



Hang on to Your Wigs and Keys!

There aren't many 80-year-olds who can still get along at the same speed as they could when they were 20—especially not at 60 mph. But now, after entering its eighth decade of rollercoasting, the mighty Cyclone on New York's Coney Island is still going strong. For 45 years this Brooklyn landmark held the world record as the fastest rollercoaster in the world. But that's not its only record. In 1977 Richard Rodriguez, at only 19 years old, together with the Cyclone, at a respectable 50 years old, set another world record, this time for marathon rollercoaster riding for 104 continuous hours.

Although it only takes one minute and 45 seconds to make it once around the track, the buzz stays with you well after you've stepped out of the car. The

ride begins with an 86-foot drop at a sheer 53-degree angle, which New York writer George Plimpton could only describe as "vertigo-inducing." If the freefall doesn't jangle your nerves then the centrifugal force of the fan turn that ensues will, as riders are hurled into one another. Following a series of jolts through hills, curves, and blind drops, the train seems to careen off the tracks and out over Coney Island's bustling Surf Avenue just before rushing headlong into the station while the screaming brakes command an abrupt halt. "A ride on the Cyclone is greater than flying an airplane at top speed," the legendary aviator Charles Lindbergh proclaimed after taking a spin on the Cyclone. But you don't have to take Lindbergh's word for it.... JM