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ACRO Magazine!
World Acrobatics Society
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*Memorial from Ann Drinkward  **Memorial from Muscle Beach Friends

Venice “Muscle Beach” invites Santa Monica “Muscle Beach” Alumni to be honored guests at their Tri-Annual Fitness Contests with special awards to SMMB Alumni members in 2002.
Dear Friends of Acrobatics

Editor's Letter

It is with joy and excitement that we bring you this first edition of ACRO magazine, the new quarterly publication for the World Acrobatics Society.

This is your magazine, and we want it to be a high-quality publication for all W.A.S. member and other non-member acrobatic fans from around the world who would just like to subscribe to ACRO (for a special non-member fee). This would help promote the World Acrobatics Society concept everywhere there are flips and handstands on planet earth.

With this premier edition of ACRO, we have tried to cover most all the disciplines of our members to stimulate reader action ... Yes, you, the W.A.S. member reader ... We need your letters, ideas, photos, articles, history, cartoons, etc. to make ACRO an interesting and fun publication filled with past, present and future personalities. Plus, the happenings in the World Acrobatics Society we will all want to enjoy and share with our friends.

We want to give a special thanks to all of the W.A.S. Board Members and friends who contributed articles and financial support to make this first, very special ACRO edition a reality. Our initial plans were to go from a 12-page newsletter to a 24-page magazine ... However, your enthusiastic response has made this 40-page premier issue of ACRO possible ... It is with great anticipation that we look forward to hearing from our W.A.S. members and other readers with articles, photos and suggestions on how we can improve our World Acrobatics Society's ACRO magazine publication in future editions ...

The older I get, the Better I WAS.

"Have a happy handstand" ... GMS

It is hard to realize it was over 50 years ago that I published my first magazine ACROBAT in 1949 and it has been over ten years since Paul Zerr & Associates took over the IG ... and they are doing a Great Job!! Below are the covers of my first ACROBAT and last IG ... Thanks for listening.

P.S. In over 50 years of photographing Gymnastics and Acrobatics, our cover photo of former world champion, Leigh Hennessey, that I had the fortune to take during the Nissen Gymnastics & Trampoline tour to Egypt in 1977 has to be my favorite.
THE PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Acrobatic Legends

by Bil Copp

A remarkable gathering took place in Las Vegas on February 7, 1994. It was the occasion of the 80th birthday of George Nissen, former diver, gymnast and acrobat, gymnastics & table tennis equipment manufacturer and the universally recognised “Father of the Modern Trampoline”.

Present were many luminaries of gymnastics and acrobatics, many of them legends in their own right. At my table alone sat World Tumbling Champion Steve Elliott, Circus star Marco Canestrelli, Canadian Olympic Coach (to be) Dave Ross and trampoline innovator Dr. Bill Harris. At other tables were Pro Trampoline Champ George Hery, twisting belt inventor Charlie Pond, former national tumbling champ Joe Gillambardo, former acrobat & university vice president Joe Schabacker and first world trampoline champion-turned-successful-author Dan Millman.

Three time NCAA Trampoline Champ Edsel Buchanan was there along with Olympic diving coach Hobe Billingsley. Five time world champion Judy Wills along with numerous others from the world of acrobatics, gymnastics and table tennis also attended. So did trampoline legend Ron Munn and George’s former acrobatic partner Xavier Leonard. It was a unique event unlikely to be repeated anytime soon.

Presiding over the function was Bob Bollinger (Voltaire of the Trampoline World) inventor of the double mini-tramp and one of the most successful trampoline coaches in history. One by one, across almost two hours, each paid tribute to George with anecdotes and remembrances.

I remembered my youth in the a high school library where an almanac listed athletic achievements and champions. Munn, Gillambardo, Wills and Pond were in the book along with many others in the room. Later, I read in Modern Gymnast that a young hotshot named Dan Millman was winning everything in sight in the jump center days. It was no surprise to me when he subsequently won the first World Championships in 1964. Modern Gymnast’s publisher Glen Sundby was even there himself. Though I’d never met or seen them, each was a hero to me and a living legend. Now many were in the same room at the same time.

I looked around and thought of a few legends who were not there: Jeff Hennessy... Larry Griswold... Newt Loken... Abie Grossfeld... Paul Luxon.

Later that same year, at the Florida Workout, we recognized Elliott, Harris, Luxon and Aerial Ski Champ Frank Bare Jr. as “Living Legends”. Charlie Pond and Glen Sundby were recognised as “Pioneers of the Sport” along with “Father of Soviet Trampolin-ing” Mikhail Smirnov. Another time it was Millman, AAU tumbling champ Dickie Browning and two-time world trampoline champion Wayne Miller. I’d seen Browning in a newsreel at a theatre in the 50’s but never expected to actually meet him.

Champions abound but legends are relatively few. I wondered what transformed a normal human being into a living legend. Was it achievement, influence or spin that does it?

We all have our own views of living legends, usually influenced by what has personally impressed us through the years. Some time ago a Hollywood publicist defined “true fame” as “needing no further introduction other than their name; no title or preface such as ‘the eminent’ or especially ‘the famous’ need be used”. The world knows who we mean when we simply say “Columbus”, “Beethoven”, “Shakespeare” or even “Elvis” but who outside of a particular sphere would recognize “Oerter”, “Moskalenko”, “Zuchermann” or “Skakun”?

The World Acrobatic Society has made an effort to keep alive the memory of outstanding performers and contributors in acrobatic-related activity by periodically recognizing them. Still, this effort is limited to the collective memories of the individuals given the task of selection. One truly admirable achievement in this area was the recognition in 2001 of Roweland Wolfe, the world’s only gold medalist in Olympic Tumbling. It’s unfortunate that this unique achievement is basically unknown to all but a few acrobatic history buffs, mostly near contemporaries.
HE COINED THE TERM "SPOTTING"

It's not very often that a supplementary definition of a very common word can be traced to one person. The term, "Spot," was devised by Dr. Harley Price, the only coach of men to win national NCAA team titles at two institutions (University of Illinois and Florida State University) At Illinois, Price painted a large, yellow spot, four feet in diameter, on several walls of the gymnasium with the word "Spot" printed inside to remind his gymnasts that safety was of paramount importance. Since the practice of manual assistance was regarded as a primary safeguard in teaching new elements, the Spot on the wall became associated with such assistance and finally evolved into the verb "to spot" or "spotting." "Spotting" was demonstrated in Price's widely adopted book published by the US Naval Institute in 1944. The term stuck and it is commonly used by everyone in the sport in the United States having the general meaning of standing in to manually assist a performer. The term is also used in the sport of weightlifting.

JACK’S STAR ON HOLLYWOOD BLVD.

Muscle Beach Alumnus, Jane Russell (who came to MB with her husband Bob Waterfield. Before his football fame, Bob was in gymnastics at UCLA.) Jane along with the Honorary Mayor of Hollywood sing a song to Jack LaLanne upon placement of his Star on Hollywood Boulevard on his birthday. Jack also had a "Jumping Jack" ~ Fitness is More than Physical - It's a Way of Life... feature in the February Readers Digest magazine...

Turn Back Your Odometer?

