entrance to ZooAmerica Wildlife Park is included with HersheyPark admission. Hey, don't forget the chocolate! They don't call it "the sweetest place on Earth" for nothing! Mmm. Nick-named the "cleanest and greenest theme park in America," Hershey is one of those timeless slices of true, pure Americana. Located in Hershey, Pennsylvania (about 200 miles east of Pittsburgh), it is a special place everyone should visit at least once. HersheyPark is open daily from 10:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. from June through September 3, 2000. For more information call 1-800-HERSHEY or visit www.HersheyPA.com.



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VILAIN

New this year, there is finally a Six Flags theme park within day-trip distance from Pittsburgh (about 120 miles). Six Flags Ohio in Aurora, (formerly Geauga Lake) begins its first season with a bang. With \$40 million in new rides and attractions, it's a whole new park packed with summer fun for everyone. Already breaking records, Six Flags Ohio notes four roller coasters, including Batman Knight Flight, the world's longest floorless coaster, and Superman Ultimate Escape, the world's first vertical spiraling impulse coaster. With roller coasters and attractions named after popular heroes like Batman and Superman, a children's park called Looney Tunes BoomTown, and free access to the Hurricane Harbor water park (included with Six Flags admission price), Six Flags Ohio positions itself to be an instant family hit. Open daily from June through September 1, 2000 from 11:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. For more information call (330) 562-7131 or visit www.sixflags.com.

Neighboring Six Flags Ohio is Seaworld Cleveland. No Summer would be complete without watching Shamu frolic under neon lights and splash his willing, cheering spectators! In addition to Shamu's awesome performances, Dolphin Cove allows visitors to touch and feed these gentle creatures. The educational Shark and Penguin Encounters, hilarious Sea Lion Show, and other 20+ attractions make SeaWorld Cleveland an ideal summer getaway. New additions for 2000 include: Mission: Bermuda Triangle, an incredible virtual tour of the ocean's depths; and New Orleans Nights Evening Entertainment, a Cajun festival of music and dance. For more information call 1-800-63-SHAMU or visit www.seaworld.com.



Six Flags Ohio in Aurora was formerly Geauga Lake.

Of course, there is always Kennywood, Idlewild Park, and Sandcastle Waterpark — the local favorites. Kennywood's legendary roller coasters and nostalgic rides make it a Pittsburgh tradition. In order to create more space, Kennywood plans to tear down the Steel Phantom at the end of this season, so it may be your last chance to ride and enjoy the metal megalith. The park features 31 major rides, 3 water rides, and 14 Kiddieland rides. Check out the new Aero 360, a 90-foot tall, vertical spin ride. Kennywood is open daily from June through September 4, 2000, from 10:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. For more information call (412) 461-0500 or visit www.kennywood.com. Idlewild, the third oldest amusement park in the United States, is the ideal, family spot for summer. The Story Book Forest and trolley ride through Mister Rogers' Neighborhood of Make-Believe create a magical world of enjoyment for old and young alike. Open everyday except Mondays through September 4, 2000, from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00-8:00 p.m. For information call (724) 238-3666 or visit www.idlewild.com. Finally, you can cool off at Sandcastle in its 15 wild water-slides and pools for adults and kids. Open daily, June 3 through September 4, 2000, 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. For more information call (412) 462-6666 or visit www.sandcastlewaterpark.com.

Summer is a time to take adventures and chances. Shed the last of those winter blues and take on something other than the same old routines. Visit new places, see new things, and have a great time! ▲

Are you looking for a way to reach the northern communities of Pittsburgh to advertise your summer fun or church/community festival? Look no further! **Northern Connection** can connect you to the people you hope to reach!

Place your ad in our **Ferris Wheel of Fun!**

Call our Account Executives at 412-364-8700 to reserve your "seat"!

PARISH MISSION

Saint Sebastian Church,
311 Siebert Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

We invite all our friends and neighbors to a week of Spiritual Renewal at our Parish Mission.

June 11 – 15, 2000

"Life is Difficult But God Is Good"

Father Scott Seethaler,

a Capuchin-Franciscan priest of the Pittsburgh area, who is well-known in both public and religious settings, will preach on faith, values, stress, education and family issues.

EVENING SESSIONS

(7:30 p.m. in Church)

- Sunday: A Christian Response To Stress
- Monday: Celebrating Marriage & Family Life
- Tuesday: Finding True Happiness
- Wednesday: The Art Of Forgiveness
- Thursday: Give Hope A Chance

MORNING SESSIONS

(following 9:00 a.m. Mass – in Church)

- Monday: Learn To Trust Your Prayer Life
- Tuesday: Prayer Gives Me A New Heart
- Wednesday: When God Says No To Prayer
- Thursday: Intimacy With God Through Prayer

Before you go on your Vacation Get-away, come break away with us for a Spiritual Vacation with God!