

## Sad News



**George Verbiwski** passed from this life February 6, 2018, after a long battle with Progressive Supra Nuclear Palsy. George was born December 19, 1939, in the Red Cross outpost of Endeavour, Saskatchewan, Canada. He joined Ice Capades in 1959 and became a very successful slapstick ice skating comedian. George travelled the world with Ice Capades, Moscow in 1961, Australia in 1967 and every major city in Canada and the USA as well as Dubai, Hong Kong and Beijing. It was in Ice Capades that he met his wife, Gerty Desjardins, in

1963. They were married in 1969 in Canada, and moved to Las Vegas. George was an IATSE union member and worked as a stage technician in most of the showrooms on the Strip. He also became assistant entertainment director at the Aladdin Hotel from 1980 to 1990, followed by 10 years with Siegfried and Roy at the Mirage. He was preceded in death by his parents, Nick and Louise Verbiwski. He is survived by his wife, Gerty; mother-in-law, Germaine Desjardins; brother, Gerry Verbiwski (Marlene); sister, Jeanette Reynolds (Harry); nieces, Linda Wasden (Harry) and Maura Reynolds; and nephews, Ken Verbiwski, Richard Reynolds and Kelly Verbiwski. Celebration of life will be at 5 p.m. Tuesday, February 27, 2018, at Ron DeCar's Event Center, 1201 S. Las Vegas Blvd. Donations can be made to Nathan Adelson Hospice or Lou Ruvo's Cleveland Clinic.



[Click here for Legacy obituary](#)

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### Cinda Starleaf – January 15, 2018



May 30, 1950 - January 15, 2018 On January 15, 2018, **Cinda L. Starleaf (aka Cindy Brendgord)**, passed away at home in Los Angeles, CA, with family at her side, ending a three-year struggle with multiple myeloma. Born in Great Falls, MT, she trained as an ice skater from age 4 and turned professional as a member of the Ice Capades. Cinda graduated from Great Falls High School and attended college in Los Angeles. She worked in IT for Ticor, Nissan, and the Los Angeles Times. She stayed in touch with her roots by becoming an accredited judge and volunteering at local ice skating competitions. She was full of life, creativity, humor, compassion, and loved experiencing new things. She was preceded in death by her sister Sherry Kraft, Billings, MT. Cinda will be dearly

missed by her husband Steve Fox, Los Angeles; sister Carol and Jim Heath, Seattle, WA; brother Tom and Pam Brendgord, Billings, MT; and by her many nieces, nephews, and friends. A Memorial Service will be conducted

at Pierce Brothers Valhalla Mortuary, 10621 Victory Blvd., North Hollywood on Saturday, February 10 at 1:00pm. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory can be made to USC Norris Cancer Center in Los Angeles.

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### **Ardith Paul Hamilton – Feb. 22, 2018**



Ardith P. Hamilton (69) passed away on Thursday, February 22, 2018. She was a long-time resident of Colorado Springs, beginning in her childhood years as well as in retirement and formerly a resident of Troy, Ohio.

Ardith was born on September 30, 1948 in Salt Lake City, Utah to Helen (Richey) Paul. Before moving to Colorado Springs at age 11, she lived in Butte, Montana and began ballet classes at age 3 and received her 1st pair of figure skates at 7. They moved to Colorado Springs for Ardith to continue her ice skate training at the Broadmoor. Ardith was a graduate of Cheyenne Mountain High School, class of 1966 and skated as a collegiate at Bowling Green University in Ohio. Competing at the national level in 1967, she was rated sixth in the country. Ardith joined the professional **Ice Capades** as the “Queen of the Ice Capades” in 1968 through 1969 before marrying Alexander B. Hamilton of Troy, Ohio in 1969. Later, she earned her Master’s Degree in Health Administration from Xavier University in 1993.

