



AUGUST 26 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2008

New carnival swings into town

Powers Great American Midways debuts in 2008



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The Powers Great American Midways "Wave Swinger" cuts a stunning image against the sky. At this photo vantage, the "Ring of Fire" pictured in the left hand corner has the illusion of looking much smaller. Both are among Powers' "spectacular" rides.

S & S Amusements enjoys one last whirl

After 24 years of providing rides, games and shows on The Great Allentown Fair's carnival midway, S & S Amusements, Inc. took its final bow at the 2007 exposition.

The principals and owners of the company, Steve and Jackie Swika, notified the Lehigh County Agricultural Society's Executive Committee of this intention two years ago, giving the committee ample time to secure another company to fill the large lot that is the Fair's amusement midway.

Starting next year, Powers Great American Midways will become the Fair's carnival company. Both Steve and Jackie have expressed pleasure that a fellow Outdoor Amusement Business Association "Circle of Excellence" award winning family-operated carnival company will succeed them (see story, left).

The Swikas were recognized during the 2007 Fair Opening Ceremonies at the RCN Farmerama Theater. Society President Bill Greenawald presented the couple with "his and her" golden lifetime passes to the Fair.

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How important is a carnival midway to a fair?

On a scale of 1 to 10, the answer is probably about an 11.

With its towering rides, flashy games and inviting concessions, a carnival is a fair's skyline, its Las Vegas strip, its wonder for children and its excitement for adults.

So when the Allentown Fair Executive Committee went looking for a new carnival company to replace its retiring one, it settled for nothing less than something "POWERS-ful!"

Powers Great American Midways (PGAM), headquartered in Corfa, New York with winter quarters in Burgaw, North Carolina, has been awarded a three-year contract to light up the great expanse of the fairgrounds that goes along Chew Street in front of the Ritz Barbecue and Farmers Market buildings.

Like the Swikas of S & S Amusements that provided the Fair's midway the last 24 years (see story, right), the Powers are a family operation.

The company's president and owner, Les "Corky" Powers, has said he can't wait to give The Allentown Fair a whole new look and the ultimate carnival experience.

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Photo by Richard C. Chartrand

Steve Swika holds up his "lifetime pass" to the Fair, given with the Society's appreciation by its president, Bill Greenawald.

POWERS

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Together with his wife Debbie, children, grandchildren and a top-notch staff, Corky will bring a full compliment of rides, games and eateries that are up to his pristine standards.

In describing his carnival show, Corky maintains, “We’ve tried to create an atmosphere that is comfortable for the entire family right down to seating areas and hand washing stations. (It’s) just a family atmosphere with music, clean ride personnel; people that are courteous to the customers and plenty of supervisors to take care of any problems that may occur.”

Corky stresses “safety, safety, safety!” He points to the number of radios his personnel use to stay on top of all matters, abundant use of matting covering ground wires and hoses, daily mechanical maintenance and intensive inspections as important aspects of his operation.

The Powers show travels in sparkling white semis, trailers and campers that are unobtrusive to the eye when parked on



Photo taken by Bonnie C. Brosious

A shining example of Debbie Powers’ food operation, this stand gleams with cleanliness and beams with lights. The hand sanitizing station for patrons in front of the eatery is exemplary of Debbie’s high standards.



Photo taken by Bonnie C. Brosious

Les “Corky” Powers emerges from his traveling office on site at the North Carolina State Fair in October. Even the office has landscaping!

the fairgrounds. Corky is so meticulous, that even the inside of the trailers that house generators are spotless.

What fairgoers can expect

While attention was duly paid to the Powers philosophy of doing business and the behind the scenes workings of the operation, the Executive Committee was most impressed with what fairgoers can expect to enjoy.

PGAM is a company on the move, and Corky is continually upgrading his carnival with new equipment. The Fair will see both the company’s Dark Blue and Light Blue traveling units of amusements. The plentiful tents and flags on the midway bear these signature Powers colors.

