

Sad News

John Bate – Oct. 23, 2023



John went gently into that good night on 26 October 2023, at home in Victoria, BC, aged 87 years. He was a loving son, husband, father, family man, friend and member of the BC sports community.

‘Johnny Bates’ grew up at 2788 Franklin Street in the East End of Vancouver, one block away from the Forum at the PNE. He attended Hastings, Templeton and Vancouver Technical schools. He completed a four-year apprenticeship at the Vancouver Vocational Institute and received his Journeyman Plumbing Certificate.

John was a talented athlete and top junior hockey prospect. Judged too short to play professionally, on a bet he tried out and became the first hockey player to make the **Ice Capades**, a feat written up in *Sports Illustrated*. Between 1958 and 1962, John travelled the world entertaining people on ice, including a memorable visit to Russia during the Cold War. John was an accomplished showman (a trait he carried throughout his life) and thrilled audiences as a clown, character and cast member in many skits and shows. During his time at Ice Capades, he fell in love with Marilyn Braun, a fellow skater from the Prairies and Victoria, and the two of them began married life in Vancouver with John as Building Supervisor for the PNE Agrodome.

John and Marilyn settled in Victoria in 1965 when he became Assistant Manager of Memorial Arena. He was promoted to Deputy Director of Recreation in 1970 and retired as Director of Parks and Recreation in 1997. During that time, John was variously responsible for Memorial Arena, Crystal Pool, Royal Athletic Park, Royal Theatre and McPherson Playhouse.

John had a love affair with the Victoria sports community and a passion for the ‘Barn on Blanshard’. In addition to his job, he and Marilyn volunteered as organizers at hundreds of international, national and local sports competitions over five decades, including the Commonwealth Games. He was a lifelong member and Past President of the Recreation Facilities Association of BC. He was a founding member and Past President of the Greater Victoria Sports Hall of Fame and honoured when he and Marilyn were inducted in 2016.

John had a soft spot for Christmas. For over 30 years, he and Marilyn and their neighbours hosted ‘Candy Cane Lane’ on Tattersall Drive which brought holiday cheer to thousands of visitors each year who came to see the displays, meet Santa Claus and his elves and receive free candy canes. It was John’s way of sharing the season of joy that he never experienced as a child.

[Click here to read the entire obituary](#)

Eileen Geho—Sussman – Oct. 28, 2023



Eileen Geho Sussman, an Allentown native and longtime resident of South and Central Florida, died peacefully October 28 in her home in Melbourne, Fla. following a long battle with cancer. She was 79.

Sussman, born March 8, 1944, was the only child of Helen (Bennett) and Elwood Richard. She is survived by her husband of 35 years, Bernard Sussman, daughters Tracy (Reiff) Jacobs (Indian Harbour Beach, Fla.), Robin (Reiff) Nuno (Macungie, Pa.), grandchildren Michael, Valerianne, Matthew and Elizabeth, and step children Karin and Shawn. Sussman was married to Allentown baseball standout Mel Geho, who died of cancer in 1982.

Sussman was a 1962 graduate of Louis E. Dieruff High School in Allentown where she served as senior class secretary and was head cheerleader. After graduation, Sussman joined the cast of the **Ice Capades**. She also was crowned Queen of the Allentown St. Patrick's Day Parade. She passed her skills as a professional skater on to a new generation, teaching skating classes for area children.

Sussman worked as a bookkeeper for Brookhaven Homes and as a travel agent for many years, helping clients visit destinations around the world.

"My mother was a person of great kindness and love," said Tracy Jacobs, Sussman's oldest daughter. "She lived a long and inspiring life and passed away peacefully surrounded by those who cherished her. She will be greatly missed by her family and many friends, but she leaves us all with wonderful memories -- the kind of loyalty, humor, passion for life, and kindness we should all aspire to."

"My mother was my best friend, my rock and my biggest supporter," said Robin Nuno. "Her loss is immeasurable and will be felt by her family and friends for many years to come."

Oleg Protopopov – Oct. 31, 2023



Oleg Protopopov, a double Olympic champion in the realm of pairs figure skating, has died at 91. Together with his partner Ludmila Belousova, Protopopov clinched gold at the Olympic Games in Innsbruck (1964) and Grenoble (1968), and four times emerged as the champions of the world and Europe (1965-1968).

[Revolutionizing Figure Skating](#)

Competing with his spouse Ludmila Belousova, Protopopov was a pioneer in pairs skating, introducing many elements that are now mandatory in competitions. Their contributions have significantly revolutionized pairs figure skating with their innovative elements and performances. Their legacy extends beyond the Olympic Games with multiple victories in world and European championships.