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it. The older we get the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for. Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me. I want people to know why I look this way. I've traveled a long way, and some of the roads weren't paved. How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are? You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks. One of the many things that no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young. One must wait until evening to see how splendid the day has been. Ah, being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable. If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you're old. If you jog in a jogging suit, lounge in lounging pajamas, and smoke in a smoking jacket, why would anyone want to wear a windbreaker? I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.

GEORGE NISSEN is always working on something in his shop near his home in San Diego. This is his new fitness exercise trampoline for seniors.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
100 Years of Tradition

Dave Brown Memorial
by Cliff Gauthier 2/12/03

Dave Brown was just a regular person like you and me. He could easily be your friend sitting at the desk in your dormitory at midnight discussing the day’s events or aspects of morality and virtue. He could be the guy who on the spur of the moment would take you up on an offer to go fishing in a dinky Jon boat on the York River at Croaker Landing. Even if the fish seemed to swim around his hook to jump on yours, he would still enjoy the moment and the relentless kidding. He is the neighbor who’d call you at night and say you’ve got to come over and see my brand new telescope that I’ve just set up in the driveway. When you got there and looked into the eyepiece you’d see Saturn perfectly centered with rings in view. As you looked up, Dave would be jumping up and down with his classic ear to ear grin, yelling, “Its Saturn, its Saturn, I’ve discovered Saturn!”

Dave never met a good opportunity of which he didn’t take full advantage. During his four years at William and Mary he was a member of our gymnastics team. Our mission is to use the fantastic medium of gymnastics to help people grow and to learn more about themselves. A major objective includes learning how to be a good teammate.

As a result, you are always expected to help everybody else in the gym get better, even if it means that they could possibly beat you out for the coveted number one position on an event or for the last position on the traveling squad. Beyond this you are expected to help and support your teammates in academics as well as in all areas of personal growth outside of the gym. In return, you receive the same. Although Dave was a four-year letterman and scored one of the first 9.0’s on vaulting in the history of William and Mary gymnastics, he wasn’t a national level competitor. However, he was the gymnast you wanted to be on your team. He was a great teammate—one with whom you’d travel to Mars.

Dave was also the good friend who always kept in touch. At age 13 his appetite for flying began developing when a family friend took him for a ride in a small airplane. During college he earned his pilot’s license at the Williamsburg Jamestown Airport where he met some recent William and Mary graduates who’d done the same. After graduating from William and Mary, Dave took a year off before going to medical school. One of his first adventures involved flying to
Alaska with one of those William and Mary alums he met at the local airport. They took off in a single engine, putt-putt of a plane. That trip to Alaska took a week and included sleeping under the wings of their plane in remote airstrips. They even did a lot of navigating by road atlas. At any rate, his dream of flying was just beginning to take off. He then graduated from medical school and became a flight surgeon for the Navy. I remember him calling about how exciting it was to get his first ride in a fighter jet. I'm sure he was just as excited as he was during that first flight at age 13. In that same call, Dave also mentioned that he had been selected as the Navy's flight surgeon of the year. Next thing you know, Dave is the first Naval physician in ten years to be accepted to flight school where he proceeds to graduate first in his class; top flight surgeon, top gun — amazing. Later he sends emails about how exciting it is to land on an aircraft carrier in the middle of the ocean, at night no less. Soon he became a test pilot and I found myself filling out a recommendation for him to become an astronaut. Initially Dave wasn't accepted to NASA's astronaut training program but he kept at it, and two years later he called to tell me that he was actually going to be an astronaut. Before long my wife and I are watching his launch from the Kennedy Space Center. We followed him in space through the NASA websites. On his third day in space, we opened our email and discovered "you've got mail" from Dave in space. Mail from space — Wow! Each of us should have our dreams and know that they are important and special. Some of you may be living your dream of being the first in your family to go to college. Some of you may dream to be a great Mom or Dad. Others of you may dream of buying your first set of tools on your way to becoming a carpenter or a mechanic. Mine is to be a teacher and coach who invests in people. After all, you never know when you'll end up investing in a Dave Brown. Dave had dreams of flying and learning. These dreams took him to research in space; and ultimately ended in fame through tragedy. But had Dave not gone into space and been famous, he still would have been the same Dave — one of those everyday souls who was a great teammate. He was a man who always pushed the envelope — the envelope of positive human evolution. Life to Dave was growing as a person and learning more about himself. Along the way he inspired everybody around him grow and learn in the same manner. What made Dave extra special was the way he pursued his dreams and goals with complete honesty, dignity, and integrity. It seemed like Dave took advantage of every opportunity that came his way and always in a most noble and forthright manner. I know if Dave had the opportunity to speak today, he would tell you something like this: Never hesitate to take a risk to follow your dreams, and when following those dreams, pursue them with complete honor, dignity, and integrity. Thanks, Dave, you've made a difference.
EGYPTIAN GYMNASTIC AND TRAMPOLINE TOUR

Report by Leigh Hennessy
April 10-25, 1977
Photos by Glenn Sundby

The purpose of this trip sponsored by the Nissen Company was to get programs started in the sports of trampoline and gymnastics in Egypt. We were to perform several exhibitions, one of which was to be performed on top of the largest pyramid in the world!! I thought the idea was exciting, but maybe a little absurd...The gymnasts were Amy Hamer, Danna Hopper, Bob Rikli, and Scott Phillips. The Trampolinists were Dian Nissen, Ron Merritt, Rob Bollinger and myself. The others Linda Metheny, George Hery, Ron Munn, Glenn Sundby, and Mr. And Mrs. Nissen...

For the first couple of days, we didn't do much playing. But we got acquainted with Egypt on the inside. We learned that the Egyptians thought we were weird. They laughed at our dress, our white skin, and most humorous to them were the braces that Amy wore. Also, during those first couple of days, we visited the Giza pyramids, the museum, the Sphynx, rode camels, went shopping at the Bazaar. The visit to the pyramids was also a unique experience. The best con-artists in all Egypt met us as soon as the bus stopped. They threw us on their camels and took us off in to the Sahara. Then, the drivers wouldn't let us get off their camels until we paid a small sum of money. The Bazaar is thousands of years old and we loved to get ripped off (seriously!!) It was exciting...

About the third day there, we started our exhibitions. Sometimes we did two a day and the Egyptians love them. Most of the shows were performed with Egyptian gymnasts. We did all our exhibitions on a 1-inch bed. It wasn't very easy, but they thought a double back or a randy was the greatest thing they ever saw. After our first exhibition we got immediate recognition. The newspapers and television loved our story; their response was fantastic. One of our most exciting exhibitions was at the soccer game. There were 11,000 people there! It was their national soccer championships with the best players in all Egypt. The game ended up with a score of 0-0, but we ended up with a 10.00! The next day an article appeared in their paper about the soccer game, but it had photos from the trampoline exhibition. The caption read, "the best part of the soccer game."
We spent one night in Port Said. It was an experience we'll never forget. Our hotel was on the Mediterranean beach and we took a boat ride down the Suez Canal. It was lovely. The final day in Egypt was an exhilarating day back in Cairo. This was our day of the show on the pyramid. Throughout the whole tour, talk and excitement lead up to this day. There were photographers and journalists from all over the world taking pictures and asking us questions. Even the camel drivers treated us differently this time, than last time. They offered us free rides on their camels. A man named Moses gave me some artifacts for 70¢, that I learned dated back as far as King Tut.

