

In the News



Who remembers the Ruppert's Bears? Were you there? I remember that night when we were told to dress for precision early because there was a problem on the ice. We were ushered under the set to wait till they brought the bears off. I stuck my head through the curtain and it looked like one of the bears had its jaws wrapped around Ruppert's ankle and as it rolled backstage, it came very close to us as we were huddled waiting for our cue to begin precision. Here is what the newspaper said happened.

Ice Capades Bear Attacks Trainer – Springfield 1971

One of three bears in Paul Ruppert's Ice Capades act, ripped the pants from her trainer, Ruppert, and wrestled with him and an assistant for several minutes, last night.

Ice Capades Manager, Robert Gallagher said the bear, Dimka, "just got excited and tried to eat an extra mint out of the trainer's pocket."

The only damage was a pair of ripped trousers and a red face." Gallagher said. "The bear just got excited, and when Ruppert's pants were ripped he had to leave the ice."

Two witnesses, one a reporter for The Union, said the event was considerably more dramatic.

"The bear went after an assistant trainer and had him down on the ice, and the trainer wrestled like hell to pull him off" said Ralph Gordon, Greenfield Bureau Chief of The Union who attended last night's performance.

"The trainer and the bear wrestled for some time, and at one point the bear had a strangle-hold on him," Gordon said. "They were really going at it."

Gordon said that at one point an assistant shot a blank pistol in an attempt to break up the melee, but was unsuccessful. Gordon said the crowd at first was unaware of the battle, believing it part of the act.

“That changed when the bear bit into a stool,” Charles F. DeBarger, another witness said.

Gordon said the trainers used two other bears to help control Dimka and to hustle her off the ice. Just before they reached the curtain however, Dimka broke free again and another brief struggle took place.

The apparatus including a motorcycle ridden by Dimka just before she went out of control, was hustled off stage with the house lights up and another act was quickly brought on, witnesses said.

A West Springfield Police ambulance was dispatched to the Coliseum but was sent away, police said. Ice Capades officials said neither Ruppert nor his assistant was wounded.

Gallagher said the act will be on again tonight with both Dimka and Ruppert performing. The incident happened before a near-capacity crowd of 4500.

ICE CAPADES REUNION RECAP - NEW



Bob Recker kindly supplied this video from the recent reunion in Palm Springs.

Click on either link

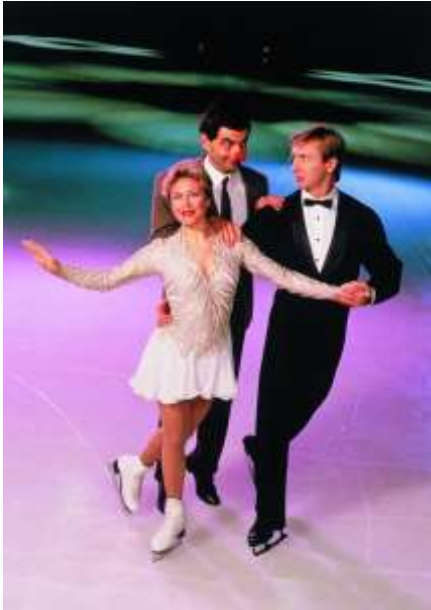
[ICE CAPADES 2022 REUNION.mp4](#)

<https://tinyurl.com/3chzb9ak>

[Click here for Facebook Reunion pictures](#)

[Click here for David Sadleir's pictures](#)

Video of the Month



Mr. Bean goes skating with Torvill & Dean

[An oldie but goodie](#)

Did you know?



By Dave Ouse
August 12, 2022

News Tribune, Aug. 12, 1982

- A final decision hasn't been made, but the Ice Capades, which has rehearsed its last 16 shows in Duluth, may not be back next year. Ice Capades currently rehearses three different touring companies in three locations during August and could save money by combining them.

Did you know why we played Rochester?

