

ACRO

Summer 2003

World Acrobatic Society

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World Acrobatics Society
 Gallery of Honor
 Las Vegas, Nevada
 24&25 April 2003

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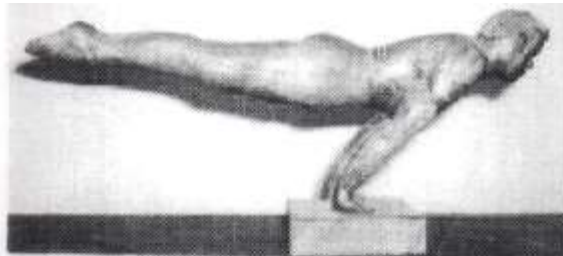
WORLD
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 ACROBATICS

WORLD
 ACROBATICS

Images
 by
 Laurence
 Dr. Laurence P. Bestmann



LETTERS

Glenn

Here is another famous ACROART for our W.A.S. Magazine by sculptor, Joe Brown on the campus of Temple University in Philadelphia PA.

Brace & Norma Frederick



We welcome letters, ideas and photos from all of our listed disciplines

ACRO

P.O. Box 3006
Oceanside, CA 92051

gmagym@aol.com

Dear Glenn/Btt:

THANKS TO YOU BOTH. for your involvement at the recent World Acrobatics Society 2003 Congress! It was a very "moving experience" for my daughter and I. The ambience of the overall group was exceptional. A special thanks to you, Bill, for orchestrating the overall congress and especially for your "hi-tech work" associated with the induction ceremonies. You are indeed, a wizard!

A special thanks to you, Glenn, for your involvement with the production for the initial copy of ACRO magazine I sincerely hope that W.A.S. will receive the support for the needed for the on-going publication of ACRO! I know the editorship of ACRO will need to be exceptional so as to ensure the appropriate coverage/inclusion from time to time regarding, each of the various disciplines represented by the Society. We "all" should recognize that the coverage may not always include, with each and every issue; the single discipline/sport/activity in which we have our major interest; however, each discipline/sport/activity must appear from time-to-time so as to help insure continuation of subscriptions. For example, I do love gymnastics, yet, I love trampolining especially. Best Wishes,

H. Easel Buchanan,
Omaha, NE

ED: We agree and hope our readers will submit articles on the different disciplines



Hi Glenn,
I hope things are going well for you. I am still keeping my acro partner, Terry! in the air every week at the beach, although the size of our group has diminished the last couple years. I would like to support the new ACRO magazine, so sign me up for the World Acrobatics Society.

Aloha,
Ken Farrell
Honolulu, HI



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The World Acrobatics Society

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ACRO CHALLENGE

From the Editor's desk

It has been a positive challenge to come up with our second ACRO magazine to meet the standard set with our first edition...we hope you like the results and look forward to hearing from you, our WAS readers with articles, photos and suggestions for our future ACRO magazine issues.

* * *

The 2003 World Acrobatics Society Congress in Las Vegas was an inspiring event for the future of W.A.S. Starting with a very special motivational and physical presentation by Peter Vidmar along with the inductee program it was a very positive weekend with families and friends of the World Acrobatics Society.

* * *

Our first cover was hard act to follow...but while walking on the Beach in Oceanside I came across a Jet Ski competition north of the pier. Along with the racing program they were doing some unusual acro skills. I met an official Jet Ski photographer (Jeff Hain) among the crowd and he told me more about the flip side of Jet Ski competition. Jeff followed up by sending us an article and photos that gave ACRO our exciting cover and center spread.

* * *

Because we have a very limited W.A.S. membership and subscriber list, our publication costs exceeds our budget...Our Special Thanks to our sponsors, members and friends who believe in our ACRO magazine, we hope to grow and at least break even by the end of the year.

You can also be a big help by getting friends to subscribe or give a Gift Subscription(s) to a friend (or two)...for only \$15 a year.

"Have a happy handstands" ... GMS

TO W.A.S. ACRO SPONSORS THAT HELPED FUND THIS ACRO SECOND EDITION...WE THANK YOU!

<i>Paula Boelsems</i>	<i>Chuck Hardy</i>	<i>Bill Walker</i>
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<i>Sue Gorgan</i>	<i>Ray Stevens</i>	<i>Walt Zippel</i>

ACRO

World Acrobatics Society Magazine



The Official Publication of the

World Acrobatics Society

President: Bil Copp

P.O. Box 7282, Venice, FL 34287

Ph 941-426-0631

triffis@aol.com

Editor: Glenn Sundby

P.O. Box 3006, Oceanside, CA 92051

Ph 760-722-0606

gmsgym@aol.com

Computer Graphics
Steve Mackey

1st Vice President
Paula Boelsems

2nd Vice President
Abie Grossfeld

Secretary
Hal Frey

Tresure
Dick Albershardt

Archivist
A. Bruce Frederick

Membership Chairman
Duncon Erley

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THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

"Some Acrobaticgrounds"

by Bil Copp

This year is the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' first heavier-than-air flight. The biggest thing about this historic feat was not merely getting off the ground but actually controlling the flight.

Did you know that both Orville and Wilber were GYMNASTS?

Both regularly worked out at that early Mecca for gymnastics, the Dayton YMCA. Wilber credited his gymnastics training as a major contributing factor in successfully handling the controls of the Wright flyer.

There have been a number of pilots in our Acrobat community. The great tumbler Dickie Browning and his Olympian diver brother Skippy come immediately to mind. Gymnast John Crosby; Trampoline immortals Frank Schmitz and Storm Eaton were pilots as was Olympian Tom Gompf and, to a much lesser extent, yours truly.

Participation in the Acrobatic disciplines appears in the biographies of many prominent persons. These include Johnny Carson, Tom Smothers, Gene Kelly Douglas Fairbanks, John Kennedy Jr. and Malcom Forbes who was captain of his Princeton gymnastics team.

Actors Russ Tamblyn, Joe E Brown and Bert Lancaster were professional acrobats and astronauts Scott Carpenter is but one of the numerous spacemen, American and Russian, with a gymnastics or diving background.

It's rumored that Bill Gates has a trampoline room in his home. The last time I saw such a thing was in the living room of Marco Canistrelli. The 8 ft ceiling was no problem. It was for his toddler son.

Judy Ford was a Jr. National Trampoline Champion who used her flipping talent to become Miss America in 1969. Several other young women have used gymnastics talents to win state beauty pageants.

A few years ago, at the Canadian National Exhibition, a group of competitive trampolinists were putting on a show when they were approached by a delegation of important-looking men. It included Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau who asked if he might try the trampoline. He slipped off his shoes and surprise turned to astonishment when he performed a back flip and nearly flew off the apparatus but for a spot by Aaron Johnson. Trudeau had been a diver in his college days.

This story intrigued me and I subsequently learned that many heads of state have been on the trampoline. Newspaper and magazines have carried photos of Gerald Ford, Fidel Castro, Spanish King Juan Carlos and Ugandan dictator J. J. Amin Dada all bouncing on trampolines.

Baseball legend Lou Gehrig was a member of the New York Turners as was president William Howard Taft. Somehow, the idea of the 360 lb Taft (who once got stuck in a bathtub) working the high bar conjures up a most intriguing image... "Hey! Spot my flyaway!"

* * * *

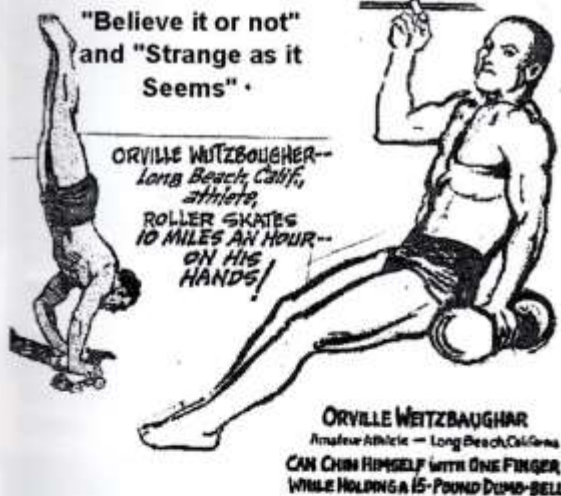
A correction: In my last message I alluded to Lillian Leitzel as being the first woman to achieve a triple somersault. It was Antoinette Concello, not Lillian.

