

BOOK REVIEW: *ALWAYS CEDAR POINT: A MEMOIR OF THE MIDWAY* BY H. JOHN HILDEBRANDT

To read the first section of *Always Cedar Point: A Memoir of the Midway* is to immediately feel envious of John Hildebrandt's life. Enthusiasts can only imagine the exhilaration of choosing, marketing and overseeing the operation of some of the world's best attractions at America's Roller Coast.

It's not always easy though. Hildebrandt describes the frustrations, the hard work and the flops that came along the way.

Hildebrandt started at Cedar Point in his 20s in the marketing department. In his 40-year career with Cedar Point, he saw it all. Whether one worked at Cedar Point, works in the industry or is a big fan of the park, it's easy to take this ride with him.

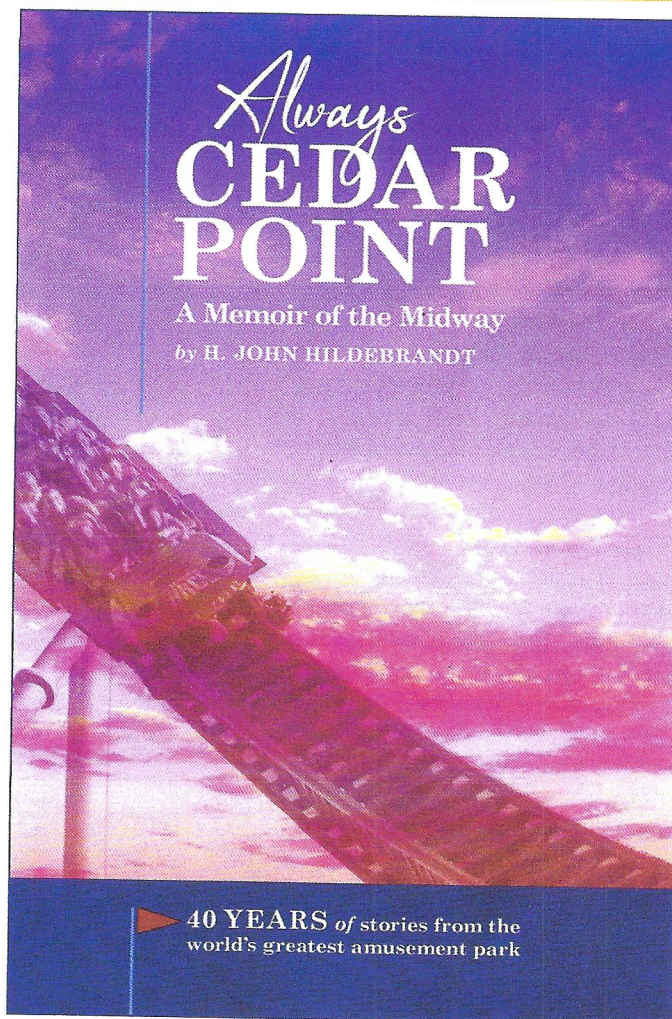
The sections of the book that highlight the installation of new coasters will immediately speak to ACEers. The opening of *Gemini* is particularly captivating. Longtime enthusiasts will quickly recall many moments in the park's history, such as the renaming of *Banshee* to *Mantis*, favorite commercials, Jungle Larry and more.

American Coaster Enthusiasts even have their own portion of the book, as Hildebrandt tips his hat to people who are passionate about rides. While ACEers may take exception to an early mention that our organization formed in 1978 at Kings Dominion, he corrects it later in the book noting Busch Gardens. The random typo that appears almost speaks to the Cedar Point fan, like being in the room with Hildebrandt when he pulls the paper out of the typewriter, well, ... printer. It has that immediacy.

The author makes a point to mention the people who helped him along the way. Longtime Cedar Fair people will appreciate and identify with that, but it is the fans who will really gobble up the entertaining tales, such as filming the commercial for Demon Drop, which rides were hits (or not) and how marketing each new attraction was an artful skill.

Always Cedar Point: A Memoir of the Midway is an easy recommendation. It's the type of behind-the-scenes look that many park fans think they already know but soon realize they don't. Hildebrandt skillfully takes us there, weaving personal aspects of his own life into the journey. It's a great read.

—Tim Baldwin



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Lee Ann Draud (ldraud@aceonline.org), ACE's publications director, and Tim Baldwin (tbaldwin@aceonline.org), current editor of both printed publications, are eager to hear from you. There are bound to be questions, so reach out and see what rewarding possibilities might exist for you.

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