

Our Alumni in the News

Scott Hamilton gets personal his 'humbling' brain tumor miracle

'It just puts you on your knees'

By [Johnny Dodd](#) - Posted on May 24, 2017



Olympic gold medal-winning figure skater Scott Hamilton still remembers the moment he received the unexpected news about the tumor growing inside his brain – and how it floored him.

In August 2016, the 58-year-old married father of four kids, who became an overnight sensation after winning Olympic gold in 1984, was diagnosed with his third benign pituitary tumor in 12 years.

Six months later he sat in his surgeon's office anxiously awaiting the results of an MRI and potentially more bad news.

But the surgeon, who was scheduled to remove the growth, stood in his office, studying the results with a puzzled look on his face before announcing, "This is remarkable."

"What's going on?" Hamilton recalls asking the surgeon in an interview that appears in this week's issue of PEOPLE. (Watch the full episode of [the Jess Cagle Interview: Scott Hamilton Today](#), available now on the new People / Entertainment Weekly Network (PEN).)

The surgeon replied, "It actually is much, much smaller."

"Can you explain this?" Hamilton asked.

The surgeon's reply was simple, direct and not at all what one of America's most beloved Olympic athletes expected.

"God," he announced.

[Click here to view the video and the rest of the article.](#)

DECC Hall of Fame: Duluth brother and sister figure skating duo started act in Duluth

By [Matt Wellens](#) on May 21, 2017



Before becoming a national act, the figure skating careers of Bob and Ruby Maxson began on flooded tennis courts in front of the beaming headlights of cars in Duluth.

The siblings from Duluth were featured performers in the Shipstads and Johnson Ice Follies in 1937 before moving to the Ice Capades in 1946. Bob Maxson, who died in 1999 at the age of 79, and Ruby Maxson, who died in 2003 at 81, will be inducted posthumously into the DECC Athletic Hall of Fame on Wednesday May 24th along with four others.

The brother and sister pair from Duluth became so good at their craft, that even slips and tumbles during their performances were choreographed.

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

World Figure & Championship Festival



World Figure Sport is thrilled to announce that Mr. Tommy Litz, 2-time World Figure Championship Judge, World Figure Hall of Fame Member & Olympian will be judging and examining at World Figure Sport's "Figure It Out" Competition & Exams on **Sunday, May 28th, 2017**, 8:15 p.m. at the Ameri-Can North Sports Center in Plattsburgh, N.Y. Last week to register at: <https://squareup.com/store/world-figure-sport/item/figure-it-out-workshops-in-plattsburgh-ny>

Photo of Tommy Litz by: Deborah Hickey

Memory of the Month

Miss hearing our Bob Turk's voice. Here is an interview that will certainly bring back some fond memories.

A Conversation with Bob Turk, as featured in [Blogspot](#)



Bob Turk, who passed away on February 1, 2017, was the director of the Ice Capades for decade. He worked with [Peggy Fleming](#) from the time she was eleven until she won Olympic gold in 1968 and choreographed, produced and directed skating productions that spanned the globe. As a young man, he was a regular at The Polar Palace, where he played records for Sonja Henie and had competitions with Belita Jepson-Turner to see who could land the most Axels in a row. Last March, [Randy Gardner](#) connected us for a forthcoming project

I'll be presenting... a biography of Belita. Our lengthy conversation extended far beyond her incredible story. Warm, honest and incredibly candid, Bob opened up to me about many of his experiences in the skating world. It is my privilege to share a few excerpts from that memorable conversation with this absolutely delightful man.

ON THE 1949 RHAPSODY ON ICE SHOW IN HAVANA, CUBA

"Belita and [Red McCarthy](#) were in that show and I choreographed it and skated in it. We couldn't find that many skaters so we took the best dancers from MGM and put them on skates. [Mabel Fairbanks](#) was in that show."

