

## Our Alumni in the News

### What a Feeling!



Yes, that's Gary Jones waterskiing on Lake Placid. The things we do when we're retired. Here he is with Tommy Litz and instructor Amanda in the boat cheering him on. Whiteface is in the background.

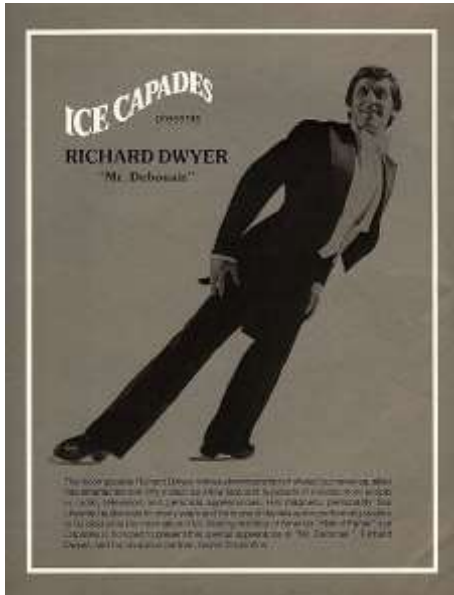
Gary Jones toured with all 3 companies of Ice Capades, from 1969-1980. Gary and his partner Judy Roof were the adagio team in West Company for the 1978-1979 tour.

Gary wanted to share a few highlights and memories during his tenure with America's #1 Family Show. - visiting Mount Rushmore while in Rapid City with Continental - Closing in Honolulu with West Company spending days at Hanauma Bay, and going to the Arizona Memorial. - opening the new show at Convention Hall at Atlantic City. - playing NYC with its wonderful restaurants, and Broadway plays - seeing a Chorus Line and Chicago with Liza filling in for Gwen Verdon. WOW! Thank you Kenny! - and of course, very fond memories of George Foster and Dolly Pierce.



# A Chat with Mr. Debonaire, Richard Dwyer

The legendary skater, Richard Dwyer, sat with Susan Austin and Randy Gardner for an informal Question and Answer session recently in Burbank, California at the Pickwick Ice Arena. Mr. Dwyer's fame as "Mr. Debonair" in Ice Follies and later in Ice Capades made him one of the most popular ice show personalities in history. He inherited the role from Roy Shipstad when he was only 14 years old. Shipstad trained and taught him the number, but they had to rename the role as, "The Young Debonair" and the "Dwyer Girls" were taller than he was at the time. Mr. Dwyer says of Shipstad, "He is a great mentor and a great friend." And, we all remember his pair skating years with Susie Berens. They always brought a smile to everyone's face.



In later years, Mr. Dwyer continued to perform in numerous shows around the world and did guest coaching in places like Hong Kong and Dubai. This ever-so-friendly gentleman has entertained us all for years and it is no wonder that he had fans like singer Tony Bennett and Sonja Henie:

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

## A Great Memory -The Next Ice Age Kicked off 30th Anniversary at Mt. Pleasant Ice Arena (2018)

Posted By: [Carolyn Kelemen](#) on: October 09, 2018

Photo by Kim Zaruba



Fans of both dance and ice skating – especially those who value figure skating as art, not just sport – should take note of the special program being prepared by Nathan Birch and [Tim Murphy](#), founding directors of The Next Ice Age kicked off its 30<sup>th</sup> season in 2018 at the Mt. Pleasant Ice Arena in Baltimore. And what a party they have planned both for their fans and for their skating students from up and down the East Coast.

First up is a sneak preview of the new documentary on the life and legacy of John Curry, the 1976 Olympic Gold Medal winner who turned the sport of ice-skating into an exalted art form. "The Ice King" features unseen footage of his remarkable performances plus interviews with his company members, Dorothy Hamill, Birch and Murphy, among them. The film will be followed by a special live performance of Curry's masterpiece, "On The Beautiful Blue Danube," described by one critic, "If dancing is the way angels walk, then skating is the way angels dance."

In 1984, this writer had the privilege of reviewing The John Curry Skating Company (with Dorothy Hamill, Birch and Murphy) on the stage of the Kennedy Center – yes, ice magically formed on top of the floor to allow smooth and beautiful skating. A few years later, I also caught a more intimate performance of “On The Beautiful Blue Danube” for Next Age Company members, Shaun McGill, Murphy, Birch and Curry, himself, at the Northwest Ice Rink.

