



Registration Information Coming Soon



SAVE THE DATE!

Skaters, All-Performers, Production, and Administration personnel...

You may have traveled around the world, but have you been to beautiful Palm Springs? We will be celebrating at one of the most stunning Palm Springs properties, the **OMNI Rancho Palmas Resort & Spa**, on **June 16, 17 & 18th, 2020!** This is a spacious property, with lots of different areas for us all to gather and catch-up with friends, both in the sun and the shade, and inside the hotel. You shouldn't have any problems locating your friends here!

Specific details about the hotel rate and our 'rate', along with cost for the event to follow soon. Please note that fun activities and things to do, are being planned for during the daytime. Watch for those updates, here, and on our Facebook Event Page, and Group page. If you are on Facebook, *please take it upon yourself to invite*

'your' Ice Capades friends to the event, on [The 80th Reunion Event Page](#). All 'Professional Ice Show' skaters, production, and administration staff from other shows, are also invited.

[Click here for full details and updates](#)

Alumni in the News

Scott Hamilton earns high marks at Tidewell Hospice luncheon

By [Gayle Guynup](#)

Social editor, Herald Tribune



World-renowned figure skater and 1984 Olympic gold medalist **Scott Hamilton** is one of my favorite all-time sports personalities, not just for what he accomplished on the ice, but for the way in which he did it. And those same qualities that kept me glued to the television in the 1970s and 1980s were on display once again before more than 850 guests at the Tidewell Hospice Signature Luncheon at the Ritz-Carlton ballroom recently.

At a VIP reception before the luncheon, event chair **Cindy Stuhley** noted that Tidewell first touched her life in 2012 when her mother died, and then again with grief counseling when her oldest grandson passed away. In an emotional moment, her husband, a tearful **Tom Stuhley**, presented a bouquet of flowers “to the love of my life.”

Once guests were seated, and after lunch had been served, Hamilton was introduced by Tidewell President and CEO **Jonathan Fleece**, who noted that “Scott so represents hope, courage, compassion and caring. His message is Tidewell’s mission,” Fleece said. In his introduction he added that Scott’s motto is “The only disability in life is a bad attitude.” Upon taking the stage, the 5’4” Hamilton looked out over the massive audience and began by saying, “Holy cow, this is awesome.” He then launched into an unscripted, self-deprecating and humorous look back at his life, beginning with being adopted at 6 weeks of age. “I remember it like it was yesterday,” he said.

In and out of hospitals as a young child (at one point being told he had six months to live), the diminutive Hamilton eventually took up skating - though initially he wasn’t overly impressive, finishing “dead last” in one of his first competitions. When his mom (whom he called the love of his life) lost her battle with cancer, Hamilton decided it was time to go “all in.”

“I needed to become the person she believed I could be,” he said. And a few years later it was Hamilton carrying the U.S. flag in the opening ceremonies at the Lake Placid Olympics (where he finished fifth), before going onto win his gold medal at Sarajevo.

He retired as an amateur, and worked as a professional with **Ice Capades** before co-founding

Stars on Ice. It was in his 13th year as a professional, 20 years after losing his mother, when they found a mass that proved to be testicular cancer. His fear, he said, turned into courage and confidence “as my mother came back to me.”

Having beaten that, the next challenge was a brain tumor, that has since reoccurred two more times. “When I told my wife about the tumor, she grabbed my hands and started to pray. It was the single most powerful moment of my life,” Hamilton said. Today, he is enjoying life with his wife, Tracie, and their two sons, Aidan, 10, and Maxx, 6, at their home outside Nashville. He said he is a frequent visitor to Sarasota, as his best friend lives here. “I have fallen down 41,600 times,” he said. “We are fragile. We are vulnerable. But we are also resilient.” His advice? “Squeeze every drop of joy that you can out of every single day.” Seen were Aida Matic, Robert and Denise Pope, Julie and Phil Delaney, Don and Mary-Lou Moulton, Margarete van Antwerpen, Jan Miller, Christine Johnson, Kathy Martella, George Schofield, Diana Buchanan, Mary Jane Hoffman, Gerda and Donald Hanson, Jane Haas, Carlton and Linda Fisk, Michael Crosby and many more.