[A Legacy Remembered](#)

The Skating Lesson, a trusted figure skating community source, announced Protopopov's death, highlighting his enduring impact on the sport. Protopopov's wife and skating partner, Ludmila Belousova, passed away in 2017. Protopopov's career and legacy extend beyond his Olympic success. He and Belousova were trailblazers, introducing new elements and pushing the boundaries of pairs figure skating.

Inspiring Future Generations

Protopopov's achievements were globally acknowledged and celebrated. They were inducted into the Figure Skating Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs, USA. Their innovative elements and performances will continue to inspire current and future generations of figure skaters. In 1979, while on tour in Switzerland, Protopopov and Belousova sought political asylum and did not return to the Soviet Union. They spent the rest of their lives in Switzerland.

The passing of Oleg Protopopov marks the end of an era in figure skating. His contributions will forever be remembered, and he leaves behind a legacy of innovation and excellence that has left an indelible mark on figure skating. The figure skating community and fans worldwide mourn the loss of a true legend and pay tribute to Protopopov's remarkable career.

[Click here to read Oleg's obituary](#)

Bob Hubbard – Nov. 14, 2023

Message from Kimberly Worsnop:



It is with a heavy heart (and an interesting twist) that I share with everyone that knew him, my father Robert, Bob, Bobbie, [Bob Hubbard](#) left us this morning. He had multiple hip surgeries back in March that did not go well and has been bed ridden and struggling all year. I flew up just in time to spend the last of his hours with him. 🙏

In an interesting twist, Iceland, the ice rink my father grew up in and was a coach for most of his adult life including helping rebuild the sheet ice once or twice, was vandalized many years ago and has been sitting vacant ever since. I wanted to leave some flowers in his honor outside the rink. When I drove up, there was a gentleman with a camera and microphone. Apparently, all of the local news crews had just left with the exception of channel 10. He shared with me that

TODAY the city is having a committee meeting on whether to revive the rink. Tear-soaked cheeks, messy make up and all, I agreed to an interview.

I only hope it makes any kind of a mark to help restore this historic landmark. The irony of this timing was not missed... and once I crawled back into the car and pulled away, I looked down to see a ladybug sitting in my lap. 😊 I guess you can say...my dad was a "Lady" bug!

Our Final Final at his favorite, Piatti's. Cheers and RIP Dad 🙏- I LOVE YOU so much! ❤️❤️❤️ I promise I'll stay [#HubbardStrong](#)

James Herbert Haight – Nov. 17, 2023



James Herbert Haight, 80, of Grafton, passed away Friday, November 17, 2023 at The Cleveland Clinic in Avon following a long illness. He was born April 27, 1943 in Flint, Michigan.

James had worked as a Packaging Engineer for Parma General Motors and retired in 2001. He had skated in the **Ice Capades**, was a lifeguard, and was an avid fisherman. James served in many capacities with Belden Hot Stove as President and baseball coach. He was also a member of The Midview Touchdown Club.

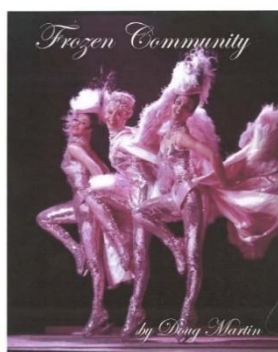
Survivors include his loving wife of 59 and one half years, Regina 'Jean' (nee Weigel); a daughter, Carrie McGinty; three sons, Jim, Mike (Hilary), Dan (Julie). Additional survivors include his grandchildren, Ashley, Jesse, Kelsey, Cassandra, Danny, Taylor, Jack; his great-grandchildren, Cora, Harper, Clay, Scarlett, Rosie; a sister, Bridget Nowak (Jim); and a brother, Tom (Marilyn).

James was preceded in death by his parents, John and Mary (nee Robertson) Haight; and a sister, Joan Malecha.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 11 a.m., Monday, November 27, 2023 in St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church, 1800 Station Rd., Valley City, where the family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until time of Mass at 11 a.m., Monday. The Reverend Father Daniel Reed, Pastor, will be the Celebrant. Burial will be in St. Martin Parish Cemetery in Valley City.

<https://chroniclet.com/news/372847/james-herbert-haight/>

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 is a story from **Lori Elliott** sharing a secret about Ken Shook's interesting sideline – Read on----

Ken Shook was the show's skating acrobat. Being that he could do backflips and walk all over on his hands and such, he would do this off ice as well. He was hanging out with us one day, and we were all bored, staying in some old multi-story hotel in a city I don't recall. Ken decided to break the boredom, so we went out on the window ledge, some six or seven stories up, and walked along the ledge of the hotel, upside down on his hands, just to get the reaction of the people down below on the ground. Wow.

