

## Sad News

Bob Bassett – June 4, 2023



Unfortunately, this is the only information given on Bob's passing at this time.

He went by ambulance to the hospital in Socorro, NM, to have scans done after a fall on May 30. The second day there, He had a stroke (cerebral vascular accident - (cva) but was too weak to recover. Condolences go out to Bob's family from his Ice Capades family.

Bob with Patty Gur & Bob Recker

## Alumni in the News

### I help others': Former Olympian gets candid about her struggles

Figure-skater Elizabeth Manley, who's now a life coach, sticks the landing in Simcoe County; 'Collingwood stole my heart,' she says



[Jessica Owen](#)

May 21, 2023 7:00 PM

Elizabeth Manley is a former Olympian and a life coach.

[Listen to this article - 00:04:28](#)

Figure skating might have been her first love, but Collingwood is Elizabeth Manley's most recent obsession.

This week, we spoke with Manley, 57, former Olympian and life coach.

**Q: For how long have you lived in Collingwood? A: We moved here in February.**

**Q: Where did you grow up?**

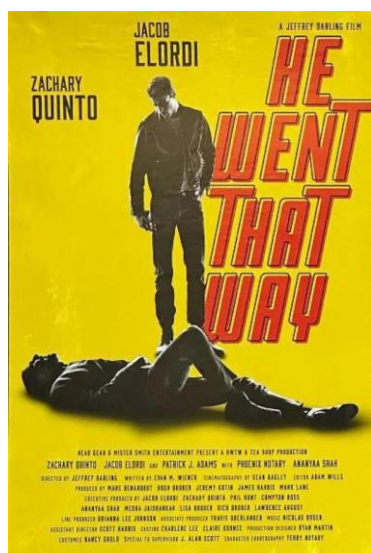
A: I was born and raised in the Belleville/Trenton area. I'm an air force brat. We were on the base there. My whole career was in Ottawa. I lived in the U.S. for 18 years. After I went pro, I was doing a lot of tours and TV. It was easier for me because it all existed in the States. I moved back here in 2005 because both my parents took ill.

**Q: Can you tell me about your experience as a figure skater?**

A: I started skating when I was two-and-a-half years old. I skated as an amateur until I won the Olympics silver medal in 1988. I went to the world championships a month later. Then I turned pro. I was professional until I was 50.

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

## **Dave Pitts & Spanky story in the movies**



A movie called “**He Went That Way**” has been released about the serial killer Larry Ranes who was on a killing spree. Our Dave & Spanky were driving from coast to coast in 1964 where they picked up Ranes. This movie is basically about Ranes but Dave & Spanky played an integral part of his story. It recently premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in NY to sold out viewings. The movie, like most movies, got mixed reviews from the critics, but the audiences really liked it. The movie does tell a very different story than what actually happened with Dave & Spanky, as I'd say about 25% is real to the incident, but the movie goes in a very different direction.

The article appeared in ‘Distractify’ on June 9, 2023

[Click here to read the movie’s article](#)



Dave & Spanky unwittingly became a part of Larry Ranes story when they picked him up while driving from coast to coast. They were just a part of this man’s journey and in true movie style, the movie has been adapted to fit the story, but the Blade has been given permission to share with you Dave & Spanky’s terrifying story which is included in Dave’s book recollecting what really happened from Dave’s point of view. Luckily, he and Spanky lived to tell the tale.

## **The year that Spanky saved 2 lives. True story!**

(Excerpt from Dave’s book)

The summer between my second and third year in the show, Capades decided that it would be much easier on traveling for both the show and myself if they just purchased a truck for me and I drove the tour. So what they did was to go out and get a GM Carryall that was similar to a truck size station wagon. They added special heaters and heavy brass colored, metallic stretched steel grillwork that separated the front cab area from the back area where Spanky would travel, then live in the arenas.

When the show closed, I wanted to leave at once in my new, 1963, forest green, GM Suburban Carryall and on the way to Atlantic City, stop in Chicago and spend a little time with my parents and show them my new set of wheels that Capades had just bought and outfitted for me.

After conferring with Transportation's Marshall Alderson as to the easiest way to go, it had previously decided that I take the northern route from LA, up toward Nevada and Utah to Wyoming. Then cross the northern edge of the Rockies, down to and across Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri to Illinois, then stop in Chicago and Evanston for a few days before continuing along the Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey toll roads to Philadelphia and finally over that last 65 miles to Atlantic City and my traditional summer home at the Pageant Motor Inn and Spanky's in the Convention Hall.

Now in those days, the super freeways didn't really exist, so you took the by-pass highway to the northern side of Vegas where to did an abrupt 90° right turn and traveled east until it met up with the main road exiting the city, the again did an abrupt 90° left hand turn and you were once again on Highway 5 and headed north toward Utah and Salt Lake City.