Curry’s breezy, ensemble piece set to the familiar waltz reminds one of George Balanchine’s abstract dances for his fleet-footed New York City Ballet. With broad and billowy arm movements, the skaters glided through intricate patterns in and out of the wings (on the ice it’s more difficult to determine stage directions).

In his 1978 biography, Curry clearly writes that if he were to do it over, his choice would have been ballet. And then added how dancers do turns better than skaters. After a brief stint in Broadway shows, he died from heart complications from the AIDS plague in 1994 at the age of 44. Imagine the brilliant ice dances he would have created...

Lucky for us, Tim Murphy and **Nathan Birch**, two of Curry’s protégés (and stars in their own right) picked up his artistic medium and began to see the world’s stages sheeted with ice. Since the founding of The Next Ice Age in 1988, Birch and Murphy have earned numerous awards and have traveled worldwide to share their talent.

Murphy choreographed the 1994-95 season for the **Ice Capades**. Birch had the honor of being the first skating choreographer to receive a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. He and Murphy have worked with skaters JoJo Starbuck, Nancy Kerrigan and Dorothy Hamill, among other skating stars, yet the two friends still smile when you mention their performances with the John Curry Skaters at New York’s Metropolitan Opera House and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Audiences accustomed to the pyrotechnic jumps and spins of competitive skating or the sequins and glitz of entertainment like **Ice Capades** may be disappointed to find that none of the above appears on the Next Ice Age’s program.

“Skating is not ballet on ice,” Birch explains. “It only borrows positions from it. We have a real yearning to teach skating the way John Curry brought the two disciplines together. There’s no doubt in Birch’s mind that Curry, who won a gold medal in the men’s figure skating event at the 1976 winter Olympics, has blended dance and skating into a new form of entertainment. And like his mentor, Birch has applied his choreographic gift to skating without losing its aesthetic essence.

While we won’t have the pleasure of seeing neither Birch nor Murphy in the line-up, The Next Ice Age features one female skater along with the traditional male ensemble. Tess Terpos joins Ian Lorello, Wesley Campbell and Neill Shelton in “On the Beautiful Blue Danube.” It promises to delight both young and old.

# Trivia Question

## Pretty Woman (1990)



How many times have you watched Pretty Woman?

Our master of finding unusual articles,

Richard Morse came up with this one. (thanks Richard)

*'Did you know that there was a reference to **Ice Capades** in the movie?'*

To save you from looking for it (unless you want to watch it again),

Richard has saved you and has referenced the scene

between the two call girls.

- *You just can't turn tricks forever. You gotta have a goal. Do you have a goal?*
- *Well, I always wanted to be in the Ice Capades.*

Here are it's time stamps and/or click below to see the clip.

- **01:59:21** You gotta have a goal. Do you have a goal?
- **01:59:23** Well, I always wanted to be in the Ice Capades.

Clip on "next clip" for the response to her question:

<https://getyarn.io/yarn-clip/656fac67-b5b4-4729-9bba-197aa0278d66>

## Video of the Month

### Rhapsody for Piano & Ice – 1969

Thank you Richard Morse for creating this beautiful tribute to "Rhapsody for Piano and Ice," an original composition by James Harbert for Ice Capades 29th edition.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bwVBbOkHlc>





Here is a special treat of Romaine & Steele's performance from this production number. If you skated in the 1969 production, it will have a special meaning to you. This was one of their finest programs choreographed especially for them with James Harbert's original music.

Thank you Joanne Funakoshi's father Willie for filming this and to David Sadlier for digitalizing it and sharing it with us.

[Click here to watch a piece of history.](#)

## **RELIVING FOND MEMORIES**



Doug Martin had published two books called 'Frozen Community' where he wanted to have skaters tell funny stories about their time on the road. Stories were posted before but worth sharing again.

Did you have any trouble with losing your contact lenses? Gloria Spoden had a couple to share with us.

Contact lenses played an important part in the lives of Ice Capades performers. Those of us with really poor vision could finally trade in our coke bottle glasses for contacts, and voila, a swan was born. But wearing contacts had a downside as well.

It was the 28<sup>th</sup> year of Ice Capades, and we were performing a number called "The Ritual of the Waters", which came right before intermission. We were in those awful black Mylar costumes, dressed from tip to toe, and had ribbons on our fingers. We had to flip the ribbons, and when I did it, one of the ribbons snapped back, caught me in the eye, and knocked out my contact lens. In those days I wore clear hard lenses, no colored ones then. During intermission they hosed and melted the ice from inside the Zamboni, and placed a towel over the drain pipe. I even went into the Zamboni and felt around the bottom. Much to everyone's surprise – mine included, my lens had gotten trapped in the towel and was undamaged.