When our show toured Japan, we had to take a long ferry ride to Atami. It was really foggy, and we found a bird that had crashed into the ship. It was dead, of course, and wouldn't you know, one of Ken's hobbies was taxidermy! So we all decided that he should stuff this poor, dead bird. From the ship's galley, we gathered up some flour and water for a paste – not your traditional taxidermy supplies – and we watched as Ken stuffed that bird. At the reunion, I asked Ken if he still had the bird, and to my amazement, he said that he'd kept it all these years, and had only parted with the poor thing the year before.

Ken added – He didn't have the right kind of preservatives while in Japan, and had to make do with what I had. After many moves and many years of neglect, the poor guy was looking a little tattered, so I knew it was time to give him up. At least I have a picture. But the funniest part was that the press did a story about me smuggling him back home in my skating boot. I was always nervous that the authorities would knock on my door someday. To be honest, I think I'd have gotten rid of him too. Especially since someone, somewhere, might say something at the wrong time and the Bird Police would show up to claim the prize!!

Learning that Ken was an amateur taxidermist surprised a lot of people. No doubt there were a lot of performers on tour with the show who were talented in many different areas. I'm sure there were singers, musicians, dancers, actors and those who were athletic in a variety of sports other than skating. Unfortunately, not a lot of people were aware of these talents until somebody was leaving the show to pursue other fields of work, many times in the entertainment business.

Let's keep Doug's legacy going. I'm sure there are more 'interesting' stories out there from your time in the show. If you would like to share, please send them to me.

The 12 Days of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... a picture book of skating his-tory

On the second day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the third day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the fourth day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the fifth day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 5 layback spins.
4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the sixth day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 6 broken laces, 5 layback spins.
4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the seventh day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 7 lucky lottos, 6 broken laces, 5 layback spins,
4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the eight day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 8 home baked goodies, 7 lucky lottos, 6 broken laces, 5 layback spins.
4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the ninth day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 9 Zambonis cleaning, 8 home baked goodies, 7 lucky lottos, 6 broken laces, 5 layback spins.
4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the tenth day of Christmas the skaters gave to me... 10 stick & puck guys, 9 Zambonis cleaning, 8 home baked goodies, 7 lucky lottos, 6 broken laces, 5 layback spins.

4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the eleventh day of Christmas the skaters gave to me...

11 skates a' sharpened, 10 stick & puck guys, 9 Zambonis cleaning, 8 home baked goodies, 7 lucky lottos, 6 broken laces, 5 layback spins

4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

On the twelfth day of Christmas the skaters gave to me...

12 laps of chatting, 11 skates a' sharpened, 10 stick & puck guys, 9 Zambonis cleaning, 8 home baked goodies, 7 lucky lottos, 6 broken laces, 5 layback spins.

4 puffy coats, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 elbow pads, and a picture book of skating his-tory

Lyrics by Heather Second December 2022

A Memorable Last Look



1968 World Championships - Pairs Free Skate -
Ludmila Belousova & Oleg Protopopov URS

[Click here to view this video](#)

The Protopopovs performing at the 2015 Evening with Champions. Ludmilla was 79 years old and Oleg was 83 at the time of the performance. The skating world has lost a legend. May they both rest in peace.

[Click here to view this video.](#)



Picture of the Month

Tommy Litz & Gary Jones discovered on Main Street, Lake Placid.



**A Trip Down Memory Lane for Tommy Litz - 1964 World's Free Skate
(first man to do triple toe loop)**



In an era when men were practically forbidden from raising their arms above shoulder level, musical interpretation had to be done from the waist down and back in 1964, you would have been hard pushed to find a better example than this incredible performance by Tommy Litz, who also landed the first triple toe loop in major international competition here. He finished in

sixth but was second in the free and even had three first places. This was despite his own judge placing him TWELFTH(!!!!) in the free.

[Click here](#)

Reunion News

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

Casting News



2024

Bietak Productions

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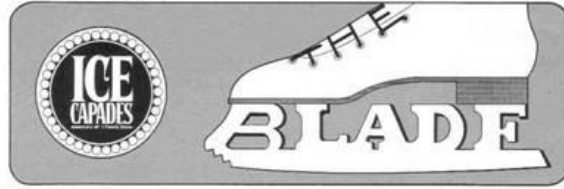
IG: @willybietakproductions

JOIN OUR WILLY BIETAK PRODUCTIONS FACEBOOK CASTING PAGE

Pictures from Past Reunions

[All Skater's Reunion – May 1-3, 2023 Las Vegas](#)

[Ice Capades 2022 Reunion pictures](#)



The website, 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!

Upcoming Events



CELEBRATING THE JOY
OF DANCING ON ICE

Ice Theatre of New York, Inc ®

presents

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

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