



REUNION EDITION

NEWS FROM ICE CAPADES ALUMNI

December 2018



Picture of the Month



Isn't she lovely?



Video of the Month

Starstruck Precision & Finale

West Co. Seattle 1979-80

Memories Worth Remembering Again



[Lani Hudelson](#) couldn't resist remembering a story about 'tank ice' - my bad, she *giggles*. Dolly Pierce used to order me not to do any 'rain dances' while we were on tank ice in Phoenix (Dolly knew that my great, great grandmother was Blackfoot so it was a running joke with us). Of course I ignored her - and I was egged on by others in the dressing room. The last time there I didn't do a rain dance. I did a sand storm dance and that's what we got. Made it through to intermission and that ended it that night. Of course I didn't cause the dust storm ...I could smell the dust in the air and figured that what was coming - my bad. The ice was melting so fast that we would glide and chatter across the exposed pipes and then glide again, chatter on pipes and our costumes got soaking wet when we had to kneel down. Our blades got badly chewed up when we had to run across the concrete to get under the grandstand. Poor Stan he had a lot of blades to sharpen before opening in the next town in California.

Anyone else have memories of 'tank ice' they'd like to share?

Where Are They Now?

Donna Good (Marsden) Campbell



A born athlete from Burnaby, CB, Canada's Donna Good-Campbell is still a force in the field of figure skating today, as a coach and competitor at the age of 78. Donna has been part of the Ice Capades West Company in 1957 and 1958, and has spent her life coaching, both at home in Canada as well as in Argentina.

Where did you end up after you unpacked your suitcase? Upon retirement, I moved to Kelowna, BC, I managed to find some ice sessions for seniors, and discovered that a few of them were formally competitive skaters and coaches such as myself. I have coached for 35 years plus while working in other areas as well.

What do you do for pleasure? I am usually found on the golf course, travelling the world, filming for the new CBC Documentary "Journey To The Worlds" or at home in Kelowna BC playing guitar with family and friends.

What has become your passion? Recently the group of skaters I met up with, some still working, and some of us retired, we decided to compete in some adult competitions. I decided to go for it and entered the Adult

Bronze Interpretive Group V. This group was aged 56-80 yr. age group. I was the oldest competitor in the Skate Canada Super Series Final at age 77, also after having a total hip replacement. I was just recovering from the hip at the last reunion, but I did to the Street Dance?

A 2018 Update: At the Super Series Skate Canada, I won a Bronze Medal, as well as a silver. I was competing against skaters 18 years younger than my 78 years at that time.



To view Donna's skating videos, go to:

www.donnagoodcampbell.com

Donna would love to hear from you:

dgooddcampbell@gmail.com

For your Reading Pleasure

Down memory lane – 2nd in a series of short stories

by Michael Garren

JUNE 29, 2008

FLYING HIGH AND SEEING STARS

Las Vegas is the city that never sleeps. The mere mention of the city conjures up visions of lounge shows and headliners in every showroom on the Strip, billion dollar resorts with spectacular stage productions that practically defy the imagination, and scantily clad or unclad physical specimens of either gender. This was my second year playing Las Vegas, and for me it was the most exciting stop on West Company's tour, with the exceptions of Los Angeles and Honolulu. How was it that I was lucky enough to be back in the city of flashing marquees touting idols of every segment in the entertainment industry, or one armed bandits with never ending jackpot bells ringing, and unbelievably modest priced buffet spreads which could satisfy the palate of any individual accepting the challenge? Damned if I knew, but there I was in the city of high rollers and applause, performing as a principal for my second time in as many years. And if you think I'd had my fill of excitement my first year there you would be highly mistaken. I was practically busting at the seams in anticipation of each and every performance.

Being a principal, in addition to being the most uplifting activity for my pride at such a tender age and the satisfaction of performing in my own spotlights, undeniably afforded me numerous additional advantages. As if that in itself was not enough, there were radio and television interviews or an occasional newspaper article for publicity, and my advance publicity TV promo which I occasionally saw on a local channel; a copy of which I was able to secure years later before the close of 6121. There was a private stateroom to be shared with another principal on train trips, my picture in the program and invitations to special functions or parties throughout the year; each of the above being a boost to pride in my job and my accomplishment, all the while keeping my ego in check by never forgetting Leonard Perry's adage to "remember

honey, that you are only one rung on the ladder of show business above the circus”, he used to say sarcastically. That said, don’t misunderstand me; in spite of the advantages afforded to me as a principal I never let it go to my head, and I was nonetheless proud of my tenure on the roster in previous years as an ice cadet.