The current ride count on the company’s Web site includes 29 “kiddie,” 14 adult and 12 “spectacular” rides all in mint condition, most of which will be in Allentown.

The food stands are colorful, immaculate units that Debbie scrutinizes for their quality and hospitality.

Corky emphasizes fairness and value as part of his game operation. Requiring game operators to move merchandise, he enforces the notion that patrons “winning and taking home prizes help them remember their extraordinary experience even after they have gone home.”

‘We’ve Got Your Ticket To Ride’

During the months leading up to Preview Night August 26, the Fair staff will work closely with PGAM to introduce the new carnival with exciting promotions and facilitate its first time setup.

The Fair’s 2008 theme, “We’ve Got Your Ticket To Ride,” sharpens its promotional focus onto the carnival. All aspects of the Fair, including the agricultural exhibit areas, will incorporate the fete theme.

Anyone interested in a peak at the new rides and attractions that will be at the Fair may log onto www.allentownfairpa.org and use the click through to the Powers site that is available on the homepage.

Also, videos of Powers amusements that were recorded at this year’s North Carolina State Fair are available for viewing at www.myspace.com/thegreatallentownfair.

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Curtain Call

The Lehigh County Agricultural Society bids final farewell to the following:
Herman G. O’Neill, Director Emeritus
 December 25, 2006.
Carl D. Snyder, Director
 May 17, 2007.
Richard J. Hummel, Director
 September 30, 2007.
Honorable James N. Diefenderfer
 Director Emeritus
 November 14, 2007.

An Oldie but Goodie

Emphasizing the “55” in its 155th year, The Great Allentown Fair went retro with an “Oldie But Goodie” theme. Here are some rockin’ around the Fair scenes—

Top center: Pretty in her pink poodle skirt, Farmerama Theater coordinator Gay Schroeder fits right in to the Lost in the 50’s Classic Car Club exhibit that kicked-off fairweek’s “Oldie But Goodie” festivities.

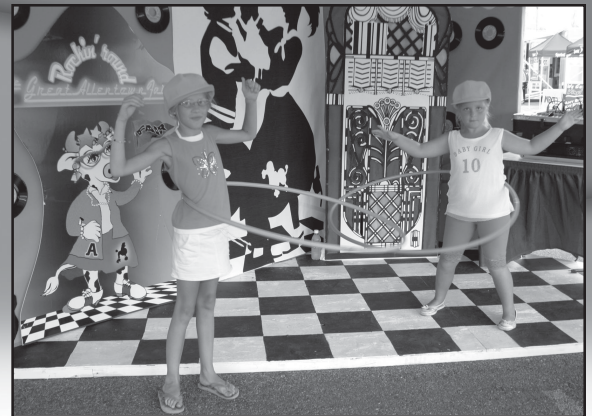
Top right: Young fairgoers hula-hoop it up inside entertainer T-Bone’s outdoor “malt shop.” The ukulele playing T-Bone added ‘50s flair to his family participation shows all week.

Mid center: Ready to jitterbug? Workers in Agri~Plex dress the part to get visitors in the mood as they rock around the building.

Mid right: Betty Boop looks onto the classic hood and chrome of a ‘57 Corvette, part of the retro décor in Agri~Plex. A back-to-the-‘50s washing machine, kitchen set and many other authentic props brought back memories of “happy days.”

Bottom center: “Ain’t nothing but a hound dog...” Jay Allan makes the ladies swoon with his ultimate Elvis tribute at the Music Tent on Preview Night.

Bottom right: Even the dignitaries at the Fair’s Opening Ceremonies “twist and shout!” Twisting so fine (from left to right) are Pennsylvania Secretary of Agriculture Dennis Wolff, Lehigh County Executive Don Cunningham, State Representative Jennifer Mann, Fair Librarian/Historian Jack McHugh and Pennsylvania Fair Queen Faith Huston.