Note: This report by Leigh Hennesy has been condensed from the article which appeared in the April-May edition of AcroSports Magazine. If you would like to receive the complete article (with more photos of the tour). Send $2.00 to GMSGYM to P.O. 3006 Oceanside CA 92051... To cover the cost of making copies and mailing.
THE FINAL TRAMPOLINE FRONTIER... GEORGE NISSEN AND RON MUNN PUT A TRAMPOLINE ON THE GREAT PYRAMID IN EGYPT, 1977.
The Spirit of the Acrobat
by Dan Millman

In each of us are heroes;
speak to them and they will come forth.
— Anonymous

The announcer’s voice quivers with excitement as the video begins to play: “Ladies and gentlemen, you are about to see a feat performed for the first time by David Seale — a feat requiring total concentration, daring, and coordination. What you are about to observe did not happen overnight but resulted from years of preparation. Here he goes!”

A figure appears on the screen. David looks relaxed and confident, about to begin a complex series of movements and balances. He stands momentarily poised on the brink; then, with eyes locked straight ahead, his mind focused completely on the task at hand, he begins to move. His body remains relaxed as he engages the first move.

Suddenly, with a tremor, David starts to fall. Quickly, he catches himself, and without wasting a moment on regrets he stands poised in the present moment, concentrates, and continues toward his goal.

As he nears the goal David has another near miss but again regains his balance. He reaches out, his face beaming. After a final moment of suspense, those watching breathe out and applaud with delight as ten-month-old David Seale, future acrobat, grasps his mother’s outstretched arms.

Recorded by his father’s camcorder, David has walked his first steps across the living room rug.

We are all acrobats in our infancy: our mind focused on the present moment, your body relaxed, sensitive, elastic, and aligned with gravity, our emotions spontaneous, expressive, and natural. But some of us, for reasons that remain mysterious even to ourselves, retain the love of exploring the full range of human movement.

We may explore or even excell in other sports, but eventually we leave the basketball hoops, volleyball nets—the bats and clubs and goal posts—for others more comfortable in earthbound territory. And we continue to explore, like young David, the edges of the possible. While maturing (and sometimes just plain getting old!) we retain the hearts of children, the excitement of toddlers, as we balance, somersault, soar, and twist—expanding the acrobatic arts.

No matter what our age—even after the double somersaults give way to an occasional handstand or cartwheel—the joy and memories remain. Even today, children enter the world with the seeds of the future acrobat within them. For the rest of us who look back with great affection, and the hard-earned wisdom of our experience, we share and mentor. But mostly we remember those years ago, when the skills within us, born of sweat and practice, came out into the world.

Acrobatics for us is more than learning another somersault or balance; it’s about exploring new frontiers, turning movement into art, and reminding the earth-bound folks of the courage and spirit within us all.
THE HISTORY OF THE
INT’L GYMNASTICS
HALL OF FAME

IN 1987 Glenn Sundby, former publisher of International
Gymnast magazine, dedicated a portion of his building in Oceanside,
Calif., to the idea of creating an International Hall of Fame for gymnastics. Having published a magazine for more than 30 years, he had accumulated a wealth of information and gymnastics memorabilia from around the world.

Little by little more items were donated to help develop Sundby’s idea of a Hall of Fame. Everything from flags, banners, pins, videos, photographs, trophies and uniforms came through his doors in waves of international support.

Though the original Hall of Fame opened officially in 1991, it became apparent that a new location would be necessary to attract more visitors.

In January 1995 a new Board of Directors was created, and its first task was to further develop and improve the Hall of Fame. During the Board’s 1996 meeting, Board members Paul Ziert and Bart Conner made initial inquiries into the possibility of moving the Hall of Fame to Oklahoma City. The idea came to fruition, and the Hall of Fame indeed was relocated to Oklahoma City, in the East Concourse of the First National Center.

Since 1997, an annual induction dinner has been held in Oklahoma City. After the ceremony on May 9, 2003, 43 individuals will have been inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Indeed, the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame grew from a simple notion to a respected institution within the sport. Induction into the Hall of Fame has become one of the highest honors a gymnast, coach or contributor can hope to achieve.

Today, the Hall of Fame receives daily visitors. For more information about the Hall of Fame, visit www.ighof.com, or e-mail IGHOF@aol.com.

International Gymnastics Hall of Fame
120 N. Robinson - East Concourse
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
Tel: 405-235-5600
INDUCTEES

1997

NADIA COMANECI Romania  
ARTHUR GANDER Switzerland  
BELA KAROLYI Romania-U.S.  
MARY LOU RETTON United States  
MASAO TAKEMOTO Japan  

BART CONNER United States  
JACK GUNTHARD Switzerland  
OLGA KORBUT Belarus  
LEON STUKELJ Slovenia

1998

VERA CASLAVSKA Czech Republic  
LARISA LATYGINA Ukraine  
cATHy RIGBY United States  
PETER VIDMAR United States  

SAVINO GUGLIELMETTI Italy  
TAKASHI ONO Japan  
LYUDMILA TURISCHEVA Ukraine

1999

FRANK BARE United States  
YUKIO ENDO Japan  
EUGEN MACK Switzerland  

MIROSŁAW CERAR Slovenia  
NELLI KIM Belarus  
YURI TITOV Russia

2000

MAXI GNACK Germany  
ECATERINA SZABO Romania  

LI NING China  
HARUHIRO YAMASHITA Japan

2001

NIKOLAI ANDRIANOVA Russia  
BRUNO GRANDI Italy  
WILLIAM THORESSON Sweden  

LYUBOV BURDA Russia  
SAWAO KATO Japan  
TEODORA UNGUREANU Romania

2002

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DANIELA SILVAS Romania  

KEIKO IKEDA Japan  
BORIS SHAKHLYN Ukraine  
BERTHE VILLANCHER France

2003

MAX BANGERTER Switzerland  
KARIN JANZ Germany  
KURT THOMAS United States  

DMITRY BILOZERCHEV Russia  
FRANCO MENICHELLI Italy
ACROART

Down through the ages painters and sculptural artists have used sports with gymnastics and acrobatics as the theme for many famous works of art. Pictured here are a few photos from Paula Boelsems' personal acrobatics, dance and clown museum collection (not to mention elephants) that we thought you would enjoy seeing in your ACRO Magazine.

RIGHT: A very beautiful adagio lift.

FAR RIGHT: A very unusual pyramid from a friend in Florida.

LOWER RIGHT: A 30-inch high cast bronze by sculptor, Edward Saeng.

BELOW: The famous one handstand that graced the lobby of the famous Herman's gym in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (Ask George Szypula or Joe Schabaker. They will tell you all about the statue and the famous gym.)

LOWER LEFT: An interesting balance in front of a large commercial building on Wilshire Blvd. in Beverly Hills, California.