She is survived by her loving children: Adam Hamilton of Hamilton, Ohio and Helen Leigh Scott of Plant City, Florida; her grandchildren: Nicholas and Connor Scott. She was preceded in death by her mother, Helen Richey Paul.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 10am on Monday, February 26 at the Shrine of Remembrance “America the Beautiful” Chapel located at 1730 Fountain Blvd., Colorado Springs, to share in the memories and stories of her life.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in Ardith’s name may be made to Aullwood Audubon Center & Farm, 1000 Aullwood Road, Dayton, OH 45414 [www.aullwood.audubon.org](http://www.aullwood.audubon.org); Pikes Peak Crime Stoppers, P.O. Box 147, Colorado Springs, CO 80901; or Troy Skating Club, 255 Adams Street, Troy, OH 45373.

[Click here to read the entire obituary](#)

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### **Richard Garrett – February 17, 2018**



Forwarded from Pepe from Richard’s daughter Leslie who called to say that her dad, Richard Garrett, passed away tonight in Saulte Ste. Marie, Michigan. He had been in failing health in recent years. I'm not sure that I have current email addresses for many of the skaters who knew him so I'd appreciate it if you'd pass this on.

Unfortunately by press time, was unable to obtain any more information. Condolences to Richard’s family from his Ice Capades family.

# Our Alumni in the News

## [The show must go on: the real story behind the real troupers](#)

Posted on [January 21, 2015](#) by [Bonnie Atwood](#)



Sometimes I panic when I sense how much of our past culture dies each day. Today, and many days, I am thinking about show business. Those of us who love it, like to call it “show biz.” I’m talking about real show biz. Old time show biz. I’m talking about circuses, vaudeville, burlesque, follies, the Rockettes, and the **Ice Capades**. There’s no business like it, no business I know.

I am not addressing stripping or pole dancing here. Or cheerleading or beauty pageants, for that matter. Those things are entirely too far afield. I might include synchronized swimming, and would definitely include synchronized water skiing.

The old time show business acts of which I speak always have these seven elements: skills required, stamina required, interesting costumes, choreography required, a little daring required, precision to the nth degree, and girls. There’s usually dramatic music, also.

A lot of businesses require hard work. Nobody but someone who’s been in show business can fully appreciate how hard this business is. It always includes hard physical labor. It includes conquering fears, both physical and psychological. It includes risk. It includes relentlessly long hours. It includes cramming feet that are swollen, bruised, and bloody, into tight fitting boots or dance slippers.

In show business, you go on whenever and wherever a show is scheduled to start. And you perform until the last curtain closes, and the orchestra conductor lays down his baton. Since this is a business, and an expensive business, shows are scheduled pretty often. That might mean as many as 10 big shows a week, when you include matinees and extra performances on weekends. Yes, weekends, and holidays. That’s when most people go to see entertainment, so when other trades are taking some down time, show businesses work extra hard.

If you love train travel as much as many of us do, your train ride is your downtime. But for some people, travel is just as grueling as work. In the early Ice Capades, we always rode the train. Later, in an attempt to make life easier, a union bargain switched the travel to plane rides. Some of us don’t think that was a great idea, but the point is still the same. In show business, you’re always working. If you’re not working, you’re practicing. If you’re not practicing, you’re traveling fast to your next show town. So you’re never really “off.”

And what if you get sick or hurt? Don’t make me laugh! Everybody who has spent more than a few days in show business has performed with extreme pain or a cough that accompanies pneumonia or a debilitating hangover. You don’t call in sick. You just don’t. If you are able to pry your eyes open at all, you get your body up and dressed for the show. And when the lights go up, you look real happy, no matter how you feel inside.

All this entertaining splendor looks easy, but it’s not. And it doesn’t happen by itself. It requires the utmost dedication. It requires a crew of people on stage and backstage, who are really good at their crafts. And, most of all, it requires heart.

That’s what makes a troupe, and that’s what makes the show go on, through hell or high water. (Hence the expression, “He’s a real trouper.”)