ON LONELINESS

"I'm suffering now because I'm lonely. I'm by myself. My lover who I lived with for sixty one years, he died... and I'm alone. Rita Palmer, who was with the Ice Capades, she died. So many people moved down here because I moved here and they're all gone. That's the worst punishment you can do to me is alone. I'm a people person. Everybody from Ice Capades is dead, I'm ninety and I don't know why everyone died and left me by myself. My mind is sharp, I'm straight as an arrow, I still go to the gym, I've got dancing and tennis and I'm taking classes, I still drive my car to the store... I'm not strong like I was but I'm fine. But I'm alone; I'm by myself. I don't know how that happened but it did. There's a million gypsies, I e-mail with them, I talk with them, but none of them live near me."

ON BELITA

[Click here](#) to hear Bob's comments on Belita

ON BOBBY SPECHT

"Bobby was very, very gay and never tried to hide it. He and Alan Konrad were sort of lovers for a time, but he never really had a lover until the end of his life. He was always drinking and he was wonderful... He lived down here but he drank and lost his vision. He could have had eye surgery but he didn't do it and they just found him dead on the floor down here. He could have had his eyes fixed but he didn't do it so he couldn't see... but he was a wonderful guy. Bobby didn't have any delusions of grandeur, nothing... He was the sweetest person in the world. When we were younger, him and I used to act like crazy fools. He called me Turkey."

ON SONJA HENIE

[Click here](#) to hear Bob's comments on Sonja Henie

ON WILD HOLLYWOOD SKATING PARTIES

"When Ice Capades came into town, Bobby Specht would rent a big house - usually a movie star's house - out

in Beverly Hills. After the show every night, he'd throw a big party with every skater in the world. There'd be fifty people there. Everybody'd bring a bottle. Sometimes I'd say to Belita, 'Bobby's throwing a party' and I'd pick her up and take her with me... and the damn parties would go on till three, four o'clock in the morning."

ON HIS GRANDPARENTS AND ICE CAPADES FAMILY

[Click here](#) to hear Bob's comments on his Grandparents and his Ice Capades Family

Skate Guard is a blog dedicated to preserving the rich, colourful and fascinating history of figure skating and archives hundreds of compelling features and interviews in a searchable format for readers worldwide. Though there never has been nor will there be a charge for access to these resources, you taking the time to 'like' on the blog's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/SkateGuard> would be so very much appreciated. Already 'liking'? Consider sharing this feature for others via social media. It would make all the difference in the blog reaching a wider audience. Have a question or comment regarding anything you have read here or have a suggestion for a topic related to figure skating history you would like to see covered? I'd love to hear from you! Learn the many ways you can reach out at <http://skateguard1.blogspot.ca/p/contact.html>.

Where Are They Now?

Jean-Pierre Romano

Where were you originally from and what brought you to join Ice Capades?



I was born in Marseille France after my father Tony Romano immigrated to France from Italy. Our bicycle family act 'The Romano's' was hired by Ice Capades in Oct 1967. We did tours with East Co and West Co. Later on I learned to skate and became a line skater for a couple years and never stopped auditioning comedy acts for Bob Turk. I finally was given a spot as a comedian and so toured as Jean Pierre in Continental, West Co, East Co and also did the Japan tour. I left Ice Capades in 1984.

What did you learn about being part of an ice show?

Our family did not know what an Ice show was, as we came from Vegas shows and circus. But that first time we saw the show (as we arrived in Cleveland to join) with 10 spot lights and the white ice, the skaters gliding with smiles on their faces and the music from a full orchestra, we were in Heaven. I remember telling my father that we hit the jackpot. Little did I know that I would end up doing Comedy in the greatest show on Ice.

What are your fondest memories of being part of the show?

It is the night we joined which changed my life. Opening nights. I love the train trips and the travels across Canada and the US. Also as a laugh, my brother locked Johnny Labreque in the bathroom without him knowing (in Chicago) and then yelled "fire" to this day I'm still laughing.

Where did you end up after you hung up your skates?



I left Capades in 1984 and was offered to go to Holiday on Ice in Europe but decided to switch careers and so stayed in Los Angeles and now live in Woodland Hills, CA with my beautiful family.