Jonathan Fleece, Scott Hamilton, Cindy and Tom Stuhley.
PHOTO BY WENDY DEWHURST-CLARK

Mike Edwards Receives Lifetime IATSE Membership



Pictured with Damian Petti, IATSE Vice President, presented a lifetime membership (stagehands union) to Mike Edwards. Mike was the Assistant Carpenter with Ice Capades West from 1969-1971. Adri Edwards (also in photo) skated with Ice Capades West as well as Holiday on Ice and Paris Sur Glace.

Remembering the 2015 Ice Capades Reunion



[Click here to relive some memories & pictures](#)

Did You Remember the Rules?

ICE CAPADES – 1967

To: All Skaters

A few suggestions are needed backstage to enable us to have a smoother operation of the show. If you will please abide by the following rules – you will greatly eliminate many difficulties.

1. No hanging on or peeking out curtain – my pet peeve.
2. No sitting on props, prop table and wardrobe tables, dashlights, -- put nothing on the dashlights
3. No littering backstage – if you are not working a number – stay out. Be aware of props and scenery changes and stand aside. This is part of your routing as well as out front performing. Keep quiet under the set.
4. IN the coffee stand area – deposit your litter in Trash Containers – don't leave your coffee cups, cold drinks, popcorn, hot dogs, etc. all over the seats, wardrobe and prop table, or packing crates. Do not be careless – HELP keep your backstage neat and clean.
5. Wear your robes out of the dressing rooms when not in costume.
6. Skate-guard bags are provided – do not lay your guards on tables, scenery or props.
7. Take Pride and Care of your hand Prop and Costumes; they cost Ice Capades a great deal of time and money. In doing so, you can save enormously on maintenance.
8. EVERYONE is responsible for his or her own dressing table. Keep it neat at all times. Please do not carelessly litter the floor with Kleenex, and hair spray cans, baby oil bottles, old towels or any other litter. Put your litter in paper bags provided and trash receptacles. Each person empties his own paper bag. It's your litter: Keep skates, shows, slippers off the floor after the show each night to allow the building sweepers to properly clean the dressing rooms. On opening night, you find the dressing rooms neat and clean - please leave them that way on closing night. No smoking – food – or dink in the Costume Rooms.

9. Nothing should be posted on the Bulletin Boards without permission of the Company Manager.

If everyone will offer 100% cooperation, you will be rewarded with improved and far more pleasant working conditions. Do not hesitate to bring your backstage difficulties and suggestions to me.

A Little Tank Ice History

By Jim Custer

Jim Custer, who skated with Ice Capades from 1962 – 1968, along with his wife Jennifer, shared his knowledge about ‘**Tank Ice**’ from his experience with the ice equipment.

Tank Ice was a term used when the show brought in their own refrigeration equipment to put down a layer of ice to make a skating surface. Usually, the floor surface on which we needed to make ice was concrete. But there were two occasions, in 1967 and 1968, where the surface was totally different. Ice Capades contracted to do a show in a brand new college basketball auditorium in Champagne, Illinois, and on the baseball field at Shea Stadium in New York.

I began working with the ice equipment during my 5th year with Ice Capades, when my wife Jennifer and I were transferred to the International show. I was hired to stand watch over the equipment, work an 8-hour shift after skating a performance, usually from midnight to 8:00 am. The engineers in charge of making the ice were Bob Bennett and Buff McCusker. My duties were to make sure the equipment didn’t fail during the hours of my shift. I read gauges, listened for unusual noises from the machinery, and make sure the ice surface didn’t melt. Some of the cities where we used Tank Ice were Salt Lake City, UT (at the State Fair); Shreveport, LA; Champagne, IL; New York (at Shea Stadium) and in Honolulu, HI, just to name a few.