**The show must go on.** I don't think anybody knows exactly where that expression originated, other than, it's a show business term. People started saying it in circuses in the 19th Century. (That was a marvelous age for circuses!) And the show going on, no matter what, was not merely a business decision or a habit: It was a point of honor.

Are we forgetting that principle today? Are we forgetting the show business roots of many of our great expressions and values?

I am afraid the answer is "yes."

I think a lot of people still think "**the show must go on.**" They probably mean "the internet must not go down."

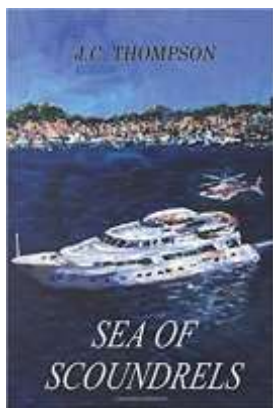
A few of us old geezers will always know it's tied to sawdust and greasepaint.

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BONNIE ATWOOD is a writer based in Richmond, Virginia. She used to be an "Ice Capette." This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Ice Capades, "the greatest show on ice," until it ended in the 1990s.

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## Our Alumni Write Books



**Jannat Thompson** – who skated with Continental 1976-77 and West 1977-78

- has published a book.

'I finished my novel *Sea of Scoundrels*, and it's available on Amazon.com in paperback. I hope to have it on Kindle by year-end. It's "inspired" by some bizarre personal experiences courtesy of my ex-husband, and I wrote it as J.C. Thompson for a number of reasons.

Here is the link: [https://smile.amazon.com/Sea-Scoundrels-J-C-Thompson/dp/1977699820/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518997926&sr=8-1&keywords=sea+of+scoundrels](https://smile.amazon.com/Sea-Scoundrels-J-C-Thompson/dp/1977699820/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518997926&sr=8-1&keywords=sea+of+scoundrels)

## What was your first day like when you walked into that arena and knew you had just joined "America's #1 Family Show"?

**Richard Morse remembers** - The second week of rehearsals was my first day. I arrived an hour early so as to avoid having to walk in front of everybody. I took a seat in the front row figuring the cast would formulate around me. Finally Rita Reiderer skated over and asked, "Are you Richard Morse from Providence?" Walking across that ice, skates in hand, was the longest walk I've ever taken!!!

**Nancy Anderson King remembers** – Shirley Costello took me under her wing on the train trip from Los Angeles to Atlantic City. We had a layover in Chicago so we went to see "How the West was won. Somehow on the taxi ride back to the station my skates were left behind and I arrived to work the next day with no skates. It took about 4 weeks for a new pair to arrive so I had to learn the numbers on the floor. Not a great start but I lasted 25 years in the business.

**Pam Miller remembers** - I was fortunate to hook up with three girls from Continental that were here in West Company. for their second year. They showed the ropes to this very "deer caught in the headlights" Canadian! I did have a girl that told me the seats in the costume room were also assigned like the make-up room.....took me three days to discover this was an initiation!

**Jane Pierce remembers** - It hit me big when Phil Romano came to Bakersfield during rehearsals and talked with me for a minute. I had to pinch myself.

**Jim Hurst remembers** - It's a long story...short version: Shirley Costello auditioned me (I had NO idea of who she was at the time) and "approved" me for hire during East Co. rehearsals in Utica, NY. I'll never forget her ringing endorsement "**You're fine, you'll do**"!! LOL, she was always nice to me when she came in to West Co which is where I spent 6 years with the fabulous Dolly Pierce and Ed Pierce. Reporting to the arena in Duluth we walked around to the back/stage entrance and sitting out in lawn chairs watching (critiquing?) all the new kids were the people who drove the tour; definitely remember Rick(stage manager) and Bev (wardrobe mistress) Banville watching us. Walking past them and they were very, very JUDGY!! LOL Welcome to show-biz!!