* * * *

Note: Among the other famous among the ARCO personalities... We should include Arctic & Antarctic explorer Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd. He was a gymnast under coach Lou Mang at the USA Naval Academy in 1910 to 12. According to coach Mang Dick Byrd was a good all-around athlete, skillful at boxing, wrestling, swimming, pole vaulting, and gymnastics where he specialized in flying rings. Pictured here is Admiral Byrd dropping USA flag at the bottom of the world Antarctica 2/16/47



ACRObits

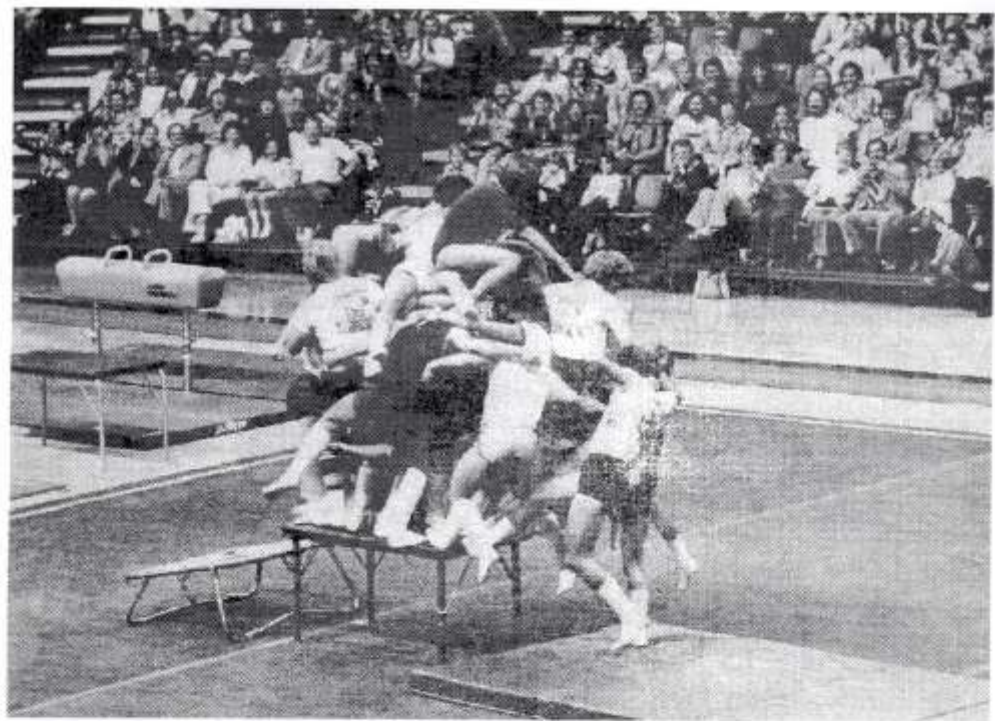


"Believe it or not"
and "Strange as it
Seems" •

ORVILLE WITZBAUGHER—
Long Beach, Calif.,
Athlete,
ROLLER SKATES
10 MILES AN HOUR—
ON HIS
HANDS!

ORVILLE WITZBAUGHER
Amateur Athlete — Long Beach, California
CAN CHIN HIMSELF WITH ONE FINGER
WHILE HOLDING A 15-POUND DUMB-BELL

From the scrapbook of WAS member Orville
Witzbaugher of Palmer AK.



Coach Robinson and his World famous Vaulting Team

That's INCREDIBLE! By Don Robinson (Former head
coach at ASU. 25 years)

With the understanding that "No one will sell and promote
our team as good as we can," we have always gone out to
the schools and community doing fun and lively
gymnastics shows. We used these shows to sell our sport
of gymnastics to the public. Since it wasn't always prudent
moving PB's, Still Rings or a Floor Ex mat for a 20 minute
show across town, we got creative and developed some
fun acts that could possibly be

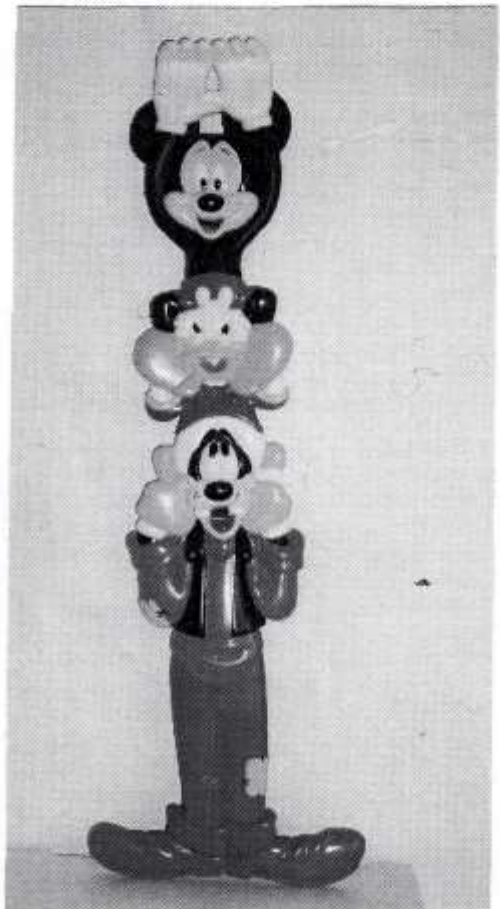
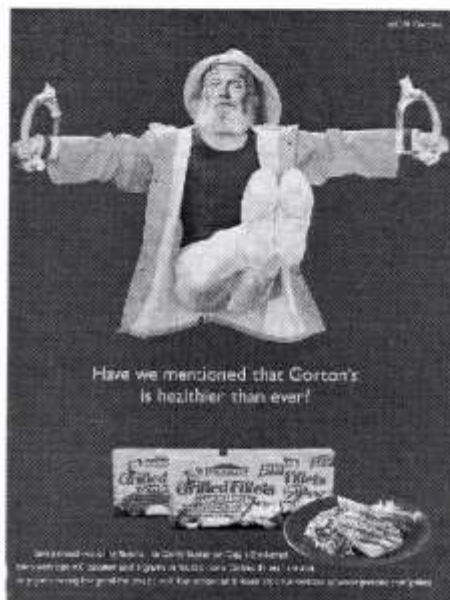
construed as a mix between gymnastics skill training and
circus routines. Eventually, one of our most popular acts
ended up before the producers of 'That's Incredible', The
TV show. As a result we ended up appearing on their
show in the early 1980's.

This act started in the late sixties- early seventies when
Bob Fenner of Gym Master Go. built me a padded
tumbling table, 30' by 48' with adjustable legs so we could
adjust the table for spotting. Bob, being a great person and
helper and supplier of outstanding gymnastics equipment
was always helping gymnasts, coaches and many
struggling programs, often at his own expense. Thanks
Bob

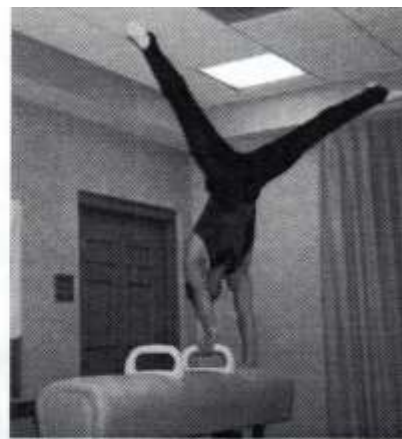
The table act started by gymnasts doing basic vaulting, and
tumbling such as handspring, headspring, dives and front flips
over the table. Soon we added the trampoline doing front flips
on to the table, punch fronts off, then we added the twists, and a
lot more crazy skills, i.e.- Full twisting 1 3/4. After trying many
skills we decided to- see how many people we could put on the
table by doing a front from the trampoline. This routine started
with just a few gymnasts and coaches; 6 to 10, and then we
started to increase the number to at least 20. The spectators
loved it and had lots fun watching us do this version of a Dog
Pile. There was always lots of laughter and applause.

We were asked to do this routine everywhere- basketball half
times, school assemblies, parties and picnics. We did this fun
show for university presidents, booster clubs, and local
television. As we did this routine we always tried to add more
people to the table and created a world record of 26 adults. At
one point we used the engineers on the team to decide who
should go up in what order and where they should go to
maximize our space before falling off. We would end up going
3-high at some points! I would usually be the first to front-flip on
followed by the

3 biggest 'comer men' to build the base. In the early 80's
we did exhibitions throughout Switzerland and reached
our goal of 26 + 1 young gymnast, 12-year old; Sean
Cooney. We were told at that time we would be put in the
European Guinness Book of World Records! To this day
we do not know if we are in the book but we do hold the
world record! The pictures were both taken during shows
in Arizona. The world record poster was used in Switzerl
and to advertise our world record attempt. WE DID IT!!!