AT LEFT: Another graceful adagio lift near the Convention Hall in Phoenix, Arizona.
CIRQUE DU SOLEIL
A SUCCESS STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Cirque du Soleil was formed in 1984 by a troupe of street performers known as "Le Club des Talons Hauts" (the high-heels club), the same group which from 1982 to 1/984 had organized the first street performers' festival, La Fête foraine de Baie-Saint-Paul. (Baie-Saint-Paul is a small town near Quebec City.)

- Among the members of this group there is Guy Laliberté, then a musician and firebreather, who is now Chief Executive Officer and Founder; Gilles Ste-Croix, who was often found high up on stilts in those days, served as Director of Creation on most Cirque du Soleil shows, and Guy Caron, then an actor, has directed some Cirque du Soleil productions.

- In 1984, 73 people worked for Cirque du Soleil. Today, the organization has over 2,500 employees world-wide. The average age of Cirque du Soleil employees is 34.

- Cirque du Soleil has not received any grants from the public or private sectors since 1992.

- Initially, from 1984 to 1989, Cirque du Soleil toured only one show at a time and played to an average of 270,000 people a year.

- In 2003, there will be no less than nine Cirque productions running simultaneously. In 2002 alone, nearly seven million people have seen a Cirque du Soleil show.

- Since Cirque's founding in 1984, more than 37 million people have attended one of its productions.

- Since it began, Cirque du Soleil has performed in over 240 engagements in 90 cities around the world.

- Cirque du Soleil's International Headquarters are in Montreal.

- Numerous organizations from around the globe have honoured Cirque du Soleil, particularly for its artistic and business achievements. These distinctions include prestigious Emmy, Drama Desk, Ace, Félix, and Gémeaux awards, as well as a Rose d'Or de Montréal.

- Cirque du Soleil is now working on diversifying its commercial activities: for example, projects are under way in the entertainment, audiovisual, film, publishing, and merchandising fields.

- On December 14, 1998, Cirque opened its very first store right in its new permanent theatre at Downtown Disney West Side on the property of Walt Disney World Resort, near Orlando, Florida.

January 2003
THE CREATION STUDIO HIGHLIGHTS

- Upon being hired by Cirque du Soleil, performers go to the Creation Studio at the International Headquarters in Montreal for pre-training. This training is preliminary to rehearsals for the various Cirque shows.
- All performers recruited by Cirque du Soleil complete a customized training program to ensure they’re adequately prepared for the rigorous demands of shows.
- Because many new athletes come from the sports world, they (and everyone else for that matter) must undergo comprehensive training to help develop and bring out the "actor" in them. This performance training includes such elements as acting, movement and percussion lessons.
- Performers who train at the Creation Studio hail from countries all over the world, including Canada, China, Russia, Mongolia, France and Switzerland, to name just a few.
- Performers come from a variety of backgrounds, including artistic gymnastics, tumbling, acrosport, swimming, diving, dancing, singing and music. Clowns are also among the cast of performers.
- In 2003, over 200 performers will receive customized training in the Creation Studio.
- To supervise performer training programs, the Studio employs some twenty trainers from around the world. These trainers specialize in such fields as dance, theatre, singing and acrobatics.
- Physiotherapists and fitness specialists work on site in the Studio to keep performers in good health, help maximize their physical potential, and ensure an optimal environment for their development.
- One of the Creation Studio's mandates is to develop new acrobatic equipment and disciplines. To this end, a team consisting primarily of seasoned coaches and riggers conducts ongoing research. If necessary, the team will enlist the aid of engineers and other high-tech specialists. Equipment such as the "three-sided trampoline" (a fly-shaped arrangement of three trampolines) featured in the show Mystère, as well as the "boat," a spectacular acrobatic device used in "O", were developed by the Creation Studio.

January 2003
Las Vegas, Nevada
SCHEDULE

**Wednesday, April 23 – WAS Suite.**

4:00 PM  Board of Directors

**Thursday, April 24 – Mediterranea**

8:30 AM  Registration
9:00 AM  Opening and Introductions
9:30 AM  Presentation: “Rite of Passage”
10:00 AM  Gallery of Honor
12:00 Noon  LUNCH BREAK
1:15 PM  Premier: “Two Cents”
3:00 PM  Gallery of Honor
5:30 PM  Informal Social

**Friday, April 25 – Mediterranea**

9:00 AM  Presentation: “A Journey of Discovery”
9:30 AM  Gallery of Honor
12:00 Noon  LUNCH BREAK
1:30 PM  Presentation “A Journey of Discovery”
2:30 PM  WAS Business Meeting

**Saturday, April 26 – Mediterranea**

8:30 AM  WAS New Office
OGRESS
April 24th & 25th
OF EVENTS
Hampton Inn Tropicana Meeting
Hampton Inn Tropicana
Originality & Virtuousity” – Peter Vidne-
tations – Session I
Ties of the Trampoline” – Bil Copp
entations – Session II
(poolside, if possible) – Cash Bar
Hampton Inn Tropicana
Balancing History” – Joe Schabacker
ssion III
Hamptastics Retrospective” – Abie Grossfe-
g and Elections
Hampton Inn Tropicana
Meeting

LAS VEGAS NEVADA
APRIL 24 - 25
PAULA DELL - Stunt Woman

Paula Dell, Charter Member of the Stuntwomen's Association of Motion Pictures (SWAMP, 1967) did her first stunt for MGM while a student in the eighth grade and more than forty years later is still a working stuntwoman having just completed work on the feature film "Mystery Men".

Born in Colorado, her parents found out quickly that she and two sisters were naturally acrobatically inclined and they participated in the usual childhood acrobatic and pyramid groups. When they moved to Santa Monica, California, Paula joined in the activities at world famous Muscle Beach where acrobats and stunt people from all over the world gathered to exchange information and sharpen their skills. It was there that she met the stuntmen who needed a small person to throw around for a film and hired her because of her ability.

After graduating from high school, she followed her parents' advice and attended college at Stephens in Missouri where she obtained her A.A. Degree, and the University of Southern California her B.S. and M.S. in education. Following College graduation she taught Physical Education in the Los Angeles Public High Schools, married and had one son before returning to motion picture stunt work. During this time, she continued with her dance training with world renown artists such as Carmelita Maracci, Martha Graham, Jose Limon, Merce Cunningham and performed in live performances in theatre, nightclubs, water shows, fairs and circuses.

Her specialty was an adagio-teeterboard act in which she performed around the world, but she also performed many different circus acrobatics such as risley, trampoline and Arabian pyramids; circus aerial work such as trapeze, Spanish web and swinging ladders, and she rode elephants and horses. All of this activity gave her a wonderful background for the stunts she did doubling and training such movie notables as Carol Channing, Julie Andrews, Jacqueline Smith, Doris Day, Carol Burnett, Eva Gabor, Pat Morita, and Tim Conway among others. She has worked with outstanding choreographer and has received credit for her own choreography in different productions including the Ice Capades. Her training and experience has made it possible for her to perform a wide variety of stunts. For examples, flying through the air from teeterboard, trampoline, many different circus acts such as trapeze and other aerial acts, thrown by men or shot out of a cannon, working on high precipices, climbing hanging and falling from great heights, driving a car through explosives or to certain marks, fight scenes, swimming, diving, running, rolling, getting wet, muddy roughed up hit by a car, fencing shooting gun or bow and arrow, attacked, specialized water skiing, surfing, being killed in various manners such as shot, knifed, strangled, driving a boat, riding a horse or being picked up by a rider, riding an elephant and working with other wild animals are among the activities she has done.