Performing in Las Vegas was exciting, for one reason, because of the sheer volume of performers in the city, and it seemed that before the week ended they had all come to see us. Even then it was a Mecca for skaters; however, at that time there were only a handful of permanent positions available in shows, being at the Hacienda or Stardust. I had seen them both earlier that week. Many skaters had left traveling shows to skate, dance or work behind the scenes, and those positions were, in my opinion, highly prestigious; each paying substantially more than being on tour with Ice Capades. I was in awe of Las Vegas skaters’ artistry and ability to work a small surface on a proscenium stage. All week we had been visited by these skaters and ex-skaters who had decided to settle down and get off the road but were still performing to some extent or another, and at the time I WANTED one of those spots. I was fortunate enough later in my career to have been given several of them.

It was in Las Vegas in 1968, a weekend several of us, and I in particular, will never forget. That Friday night would turn out to be, in several ways for me at least, one of the most memorable nights of the tour.

Performing had been quite nerve wracking the whole week but I knew it was part and parcel of the job. I knew as well that those who took to the ice without nervous apprehension as to the outcome of their performance were either fools or, in my opinion, did not care enough to warrant being there. I cannot recall ANY performance in my entire career, either as a cadet or a principal, that I did not have butterflies in my stomach before the music began, and I venture to say that most of you too had the same emotions.

When I arrived at the Convention Center that night for our performance I was not surprised to see a notice on the bulletin board about a party after the show. It wasn’t unusual; we were invited to parties all the time, but there was something exceptionally different about this one. It was an invitation that had been sent to all of the shows on the Strip and was to begin at 3am Saturday morning, that allowing performers of midnight shows enough time to finish their shows and get to the party. I briefly scanned the invitation which was written in part saying, “Altovise and I would like to invite the principal cast of Ice Capades to be our guests tonight at the Sands Hotel to help us celebrate my birthday”. It was signed Sammy Davis Jr. WAIT A MINUTE... SAMMY DAVIS JR.? That’s impossible; this had to be a joke. I read it again, slowly and word for word. When I realized that it was authentic the thought of attending that party immediately made the hair on the back of my neck stand straight up; one of those moments as if you were feeling the sound of a Star Trek transporter instantly scanning from your head to your toes.

When I reached the dressing room it was abuzz with talk of the party; who had seen him perform, where, when and with whom? Speculation about his potential guest list during our performance was rampant and we parlayed names of the various celebrities currently playing on the Strip. I never once heard the question, “Are you going?” asked of or by anyone. Who in their right mind would turn down an invitation like that anyway? Certainly not ME, and though I would be only a guest, I experienced an air of anticipation and nervous excitement which approached overwhelming.

Our arrival at the Sands Hotel was unfortunately only by taxi, but as the attendant opened our door I felt like I was stepping out of a limo for a premier. No flashing cameras, or paparazzi, but the lights were SO bright. The Sands already had such a lengthy history of playing host to Hollywood’s royalty, and their pictures taken there, including many of Sammy and his “Rat Pack” friends, flanked the corridors leading to a very large convention room. Believe it or not the corridor’s carpet leading to the room was red; it was not THE red carpet, but Bruce Jarman and I pretended it was just the same. At the door there was a seating diagram indicating where we should sit. The room was set up with about 40 tables, each seating 10 guests, arranged in a way so as to create an empty rectangle for dancing in the center of the room. As it turned out we had two tables bordering the dance area. FRONT ROW SEATS! There was a speaker’s dais at one end of the room and to one side of that were three tables, two of them holding huge single layer cakes inscribed ‘Happy Birthday Sammy’, and a third decked with two enormous bowls of red punch with strawberries and orange slices floating in each.