Here are examples of how major companies use Acrobatics to promote products and activities



2003 Gallery of Honer recipient Peter Vidmar in action and words at the WAS Los Vegas Convention

MOTIVATION and INSPIRATION

By Loren Janes

One of the most powerful moments of the entire annual 2003 convention of the World Acrobatic Society took place as one of the better-known inductees of the "Gallery of Honor" began to speak to the room filled with many legendary athletes of the acrobatic world. This athlete was blonde, in fabulous shape and looked about 30 years old.

His talk was not only interesting and entertaining, but also uplifting and inspiring. His words were highlighted by his demonstrations on the pommel horse. He covered the subject of self-discipline and focus, as well as training every day whether you feel like it or not. He shared with us his personal thought process of visualizing, which helped him to train better. He also talked with us about his mental process before each event in major competitions and the Olympics.

The speaker was Olympic Gold Medal winner Peter Vidmar, inducted into the "World Acrobatic Society's Gallery of Honor" at the opening session of their 2003 convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. As the first speaker of the congress he set a high standard for the following speakers.

Peter's accomplishments are the stuff of which legends are made. The greatest in gymnastics accomplishment is perhaps in

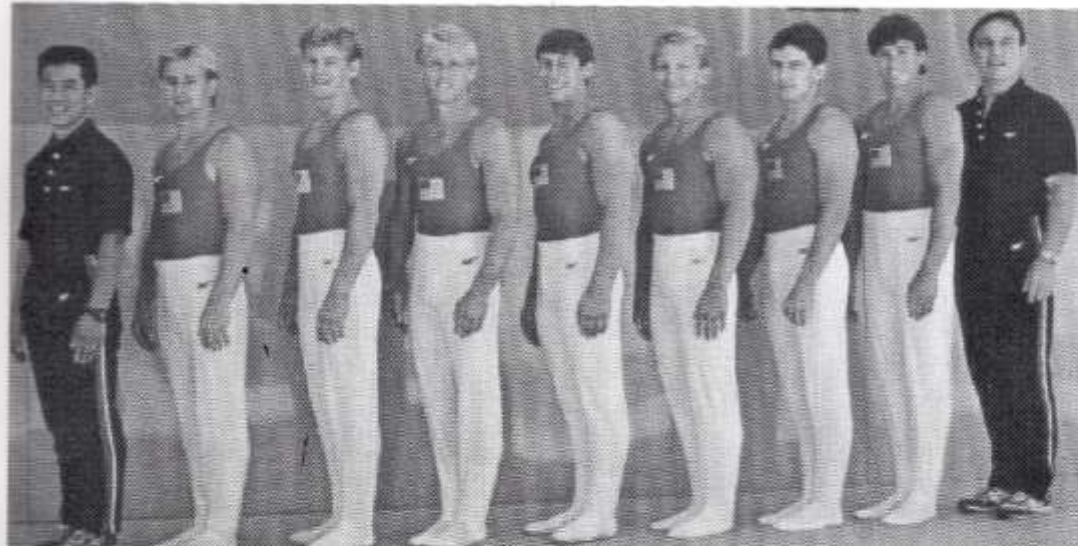
the 1974 Summer Olympic games in Los Angeles as a member of the USA that took 1st Place and winning the gold medal on the pommel horse individual. He also won the silver medal in the all-around competition.

Peter spends much of his time now on the corporate lecture circuit where he continues to perform for audiences on the pommel horse. His new book entitled "Risk, Originality, & Virtuosity, the Keys to a Perfect 10", was released a few months ago. It is a business/self improvement book. He is the Co-chair U.S. Olympic Committee Sports Summit a series of workshops designed to America's medal hopefuls to win gold at Athens in 2004, in addition to his activities Peter is now a serious cyclist. He has competed in 24-hour race ultra endurance races. He placed second (by two seconds) in his age category the NORBA National Series race at Big Bear at Big Bear, Calif. last year.

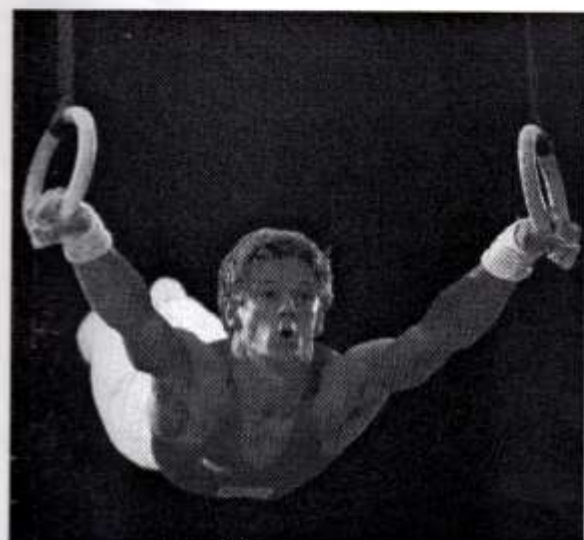
And at present Peter is also the honorary Co-Chair, with Bela Karolyi and Lou Retton of the 2003 World Gymnastic Championships to be held in Anaheim California during August. He is convinced it will be the best ever and that our team will see some serious time on the victory platform.

Peters 1984 Olympic '10.0' Gold Medal routine and the reception by his team members

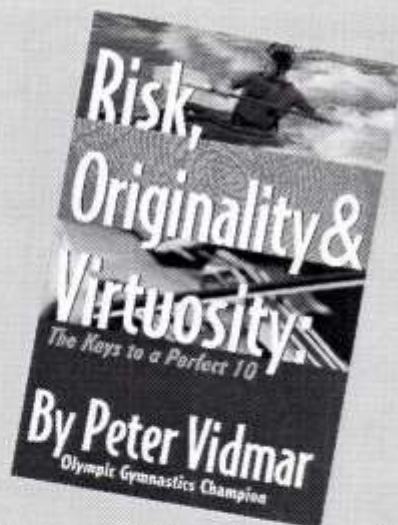
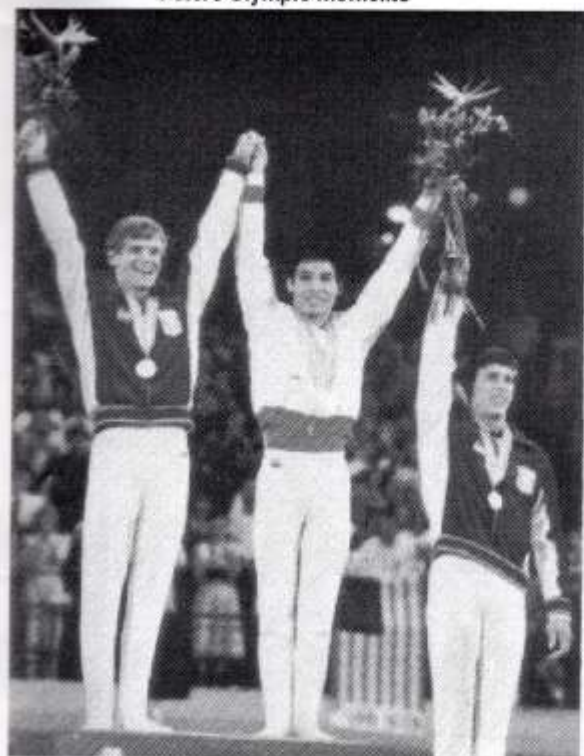




The 1984 U.S. Men's Olympic Team: Assistant Coach Makato Sakamoto, Scott Johnson, Peter Vidmar, Bart Conner, Tim Daggett, Jim Hartung, Jim Mikus, Mitch Gaylord and Head Coach Abi Grossfeld



Peter's Olympic moments



"When we place a high enough value on something, we'll get the job done," says Olympic gold medalist Peter Vidmar. Everyone works hard when they want to, when they get quick results. The best work hard when they don't want to, when it's inconvenient to give that "little extra." And that's often enough to put them on top."

When Peter Vidmar captained the U.S. Men's Gymnastics Team to its Olympic gold medal, exceptional performances were judged using three criteria: Risk, Originality, and Virtuosity (R.O.V.) A technically correct performance in order to achieve a perfect 10, the gymnast had to show Risk, Originality and Virtuosity.