Besides her own performing, she has dedicated much of her time in passing on her knowledge and ability to young people who have gone on to successfully compete or perform in ice shows, water shows, circuses and stunt work, She is a founder and a Director of the U.S. Sports Acrobatics Federation and was the USA International Judge Representative for 15 years. Among her awards and recognition are the Santa Monica City Schools' Creative Arts Achievement for an alumni called Stairway to the Stars Honoree; Recognition by the International Federation of Sports Acrobatics for Outstanding Contributions; membership in the International Association of Sports Writers and Photographers for articles published and translated into many languages; Los Angeles City Recreation Spirit of Physical Fitness Award; Los Angeles Times-Westside Distinguished Citizen Fame, and U.S. Sports Acrobatics Hall of Fame.

Partial listing of feature film credits include: Batman Returns, Batman Forever, Above the Law, Earthquake, Poseidon Adventure, Towering Inferno, Thoroughly Modern Millie, Jumbo, Camelot, Logan's Run, Airplane, Blazing Saddles, Silent Movie, True Lies and Mystery Men plus innumerable television shows and commercials.
MOTION PICTURE STUNT ORGANIZATIONS

At first doubling or stuntwork was a matter of making the STAR of the movie very glamorous, the man very heroic and brave, the heroine very meek and in need of help from the villain who did many dastardly deeds. The desire was only to please the director or writer by doing what was wanted without much thought of the consequences to life or limb. It meant being involved with the glamorous cinema industry, another dollar in their pocket and possibly more work, that they became daredevils, doubling movie stars for dangerous tricks without much planning. At first the men (no women) were hired on the streets outside of the studios. After many accidents and deaths from the tricks, the men with more ability and agility became known to the production companies and were contacted directly about the job by the casting offices. They became the nucleus of the stunt world that, therefore, was more and more planned for safety from the knowledge gained on previous jobs. In the late thirties and early forties these men would band together and use their friends to work with for their own safety or political insurance. There were stunt men known as 'western'. They rode horses, knew how to fall and took care of the livestock, 'acrobats' were usually from a circus background or gymnastics, 'fighters' were mostly boxers and wrestlers, fencers, etc. Some specialized in certain stunts such as driving the wagon or car, high dives, falling the horse, pick-up on horseback, teeter board acts, etc. A couple of girls began to join them. Most were girlfriends or wives, the most important of the early women were Babe DeFreest and Helen Thurston who made a real career of being stuntwomen but the majority of the jobs were still being done by men made up to look like a woman.

In the fifties the times were changing and television had begun. Action movies were in a decline. Jobs were becoming scarce. In order to protect their jobs and working conditions the men formed an association that became known as the Hollywood Stuntmen of Motion Pictures and Television. You had to have worked in the industry for a certain amount of years, made a certain amount of annual salary and be a safe sensible person with great ability and a friend in order to be voted into the group. They succeeded in many things that are taken for granted in the industry today such as required safety requirements for the type of stunts to be performed and the knowledge of how to stage for the camera to make the stunt look real without any injury to the cast and much improved equipment. They made the industry aware of the importance of the part that stunt people contributed to the film industry which helped in raising their base salary and their respect. It wasn't just gaffing a job by any of the group working but the actual position of a stunt coordinator was begun. This person was knowledgeable in how the stunt was to be performed or he was sure to hire a specialist that he could trust. As the studios closed their casting office, the assistant directors did the hiring and the Association and/or the coordinators could help them.

In the late 1960's there were more women working steadily and they wanted to improve their working conditions. It was in 1968 that their were signs of complete cooperation of the men in the Stuntmen's Association and the following year the Hollywood Stuntwomen of Motion Pictures and Television was formed with their help and is still the oldest successful women's organization of today. Only about 24 women were eligible for membership in the beginning based upon the years in the industry and the amount of annual income they had. They still were receiving less money for the stunts performed and keeping the men from doubling women.

The women are now receiving equitable salary for similar stunts and do do some very harrowing stunts they would not have had an opportunity to do in the 60's.

In the early 70's there were several members who did not agree with some of the decisions of the original stuntmen's group and formed their own group known as Stunts Unlimited. It caused a real rift in the stunt world. In following years differences were finally healed and the two groups worked together thru the union on pressing problems they all faced while working. Stunts Unlimited even made a few token memberships for women. Other newcomers or disenfranchised members made their own groups, of either men or women. Some succeeded and others failed. There are now about six successful organizations in Hollywood with some in New York, Florida and Europe controlling most of the people who do stunts in the movies and television making for a much more safe occupation. Although not recognized in the Academy Awards there have been some recognition for unusual work such as Yakima Canutt for the chariot scene in Ben Hur and for several years in which the stunt people honored their own for outstanding work. The last several years the Red Bull Drink Corporation has sponsored the Taurus Awards Show in which awards are presented for the outstanding stunt performances in various categories done similar on a smaller scale than the Oscar Awards with plenty of glitz and glamour.

It is not surprising that there are many stunt people who have an acrobatic background in gymnastics, sports acrobatics, trampoline diving or circus arts who are the most successful in the field. In following newsletters we will highlight some of them in more articles on stunt work.

ACDO, Spring 2003
Ramblings of an Old Trampolinist or Back to My Roots by Glenn Wilson

Larry Griswold, a famous trampoline pioneer who just happened to be my uncle, started it all for me in 1947 when he gave me one of his old show business trampolines. That single act of kindness changed my life. Who knows what I would have become? I became a gymnast of sorts. I was a trampolineist. Not that I knew there were such things. All I knew at the time was that we had this fun thing in the yard where my friends and I spent most of our summer days. We would get that thing out of the garage in the spring and put it back reluctantly when the snows came. We spent all day on it, and many nights we even slept on it. Larry also gave me his book published in 1947 called Trampoline Tumbling. That's how we learned our stuff. Get out the book, try it, learn it and then invent some new ones. At least we thought we were inventing something new. Today, when I look at old film taken in the back yard, I see a narrow, padless, trampoline with shock cords rather than springs.

By the time I went to college in 1955 the trampoline event had progressed into a competitive sport. The rules required three routines of eight contacts. We got a 10 second rest in between. Later in 1958 or so we had to perform two routines with ten bounces and a twenty second rest between. Eventually, we came to the ten bounce routine of today. Another interesting sidelight was that we were considered to be gymnasts. The trampoline was part of the college competitive events. There were the traditional events plus trampoline, tumbling, swinging rings instead of still gings, and rope climb. (Trampolining owes a lot to the coaches of the Big Ten Universities ten in those days) who nurtured and supported the event in the early fifties. Can you even imagine the politics of it? I wish E could have been in the rules committee meetings of those days. Rope was an event of the East and the West. Trampoline was a favorite of the Mid-West. Vaulting was not an exciting event like it is today. Floor exercise did not include much tumbling. Tumbling had a 60 foot mat.

