

Sad News



Joseph Stanley "Stan" Belliveau of West Islip, N.Y., passed away on Dec. 28. Stan was a longtime member of the Metropolitan Ice Rink Managers Association (MIRMA) and a loyal supporter of the ice skating and hockey industry.

He was a former professional ice skater who performed in the Hollywood Ice Review with Sonja Henie and with the Ice Capades for 10 years. Owner of Stan's Skate Shop at the Rinx in Hauppauge, N.Y., he was an Army veteran, having served during the Korean War.



Stan was the beloved husband of Diane V. Belliveau; loving father of Terri (Jarri) Rasmussen, Suzie (John) Hewitt, Barbara (Tom) Gould, John Belliveau and Andrew Belliveau; and cherished grandfather of Carl, Eric, Anna, Emma, Rebecca and Thomas.

Visitation was held Dec. 30 with a mass of Christian burial on Dec. 31. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his name to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

[Click here to read a Daughter's tribute to her Dad "Stan"](#)

Our Alumni in the News

The Jacqueline du Bief Story



"One does not take up skating; skating just takes up you." - Jacqueline du Bief, March 23, 1954

Back in the [fourth installment](#) of "The Other World Champions" series here on the blog, we oh so briefly explored the story of one of the most enigmatic skaters to capture the world's attention during her era. For a long time I have wanted to write at length about Jacqueline du Bief's important contribution to the skating world... but there have been a couple of roadblocks. There's not a wealth a video footage of her publicly available and much of the source material written

about her career isn't in the English language. That said, with a translated copy of her 1956

autobiography in hand, a wealth of English sources and what French sources I could roughly translate, I put my nose to the grindstone and was able to come up with this biographical sketch which I hope will shed some new light on just how big a deal this French star really was.



Born December 4, 1930 in Paris, France, du Bief started skating at the age of four with her older sister Raymonde at the Molitor Rink and became immediately hooked. Both sisters actually studied ballet prior to receiving high level instruction in skating, which was a complete juxtaposition to how most skaters of the era would have approached the sport in their youths. When she started taking lessons with Lucien

Lemercier, she was a quick learner and by nine years of age, she was already making quite an impression. One of the first mentions of du Bief wowing crowds was around this time. The August 21, 1939 issue of the French language newspaper "Le Figaro" cites her as a star of *Lè bal des Petits Lits Blancs* in Cannes, an opulent summer festival where she demonstrated her skating prowess alongside other performers such as soprano Lily Pons, ballet dancer Serge Lifar and le ballet de l'Opéra-Comique.

[Click here to read the complete article](#)

Show Biz Friends featured our very own Don Watson



Meet **SBF** member **Don Watson** and read about his outstanding career in show business.

Don started out as a child performer in the *Adolphus Hotel Ice Show* in Dallas, and rose to be **Exec Vice-President of Champions On Ice** and **Director of Booking for Ice Capades**, with stops along the way as principal skater in **Ice Capades**, **The Sonja Henie Ice Revue**, and **Holiday On Ice** in the U.S.A., Europe, the Far East, and Russia.

When Don decided to turn the page from his performing days, he became the **Company Manager for Siegfried & Roy** at the **Mirage** in Las Vegas, the **Production**

Coordinator for the **Moscow Circus** and the **Advance Man** for **The Rolling Stones**, and **Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young**, along with other endeavors, like meeting such notables as the **Duke Of Windsor** and sharing a dressing room with **Harpo Marx**!