► Powers photos continued



Photo by Terri L. Schwenk

Flags, lights and tent canopies keep with the Powers dark and light blue color scheme for a sharp look throughout.



Photo by Terri L. Schwenk

A neatly uniformed Powers attendant collects tickets next to a safety information sign that are at each attraction.

S & S

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Bill relayed the history of the S & S years at the Fair, and expressed the sentiments of the Fair's staff and committees that worked with the Swika family to produce 24 "great" Great Allentown Fairs.

He noted that when the Swikas first played the Fair in 1984, one "S" in the company's name stood for Steve's dad affectionately known as "Pop" Swika and the second "S" stood for Steve.

Not long after that debut, "Pop" retired and Steve's wife Jackie ascended into the partnership. Bill quipped, "I know which 'S' is first—I'll bet on that. We know Jackie, you run the show."

When Jackie laughingly revoked that notion, Bill added that it must be true because every time anything went wrong, Steve said "See Jackie."



Photo by Richard C. Chartrand

The 'S' & 'S' in S & S, Jackie and Steve Swika, show off their lifetime fair passes before heading back to the midway.

An emotional Steve came to the microphone and told the audience that playing The Allentown Fair has been the highlight of his and his wife's careers.

In relaying the couple's decision to "slow down and take it easy" at this stage in their lives, he highly recommended the incoming carnival company and the family that owns it.

He said that the Powers are good friends of his and Jackie's and that the Powers, like the Swikas, came up the hard way and will provide an excellent attraction for future fairgoers.

He then invited everyone for one last whirl on the S & S Amusement Magical Midway, and fittingly, "fair" weather for the remainder of the week made Jackie and Steve's swan song a lovely one.

AGRI~PLEX - SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - Dates are subject to change

DECEMBER 2007

1-2 (Agri~Plex)

Antique & Modern Arms Show

8 (Ag Hall)

Music Mixer/Concert

29-30 (Annex)

Computer Show

JANUARY 2008

11-13 (Agri~Plex)

Lehigh Valley RV & Campgrounds Show

18-20 (Agri~Plex)

Automania

26-27 (Ag Hall)

LV Kennel Club Canine Learning

30 (Agri~Plex)

SkillsUSA Championship

FEBRUARY 2008

2-3 (Annex)

Computer Show

9-10 (Agri~Plex)

Antique & Modern Arms Show

15-17 (Agri~Plex)

Eastern PA Spring Home Show

23-24 (Agri~Plex)

Spring Thaw Train Meet

MARCH 2008

7-9 (Ag Hall)

LV Flower & Garden Show

March (cont'd)

8-9 (Annex)

Computer Show

29-30 (Ag Hall)

Allentown Antique Show

APRIL 2008

6 (Agri~Plex)

KidsFest

12-13 (Ag Hall)

Rubber Stamp & Paper Arts Festival

12-13 (Annex)

Computer Show

16-17 (Ag Hall)

Senior Fest Spring 2008

19-20 (Agri~Plex)

Spring Melt Fire Show & Auction

26-27 (Agri~Plex)

Antique Book & Paper Show

MAY 2008

2-4 (Annex)

Pinball Wizards Convention

10-11 (Agri~Plex)

Antique & Modern Arms Show

17-18 (Ag Hall)

Spring Spiritual Holistic Expo

17-18 (Annex)

Computer Show

For show times visit allentownfairpa.org or 610-435-7469.

About the photographer—Melanie Heinrich, whose commercial and fine art work has been published internationally, shot our cover photo. Her latest publication is a coffee table photographic essay entitled "Behind The Colored Lights," a print follow-up to her award-winning short film documentary of the same name. Melanie's subject for the "present day" section of the book is Powers Great American Midways. As Debbie Powers' sister, Melanie has a relevant perspective on exciting, ethical and visually compelling carnival life. To find out more about Melanie and all of her work, visit her Web site at www.mhstudios.com



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