And the equipment, well it was something. A 6 x 12 tramp with 1 3/4 inch web beds was the latest thing in 1955. Springs were replaced by shock cord, or as we know it today, bungee. We would just roll that baby out, set it up, and start bouncing. Yeah, that's right, no end decks. The end deck has made the sport watch-able. Before the decks' inception the judges were always jumping out of their chairs when a trampolineist would roll off the end of the tramp. All of us old timers have stories about people catching us running away when they were supposed to catch us. The 7 x 14 with a one inch web became the standard in about 1958. Somehow we felt it was cheating to have such a big trampoline. But it really made us all better performers because of the larger margin for error. The 4mm x 6mm beds or the two string beds of today are far superior giving a true and higher bounce.

Did I mention spotting? The standard was to have four spotters, one on each side of the trampoline. Go back and read the old texts. The admonition to spot is in every one- Have four spotters. The idea was sound, but with college men flying off the ends it was dangerous job. The end deck changed all that. It is com forttable to watch today without worrying about falls off the end.

In the early sixties the FIG developed the "Code of Points." It was a revolution in judging the traditional events. We college
coaches tried to fit the judging of trampoline to the Code, but it was all very crude. It was for Bob Bollinger to figure it all with his "Axial Rotation System." He assigned 0.1 per quarter rotation and 0.1 for half a twist. It was a stroke of pure genius, and it remains the same today except for a bonus point given today for a complete somersault.

Modern trampoline competition is highly refilled, and the competitors seek a stylized form that has been developing for the last forty years. But, what about the years before that, when the rules, skills, terminology, judging, and equipment were evolved? I talked with Charlie Pond about the first national championship in 1946 in Dallas. I asked about the rules. Where does one start to make rules for a new sport? He said the rules were patterned after the rules of the tumbling event as it was done then. Bouncers would begin bouncing and do skills in sequence at least three in a row. They could then bounce more and do another three skill sequence, and so on. The athlete was supposed to demonstrate skills forward, backward and with twists. There was a time limit of two minutes.

**There was a second event that changed my life.** In 1998 I was surfing the net when I discovered that the Trampoline had become an official event for the Olympics in 2000. When I was competing on the trampoline, we talked about the eventuality and the dream of being an Olympian. Our dream seemed to die in the seventies when the colleges dropped the event and the clubs had insurance problems. Once I heard the good news, I immediately upgraded my trampolines so that we could get back into trampoline competition. I gathered up a few kids and started coaching in earnest, but it was not enough. I sold my gymnastics club, which my wife and I had owned for 18 years, and we bought a little club devoted only to tumbling and trampoline. Thus, I was returning to my roots, and we became part of a new movement with hundreds of facilities devoted only to trampoline and tumbling.

Our club is called GTC which stands for Gymnastics, Trampoline, and Cheer. Mostly we call it Gray haired Trampoline Coaches and the funny thing is many of the coaches at the National Championships are just like us-relics from and earlier time. The three of us together have now produced eight age group national champions, and we are struggling up the ladder. I can't believe how much it is like the gymnastics growth of the sixties and seventies. We are even chasing the Russians on the international scene. In the sixties the American bouncers were the best-I guess because we were the only competitive bouncers. The early years of the USGF (Now USAG) saw several tours to Europe with trampoline athletes for the purpose of spreading the news about a wonderful new sport. The USGF sent me to coach one of those tours to Germany in 1967 where I had a wonderful time. Now, Germany, France, Great Britain, Russia, Belarus, Australia, Canada and Spain are the powers of the sport. While we were strong in the sixties our dominance has waned. We haven't had a man in the top 20 until the last World Championships where our guy was 19th. My son Rand was the highest ranked American in the Tokyo's World Championships in 1984. He was 28th, and I was proud of him.

I look across the gym when we have "Open Gym" and it reminds me of the trampoline centers popular in the early sixties. We have had more than a hundred youngsters trying to improve their skills, play and just have fun. We've learned a lot since then, and so we supervise, supervise, supervise and teach, teach, teach. Sometimes things never change. I say to the child, "Let me teach you how to learn a somersault one step at a time." Then the parent says, "Do a flip," and the children still say, "Watch me, watch me."
We hope you enjoy this pictorial look at those wonderful “Golden Years” of our Camelot ... the Santa Monica Beach Playground between 1939 and 1959.

Santa Monica Beach Playground
Muscle Beach 1934-1959

I remember "Muscle Beach" along with many of the old gang that still show up on a sunny weekend. The platform is long gone as the city of Santa Monica dug up all the equipment and closed the area in 1959 to make room for a parking lot (they said) that never came to be.

When I started there as a 14-year-old in the summer of 1936 it was just called Santa Monica Beach Playground. There was a lot of iron equipment: high rings, low rings, two medium high bars, a set of double bars, p-bars and some old rugs on top of some plywood next to the ping-pong tables by the equipment shack. You could check out footballs, volleyballs, checkers and chessmen, ping pong paddles and balls, and they even had some low portable parallel bars.

They say it all started around 1934 when Santa Monica recreational worker Kate Giroux got the WPA to put up some swings and kidder equipment and Paul Brewer and Samohi classmate Jimmy Pfeiffer talked the City into putting up some regulation bars and rings, etc. Whatever the facts, it became a gathering place for wrestlers, acrobats and gymnasts, and by 1938 the platform had been moved, enlarged and several rows of benches installed along the boardwalk (really cement walk) for the gathering spectators. The participants and audiences continued to grow, and the brawn, beauty and balancing developed even more to the delight of the photographers. The WWII years brought locally-stationed servicemen from across the nation to this Mecca of fun and fitness, and many stayed on. In the ’40s and ’50s the crowds and participants continued to grow, and any weekend or holiday was an excuse for an impromptu or planned show with the annual Miss Muscle Beach and Mr. Muscle Beach contests and show the highlights of the summer festivities...

Because of the influx of bodybuilders in the 40s, somewhere along the way the muscle magazines referred to it as "Muscle Beach," and the name took hold and stayed on to become famous around the world. This is but a brief introduction to the historic quarter of a century of happenings at the original Santa Monica "Muscle Beach."
“Ode to Muscle Beach”

Just a speck on the sands of history, a little flower born in the years of depression, that blossomed for but a brief time.

It played a part in many a life, both great and small, but like a soldier in battle was cut down before its time.

We can all remember well this Camelot of our youth, the joy of innocence past that molded many a life.

They came from across the nation and worldy places, from '34 to '59 to see and partake of this oasis,

To an acre of sand on the ocean Pacific, and to their life a memory terrific.

