



Reunion Information



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Our Alumni in the News

Tai & Randy & Figure Skating Things I found on Line



<https://youtu.be/32x7BK-jZlo>

It's TIFO on ice week, as we welcome skating royalty, Tai Babilonia & Randy Gardner, winners of the 1979 World and five(!) US Figure Skating Championships. Tai and Randy are joining us to talk about their astonishing careers, including their many successes and accolades, as well as the injury that pulled them from the 1980 Olympics. What was it like growing up in the spotlight and in our hearts? Randy's story is coming to the big screen. Catch it here first on the big podcast. Plus, skating choreographer Sarah Kawahara is a friend and colleague of the duo and she is back to share their secrets and gush about her famous daughter Hayley Kiyoko! All that and a cute, canine Facebook Feedtime. The panel includes Jamie Alcroft, Danny Mann and host Louise Palanker.

The Original Whirling Dervish: The Ronnie Robertson Story



"Everyone told me it was a natural ability that I had one of the best centres of gravity they had seen. My weight was distributed just right, my legs were bowed just enough to spin." - Ronnie Robertson, "The Los Angeles Times", 1982

The son of Albert and Christine Robertson, Ronald 'Ronnie' Frederick Robertson was born September 25, 1937 in Brackenridge, near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When Ronnie was a tot, his father worked as a draftsman at a glass factory. After [World War II](#) broke out, he moved Ronnie and his sister Patricia to California after taking a job as a naval architect. A sickly child, Ronnie took up figure skating on the advice of his doctor. Jumping and spinning seemingly came natural to him and by the time he was eight, he had won so many competitions on the West Coast that the rules were stretched to allow him to enter the U.S. Championships. However, on his first trip, he finished dead last.



Ronnie Robertson receiving his trophy as winner of the 1952 U.S. junior men's title. Photo courtesy "Skating" magazine.

Although in excellent hands with coaches [Gustave Lussi](#) and [Bob Dench](#), skating and life were both at times tumultuous for Ronnie. On the ice, he struggled with his nerves when performing school figures under the watchful eyes of the judges. Off the ice, he was having a (not so secret) relationship with a fellow male skater... at a time when same-sex relationships weren't exactly tolerated by many. He later admitted, "I was spending eleven hours a day, six days a week on the ice. I was too tired to study and I knew there would be someplace for me in the profession... There were times when I threw my skates away and said I'd never skate again. But I always went back to it." His hard work on the ice paid off though. By the end of nearly every one of his free skating performances in competition, the crowd erupted in a roar of

applause. Gustave Lussi later recalled, "I knew I had a gem on my hands."

[Click here to read the rest of the article, courtesy of Skateguard](#)

Did You Know....



Zamboni ended the Cold War? In 1961, the Ice Capades went bravely behind the Iron Curtain with its own Zamboni ice resurfacer. Awed by this newfangled capitalist technology, the Soviets managed to hold on to the Zamboni machine after the Ice Capades left Moscow. The Russians were so impressed that numerous Zamboni ice resurfacers were ordered and sent to the USSR before the wall came down. Zamboni machines have also been sold into the Chinese market as that country's recreation industry has grown, while at least 200 machines have been exported

to Japan. In 1987 Sports Illustrated claimed, “There are Zambonis in a majority of arenas in North America. There are Zambonis behind the Iron Curtain, Zambonis near China’s Great Wall, In Australia, Korea, South Africa. Geography doesn’t matter; politics matter even less. Ice is Ice.” By plane, truck, or boat, Zamboni ice resurfacers travel the world and even infiltrated the Iron Curtain thanks to the Ice Capades and the Winter Olympics.

Article courtesy of ‘Zamboni, the Coolest Machines on Ice’

Here’s How Zamboni Changed the Game for Ice Rinks

Invented by rink owner Frank Zamboni, the ice-clearing machine celebrates its 70th anniversary this year



The Zamboni totally transformed winter sports by giving chopped-up ice surfaces a fresh-frozen smoothness in a matter of minutes. (David Brewster/Star Tribune via Getty Images)

By [David Kindy](#) - smithsonian.com
October 16, 2019

The **Ice Capades** were in Boston on New Year’s Day 1954. That evening, the Boston Bruins were also scheduled to play in Boston Garden. The maintenance crew was dreading clearing the ice in just a few hours in preparation for the NHL game against the New York Rangers.

It was a laborious process, requiring shovels, brooms, squeegees and pushing small handheld plows around to clean the surface. It worked—sort of—but the ice usually had an uneven finish and tended to be bumpy, which could cause the puck to bounce in unexpected ways and skaters to lose their balance.

Fortunately, Bob Skrak was working for the **Ice Capades** that day. He operated a new piece of equipment that smoothed the ice for the figure skaters so it was as clear as if fresh made. Bruins management immediately took notice and ordered a unit. It was delivered to the team in the fall.

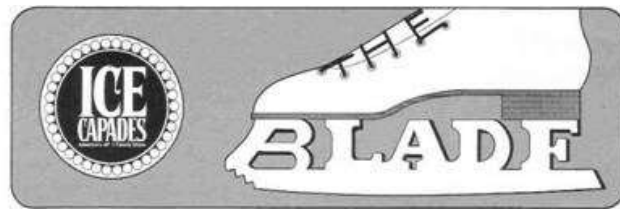
That fabled piece of equipment—[Zamboni Model E21](#), the first to be used by an NHL team—was a game-changer. It was driven around Boston Garden for years by Lelo Grasso, who would deftly tip his trademark fedora to the crowd as he circled the ice. In 1988, when the Boston Bruins ordered a new machine, it sent Model E21 back to the [Zamboni](#) manufacturing plant in Paramount, California, to be restored. It is now in the collection of the [Hockey Hall of Fame](#) in Toronto, Canada.

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

Video of the Month

1948 – Ice Aces – a visit with the Ice Capades from Pan Pacific Auditorium with Donna Atwood, Bobby Specht, Alan Konrad, etc.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8jq-Kk8uKs>



The website, www.icecapadestheblade.com has been revamped and more information has been added. It's still a work in progress. If you have something to add, please send them.

Look here for **2020 Ice Capades Reunion** information

Cast & Production Pictures – check it out. Relive some memories.

Rosters – Looking for someone or remembering who you skated with in the show?

Video links – have been collecting skating You Tube links from the early years.

Program Covers – we had the most beautiful covers

Past Issues of The Blade – just in case you missed an issue

Past Reunion Pictures – relive the times you attended the reunions

In Memorium – remembering those who have left us

Check it out!

Upcoming Events



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

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