The same principles apply to any aspect of life. To succeed in business, as in sports, we can't just do the basics, what everybody else does, as well as everyone else does it. Rather, we need to put forth extra effort or crucial improvement to reach the degree of success we desire. Using examples from his own experiences and from numerous other athletes and entrepreneurs, Peter will show you how those principles are embodied by R.O.V.

The R.O.V. principles are simple, but effective. *Risk* means you're willing to break from your comfort zone to do something daring. *Originality* allows you to quit copying the other guy and accomplish something that causes others to try to copy you. *Virtuosity* involves perfecting your skills. When applied together, these principles elevate performance. This book will show you how.

"It sounds so simple--Risk, Originality and Virtuosity. Yet the application of those three simple words and the resulting action we take will either make or break our organization."

About the Author Peter Vidmar captained the 1984 Men's Gymnastics Team when it won its first-ever Olympic gold medal. He also captured the gold in the pommel horse--scoring a perfect 10--and won a silver medal in the individual all-around men's competition. Today, Peter translates his skills as a leader and motivator into inspirational presentations for Fortune 500 companies. *Successful Meeting magazine* has listed him among the top ten corporate speakers in America, with a long list of clients ranging from Disney to Nestle to Merrill Lynch. He is the co-chairman of the U.S. Olympic Committee Summer Sports Summit, a series of workshops designed to prepare America's medal hopefuls to win gold at the Olympics. He has helped numerous companies, organizations and individuals use the concept of R.O.V. to motivate employees, improve moral and encourage new ways of thinking. He lives in California.

Hall of Fame Chills



Max Bangerter, the secretary-general of the FIG during much of my coaching career, was a likeable leader who seemed quite dedicated to gymnastics. Because he died in 1997, his award was accepted by FIG Executive Committee member Jay Ashmore.

I remember poring over the 8mm films of **Franco Menichelli's** floor exercise routines, marveling over the uniqueness of his skills and presentation. He was more than a gymnast; he was an artist. Although apologizing profusely for his English, Franco touched our hearts with the well selected words he chose to convey his gratitude. He later donated to the Hall of Fame a one-of-a-kind medal presented to him by the City of Rome upon his triumphant return from the 1964 Olympic Games.

Karin Janz and her East German teammates, who appeared mysterious and well trained with their strong technique and impressive execution, always captured my attention as competitors. Now, Karin is one of the top orthopedic surgeons in Berlin, where she has co-developed an artificial disc for the lumbar area of the back. Her procedure has already

been used in 15 spinal clinics in the U.S. Her acceptance speech appropriately focused on the health, safety and well-being of the gymnasts of today. Also, Karin's book, *"The Artificial Disc,"* has given me a new creed with a proverb she quotes: "You will know the pioneer, he is the one with the arrows in his back."

When I first saw **Dmitry Bilozerchev** in 1983 World Championships in Budapest, Hungary, I could not believe that a 16-year-old male gymnast could do what he did. He was strong, flexible and incredibly charismatic with performances that far exceeded his age. He appeared unstoppable, but then came the automobile accident and the long road

*For someone who
has always kept his
cool in public,
Bilozerchev was
obviously moved
and so was I.*

to recovery which somewhat leveled the playing field for the rest of the gymnasts. Nevertheless, he went on to win more world and Olympic medals, most of them gold. With all these accolades, I was touched by the emotion that Dmitry showed while accepting his induction into the Hall. For someone who has always kept his cool in public, he was obviously moved, and so was I.

Then came **Kurt Thomas**. With most of his former coaches present (Roger Counsil being the only notable absentee), Kurt reviewed his illustrious career with humor, drama and, oh yes, cockiness. Having been on the other side of the Thomas/Conner rivalry that produced the most exciting period in U.S. men's gymnastics, I have grown to respect this brash kid from Miami. He speaks his mind sometimes with his foot in his mouth, but he rarely fails to accomplish what he sets out to do. He continues to hang it out there where most fear to tread. He is truly someone who has made an attempt to make a difference.

Hence, it was only appropriate that at the conclusion of Kurt's acceptance speech, we were evacuated to the basement parking garage of the hotel as a tornado alert precaution. After a short delay, we returned to the celebration.

As you can see, this induction class of 2003 really defines what the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame is seeking: unique individuals who produced great gymnastics and also developed character from which we all can learn.

Paul F. Zait



INDUCTEES

1997

NADIA COMANECI Romania	BART CONNER United States
ARTHUR GANDER Switzerland	JACK GUNTARD Switzerland
BELA KAROLYI Romania-U.S.	OLGA KORBUJ Belarus
MARY LOU RETTON United States	LEON STUKELJ Slovenia
MASAO TAKEMOTO Japan	

1998

VERA CASLAVSKA Czech Republic	SAVINO GUGLIELMETTI Italy
LARISA LATYNINA Ukraine	TAKASHI ONO Japan
CATHY RIGBY United States	LYUDMILA TURISCHEVA Ukm
PETER VIDMAR United States	

1999

FRANK BARE United States	MIROSLAV CERAR Slovenia
YUKIO ENDO Japan	NELLI KIM Belarus
EUGEN MACK Switzerland	YURI TITOV Russia

2000

MAXI GNAUCK Germany	LI NING China
ECATERINA SZABO Romania	HARUHIRO YAMASHITA Japan

2001

NIKOLAI ANDRIANOV Russia	LYUBOV BURDA Russia
BRUNO GRANDI Italy	SAWAO KATO Japan
WILLIAM THORESSON Sweden	TEODORA UNGUREANU Rom

2002

POLINA ASTAKHOVA Ukraine	KEIKO IKEDA Japan
AGNES KELETI Hungary	BORIS SHAKHLEN Ukraine
DANIELA SILVAS Romania	BERTHE VILLANCHER France

2003

MAX BANGERTER Switzerland	DMITRY BILOZERCHEV Russia
KARIN JANZ Germany	FRANCO MENICHELLI Italy
KURT THOMAS United States	

ACRO, Summer 2003



Inductee Dr. Karen Janz, (Germany) shows her award to Abie Grossfeld



Inductee Franco Menichelli (Italy) and Rusty Mitchell (USA) 1964 Olympians

International Gymnastics Hall of Fame

Seventh Annual Introduction Ceremony



Inductee Kurt Thomas (USA) and Hall of Famer 97 Bert Conner, share some memories



Dmitry Bilozerchev (Russia)



Franco Menichelli donates a Medal given him by his homeland to IGHO Board Member Bill Sorenson.

International Gymnastics Hall of Fame, Board of Directors. Back Row: Susan Wilson, John Arends, Sam Balle, Bill Meads, Delene Dust, Ernestien Russell, Bill Sorenson, Glen Vaughn, Bruno Klaus, Jay Ashmore, Seated: Bart Canner, Frank Bare, and Paul Zert (not shown) Whitey Anson



Remembering Bob Hope

Excerpts from Dick Albershardt's Book

Someday You're Not Coming Down

Vietnam

Even though I had worked with Bob Hope several times in the States, he knew me by my stage name, Dick Albers, and I doubt very much if he actually knew my legal name, Albershardt. Of course, there had to be a security check by the State Department and I was about to be cleared by the United States Government for one of the most prominent passports that any civilian can possibly obtain. Bob took it a step further by calling Indiana University's Bill Annstrong, inquiring about my integrity.

Our entourage consisted of eighty-eight people, including performers, musicians, stagehands, technicians, three of Bob's writers, and last but not least, Bob's masseuse, Freddie. There were twenty-one members in the cast, but Bob's Christmas present to the men overseas was some unique package: nineteen of the cast were easy to look at, beautiful, young ladies.

We had a small rehearsal at NBC in Burbank, California, the day prior to our long, tiring trip. I was the last one to arrive, and the cast stretched their necks to see who it was. At this point, knowing my name was Albershardt, Bob said, "Look, we've got a German spy." The entire cast laughed, as did I, we all immediately relaxed, and the group became quite affable.

There was a surprisingly large crowd to see us off at the Los Angeles International Airport, including press and camera crews in abundance. I climbed the stairs to an extremely large United States Air Force plane and was caught off guard when I noticed the inside of the plane was stripped of all amenities, except seats, of course. Wire cables were exposed, running the length of the fuselage, and the smooth sleek contour we are spoiled with in commercial airliners was noticeably absent. After a photo session, I waved goodbye to

a sea of fun familiar faces, and Bob's publicity man, Bill Faith, motioned me towards the front of the plane that resembled first class. The "first class section" lacked the partition that is conventional on other planes, but there were still two large seats abreast on either side of the aisle facing two other pairs of seats. Bill motioned again toward two seats, one of which held a golf club. I said, "But that's Bob's seat." Bill motioned a third time, quite emphatically, for me to sit in that seat next to the golf club. Ann-Margret and her husband, Roger Smith, sat facing us and were busy with last minute things such as dealing with small carry-on items and strapping themselves in for the long trip.