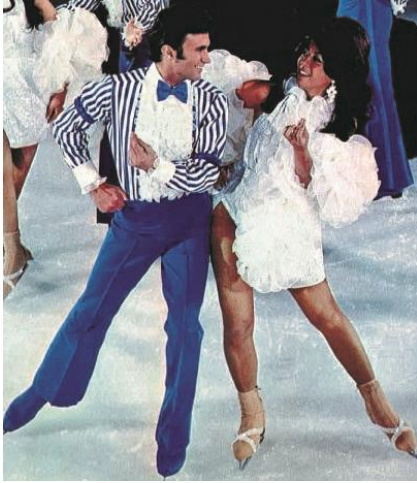
Luckily, Don was very enthusiastic in giving **SBF** an interview, which we are sure everyone will thoroughly enjoy reading. Ladies and Gentlemen: **SBF's Star of the Month**!

[Click here to read the rest of the article.](#)

[Click here to see Sonja Henie introducing 18-year old Don Watson in the NBC recording of the Sonja Henie Ice Revue, March 21, 1953, Shrine Auditorium](#)

Where Are They Now?

Tony Tauber – Ice Capades East & West Companies – 1965 – 1978



It was in the Hershey Arena in Pennsylvania where I saw my first Ice Capades show. It was then I decided that I wanted to become a professional ice skater. In 1965 I started as a line skater. After four years in the chorus, I had worked my way up to, *the back—end of the dog*. For someone with my limited skating talent this was the end of my performing days.

During those four years, I became interested in the production aspects of the show and worked as audio assistant to Joey Curran. Bob Turk, Rita Palmer, George Foster and Shirley Costello showed confidence in my understanding of the technical aspects of the show and believed it would be better for the show to get me off the ice and on the other end of the spotlights.

After learning some of the basics of lighting design on East Company, I spent one tour with the West Company under the guidance of Ed and Dolly Pierce. I returned to the East Company as Lighting Director and remained in that position until June of 1978.

With my touring days behind me, I secured a position in the Ocean State Performing Arts Center, Providence, RI. The theater was under renovation, which afforded me the opportunity to learn the inner workings of a counterweight rigging system used by touring shows. Leaving Rhode Island in 1981, I headed for Atlantic City.

The Playboy Casino in Atlantic City was my next stop as Lighting Director. Moments before the property closed in 1988, I accepted the position as Head of Lighting at Caesar's Atlantic City, designing lighting for major—headline performers. In 2004 I moved up the boardwalk to yet another casino, Resorts. The following year, I packed up and moved across country to Las Vegas where I accepted a position as Technical Director at the Las Vegas Hilton, the home of Elvis Presley.

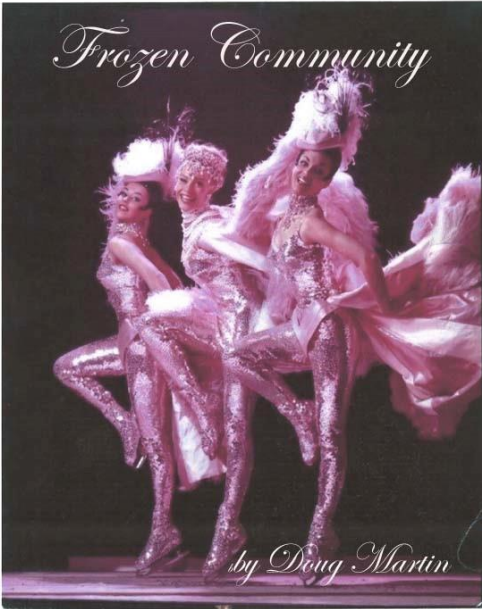
The Tropicana Las Vegas in 2015 offered me the position of Technical Director of Entertainment Operations, a position that I currently hold. I finally made it to the Strip!



I am currently married to Julia, a mother of three sons. Walking into an instant family, I became a proud grandfather of three grandsons and three granddaughters.