There was Pudge, Les & Bruce with balance & grace... the ever ready Moe to build a pyramid base... super Reba & brother Paul... Johnny Collins, Kortoff, Robinson & Cook... of Stankeys, Jimmy & Kay, you took a good look... Bros. Paton & Ferrar were all up to par... with Tesloff & Taylor adage on ice... Louie & Carol Lee also did nice... Eddie & Justus a balance delight... the Ferges family 5 did it all right... Thompson & Hill flipped and twisted like monkeys in a tree... and Wayne, Whitey & Dolores were 3... Howe & Lyke were also there... and Carle & Lucille were a juggling pair... sisters Roselle & Paula & Betty & Kitty were tossed around... and the Saunders Russ, Ray & Audrey were upward bound... there was Zinkin the strong with little DeWayne... and who can forget Marry & Jack Lefran... bodybuilding brothers Armad & Yc, plus Efremman & Reeves on hand with a flair... with Waterfield & Russell it was a beautiful pair... Wally & Dodie were part of the gang... as were Pattys Taylor, O'Keefe, McCormick & Tommy... with Betty & Evein named Smith as strong as could be... and Roland & Rudy, Marcella's & the Glenn's were something to see... Wait the bakers were great on the bars... and Janos the Chimp was one of the stars... Little Lynwood, Bill & Billy, the Knox Trio - two boys & a girl - the Hardys - Chuck & daughters 3 - a great show and all for free... we can't forget Frankie, Rex, Larry, Al, Jack, Bob, Vince, Vern, Freddie, Don, Gil who were all a part... and Hollingsworth and Timmy who were there from the start... and the Baron gave out the awards to the beauties on hand and Beverly, Min, Barbara and McCulla were far from bland... there was Barney and Cecil with eye to the camera and so many more we can't remember... the Hollywood actors, the Circo greats... Vaudeville pros all took part in the tumbling, tossing and balancing to develop new skills... from tots to seniors it was always a big thrill... the moms and dads along with the friends that sat with the cheering crowds at all were a part, especially Mrs. Williams, bless her big heart.

A happy handstand, a flip in the air, a swing on the rings, a fly over the bars... the beauty and bravery... the memory will always be ours.

In time the sea may wash it all away, for nothing is ever here to stay.

But to lives that were changed as for new goals they did reach.

"THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A MUSCLE BEACH."

Reprinted from MBAA Newsletter, Vol. I, No. 1

ACDC, Spring 2003
PAT McCORMICK and the DOUBLE-DOUBLE

Rags to Riches: The words might have been coined to describe the life of Pat McCormick. She was born in a bare apartment above a grocery store in Seal Beach. Her father, a World War I hero, died on Skid Row. Her mother worked all-hours to pay the rent. Pat and her brother, Bob Keller, were known around the neighborhood as "those grubby little kids." For fun, they swam, did flips off the bridge over Alamitos Bay, hung out at Muscle Beach in Santa Monica, and competed in every competition they could find. Athletics became my friend, competition became my life," Pat says, savoring those tomboy days. Without knowing it at the time, she was developing the skills and the mental and physical toughness that would lead to unrivaled achievements.

A diving coach spotted Pat roughhousing, admired her strength and raw talent, invited her to the prestigious Los Angeles Athletic Club, found a bathing suit for her, introduced her to two of the world's premier divers, Victoria Draves and Sammy Lee - and inspired a dream- to compete in the Olympic Games.

In 1948, scarcely 18, she finished fourth in the Trials by half an eyelash= 111 oath of a point. "Actually, it was a great learning moment," she says today. "In order to succeed, you have to learn how to fall!"

In 1952, at Helsinki, Pat competed in two events, won two. In 1956, at Melbourne, Pat competed in two events, won two. No other women in the annals of diving has equaled her feat- double-Olympic Games gold medals.

Since then, honors have been non-stop and unparalleled... The Ed Sullivan show... Cover of the Sports Illustrated... American women athlete of the year: first woman elected to the U.S. Swimming Hall of Fame... Long Beach Century Club Hall of Fame... Century Club Athlete of the Year... Official Olympic representative to two U.S. presidents... One of nine U.S. athletes to carry the Olympic flag in opening ceremonies of the Los Angeles Games in 1984... World Sports Humanitarian Hall of Fame.

An Olympian forever, the five Olympic rings are tattooed on her ankle. And her daughter, Kelly, won Olympic diving medals in the 1984 and 88 Games. Pat is a graduate and honored athlete of Wilson High, Long Beach City College and Cal State Long Beach.

Since her Olympic Games triumphs, Pat has translated her skills as a leader and motivator into inspirational presentations for major corporations including IBM, Xerox and Sports Illustrated. Pat has established a foundation to support her activities - Pat McCormick Educational Foundation.

Her awards, her achievements have brought her great pleasure and 5une. But her greatest rewards, she insists, come from "my kids" - known by their T-shirts as "Pat's Champs."

Pat and her volunteers, many of them fellow Olympic medalists, work with at-risk and economically challenged young students. Her motto is "love our children, teach our children, for they are our future." Her philosophy is simple yet profound "If you have a dream and a passion, and you really believe, you will find a way."

Pat teaches her kids the process to make it happen. She teaches them to put focus, direction and hope into their lives. Since winning four gold medals on the friendly field of strife, Pat has filled the role of student, mother, professor, radio and television commentator, professional speaker, entertainer, fundraiser, and carrying the flag for young folks in need.

Recently she fired-up students for a mini Olympics at Madison Elementary, a Santa Ana school that serves many low-income families. What are the five steps to success?" she asked the youngsters surrounding her. They told her what she wanted to hear: "Dream! Work! Ouchie (learn from failure)! Be with good people! Help others!"

"You can be anything you want, but you have to work for it," she told her rapt listeners. Pat has been going to Madison Elementary for four years - and the success of her program is evident. Pat and her volunteers bring pizza, read to the kids, listen to them read, take them on field trips, and hold athletic competitions.

Everyone is a winner, and they're rewarded with hamburgers, ice cream, shaking hands with Olympic medalists who overcame similar disadvantages. The kids leave the field with new hopes, new expectations.

Pat's goal at Madison is to follow first-grade classes all the way to fifth grade, so the youngsters can build relationships and learn and practice the keys to success. It's a huge goal- there are more than a thousand youngsters at Madison.

Attention, encouragement, role models are what the kids need most. They've got it. Pat has a needlessness for material possessions. She has her kids. Today Pat has added a new endeavor to staying in shape by swimming, riding her horse, representing the U.S. Olympic Committee, and working with Pat's Champs.

Her dog, Cody, has graduated and is now a Trauma and Therapy Dog. Together, Pat and Cody have developed a new joy- working with children in hospitals and schools.
The Woodward Gymnastics & Sports Camp in Woodward, PA has both Gymnastics and Extreme Sports in their program. According to camp owner and director, Ed Isabelle, about 90% of the girls enroll in Gymnastics and 90% of the boys choose Extreme Sports.
2002 World Acrobatic Society "Gallery of Honor" Inductee, Tom Steel, has opened a trapeze school in Encinitas, California on N. Coast Hwy 101 just north of San Diego. (Photos by GMS)

BELOW: Tom slaying active by flying to his catcher, Brian Flint.

ABOVE: A student (in spotting belt) enjoying her lesson.

BELOW: Tom with friends and staff members.
FREESTYLE SKIING, An Early History
by Bob Bollinger

Sometime, during mankind’s remote past, a single individual from a cold climate, wrapped a pair of long thin boards onto his feet and learned to propel himself across the snow. Cross-Country skiing served as a practical means of transportation. Perhaps, it was not long after when man learned to ski downhill and at one point in time, purely by accident, some skier hit a bump in his path that caused him to involuntarily execute an aerial forward somersault. This, of course, is pure speculation, but it appears to be highly plausible.