LAX Departure with Bob Hope, Ann-Margret,
Linda Bennett (& Bouncer)

Only a few minutes went by before my seatmate, Bob Hope, joined me, plopping down eagerly in his seat as though it were his first trip. I had read somewhere in a horoscope that a Gemini says funny things and is humorous, and it made quite a bit of sense, considering that both Bob and I are Gemini's. We laughed and joked the entire trip and Bob even passed silly notes to people. I had a spent flash bulb, gray and wrinkled looking, stuck it in my nose and

asked Bob if I could borrow his hankie. This tickled Bob so much that he did the same, borrowing my burnt-out bulb and walking throughout the entire plane asking various people for *their* hankie. We were immediate friends.

Actually, this ridiculousness was just the medicine everyone would need. The huge, over-sized C-141 accommodated everyone, including football great Roosevelt Grier, and was just getting warmed up for the 30,000-mile trip. We were on our way to Vietnam with stops in Midway, Guam, Okinawa, Japan, Korea, and Thailand. When we stayed in Thailand, quite a bit of our traveling was done by helicopter or smaller planes, enabling us to move around quicker or to land in remote areas. We also did shows on the *USS New Jersey* and the *USS Hancock*, and I am still awed by the gigantic size of those ships.

The cast consisted of Ann-Margret, sultry star of movies, television, and night clubs; Linda Bennett, lovely actress/singer; The Honey Ltd., vocal quartet; The Goldiggers, twelve singers/dancers; Penny Plummer, Miss World; popular Los Angeles Rams Tackle, Rosie Grier; and yours truly. Les Brown and the *Band of Renown* had the troops tapping their feet to his wonderful music, while the master of ceremonies, Bob Hope, had the Armed Forces screaming with laughter.

Most of the facilities, where we spent the night were military quarters, with the exception of the Tokyo Hilton and the Erawan Hotel in Bangkok. The Erawan Hotel was our hub and we worked from that point most of the time, flying in and out of Vietnam; you can well imagine, we slept better on those nights.

Camp Zama in Japan got us off to a tremendous start with a boisterous, indoor crowd, mostly casualties from the war, so grateful we were there, who rewarded the performers with an

incredible response. There certainly was no shortage of wounded personnel and they were always closest to the stage. It was never clear if the more seriously wounded were sent to hospitals in Korea and Japan and then home, or if the hospitals in Vietnam were simply overflowing.

We visited hospitals in Vietnam, talking with many young men, many of whom had their lives shattered, and it was rather difficult emotionally until Bob showed us how. It was apparent when we arrived at the "Traction Ward," because everyone but the nurse was tethered to the ceiling. Patients had legs and arms (or both) in the air, they were flat on their backs, and Bob said, "Don't anyone get up!" From that point on, we also relaxed and could talk to anyone, knowing they did not want sympathy, nor did they want to give us a sob story. The most popular subjects were Mom, a girlfriend or wife, their favorite football team, and their hometown. Thanks to Bob, our very difficult job was made more manageable.

One of our stops was Dong Tam, a steamy, sprawling base on the My Tho River deep in the heart of the Mekong Delta. The temperature was well up in the 90's, with humidity to match. The sprawling complex of Dong Tam was the home of the 9th Infantry Division, built with the help of the Navy on what was once a rice paddy. One of the "river rats" that combed the rivers and streams for the Viet Cong (and stayed wet all day long) was asked by Bob how he was selected for the job. His answer to the comedian was certainly apropos when he said, "I know someone in Washington."

During Bob's monologue we heard the crackle of gunfire followed by the chilling noise of rockets and booming artillery. An infantry officer said to Bob, "Charlie's irritated today." When another officer said that it was at least a mile away, Bob joked about the incident in the show later, saying, "That cheered me up no end. I then did what any mature, discreet comedian

would do, stood behind Rosie Grier."

From Dong Tam we choppered north to Cu Chi, home of the 25th Infantry Division. It was late afternoon and the heat was stifling. One of the servicemen said, "It's so hot here you can cook eggs in your helmet." Another soldier told us that he was attending chapel one day when the sounds of mortar fire broke the stillness in the middle of the chaplain's pastoral prayer. The chaplain stopped praying, raised his head and asked simply, "Is it incoming or outgoing?" The congregation replied in unison, "outgoing," and with that the chaplain lowered his head and continued praying.

We played several shows a day, all different locations, nonstop, and just when we all thought we were tired, we learned that quite a few troops came to the show-site a day or so early. They sat on the ground to wait. Inconvenience would not deter them; it was their Christmas and they were going to see the show.

When we played Cam Ranh Bay, the performers were dressed in the usual tuxedos and formal gowns for the finale, and we sang "Silent Night" in a torrential downpour. There were 25,000 servicemen sitting there singing with us and nobody moved. Our formal attire certainly needed some attention the next day, but our inconvenience was inconsequential; after all, it was *their* Christmas. And sadly, to many...their last.



Bob Hope, Les Brown and a few G.I.'s
"Watch me jump rope"

About 10,000 Marines jammed "Freedom Hall," a natural amphitheater, for a ninety-minute midday show at Da Nang (about 280 miles northeast of Saigon). After that show we boarded helicopters for Chu Lai, 90 miles to the south, and entertained another 15,000 troops at the U. S. Army's Division Headquarters. When Bob introduced me, he said, "Dick's jumping career began at the age of two weeks, courtesy of an open diaper pin."

Ann-Margret and Linda Bennett were possibly two of the most beautiful women I had ever seen and their exquisite looks were only exceeded by their warmth and terrific personalities.



They have opposite demeanors on stage.

Linda appeared in a full-length gown, quite formal, looking as though she was performing for the aristocracy at the White House. Ann-Margret has a completely different persona, is quite animated, full of energy and rarin' to go physically, and can single-handedly wow an audience. Her attire was more provocative in knee high boots and a mini dress with a generous amount of flesh showing in between. Their different styles actually complimented each other and were not competitive, as it would be having two jugglers on the same program.

We also traveled via helicopter to Long Bin, Pleiku, and Phu Cat, and were

strongly urged to leave as soon as possible after our shows. A couple times, around sundown, we saw ground activity as we were leaving the area, and like complete morons, we gawked out of the windows thinking we might see something. One location had a huge parachute over the stage, in case of inclement weather, and I had not seen that much silk since the last time I was caught peeking in the windows at Victoria's Secret. We were given the red-carpet treatment, wined and dined, and treated like royalty wherever we went, and at every stop, we were given mementos which I still treasure to this day. For some reason, I had thought we were in Vietnam to brighten their day. I enjoyed a delightful one-on-one visit with General Stilwell and happened to mention I was collecting a few hats to take home to my four sons. Quicker than the blink of an eye, the General whipped the hat off his head and handed it to me. When I refused to take his hat, he would not take no for an answer and insisted. Later, when I showed Bob the hat, he thought I should have had it autographed, something that just did not occur to me because I was so taken aback with the General's gracious gesture. General Stilwell was killed a short time later in a helicopter accident, but his hat will be on my office wall for the rest of my life as a constant reminder of this very exceptional human being.



Hats from Vietnam 1968

Regardless of how remote an area was, there were always welcome signs that made us feel like we were the heroes. We all had a great laugh at a sign that read, "Welcome Bing Crosby," which prompted Bob to say, "I'm with a bunch of Communists." One location that was farther away from the activity had a jeep and driver assigned to each principal boy, if my agent could have only seen me then), and personalized with his/her name on a big sign across the front of the jeep. These jeeps took us through some terrain that resembled a neighborhood in the back country of a Louisiana Bayou, in a jeep parade/convoy, where even Vietnamese civilians were happy to see us as well, some even taking photographs.



Preparing for the "Jeep Parade"

When we went to Korea, we landed at Kimpo Airport near Seoul, and we spread out and tried to touch as many troops as possible. We did a show at Yonggo and were surprised at the huge number of military personnel still there. We split into four groups and hit the trail along the DMZ, and wherever our choppers put us down, there were thousands of GI's screaming for a look at our provocative entourage (and I'm certainly not talking about Rosie Grier or myself). We were not allowed to take our cameras with us, nor were we allowed to even peek over a wall. The DMZ was a vast, desolate stretch of land by day, and a treacherous strip at night. ...crawling with human booby traps.