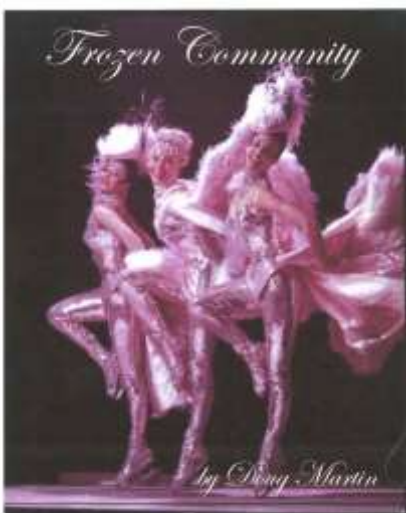
My career path took a turn to the movie industry and I became a Stuntman, a Stunt Coordinator and 2nd unit director for movies and television. I have doubled for Charles Bronson, Sir Anthony Hopkins. Worked with many wonderful movie stars of our era....You might recognize me but you're not supposed to!

If you would like to get in touch with JP, here's his email address:

Wobblybike@yahoo.com

'Never stop looking for what's not there'

More Trips 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. Here are a few more stories that we can giggle about today.

Here's a great recollection from **Darlene Ripepe (Pepe)**

Whenever we were in Chicago, most of us stayed at the Croydon Hotel, which some of us called 'Menopause Manor,' because retired show people lived there year round. There was a great piano bar downstairs off the lobby where we would hang out after the show.

I was rooming with Jan Wood (Nurse) when a fire broke out on our floor. I was sick, so was in bed early. Jan came into the bedroom and asked if I was smoking. I said no, but I'd just blown out a candle. The next thing I know, Jan is yelling, {"Fire!} There's a trunk on fire!" While Jan was on the

phone to the front desk to report the fire, I jumped out of bed, threw on some clothes, and ran to the window. We were on the 18th floor, so there was no escape there, nor could a fire truck ladder reach us. We went out into the hallway, trying to get to the fire escape, but the smoke was so thick we couldn't see. Our only option was to get to the elevator, so we got on our hands and knees and were crawling toward the elevator, trying to stay below the smoke level. Just then Bill Brenner and Terry Head came running out of the elevator. Bill reached the fire hose on the wall, broke the glass, turned on the water and aimed the hose at the burning trunk there in the hallway. In the meantime, Terry was knocking on doors, yelling, "Fire! Everyone out!" Just as Terry was heading back toward the elevator, Bill came around the corner toward Jan and me (still on our hands and knees) with the water going full blast, and hit Terry square in the chest, sending him flying backwards six feet, where he landed on his rear. It was like watching Laurel and Hardy. Jan and I finally made it to the elevator and down to the lobby... laughing all the way. Most of the girls were naked underneath their fur coats, holding their taxes, jewelry or wine bottles! When it was safe to return to the hotel, most of us made a beeline for the bar, partying and laughing well into the night.

Oddly enough, it was never discovered who set the fire. After that, I never stayed higher than the 3rd floor. That way, either a fire ladder could reach me, or I could take my chances and jump! Wheeeee.

Comments from May Blade

I enjoyed all of the May Blade. My favorite is "Where are they now?" and so glad You shared your story. As essential as water is to all of this world--YOU are the life-blood of the Blade, and IC alumni. I hope you are never taken for granted! - Bob Strong

LOVE the Blade and appreciate your hard work on it...keeps us all in touch, especially me because I am not on Facebook. - Pepe

Another great issue and I was so tickled to see your story - I sure couldn't have done it any better although it probably would have been a little bit more flowery and had a couple of "pats on the back" for you! Well done & just right! - Glenda Litz

**** That's our very own Richard Dwyer on the cover.**

Upcoming Events



Skater's Reunion 2017 Prague

September 7 – 10, 2017

It is open to all skaters and crew from all different ice shows and ice circuses worldwide.

More information will be sent shortly, Questions: praguereunion2017@gmail.com

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.

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