In the spring of 1968, we made ice on top of a new wood basketball court at the University of Illinois, in Champagne. We began by laying down a heavy gauge plastic, which covered the entire floor. Next came a layer of sawdust that covered the plastic, followed by a layer of sand. Pipes went down and then another layer of sand covered the pipes. A brine-like solution similar to anti-freeze flowed non-stop through the pipes. Compressors, utilizing a product similar to ammonia, were compressed to freeze anything that surrounded the pipes. After the sand was frozen, a crew would begin spraying water on the sand, going back and forth from one end to the other. Spraying 24-hours a day, it would take a couple days to build the surface thick enough to use as a skating rink. At the end of the engagement, a crew of men came in to break up the ice with sledge hammers and used a front-end loader to move the ice to dump trucks where it was hauled off for disposal. As designed, not one drop of water touched the surface of the basketball court.

The other challenge was when we set up an ice rink at Shea Stadium in June, 1967. The old Madison Square Garden, where we had performed in previous years, had been torn down, and the new Madison Square Garden was still under construction. Because the weather in New

York is quite warm in June, the surface was covered by a huge tent to keep the sun from melting the ice. It was removed for performances, then replaced as soon as the show was finished. But the humidity caused droplets of water to form on the ice. If they weren't regularly scraped off, they would freeze into bumps that could create problems for the cast. So skaters interested in earning a little extra money were hired to work shifts to keep the ice scraped around the clock. Ice Capades also used their own ice at the Blaisdell Center in Honolulu, HI. All the refrigeration equipment had to be shipped over ahead of time.

As a footnote, it was at Shea Stadium that year that Aja Zanova performed her last show. That evening a staggering 28,000 were in attendance, which was the largest audience ever recorded for an ice show.

During the Tank Ice dates, skaters from the line would resurface the ice during intermission. This was done by first handscraping with a shove-type scraper, followed by spreading hot water on the surface of the ice. Two guys would push what looked like your average ice cream cart across the ice. It was filled with hot water and had a long pipe in front that dispersed the water evenly, using drip holes in the bottom of the pipe. Behind that was a long towel that dragged on the ice to smooth it out. The crew always got a nice hand from the audience as they exited on the last swipe.

Breaking down the sets was as much an art as setting them up. They had to be dismantled quickly after the final performance, and made ready to place on the train that would take the cast, crew and sets to the next town, for the next set of performances. I loved to tell anyone who asked that there was a specially trained crew that took everything apart and packed all the parts into special suitcases we brought on overseas tours. I'd stand back and watch the wonder come into their eyes as they tried to picture the enormity of such a task. I'd give them ten minutes or so to think about what I'd said, then apologize for the 'story' I'd told them.

Special Video Interview with Belita



A unique **interview** with UK skater **Belita** 1970s. Listen carefully to the answers she gives to the questions referring to Sonja Henie. So diplomatic and so correct. I am very grateful to my friend and colleague Bill

Unwin for allowing me to share this material with you.

[Click here to view the interview](#)



Comments from March Blade

Of course I love my monthly "Blade" It brings me great joy & I read every word. The skating world is indeed fascinating. Once those blades "Hit the Ice" nothing else in the world is important. From frozen water something so beautiful can be created. One of the few activities where "Art & Sport" come together & everyone is a fan! Keep up the good work. It's so appreciated. - *Mark Richard*

Upcoming Events



On May 25th to May 28th, 2019, onboard Royal Caribbean's Symphony of the Seas, we will be celebrating 40 years of Willy Bietak Productions. Come join us for this incredible reunion of friends, family, skaters and employees from around the world!!!

REMINDER to make sure you book your

Bietak Celebration Cruise today!

We also need your help. If you have a cast photo from any Bietak Production show you were part of, please email a copy to reunion@bietakproductions.com. Make sure to include in the email the show name, year, and location.

Visit <https://www.bietakproductions.com/bietak-celebration/>

Royal Ballroom Cruise January 20, 2020



Royal Caribbean Mariner of the Seas
4 Nights \$429.00 and up
Taking reservations now
Call or travel agent Shelly Fogelman (248-203-0022) and reserve your favorite cabin today

[Click here for more information.](#)



<http://www.icetheatre.org/>

If you know if someone who would like to receive The Blade, please send me their email address or if you would like to be removed from receiving The Blade, please type 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

Email me directly at gspoden@rogers.com