We were eagerly looking forward to Christmas Eve when our gang was airlifted to the flight deck of the aircraft carrier, USS

Hancock. She took part in the Battle for Okinawa in World War II and was almost destroyed by a kamikaze attack in 1945. She was re-commissioned in 1954 and carried 22 Skyhawk pilots that just happened to tie their planes down there. The South China Sea looked as smooth as glass as I assembled my equipment for the Christmas Eve Show. I was all set up in an enormous area where the planes are kept out of harm's way down below deck, and I wanted to take a few bounces on my equipment to get a feel of the surroundings. Trampolines should sit perfectly level and I was not comfortable with the slight listing of the ship. We had some time to kill and my friend, Rosie Grier, just happened to be standing at the end of the trampoline as I started bouncing quite high. I do believe the Admiral changed course and I changed trajectory and who better than Roosevelt Grier to be standing there! Rosie could stop an explosive fullback with little effort and he caught me like I was an overstuffed pillow. From that time on, I never again kidded my roommate about his snoring.

Needless to say, I decided not to work that night and was quite disheartened about not working that particular festive evening. I was there to entertain and it really bothered me that I could not join my colleagues on stage. I was also looking forward to working inside (in the hold of the ship), the sound travels faster, crowd reaction is marvelous, and is quite invigorating for a performer. It was strange not being a part of the show. Our entire troupe spent Christmas Eve on board. We had an educational tour of the ship, met some very astute naval personnel over dinner, and enjoyed a pleasant, unique experience.

The next morning we stood on the flight deck and marveled at the size of the gigantic landing surface the pilots aim for. The taxpayers would be relieved that it's not I flying the plane, half-blinded by weather and looking for the ship in storm-tossed seas, with the

flight deck resembling a postage stamp. I'll stick to the 5 x 10 trampoline bed, thank you. There was a sister ship approximately 500 yards off our starboard and Bob hit a few golf balls toward the ship when we realized it was equipped with exceptionally large speakers, as the captain called out on his sound system, saying, "Sorry, but that ball was out of bounds." Later on, when Bob and I were alone, he cautiously looked around to insure we had privacy, and quietly said, "If I had a bucket of balls I could have destroyed that thing." We bid farewell to the *USS Hancock* and her crew, and headed for the *USS New Jersey* that became famous during World War II as Admiral "Bull" Halsey's flagship. The *New Jersey* cruised about three or four miles off the shores of South Vietnam and the firepower was awesome. Each gun, with a barrel 65 feet long, could hurl a shell about the size of a man and weighing a ton, a distance of twenty miles. Bob wisecracked, "I imagine when these 16 inch guns are fired they can forget about eating soup in the wardroom." Bob had a funny remark about everything, and in spite of having comedy writers he had a quick wit and a memory with filing cabinet proportions, and was never caught off-guard. When we embarked on the *USS New Jersey*, Bob said, "This must be the biggest Chris Craft in the world...it looks like Wake Island with a rudder."

During the 60's, Chicken Delight was one of the popular fast-food restaurants. I was always amused listening to Bob's writers trying out new material on each other whenever they were in close proximity. After we did a show on Midway, we were escorted around, and educated, about the gooney birds that inhabit the island. Midway is the only location in the world where these funny creatures live, and we had many laughs as they performed the mating ritual. It looked like two people trying to dance while standing in a hammock. We said our goodbyes, taxied down the runway, and just as we became airborne, one of Bob's writers, Charlie Lee, said, "When the war is over, I'm coming back to Midway and

opening up a Gooney Delight."

The most arduous part of the trip was when we returned to the stage for the show's finale and sang "Silent Night." People were still soul-searching the pros and cons of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, and the war was spreading day by day. The goal of stopping communist expansionism justified the nation's pain, but trying to justify such a remark to a young man in the line of fire would be an inadequate explanation at best. As we stood there with the air imbued with compassion, and singing to thousands of innocent faces, tears filled my eyes. I could not manage the words to the song and producer Mort Lachman kindly asked me to open my mouth and sing. As much as I respected this delightful man, I could only oblige by "mouthing the words,"

because the lump in my throat was so big that it choked off the words. Too many of these young men that we sang to never came home, and thinking about them 35 years later can still make the lump in my throat come back.

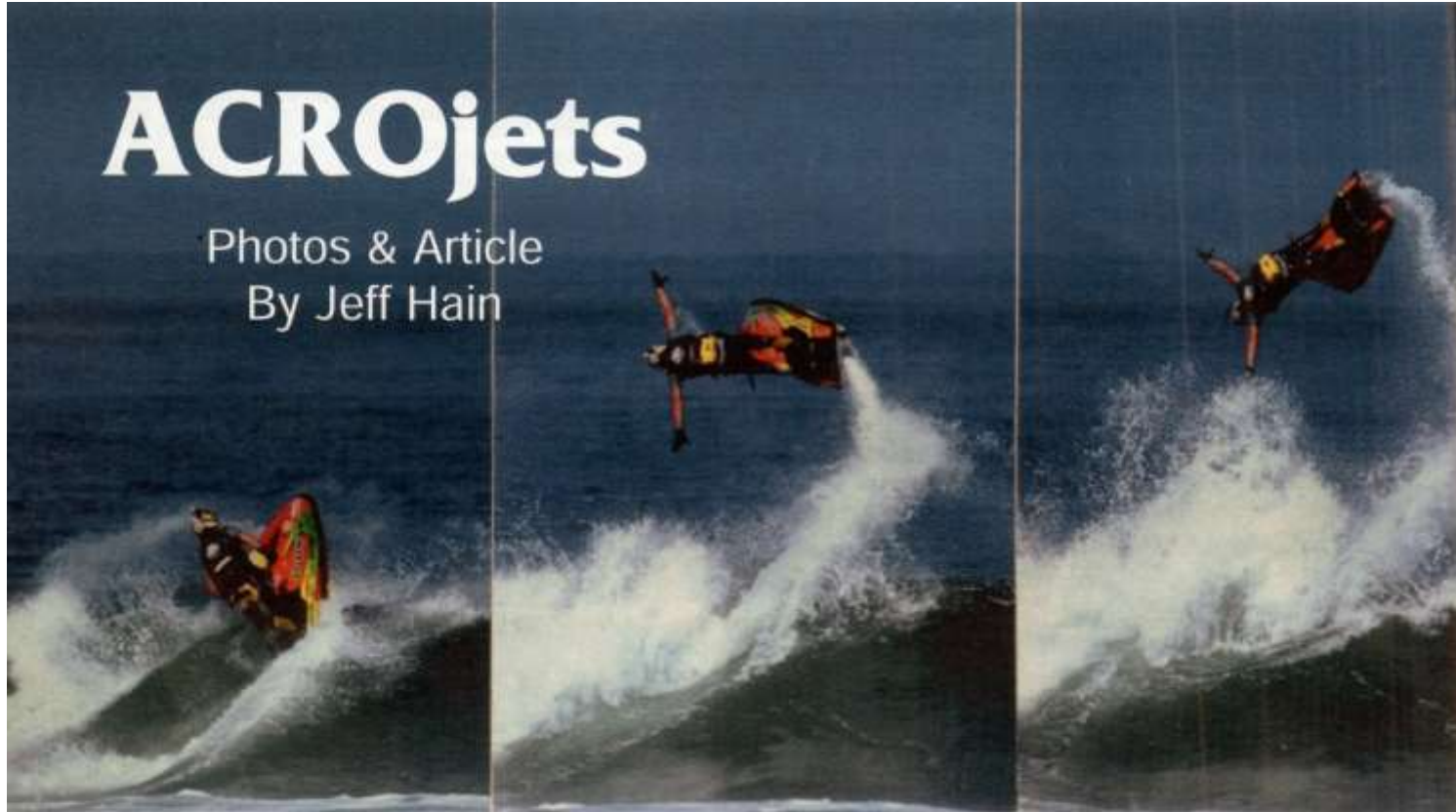
Bob Hope was certainly a rare breed and one that never forgot his roots. Being a perfectionist, along with having an exceptional amount of talent and a commitment to hard work made him the superstar that he was, although he didn't take himself that seriously. In spite of the enormous amount of fame, publicity, and wealth, he was as down-to-earth as anyone I had ever met. He was charming, sophisticated, intelligent, witty, distinguished, and an awful lot of fun to be with. Because of our age difference, it seemed like we almost enjoyed a special father/son/friend relationship, and I'd like to think he felt the same way about me.