That all sounds well and good, but as I made the left turn, I noticed a young preppy, teenaged college kid that was well dressed in sports coat and tie, standing on the entrance to a dirt road. He had his hand out and was thumbing a ride. I stopped and asked where he was going? He answered, "Michigan" and like the fool that I was who had never picked anyone up before in his entire life, cheerfully stated, "Hop in and I'll take you as far as Chicago." Big mistake .....

Still all went well the rest of that day. He was company for Spanky and I as we explained that we were on our way back to rejoin the show in Atlantic City.

All went well that day and we again made good time down into Colorado and across to Nebraska where as night fell, the weather began getting stormier looking.

Toward 11 or 12 o'clock, I again stopped for gas at a small all night station and as I gassed up, Larry stated that he had to make a "Hit." Now I had no idea what a "hit" was so I said, "Fine, you go do that and I'll just finish up filling the tank."

Within a moment or two of his entering the station office where the lone attendant waited, another car pulled up and a couple got out and entered the office. A moment later, Larry came out and got into the cab of my Carryall.

It wasn't until later that the FBI Special Agent that was involved in the case explained to me what a "hit" was and the fact that the second car's arrival probably saved the lone attendant's life.

It was shortly after two in the morning when the lightning, rainstorm hit.

Approximately 3 AM, out came the gun. It was just a small, over and under 2-shot 22-caliber pistol, but when it was up next to my face, it looked as big as a canon.

I asked Larry what he was doing and he just started to explain how he was originally from Florida, hated women because of his mother and had worked his way across the country robbing and killing the people that stopped and were kind enough to give him a ride.

"Yeah, right. Like I was going to believe that line of bull. A killer? Yeah right."

So I just explained as we drove along that I hadn't more than \$150 dollars with me, but he was welcome to that. He said nothing other insisting that he was looking for something and would tell me what to do when we got there so in the meantime, just keep going toward Michigan.

Eventually, he found what he was looking for, a small dirt road off to the left that was next to a small river. Telling me to pull turn off, he again stuffed the gun in my face. When we had gone about 100 yards, he told me to "stop and get into the travel cage with Spanky" which I did.

We just sat there with him in the cab and I in the back in with Spanky in his travel for about a half an hour. To pass the time and help keep him calm, I talked to Spanky like I always did as a father speaking to his son telling him that "everything was all right and not to worry."

As dawn came and we had entered the state of Kansas for a 100 miles or so, he pulled the car off the side of the road when no one was around, and came around back After he unlocked the two doors, he opened the cage and with gun drawn and pointed at my head, announced that he was tired and I was to drive while he sat next to me and relaxed to regain his strength.

Locking up the back, I climbed into the cab with him next to me always holding that gun pointed at me, though no longer at my head. The first thing he said to me, was, "Well, Dave, how does it feel to talk your way out of death?"

To which my mind couldn't accept the fact that he might actually kill someone and just joked about it. We both laughed and he stated. "Back there by that river, I was going to shoot you and then run the truck into the river. But if I did, I'd have to hurt Spanky and I really like him and after listening to the two of you talking together in that cage and feeling the love between you, I just could do either of you. So here you are and together, we're heading toward Chicago where once we get there, I'll tell you what to do."

"Okay, I thought. You've got the gun and we are headed in the right direction, so David, just be cool. Stay friendly and play it by ear." And that's exactly what we did, but the entire time whenever he took over the driving for a while, I had the strongest nagging of "Don't dare fall asleep, Dave, because if you do, you are dead." so I stayed awake the entire trip.

We uneventfully crossed Kansas then turned north of Missouri and went east through Iowa and across Illinois toward Chicago and home. Home, I'll bet that a 1000-times, while waiting at stoplights in small towns or re-gassing the truck, thoughts raced through my head of "Just jump out of the truck and run." "See that policeman over there. Throw open the door and make a break for it."

But the other thought for survival answered, "Sure, you touch that door handle and the gun he has pointed at you from under his crossed arm goes off and you're dead" or "even if you do get away, what happens to Spanky? No, you can't risk it. Just go along with this kid until you get home to the Chicago area and do something then." And finally "He's no big deal. Just another lying teenager that currently has the upper hand. Killed a lot of people. Baloney, that's just so much bull pucky."

As we neared Chicago's toll roads, I was told that we're not going to stop in Chicago, but instead, "Just drive around the bottom of Lake Michigan, through a bit of Indiana and up to the eastern lakeside town of Michigan City, where you can drop me off." Sounds like a good plan to me, so up we went.