This was NOT one of those parties at which I intended to arrive ‘fashionably late’ and our show had finished earlier than most of the others, so when we arrived there were only a few tables seated with people. Most of them were already drinking punch; our permission to go get some for ourselves, I assumed, so that’s what we did. Bruce was first to pour

from the bowl on the left and before I had poured mine he had taken a sip, and beaming with a smile he exclaimed, "Ah VODKA, my favorite". Well, vodka wasn't on MY list of favorites so I decided to try the other bowl. Pretty good, sweet like Hawaiian punch but with an unusual flavor I couldn't quite recall ever having tasted before. Then it's back to our seats to watch people arrive. Fifteen minutes later, back to the punch for both of us, this time Bruce deciding to try from the other bowl. As we were sitting down the second time a friend of mine that danced in the Lido at the Stardust came over to our table to say hello. I introduced him to Bruce and amid the conversation of small talk and our mutually shared excitement of the event my friend mentioned that he'd heard a rumor that Sammy had spiked the punch. Bruce immediately chimed in with "Of course, it's VODKA, my favorite". My friend disagreed, clarifying, "No, it's the OTHER one, supposed to be something pharmaceutical". "PHARMACEUTICAL, what does THAT mean" was my question that he answered with a lift of his brow and shrug of his shoulders as if to say "beats me". Whatever it meant, I noticed that I was beginning to feel P R E T T Y damn GOOD.

Since Bruce and I were the first of our group to arrive at the party I took it upon myself to mention to the others as they arrived that "the punch had been spiked, and not with just Vodka either, it's pharmaceutical". "Yeah right" was generally the reaction I received, but I somehow neglected to tell them which punch was spiked. By the time Sammy showed up everyone in our group had been to the punchbowls and back, most opting for the "other" bowl of punch I later learned rather than the Vodka. It was becoming an exceptionally HAPPY party. The next hour was spent talking and watching a constant parade of celebrities and beautiful people arrive. Bruce was much better at recognizing them than I was; he had been a dancer in New York. "That's Totie Fields, and over there Juliet Prowse; and the guy in the blue shirt, Rodney Dangerfield". I was impressed.

When Sammy entered the room he made his way to the dais and the entire party broke into applause. He welcomed everyone to the party and thanked us for coming. He continued speaking for a few minutes introducing Altovise and thanked a few of his other friends personally for coming. At the end of his talk his parting words were to encourage us all to "have a good time, have some cake, and the punch is my own special recipe so enjoy, now let's have some fun and dance". Sammy with Altovise beside him then made his way around to each individual table, welcoming us and shaking our hands. I couldn't believe I was even in the same room with these people, and now I was shaking his hand? I looked around, and everyone was watching him as he made his way around to welcome us; another instance that I told myself to take it all in, bathe in the joy of the moment, and not to forget what it felt like being there. This would obviously never happen again in my lifetime. Honestly, I really wanted to whip out my autograph book and play "fan" while I was there, but thankfully and with slight disappointment my better instinct told me that this would be neither the time nor place for that, so it was left behind. As he was leaving our table he asked if we all had tried the cake and punch, "I made it up myself, the punch not the cake". He was smiling as he walked away.

That was our cue to finally try the cake and 'don't mind if I do' another cup of punch. As I poured myself a third cup of punch I couldn't help but notice that the Vodka punchbowl was only half full, but MY punchbowl was almost empty. OH YEAH, best cake and punch I'D ever had, as well as everybody else it seemed! I was feeling GREAT, AND SO HAPPY, and definitely disappointed when the party began to break up around 5:30. On our way back to the Stardust in the limo, excuse me, I mean the TAXI, I reflected on also having seen Debbie Reynolds, Milton Berle, Phyllis Diller, Wayne Newton, Ann-Margret, Peggy Lee, Dean Martin, Johnny Carson, Joan Rivers, Dom DeLuise, Don Rickles, and scores of exceptionally attractive people.

We were back at the hotel by 6, had check in for our three show day at 11, hadn't slept a wink; in fact I later discovered no one had slept, but everyone seemed to feel they had more energy than they'd EVER had on a three show day. That Sunday however was a different story. I still don't know what the hell was in that punch, but we were all SO HAPPY it didn't matter. I do know one thing for sure though, and that is that there's no way I will probably ever again be witness to a room filled with so many stars and beautiful people, and I am thankful and continue to feel like one of the luckiest people in the world to have been there. What a great time in my life!



Looking for Show Rosters!

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Click on the link below and if you have some

<http://icecapadestheblade.com/ice-capades-show-rosters/>

that I don't have, would appreciate sending them to me.

(PDF form would be preferred)

If you know if someone who would like to receive The Blade, please send me their email address.

Email me directly at gspoden@rogers.com

Comments from November Blade

I'm amazed at the work you're doing with The Blade. I went for the first time on your new website in the memorandum and it brought tears to my eyes to see my parents Tony and Helene and all the great people that you and I know. – *JP Romano*

Thanks so much for the Blade and all you do for us old time gypsies. – *Lani Hudelson*

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/>



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