The fondest memories were my first few years on tour. Traveling with my fellow performers and taking in all of the points of interest in each city is something that few people are lucky enough to experience. The remaining years with *ICE* gave me a great education, a wonderful experience and countless memories. Had it not been for that first show in Hershey Pennsylvania and the help of the Ice Capades Family, I would not have had the opportunity for this outstanding career. If you would like to get in touch with me to say hi, my email address is: tonytauber@cox.net

A Trip Down Memory Lane



Doug Martin published a book called 'Frozen Community' that contained a collection of stories and memories while he was on tour with Ice Capades for 11 years. For those of you who were lucky enough to have gotten a copy, the stories that he collected from our alumni certainly brought great memories and recollections. Because the book is no longer available, thought I would share with everyone some of the stories, some of which are classic. Am certain that it will give you a giggle or two with some of the antics that went on.

Classic Pinky – *As most of you know, Doug and Pinky skated adagio. As Doug recalled, when they took their starting position on the ice, he couldn't figure why Pinky wasn't smiling as she was supposed to do, because it was a romantic number. As he recalled, "We were nearly through when she finally looked at me and flashed a smile – revealing a mouthful of blacked out teeth. I could hardly stop laughing inside, and was doing anything in my power not to show it. To make the*

situation even tougher, she did this before I had to lift her over my head in one of the hardest lifts to perform. We made it, but just barely. I've never forgotten that, and I always remind her, each time we talk". What great memories.

For those of you who knew John Harris, here is a classic story.

John Harris came unannounced to watch the show in Hershey. The place was packed and he went right up to the light booth to watch the show. The lighting director at the time was Mike Crawly, and so you can imagine, it made him a bit uncomfortable to have John sitting there in the booth with him. In recalling that performance, Mike says that all of a sudden Mr. Harris jumped up and yelled to Mike, "Why do you have so much green lighting out there? It looks awful?" Mike looked around to see which of his crew had green lights on, as he hadn't given the order for green lighting. But he couldn't find anyone with green spot lights on. Meanwhile, Mr. Harris continued to yell at him to "get them off!" Frustrated and frantic, Mike was doing everything he could to fix it. That's when he noticed Mr. Harris still had his sunglasses on. He indicated that Mr. Harris should take them off, and when he did, the problem was solved. Mike really got a kick out of "fixing" that light snafu.

More stories to come next month.

Inspiration Video of the Month



At the ripe age of 90, Yvonne Dowlen was ice skating at least five days a week and competing in figure skating competitions across the country. Yvonne has lived her life on the ice: traveling internationally as a famous performer in the Ice-Capades and then coaching for nearly fifty years in her hometown of Denver.

In her 80's, she experienced severe physical obstacles and used both muscle memory and her passion for skating to rehabilitate. The secret to recovery and longevity seem to lie not only in staying active, but simply in doing what you love.

Edges is the first in a series of films created by Balcony Nine Media -- created to celebrate the longevity, resilience and wisdom of our elders.

Our elders have lived through joys, wars, love, loss and progress for nearly (and sometimes more than) a century. Due to the unfathomable advances in technology and culture, they have witnessed one of the most transformative periods in human history during their lifetimes. It is often forgotten that they have lived through the chapters of life that younger generations are experiencing. We are inspired by the countless examples of thriving elders in their 9th and 10th decades who are living fully.

Those born before 1928 have been deemed 'The Greatest Generation'. We have a lot to learn from these national treasures and it has never been more important and urgent to capture their stories and preserve their legacies.

[Click here to watch the full version of Edges here](#). This documentary by Balcony Nine Media tells the story of 90-year-old ice skater Yvonne Dowlen, who rose to fame as an Ice Capades star and never officially retired. World Premiere at Mountainfilm in Telluride.

Video of the Month

Vadim Shebeco - Ice Capades Special.

"Inside the Ice Capades. A Skater's Dream"

hosted by Mario Lopez

We've all been there, what life on the road was like for us.

Relive it again.



[Click here to view the video](#)

Comments from January Blade

Pinky memories: *I was there in the back stage with Pinky and gangs for the Hallelujah finale, I was the one who could not have sang "Hallelujah" correctly. I sang with Japanese accent " Hareruuuyaaa", Pinky tried to help me sing correctly at every show. I am sorry to know of Pinky's passing! With warm memories, Tokiko Yoshihara-Lepik*

Craig Carr remembered about the story that Pinky recollected. See if it brings back memories for you as well.