When we arrived in Michigan City, he told me to stop the truck. He took my wallet with all my money and ID and left me my Ice Capades credit card. Just before he left, I told him "I have no money, so could I borrow \$10 of my money so I had cash for the toll ways booths on the way home.

He just laughed and stated that, "Yeah. I think you're a good risk and so here's \$20 instead of ten. Oh and Dave, you are not to tell anyone about this for two weeks. At that time, I'm going to kill myself. But if you do, I have your ID and know where to find you and I will come kill you. Is it a deal?"

"Is it a deal? Of course it is," I thought, "Just let me get out of here alive. "

As I pulled away, it was as if a thousand pounds, no, a million pounds had been taken off my shoulders. When I got home I was exhausted and tried to put on a happy face for my mom. However, The first thing that I did when I had a chance was to call my Uncle Mick who was the Chief of police in the nearby town of Morton Grove and explained what had happened and what Larry had said he would do if I didn't keep quiet about it for just 2-weeks.

I also explained to Uncle Mick that, "When I'm on the road with Capades, whenever the show is coming to town, my name and Spanky's is blasted across radio and TV for 500 miles and the ads would state when and where we would be appearing, so if someone like Larry wanted to get me, I was the easiest thing in the world to find. So what do I do?"

His solution was simple. "Just stay calm. Don't worry your mom and wait out the two weeks until we can go after the kid."

"Yeah, that was easy for him to say, but as each day went by, I became antsier and antsier until I couldn't stand it any longer and just to get away for a few hours, drove to downtown Chicago and visited my old agents."

When I returned home, my mother was waiting for me and the first thing to come out of her mouth was, "The FBI was here today. **Now what have you done?**"

After I sat down and explained what had happened, she stated that, I knew that something was wrong by just the way that you were so nervous, but said nothing."

That evening, with Mom and Dad sitting with me, a very nice, mid-forties, soft-spoken, gentle appearing person showed up on our doorstep. He introduced himself as a special Agent of the FBI and after showing me his identification, sat to talk with us and ask me a few questions.

It seems that he had my wallet and Identification that they had taken from Larry when they arrested him and came that afternoon to verify if I was all right. Apparently Larry was actually "Larry Ranes" a wanted serial killer. If you look him up on the Internet under Serial Killers, you will see that he and his brother were the only sibling serial killers in the history of the United States.

After hearing my story, he returned my ID, and asked why I did what I did? I explained about talking to Uncle Mick and he stated, "Milton Scanlon, the chief at Morton Grove? I know him. We worked together on a couple of cases. He gave you good advice."

He then turned to my parents and quietly stated, "Your son doesn't realize how lucky he is. We captured Ranes in Kalamazoo and it ends up that just 10 minutes after your son dropped him off, he held up a mid-thirties, male school teacher who was gassing up his car at the station across the street and forced him to drive away before killing him.

When asked why he had killed everyone else, but left your son, David, go free, He answered, "Because if I killed him, I would have to hurt Spanky and I liked him."

So there you have it, Spanky help save not one life, but two with the second one being me.

Oh and by the way, he asked me to carefully describe where I picked Larry up and when I showed him on a map of the area, he called out to Vegas and they went out to investigate. What they found was just over the hill where I picked Larry up and where it couldn't be seen, a car with four bodies in it consisting of a husband and wife and their two children. It seems that again, shortly before I arrived, he killed the entire family for just a few dollars.

It ended up that he had murdered some 7-people that they knew of and police from 19 states wanted to talk to him because his mode of operations matched a bunch of unsolved cases that they had on file.

Thinking back, I remember him saying in the car, "You know Dave, the more people you kill, the easier it gets."

Nineteen year old, Larry Ranes, was tried, found guilty of multiple homicides and placed in a mental institute for the Criminally Insane where he remains today. Last photo I saw of him shook me up. He's now in his late fifties with long brown hair and a matching unkempt beard and resembles Charles Manson. That alone is enough to give me a case of the "Heebie Jeebies."

A few days later, when driving back to join the show, I'd pass a hitchhiker with his thumb out and begin to shake all over again. It was actually two years before I could once again pass one on the road without having a nervous attack.

When at the end of the interview, Bob asked me "if I would you ever pick up another hitchhiker?" I just quietly asked back, "Would you?"

## Figure Skating Coach Rory Flack Looks to 'Bring the Urban Streets onto the Ice' in New Reality Series (Exclusive)

Flack, the first African American woman to win the US Open Professional Figure Skating Championships, leads WE tv's 'Breaking the Ice'

By [Breanne L. Heldman](#) Published on July 6, 2023 06:36PM EDT

Rory Flack doesn't suffer fools. Nor should she.