[Bill Russell, basketball great who worked for civil rights, dies at 88](#)

In 1956, Boston Celtics owner Walter Brown, who happened to be a co-owner of the Ice Capades, promised Rochester Royals owner Les Harrison that the Ice Capades would play Rochester if Harrison didn't use his No. 1 pick to take Russell. So Harrison took Duquesne's Sihugo Green and, the following year, the Ice Capades played to sellout crowds in Rochester.

Variety - July 5, 1944

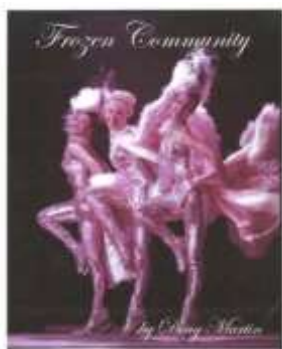
NEW LIBERTY SHIP, THE 'JOHN P. HARRIS'

A new Liberty ship, built in Savannah, Ga., and to be launched there on Aug. 15, will be called the John P. Harris, after the late Senator, father of John H. Harris, Pittsburgh showman and founder of the Variety Clubs. Mrs. John P. Harris, widow, will christen the new cargo carrier.

A pioneer in show business, Senator Harris entered the field as a ticket seller and treasurer, finally becoming a manager and then a theatre owner. From this beginning shortly after the turn of the century, Harris developed the Harris Amusement Co., now operating more than 60 theatres in the Pittsburgh area. In 1922 he was elected to the Pennsylvania Senate on the Republican ticket and was reelected in 1924.

John H. Harris, eldest son, conceived the idea of the Variety Club in 1928, which has since become national in character. In addition to the theatre circuit, Harris is president of the "Ice Capades."

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.

Here are some stories from Doug himself about their trip from Hawaii to Australia –

I mentioned earlier that we went to Australia to introduce our show to the people of that country, known around the world, of course, as “Down Under.” I quickly learned a lesson about Australian culture. Never say to an Aussie, “You have a British accent.” They don’t take kindly to it. Both my sound similar to the unpracticed ear, but there’s a distinct difference between them. I also think their distain of the comparison goes back to their early colonial history, when they were primarily a British penal colony.

Anyway, we had another great place to play before heading to Australia – America’s great 50th state, Hawaii. The year was 1964, and it was the first time Ice Capades, or any other ice show, had performed in that tropical paradise. We stayed at a newly completed hotel in Waikiki, called the Ilikai. We were only a short distance from the island’s largest shopping center, the Ala Moana Center, and just as close to the awesome beaches of Waikiki. We were thrilled to be there, even though it meant giving up part of our regular vacation time. The show had picked up these extra two places to play in the latter part of the tour, but what an opportunity for everyone involved.

Hawaiian people loved the show and the arena we played in. The Neal Blaisdell Arena held nearly 10,000 people, and we were full every performance. We also got to go to a fantastic native show on the other side of the island, at the Polynesian Culture Center. It was a beautiful show, well-paced, and a great representation of the Polynesian culture.

The week went by quickly, and before we knew it we were packing for the long trip to Australia. We finally met the gentleman who was booking our show there. His name was Art Kim and he was thoroughly familiar with Australia, as he also booked the Harlem Globetrotters there for years.

We made our way to the airport in Hawaii. A large crowd was there to send us off, and we all received beautiful leis. As we headed out to the planes we couldn’t help notice that it was not only a Canadian Pacific Airplane, but was also a prop jet. By the time we all boarded, that plane was loaded, and I mean loaded. I sat in an aisle seat next to Baird Jones, a piano player from Oklahoma. We had roomed together in a number of towns. Baird was deathly afraid of flying, and wasn’t too happy to learn that it would take more than eight hours’ flying time to reach our destination, which was Sydney, Australia. We would make one stop in Auckland, New Zealand, to refuel before heading on to Australia.

