

42 | Luna Park Fun Lives On

On warm summer weekends in West Seattle's early days, Seattleites ferried from downtown in droves to visit Luna Park. "The Coney Island of the West," Luna Park was a fun-filled amusement park built on a pier off Alki complete with rides, a roller coaster and calliope music.

Closed in 1913, the brightly-lit area attraction which once illuminated Elliott Bay is just a faint memory (with only the remnants of the pier's original pilings exposed at low tide). But now, a red neon sign at the end of the West Seattle Bridge leads the way to a 21st Century institution of the same name, attracting a new set of West Seattle fun-seekers.

Welcome to the Luna Park Café—a nostalgic restaurant and living museum that serves up tasty, malt shop-style shakes and a huge helping of community history.

The walls are adorned with West Seattle artifacts and historic black and white photos of the "greatest amusement park in the Northwest."

Built in 1988 by current owner John Bennett, Luna Park Café was made to reflect fun times of the past. "I thought it would be great to open a 50s diner with a juke box and neighborhood memorabilia," recalls Bennett.

But the décor is just part of the Luna Park draw. All day breakfast, traditional soda fountain drinks, burgers and a beer garden keep tummies coming back for good, old fashioned food.

The egg breakfasts are served three ways—as a Pile, a Hobo, or an Omelet. But you must save room for dessert.

"Shakes are the big thing here," says Bennett. "They're made fresh with Cascade Glacier Ice Cream and topped with whip and a cherry. We also offer one of the only places in West Seattle to enjoy a beer and a burger in the sunshine outside."

"Shakes are the big thing here"

John Bennett

Luna Park's remodeled beer garden amidst the Jasmine and Clematis seats 50 and offers lots of sunshine when the weather gods wish.

"We've been here for years," reflects Bennett. And people remember Luna Park as a foundation for things like kids' birthdays, meals after soccer games and great shakes all the time.

"A woman and her 18-year-old son—who was at least 6-feet tall mind you—came in the other day," smiles Bennett. "The mom pulled out a photo of her tiny son at age two sitting on our kid's coin-operated ride, and the son said to me, 'I'll never forget riding your Bat Mobile.'"

So whether you choose to grab a chocolate shake, or ponder the past with relics that line the walls, the same festive atmosphere that once adorned the shores of Alki is on the menu at the Luna Park of today—building new neighborhood memories for kids and grownups alike.

What:

Luna Park Café

Where:

2918 SW Avalon Way
206.935.7250

When:

Hours are Sun.-Thur. 7 a.m.-9 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. 7 a.m.-10 p.m.

Price:

Breakfasts entrees run \$4.95-7.95

Lunch and dinner entrees run \$6.95-8.50