EARLY DOCUMENTED HISTORY
The type of skiing known as freestyle or “hot dog” skiing goes back at least to 1915, when a skier named Carl Paulson did a single front flip on skis at the first American Intercollegiate Ski Meet in Hanover, New Hampshire. The modern era of freestyle skiing began in the mid 1950s. Art Furrer, a Swiss, began teaching tricks while working as a ski instructor in the U.S. and he did much to popularize skiing acrobatics through demonstrations during the 1960s.

In 1971, ski cinematographer and freestyle innovator, Dick Barrymore, and the K-2 Ski Company sponsored the world’s first hot dog contest in Aspen, Colorado. Barrymore's concept was that the winner should be the skier who made the hottest, fastest, most exciting run down the toughest slopes in the area. Three day later, in Waterville, New Hampshire, Skiing Magazine and Chevrolet sponsored the first true freestyle event called “The National Championships of Exhibition Skiing”, won by Herman Goellner. This contest was divided into three events—moguls, or bump skiing, ballet, and aerials. Freestyle contests still continue to use the three events today. One other contest was held that season, The Rocky Mountain Freestyle Skiing Championships in Vail, Colorado with the total purse for the first season at $20,000. As the activity gained in popularity, many sponsors came to the fore such as Midas, Chevrolet, Skiing Magazine, and Colgate Palmolive. Like any other new sport, however, freestyle skiing had its problems and as each year progressed, one wondered if the sport would survive.

THE POND ERA (1974-1978)
At the beginning of 1974, freestyle skiing was on the threshold of entering a new developmental era. Charlie Pond, for years, had been one of America’s most successful men’s gymnastics coaches! Considered by many as the nation’s top tumbling coach,
Charlie's long career at the University of Illinois had garnered both him and his teams many honors from Big-Ten and NCAA Championships to the Olympics.

Upon retirement from U of I, Charlie started the Utah Academy of Gymnastics in 1973. A group of freestyle skiers living in Salt Lake City approached Charlie one day seeking help in the learning of aerial twisting somersaults on skis. This was a challenge that Charlie could not refuse. As the inventor of the unique "twisting safety belt" for teaching such skills, Charlie went to work with the young skiers, using the trampoline, diving techniques and his twisting belt. With the help of one of his students, Frankie Bare Jr., Charlie began to develop some skilled freestyle skiers who could safely execute multiple twisting somersaults on skis.

With safety for the athlete foremost in his mind, Charlie developed a progressive system of teaching techniques that included the trampoline, a slanted trampoline, an apparatus to propel students upwards called an "air pup", a straw ski slope and a ski slope over water. Diving was definitely an important part and parcel of Charlie's training program.

HOT DOGS & HOT MUSTARD!

If the freestyle skiers of the pre-Pond era were known as "hot dogs", it was Charlie's teaching program that added the "hot mustard" to their competitive routine. With skills such as double and triple twisting, double backs and twisting triple somersaults (many of these performed by Frankie Bare Jr.), it was the Utah Academy of Gymnastics that provided the hot mustard recipe.

The Utah Academy of Gymnastics became "the" place to train for the new circuit that was being formed in the Fall of 1974! This circuit would provide both sponsor money and national TV coverage as well. Charlie took a freestyle skiing judges' course in 1974, and soon after, was selected as Head Judge and then Superior Judge for the 1975-1976 season.

A new association called the U.S. Freestyle Association was formed, and Charlie was elected as Executive Director and National Coach. The 1975-76 season included competitions in Austria, Switzerland, and Italy. At the close of the 1978 season, the International Olympic Committee recognized the new sport and accepted it into the Olympic agenda! The McCormick Sports Conglomerate soon took over the sport but would not accept Charlie's concept of Safety Certification. As a result, Charlie resigned his positions and retired from active participation in the sport. Perhaps, one of Charlie's greatest achievements was the success enjoyed by his star pupil, Frank Bare Jr., who successfully performed a "Triple-twisting Backward Quadruple Somersault"! WOW! What will they think of next?
ACRO FOTO FAVORITES

This is another ACRO fun and history page ... How about you? Do you have a Favorite Foto? We'd like to see it.

LEFT: One of the most famous Muscle Beach photos. With Harold Zinkin on the bottom, “Moe” second, Jack LaLanne third and ??? on the top.

BELOW: A family photo of the “Marco’s”, a professional balancing act that came to Muscle Beach when they were working in the area.

RIGHT: World professional high diving champion John Deininger ... a Bil Copp favorite.
International Gymnastics Camp
Stroudsburg, PA

Trapeze and Space Ball are popular and enjoyable special features of the recreational time activity at Bruno Klaus’ International Gymnastics Camp.
A COPP QUIZ

How well are you versed on Acrobatic Legends (or potential legends)? As a test of acrobatic history I present the following quiz. See how many answers you can get right.

For Dilettantes (1 pt each)
1. What tumbler set an unofficial world high-jump record??
2. What Olympic gymnast has won the most medals?
3. Name one Olympic Trampoline Champion.
4. What acrobat perfected the “one finger stand”?
5. What gymnast achieved the first-ever 10.0 score in the Olympics?
6. What gymnast did the first full twisting double somersault in Floor Exercise?

ANSWERS: Dilettante Test
1. Dick Browning did a flip over a 72” bar in 1953.
2. Larisa Latynina-USSR has won 18 Olympic medals
3. Alexander Moskalenko or Irina Karavaeva both of Russia
4. The Great Unis (He used a “jimmick” to do the stunt but it was a great act.)
5. Nadia Comeneci-Romania
6. John Crosby-USA

For Armchair Experts (2 pts each)
1. Who uniquely competed in ELEVEN World Trampoline Championships in 20 years?
2. What tumbler achieved the first triple somersault in competition?
3. What acrobats achieved the first ever one arm on one arm stand?
4. What aerialist achieved the first caught quadruple somersault in public?
5. Joaquin Capea achieved the first 4 1/2 somersault in diving. Who achieved the first quadruple front off a ten meter tower?
6. What trampolinite achieved the first tiffs in international competition?

Armchair Experts Test
1. Carl Heger-USA
2. Vadim Bindler-USSR, Moscow 1974
3. The Yong Brothers
4. Miquel Vazquez in 1981 in Tucson AZ (although Ruben Cavalleri achieved the same thing in a public practice a year earlier)
5. Dr Sammy Lee (He said it was done accidentally)
6. Chris Eilertsen-USA, Stuttgart 1972

For True Pundits (5 pts each)
Identify the following persons:
1. Jules Leotard (Right! the leotard was named after him but who was he?)
2. John Bill Ricketts
3. Lillian Leitzel
4. Alfonso Baroni
5. Jack Adkins
6. John Woland

Bonus Question (2 pts)
What circus clown was also one of the world’s greatest slack wire performers?

BONUS QUESTION (2 pts)
The great Popov, “anchor” clown of Moscow State Circus

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ACRO, Spring 2003
When athletes from around the world gathered for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia, their determination, struggle and endurance was reflected in the monumental sculpture that was independently undertaken by internationally known artist, Richard MacDonald. MacDonald’s mission was to celebrate all that is best in humanity through his art. The 21-feet high heroic bronze, “The Gymnast,” epitomizes the Olympic credo. “The essence lies not in the victory, but in the struggle.”
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