The first African American woman to win the US Open Professional Figure Skating Championships now coaches the first wholly diverse competitive synchronized ice skating team, and the skates, er stakes, couldn't be higher. Or more public.



Flack's journey with the troupe of 10 middle and high school-aged skaters is the subject of WE tv's latest reality series, *Breaking the Ice*, premiering tonight.

Flack, 54, held nationwide tryouts to bring together the Washington, D.C.-area group of [figure skaters](#) known as Team DMV (which stands for Divine Motivational Visionaries). And while she's quick to laugh in

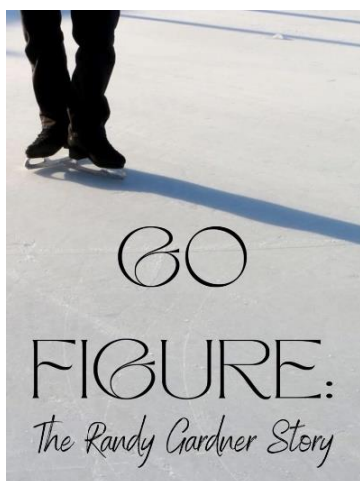
conversation, she's serious about the hard work the young ladies must put in in order to achieve their goal of making it to the Ice Sports Industry's (ISI) national championship.

In PEOPLE's exclusive sneak peek, viewers will see the skaters struggling to get in sync with one another, and team captain Nia, 12, gives her coach a little sass. Flack won't stand for that.

"It's work, work, work, and the fun is in a clean program at the end," Flack tells PEOPLE. "The fun is in learning and getting better; it's not in falling in a weird way."

While the skaters may have a missed connection earlier in the clip, finding a connection with one another was almost instantaneous.

[Click here to view the rest of the article & videos.](#)



**Go Figure: The Randy Gardner Story is now on Amazon Prime and also on PBS Passport and PBS Video. Check your local listings for the times.**

Click here - [PBS](#)

Click here - [Amazon Prime](#)

## **Video of the Month**



ITNY: 2005 Benefit Gala - Aja Zanova Tribute Video Video tribute from Ice Theatre of New York's 2005 Benefit Gala honoring Aja Zanova. This also includes Aja's famous Bic Pen Commercial.

[Click here to view the video](#)

## **Picture of the Month**

Arlene Dervitz Bronstein recently got a few of our beautiful Ice Capets together for a mini reunion. Way to go ladies and looking fabulous. Let's see more pictures of mini reunions around the country. All it takes is 2 to make a mini reunion.



Julie Johnson Goodell, Denise Betts McDonald, Melissa Militano, Patti Morton Bates, Ronny Pomeroy Stewart, Mary Pinelli Farley-Fagan and Arlene Dervitz Bronstein

## Upcoming Event

### **Ice Capades 2025 Reunion Cruise Announcement**

'Escapades 2025 Cruise' .... We'll have a good time! 🎵🎵



Please click below to join the Escapades 2025 Cruise – events page and get all updates relating to the cruise.

<https://facebook.com/events/s/ice-capades-escapades-cruise-a/746073810575573/>

THIS EVENT IS BEING CREATED AND COORDINATED BY Johnna "J" Bates...

**NOTE: PASSPORTS ARE REQUIRED!**

**[Click here for more Reunion information](#)**

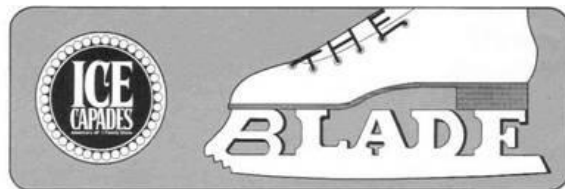
Questions: Contact 'J' directly - [dabatej@bellsouth.net](mailto:dabatej@bellsouth.net)



# Pictures from Past Reunions

## All Skater's Reunion – May 1-3, 2023 Las Vegas

### Ice Capades 2022 Reunion pictures



The website, [www.icecapadestheblade.com](http://www.icecapadestheblade.com) has been revamped and more information has been added. 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



Anita & myself are down in Mexico this month promoting (2) new ice rinks - We do some exhibitions and work with the local skaters. Then off to Germany to install our company (Glacier Ice Shows) new Show "Rock On Ice 2023" at Phantasieland Theme Park. Show opens April 1, 2023 and runs through October 31, 2023 (see attached)

Link to show trailer for show opening April 1 in Bruhl, Germany at Phantasieland:

[https://www.tiktok.com/@phantasieland\\_official/video/7113860474940247302](https://www.tiktok.com/@phantasieland_official/video/7113860474940247302)

Link to Phantasieland - Rock On Ice

<https://www.phantasieland.de/en/theme-park/fascinating-shows/rock-on-ice/>

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