"What - no taxi?"

ACROjets

Photos & Article
By Jeff Hain



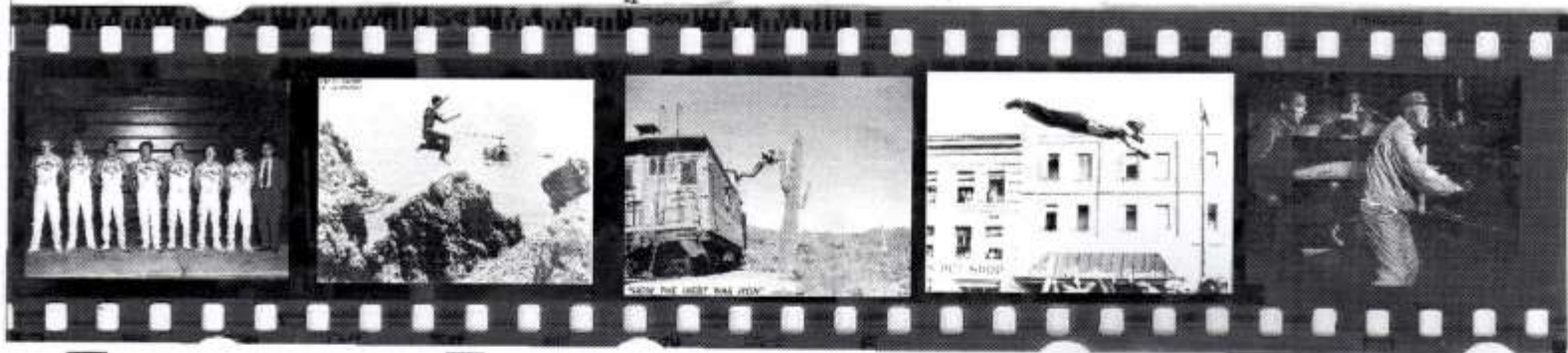
The first inverted trick on a personal watercraft was the aerial barrel roll. The trick was first successfully performed in sanctioned competition in 1993 by Californian Jeff Kantz. Kantz performed the trick aboard a Kawasaki Jet Ski X.2—a hybrid sit-down/stand-up watercraft (i.e. Jet Ski) in sanctioned competition, he also became the first to pull off the move without a wave, or a wake from a larger craft. For the next few years the aerial barrel roll became 'the move' in freestyle competition. Then in 1998 Roy headed to California to train in the surf. His goal was to work on it, as well as to come up with a few new tricks. On the evening prior to his final day of training in California he told himself, 'Now it's time to try the invert (back-flip)!'.

The following day at Oceanside, on his third attempt ever, Roy successfully pulled off a back-flip aboard his Yamaha SuperJet (a stand up model watercraft.) And although there have been rumors that a Californian from up around Ventura had actually pulled off the move prior to Roy, the myth has yet to be proven. On June 14, 1998, at an IJSBA (International Jet Sports Boating Association, the sports sanctioning body) National competition in Ventura,





EricMalone
Competing in Oceanside,



Loren Janes



Loren Janes was born in 1931 in Sierra Madre, California, and has lived his entire life in Southern California, except for the four years he lived in Santa Cruz, where during the summers he was a lifeguard on the beach and the co-star of a water show, doing synchronized swimming, springboard and high diving from Monterey and Carmel to San Francisco.

Through elementary school (Sierra Madre), high school (Pasadena), where he won competitions on the

French Horn, and college (Cal poly University, San Luis Obispo), he maintained straight "A's." His major was Biological Science (Plant and Animal Ecology).

During the Korean War, he joined the Marine Corps where he served under "Chesty" Puller. While in Marine Raider (Recon) advanced training, he broke and held the record on the obstacle course, and fired expert with pistol and rifle, setting a 1000-meter prone record.

After his Honorable Discharge, he spent two years teaching trigonometry, calculus, and science to 11th and 12th grade students in a private high school.

Loren, a single parent who raised his two children Eric and Erica, since they were six and eight years old, enjoyed being with and supporting them in their current high school and college educational, and sports activities.

He attended all of his son's ice hockey and basketball games as well as all his tennis matches. He also attended all of his daughter's basketball and volleyball games.

Loren started looking for challenge and adventure early in life. Between the ages of 10 and 17, he hiked the 220-mile length of the John Muir Trail four times alone, and lived off the land in the Southern California mountains for two to four weeks at a time, wearing only an Indian breechcloth and carrying only a hunting knife.

He is a horseman, bow hunter, scuba diver, surfer, mountain climber, and certified ski instructor, movie photographer, film lecturer, and speaker.

He is also a member and past president (1992) of the exclusive Adventurer's Club (world





headquarters in Los Angeles), and a member of The Explorer's Club world

Since the early 1950s, Loren has been speaking on the principles of the United States Constitution free enterprise, law, and government to clubs and organizations all over America. In 1964 and again in 1990, he ran for the U.S. congress.

In 1961, he became a film lecturer, using his own 16mm color films, which he had shot behind the scenes while working in movies and television. He shows his films, entitled "Behind the Action," to audiences young and old, at elementary and high schools, colleges, universities, clubs, and organizations around the world.

He encourages young people to dream-and dream big, to forego drinking, smoking, and drugs; to get excited about life and achievement. Loren's purpose is to promote the ideals of integrity, sound morals, scholastic endeavor, athletic competition and physical, mental, and spiritual fitness.

He first started competing athletically at the age of seven collecting every ribbon the YMCA had to offer. In high school, he competed in swimming, diving, water polo, and gymnastics, swimming and won numerous titles and awards, including the Coast Diving

Championship and the "Gold Award" as the most valuable member on the swimming and diving teams.

Later at Cal poly, he played first string forward for four years on the water polo team, which took the CCAA Championship in 1950. His greatest feat during this period of his life was to compete in the CCAA Championships in swimming, diving, and gymnastics all on the same two days, and at the same college. In gymnastics, out of 10 events, he won 3 first-, 2 second-, and 3 third places; in swimming, one first and 2 third places; in diving, one third place.

During those years, gymnastics not only included the six events of today (free X, high bar, parallel bars, still rings, side horse, and vaulting), but also flying rings, tumbling, rope climb, and trampoline. Loren competed in all of them and went undefeated on the trampoline in dual and CCAA meets.

In the early 1950's, Loren joined the Los Angeles Athletic Club (LAAC) where he met and worked out with Pat McCormick, Gary Tobian and Willi Farrell. The diving coach for LAAC and USC was the great Glen McCormick.

In August of 1956, Loren learned about an olympic event called the modern pentathlon and decided to give it a try. Pat McCormick went to the athletic director of LAAC, "Duke" Lewellyn and told him that she thought Loren was a world class athlete and deserving of the LAAC sponsoring him. Duke agreed with her.

So, in 1956, Loren became the first civilian to enter the United States Olympic Trials in the Modern pentathlon, a grueling Summer Olympic event that combines five grueling Summer Olympic event that combines five sports: riding, fencing, shooting, swimming, and running. He competed again in 1964.

So in 1954, Loren became a professional movie and television stuntman and stunt coordinator, making his debut in movies with an eighty foot dive of a cliff on Catalina Island in an Esther Williams movie. In the following years, he worked with practically every major director, producer, and star in the industry, including doubling for Steve McQueen his entire 23 year career, Jack Nicholson, Kirk Douglas, Paul Newman, Michael Douglas, Charles Bronson, Robert Wagner, Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis, Yul Brynner, and Frank Sinatra. He has appeared in more than 500 movies and in over 2,200 television shows.



Loren spent his free time working out at Muscle Beach, where he learned teeterboard and risley from the great acrobat and stuntman Russ Saunders. He also worked on many movies with Russ, Paula Del (Boelson), George Paul, and Bob Yerkes. In addition, he worked out at Jess Robinson's trampoline center where he met and became good friends with Dan Millman and gave Dar Robinson his first stunt job.

Loren says after researching the history of stuntmen from the silent film days to the present (over 80 years), that all the top all-around stuntmen, without exception, were gymnasts, acrobats, and divers.