## More Trips Down Memory Lane

Doug Martin gave us some untold stories from our time on the road. How about sending in some new ones to share? Send them directly to [gspoden@rogers.com](mailto:gspoden@rogers.com)

### I Remember when.....



**Jim Hurst recalls** - Mongolian was a great production number, and visually it was just stunning. The chorus costumes were very elaborate and just look at Sarah!

I've told this story many times, but probably the funniest and most unpredictable thing I ever saw during a performance was when you slave girls were sitting beautifully demure on the "poof" and Robert Berry skated right into and hit the "poof"(which was just a huge tractor tire inner-tube covered in beautiful fabric) and you slave girls went flying straight up into the air like you had been shot out of a cannon and then you all landed in a heap on the ice with your bells and coins sounding like a car alarm!!! I can still see it!

**Janice Woodbury Covington recalls** - Hahahaha omg I remember that!! I'm sure our headpiece were a little off after that! That poof was so fun to bounce on!! VERY hard for hyper me not to bounce on it!! The bells around our ankles & everywhere would be jingling if we bounced on it at all!



# Professional Skaters Foundation



The **Professional Skaters Association** International is the largest [figure skating](#) coaches association in the world.



The PSA was founded on August 10, 1938 in [Lake Placid, New York](#), as the [American Skaters Guild](#), just two years (1936) after the [Ice Teachers Guild](#) was formed in England by [Jacques Gerschwiler](#), [Howard Nicholson](#), [Gladys Hogg](#) and [Eric Van De Weyden](#).<sup>[1]</sup> On January 21, 1950, at the [Broadmoor World Arena](#) in [Colorado Springs, Colorado](#), the [American Skaters Guild](#) was reorganized and renamed the [Professional Skaters Guild of America](#).

In May 1995, the PSGA once again changed its identity to the Professional Skaters Association, International (PSA). With this new name the association took on a renewed role in the sport of figure skating, but vowed to remain rooted in its 57-year history and ideals. The “birth” of the PSA reflected the changing scope of this organization’s activities and of the worldwide skating industry. The Board of Directors felt it was time to adopt this new name, acknowledging that the PSA is the world’s premier professional skating organization.<sup>[2]</sup> The PSA is the official figure skating coach’s education, training and accreditation program for [U.S. Figure Skating](#) and the [Ice Skating Institute](#).

## The Skaters' Fund

Founded by Coach Charles Fetter in 1998, The Skaters Fund assists all coaches and performing skaters who need financial assistance due to sickness, disability or age. Since its inception, The Skaters Fund has awarded over \$130,000 in assistance to over 50 recipients. Charles Fetter passed in August of 2014 following a 12 year battle with cancer. Among his final wishes was that the Skaters Fund become a part of the PS Foundation and continue to provide assistance to coaches and performing skaters in need. His wishes became a reality when the fund was formally turned over to the PS Foundation at a ceremony at the 2015 Conference and Trade Show by his widow, Sandy Fetter. The Foundation is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and you may claim that you did not receive any goods or services in consideration, in whole or part, for your contribution.

[Donation Link](#)

For more information and sponsorship opportunities, go to

[www.skatepsa.com](http://www.skatepsa.com)

## Comments from February Blade

Thank you so much for continuing to write "The Blade" every month and keeping everyone informed and entertained with our past lives and future events. I had the pleasure to attend Randy Gardner's live autobiography "Go Figure" in West Hollywood. It was a fantastic performance by Randy, Tai and Dorothy! My millennial daughters also enjoyed the show. :) Thanks again for all the work you. It is greatly appreciated! - **Teri Andrews**

## Upcoming Events



### 2018 CITY SKATE CONCERT SERIES

#### 2018 CITY SKATE CONCERT SERIES

**Wednesdays at 1:00 P.M.**

**February 7, March 7, and March 28, 2018**

at The Rink at Rockefeller Center - Free

*(Rain date is the following day at 1:00 P.M.)*

The February 7 Concert will be in honor of **Black History Month** and will profile US Open Champion **Rohene Ward**.

For more information, [click here](#)

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