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Boardwalk

# Giant Dipper and the Carousel win new historical significance

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SANTA CRUZ — The Boardwalk's venerable Carousel and its roller coaster were designated National Historic Landmarks Monday, and a gaggle of local dignitaries took advantage of the situation to mill around together, reminisce, and drink champagne before lunch.

The memorial cake began to melt in the sunshine as one politician after another stood in front of the television cameras, presented a plaque and expounded on the historical significance of the rides.

"I rode the merry-go-round in my early days," said U.S. Rep. Leon Panetta, D-Monterey. "I'm probably the reason they switched to steel

rings; I used to go home with the brass ones in my pockets."

Dave Cherry, associate regional director of the National Park Service said, "Historical landmarks generally make you think of famous people and battles, but that's not all that makes up the fabric of our country.

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## Giant Dipper

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"All work and no play makes Johnny a dull boy."

More plaques were unveiled, the cake was cut, then Boardwalk employees opened the gates and all the adults present scrambled onto the Carousel, grabbing for the steeds on the outside like any bunch of kids.

The Carousel was built in 1911 by Danish woodcarver Charles I.D. Loeff, and features hand-carved horses with fancy jeweled harness and real hair in their tails. Music for the ride comes from a 342 pipe German-made Ruth organ which was built in 1894.

The Carousel is a gentle ride, and some of the crowd balanced champagne glasses as they rode. Others grabbed at the steel rings and tried to wing them into the clown's mouth. A collective moan of disappointment came from the riders when the ride ground to a halt.

Then everybody jumped off, raced

for the exit and headed down to ride the Giant Dipper.

The Dipper was built in 1924 by Charles Loeff's son, Arthur, who envisioned the ride as a "combination earthquake, balloon ascension and aeroplane drop." On May 17, 1924, the Dipper cost 15 cents to ride. The cost is now \$1.75, but on Monday the group of dignitaries got to ride for free.

Riders in business suits and riders in heels and hosiery crammed onto the train, held their arms high in the air and screamed their heads off as the train vanished into the tunnel. After a minute or two they reappeared at the other end of the platform and yelled "Do it again! Do it again!"

As National Historical Landmarks, the Dipper and the Merry-Go-Round now sport fancy brass plaques that put them in the company of such sites as Mount Vernon and Monticello.