Another time we were exiting through the tunnel after our opening number, when the curtain caught me in the eye and popped out a lens. I had a quick change so I turned to our prop man, Dick Burch, and asked him if he'd look for it. He shone a light into the tunnel and again he managed to find my clear lens. Amazing.

Some of you might remember Joan (Crash) Plimley, who loved the color lavender. Everything she owned was lavender, including her contacts. I remember she too lost one of the lenses during the show, and despite scouring the ice afterwards, no one could find it.



Rosemary Dean had trouble adjusting to contacts so she just did without when she skated. We were not supposed to speak while we were on the ice, and that was a rule we always abided by, right?. Well, almost always. During one of our precision numbers one night, we were doing a back circle, which went into two smaller inner circles. Rose was in the smallest circle, and because she couldn't see very well, we were given permission to cue her as we spliced back into the outer circle. So every night we'd whisper, "here, Rose' here, Rose' and that's how she got back into place every night. Speaking of Rose, when she finally did find contacts that she was able to wear, they opened up a whole new world for her out on the ice. After one of her numbers she came flying backstage, proclaiming, "Did you see that good looking guy at the fifth marker, stage right?' God bless contacts.

## **New Dates – June 14 - 16, 2022**



**Announcing - NEW DATES for the Ice Capades Reunion – June 14, 15, 16, 2022, at the stunning and spacious OMNI Resort & Spa, Rancho Mirage (Palm Springs), CA.**

Now that it is unlikely California will be allowing large gatherings in Spring, and our Canadian friends are still being asked not to travel... it became evident we needed to push our event - to 2022. Doing this will hopefully allow for more attendees to be vaccinated. We want to be safe, and allow for as many skaters, and extended Capades family, to be able to attend as possible. Hope you'll want to be there too!

Yes, **if already registered**, your event registration will be transferred to June 2022! While it may seem to be a long wait The Ice Capades Reunion 2022 committee is still excited and committed to providing a fun experience, in what could very well be the last chance to gather 'this many' of us in one spot. Please save any requests for cancellations, for extreme personal situations only. Much appreciated.

**If you already have a hotel reservation**, know the OMNI Resort has moved all reservations over to the new date(s). Feel free to call and confirm, to ease your mind. The 2022 OMNI Resort Reservation Website is not up yet. Know they are working on a skeleton crew, but I am told the website will be Live in a few days. Info regarding the new OMNI Resort website will be posted soon. Our hotel rates, will remain the same in 2022.

We are all getting older. (Still glamorous, but older). And after all this Covid-19 craziness it will be so good to see old friends again! So, please make a plan to come join us, and fully enjoy this special, unique reunion!

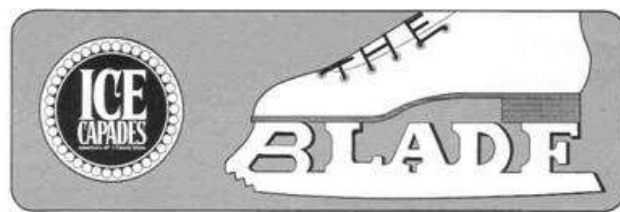
[Click here for 2022 registration form, which can be printed out](#)

Click here to register: [New Hotel Reservation Link](#)

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS UPDATE FROM STEPHANIE...** Here's who the OMNI Resort & Spa has reservations for - in 2022! If you have made a reservation for 2020 or 2021, *but your name is not here*, please call the hotel with your Confirmation Number to be sure your reservation has been changed to 2022. They feel confident all reservations have been moved... but please check if your name is not here, and you know you already made a reservation. Remember to use our Code to get our Special Rate: **061422Capade** Thank you! Sorry for any confusion.

Questions: -- Stephanie Perom, Event Producer, (310) 962-5908 -Cell, [IceCapadesReunion@outlook.com](mailto:IceCapadesReunion@outlook.com)

[CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT WHO'S COMING TO OUR REUNION...](#)



The website, [www.icecapadestheblade.com](http://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 2022 Ice Capades Reunion** information, including the list of **who's coming**

**Cast, Precision & Production Pictures** – Relive some memories.

**Past reunion Pictures** – Check them out for some you may have missed.

**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 too soon

Check it out!

# Upcoming Events



## Knoxville Ice Chalet, Knoxville, TN

ProSkater Live Auditions & Performance Camp - **October 2 - 3, 2021:**

<https://proskaters.wufoo.com/forms/r1fkhsbw1jo57s1/>



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

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