*I know exactly what the HALLELUJAH Step was that Pinky referred to...we did it at the end of finale in **Let There Be Girls** and it was also in the opening of **Wonderful Day**... Hand open in 1 cross above your head like a scissor on 2 and open on 3 and come down on four... the Capets and Cadets made several passes down the staircase and slipped back with 3 turns between the set that looked like huge organ pipes in steel blue gray. They flanked a white and silver staircase. In front on the stairs was a multi white and silver folding screen of painted top and gloves with vane that opened in the vocals singing " Hallelujah! Sing Hallelujah! and would pull open to reveal the stair pushing forward through billows of dry ice in blue as the cast came from the top of the stairs down to the ice to the Vincent Houmans song: Hallelujah!"*

... ever hear it before? it was written in the 1930's... it says:

Sing Hallelujah! Hallelujah! and you'll chase the blues away!

Sing Hallelujah Hallelujah.. gets you through the darkest day...

Satan lays a awaitin" and creating; skies for gray..

say Hallelujah! Hallelujah and you chase the blues away!"

It still evokes a tear to my eyes as I can see it can hear it in my head easily.... it was the perfect signature for John H Harris as his era of opulence left Ice Capades and masterful eye of production numbers. .. ah what magic!

The kneeling step Plinky referred to had the cast on their knees a LONG time as the principles came out skating through the rows of kneeling Capets and Cadets doing that same arm move with a variation in it. There was so much dry ice that the skaters were covered up to their waists and when the kneeling part took place.... the skaters literally disappeared and all you could see was the blue gloved with white cuffs on them and the neck puff for the Capets... it really was a memorable and emotional finale for many.

*Your dedication to keeping our group together and keeping the memories alive is so amazing and appreciated. Putting the Blade together each month, organizing our reunions, and just keeping up on people is a huge undertaking and I personally am very grateful for all you do. I could go on with how you have helped many of us reconnect and form new bonds but I really just want to say Thank You.! **Karen Lawrence-Viel***

*What you are doing for everyone who ever thought about ice skating is wonderful. Thank you Gloria. I would add my belief that without you there would be very little left of the comradeship that existed "back then." Gloria, I don't know how you find time to publish The Blade each month. It takes me all month to boil water for my potatoes. Where do you find the time? Hope the holidays were fun for you. And seriously, thank you for The Blade! - **Phil Wylly***

About Bob Turk. My sister, Frances Dorsey had Bob Turk do her solo choreography for each of the 4 years she was in Ice Follies. He'd stay at our home on Mercer Island, near Seattle WA, and I so enjoyed him. Your videos about his Lido creations were fun, and inspiring. I adored his class, love of color, ideas, and laughter with this new Lido show which would be performed for 4 years.

Now comes 2017, New Year's Eve show on NBC when midnight in NY, and 2 hours prior to midnight in Las Vegas, they switched the programming to the live performance of Jennifer Lopez, who was dressed, and strutting like a trashy Vegas prostitute. She even turned around to her audience, and wiggled her bare butt checks. Compare this to the gorgeous, incredible, statuesque, elegantly attired show girls at The Lido in Paris. – **Sherry Cook**

Upcoming Events



The Randy Gardner School of Skating at ICE At Santa Monica

[Click here](#) for more information



Website Update

The reunion website – www.icecapadesreunion2015.com is still there. Even though the reunion is over, the plan is to continue to use this site for alumni updates so please keep checking back from time to time as news will be added periodically. Don't forget, there are also show rosters for your reference, updated obits, reunion pictures and upcoming events.

If you would like to be removed from receiving The Blade, please type 'unsubscribe' in the subject line and send it to me directly. gspoden@rogers.com