Baird started drinking even before he got on the plane. Before long, he’d had more than his share and I knew he was about ready to pass out. He did just that ten minutes after takeoff. His head landed on my shoulder and stayed there the entire trip. When we got to New Zealand, I was able to shift him, and I got off the plane to stretch my legs while they refueled.

I got a laugh when I went to a refreshment stand to get a drink. The lady working there looked at me and said, ‘you’re from America, aren’t you?’ I said, “Yes, how did you know?” She said, “By our clothes. Americans always wear bright clothing.” I said, “Okay, if you say so.” I returned to the plane and we were on our way again. When we finally put down in Sydney, we were all relieved that we had arrived safely. Baird woke up as we landed, looked at me and said, “Well

that didn't take long." I wanted to smack him, but he was in his sixties, so that wouldn't have been right. I just smiled and let it go at that.

We breathed a sigh of relief when we finally deplaned. It was so good to get off that undersized, over-packed airliner. The crew was very polite and efficient, but even that didn't soothe that cramped feeling shared by everyone on board – with the exception of Baird Jones, of course.

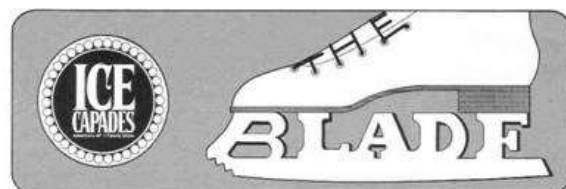
A couple of our Chorus girls were told to be ready to do an interview with the gaggle of reporters who were there, and to model a couple of their costumes, posing on ice blocks that had been brought to the airport. They stayed behind to do their PR work, while the rest of us headed for the hotel. A large number of the cast went straight to the hotel bar, where they could get beer for 25 cents a glass.

When the girls who'd been left behind to do the interview finally got to the hotel and saw what was going on, they were ticked off. We couldn't tell that from anything they said, but there was no doubt they were not happy. But it didn't take long to calm them down and get a smile from them after someone bought them a couple of drinks.

The next day, a number of us went out to have a good look at Sydney, a very large city right on the ocean. The scenery was very impressive, but as we drove along what is called Bondi Beach and observed the huge waves coming on shore, we couldn't help wonder why there weren't a lot of surfers out there. The fellow showing us around told us in a word: Sharks. Bondi Beach is famous for its large shark population just off shore. Our guide told us that the various types of sharks in the waters surrounding Australia are very aggressive, and that people who are not extremely well trained in swimming in heavily shark-populated waters, had best stay on the shore. He didn't have to tell me twice.

We learned to respect the assorted types of fish, alligators and other marine life while we traveled the country doing shows in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. We had to get used to a few major differences while we were there, such as the fact that June, July and August are winter months in the Southern Hemisphere; and that Australians drive on the opposite side of the road than we do in America. Just a note: When you leave Australia, say on a Sunday, you'll arrive in the USA on Saturday, because of crossing the Equator.

We had a very successful run in the three Australian cities we performed in. The Australian audience was very lively and gave generous ovations to all the performers—Principals and Chorus members alike. We learned a lot concerning different cultural values, and reasons why Australians do different things differently than we do here in the US.



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 **2022 Ice Capades Reunion** information, including reunion pictures

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!

USFA is Looking for Skaters



US Figure Skating for the Centennial Year is reaching out to find and connect former and current members who skated any time in USFS history to reconnect. Please consider registering!!! Share with those skating friends you stay in touch with!!

I can imagine some fun reconnecting events!!!

[Click here for more information](#)

Upcoming Events

Skater's Reunion – May 1 – 3, 2023



For folks who want information about the 2023 Las Vegas Ice Show Reunion, DATES: May 1-3 of 2023 (Monday-Wednesday) or are not receiving the newsletter updates, please email us at HOIFamilyreunion@gmail.com, and we'll put you on the newsletter distribution list.

Online Link to register: <https://www.formpl.us/form/6524508642738176>

[Click here for details & updates](#)

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