Devoted to helping youth, Loren has performed in fund raising exhibitions around the world. In Taiwan, he helped raise \$250,000 to provide shelter for young girls who had previously slept in factories where they worked. In Hong Kong, his trampoline exhibition raised a sizeable contribution to the Asian version of the YMCA, and while filming in Mexico, he gave a gift of a trampoline to an orphan's home in Durango.

In 1981, Loren celebrated his 50th birthday by running a half marathon on a dirt mountain road in one hour and fifteen minutes. To a stuntman, keeping in perfect physical condition is essential to the preservation of life.

To accomplish this end, Loren runs his own personal marathon five mornings a week by riding his mountain bike five miles up into the mountains, then leaves his bike and runs a five mile loop back to it, then bikes the five miles back home. Thereafter, he works out on his high-bar, parallel bars, trampoline, and with only his arms, climbs a 30-foot rope hanging from a tree in his backyard. He swims a mile or more each evening.

Loren feels fortunate that in his long career he has never been seriously injured. In fact, he has never broken a bone. He gives credit for this to his coaches for teaching him discipline and focus, his acrobatic background, staying in good shape, never smoking, drinking, or using drugs and his faith in God.

In 1961, he was co-founder of the stuntmen's Association of Motion Pictures and Television, the original stuntmen's organization.

In 1992, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), and was the National Chair of the SAG Stunt and Safety Committee. Committee.

In August of 2001 Loren received the coveted lifetime achievement award: the "Golden Boot" (the Oscar of Westerns).

In April 2003 Loren received the "Gallery of Honor" award from the World Acrobatic Society.

In November 2003 Loren will receive the "Silver spur Award" in recognition of outstanding achievement in entertainment and western film.

Loren's Coaches

Swimming and Diving	
1st-8th grade	Pasadena YMCA
High School, Pasadena (PAC)	Bud Lyndon
College, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	Dick Anderson also water polo)
Gymnastics	
High School	Dave McBride
College	Dr. Glenn Noble
Teeter Board and Risley	Russ Saunders
Russian Swing and Wire Walking	Bob Yerkes
The Modern Pentathlon	
Riding Jumping Dressage	Don Burt "Sue Sal" Hale
Fencing (Epee)	Jean Heremans Belgian World Champion Delmar Calvet French Champion
Shooting (Pistol)	Duncan Stewart Capt. Ray
Bramel	(USMC) LAPD Pistol Coaches
Swimming	Peter Daland (LAAC and
USC	
Running	Chuck Coker Articles in Runner's World Magazine

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

Dive into the amazing world of "O"

Picture a world without boundaries. A world where imagination runs free. A world where horses fly (and float!), where zebras play on a monkey bar under the rain and where curtains fly away and disappear. Welcome the world of "O" by Cirque du Soleil.

Beyond circus, beyond theatre, "O" pays tribute to the magic of the theatre - from the simplest street performance to the most lavish of operas - where anything is possible and where the drama of life plays itself out before our very eyes.

Inspired by the concept of infinity and the elegance of its pure form, "O", phonetically speaking, is the French word for water (spelled "eau"). Written and directed by Franco Dragone, who has created 10 of Cirque du Soleil's

previous productions, "O" has brought a new level of performance art to the Las Vegas Strip when it opened in October 1998.

With an international cast of 85 artists, performing in, on and above water, Cirque du Soleil's "O" tells the tale of theatre through the ages and frees us to lose ourselves in a world without limits. Join Eugen, an ageless theatre guardian and Guifà, his eager, yet unsuspecting visitor, as they embark on a 90-minute voyage where dreams are not only encouraged, they come true.

An array of awe-inspiring images celebrates the vitality of the human spirit. Among these images are the visually stunning duo trapèze, world-class divers and daring displays of highly specialized aerial acrobatics. The innovative "Barge" number, performed by eight women from the Ukraine and Russia, intrigues with a unique interpretation of traditional circus art and dramatic choreography. A spectacular visual treat, the fire sequence provides contrast to the ever-present element of water, under the direction of Canadian gold-medalist Sylvie Fréchette, bring an entirely original approach to the sport. The journey continues to the

chaotic "Cadre" number and through the poetic prowess of contortion. "O" features a team of synchronized swimmers, who, and to the theatre. The entire performance is narrated by the international melodies of an 11-piece orchestra.

"O" is a spectacular feat of imagination and engineering. The 1.5 million-gallon pool is 25 feet deep and measures 150-by-100 feet. Three years of intense study and testing have resulted in a one-of-a-kind aquatic environment. The classical proscenium style of the Bellagio Theatre is another Cirque du Soleil first, with tiered orchestra seating, side galleries on two levels and a balcony.

Yes, "O" is a world unlike any other. Rob Bollinger, our Artistic Director, describes it as "visual music"; like a beautiful song that cannot be described and needs to be heard, "O" defies





Where I Fit!

By Christine Van Loo



My parents put me in Sports Acrobatics classes when I was eight because I was hyperactive. It was their last resort before medicating me with Ritalin.

I trained in New Orleans with Igor Ashkinazi and Jurek Pol. I was that student who learned the trick six months after everyone else did. Igor once said in his thick Russian accent, "Zere are children wiz talent, zen zere iz Christina. She just works hard." I worked six hours a day (three in dance and three in acrobatics) until I retired at age nineteen. I had three different partners: Phil Millaudon, Sonny Brown, and Jay Groves.

Whenever I had to do a new tempo trick without spot I would hide in the bathroom. To combat my fear my coach bribed me with money. If I did the trick I won a quarter; a buck as I got older and wiser. Greed overrode fear. Over the years I learned to conquer fear by facing it head on. I learned to trust my partner and to believe in myself. I also earned a stack of cash.

Everybody likes winning and I was no exception, but that was not the reason I loved acrobatics. My coach tried motivating me by saying, "Get mad and kick their butt!" as if he were talking to a boxer. I would just tear up and start crying, "I don't want to kick anyone's butt. I just want to do pretty acrobatics." Eventually he quit the battlefield talk and started calling me his beautiful swan.

By 1989 my partner Jay had been in the sport a long time and now had a family to support. He quit the sport before World Cup. We performed last at a clinic in Ohio. Not until someone handed me a flower bouquet did I realize that a chapter of my life had ended. I buried my face in Jay's arms and sobbed.

At the banquet where I was presented the Athlete of the Decade award, the second I stood up, I had to sit down. My eyes flooded over with gratitude and over with gratitude and with

longing. I missed performing horribly. My mother thought something had happened to me. I couldn't get the words out at first. "I just miss it so much." I said. Leon Gelfang, a coach,

told me, "I like your tears and I like your smiles. This tells me you will work hard again." I spent five years lost inside myself wondering who I was after acrobatics.

Besides "Coaching position," it's hard to find a list of jobs for retired acrobats. So I did what many ex-gymnasts do -- I coached. I trained acrobatics and gymnastics in Italy and the US from beginner through elite level. I taught dance to gymnasts, acrobatics to champion theatrical dancers, flexibility to a champion aerobics competitor, I choreographed routines, and I even taught a 50-year-old clown to do a dive roll into a laundry basket. I enjoyed coaching but if I knew then what I do now my life would have been a lot more fun.

In a former student of mine auditioned for Cirque du Soleil in a gymnastics gym where I taught. I went along to give him moral support. Twenty or thirty athletes and dancers were stretching on the blue mat. As I sat on the bleachers my body started rocking back and forth. I squeezed the bench until my knuckles turned white.

These people were like me. This was my world, I thought. I couldn't just sit and watch. I signed my name to the audition list.

The audition lasted most of the day. We danced, tumbling, acted out emotions, did handstands, flexibility poses, and were interviewed. I did my best but didn't expect them to choose me. Six years had passed since I competed and I was no where near the athlete I once was. Besides I no longer had a partner to show my ability.

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Cirque called me though and offered a two-year touring contract. It was a dream come true, but one I had to turn down ultimately. At the time I was in a committed relationship and I couldn't expect him to wait for me for two years. Turning down that opportunity hurt.

Soon afterwards I heard about an entertainment company who hired gymnasts and specialty acts. I sent them my competition video and two weeks later I flew to Chicago to perform at a corporate show with them. That was the beginning of my life as a professional acrobat.

Today I am a professional aerial artist and acrobat. I perform an aerial silk act, in which I do acrobatic and contortion movements, drops and rolls on fabric. It's like dancing in the air. I do bungee trapeze, which involves a lot of dynamic flipping. I do Spanish web, an act in which I spin around at the top of a thirty-two foot rope. I am also doing an acrobatic act with Sonny, my competitive partner again. This career suits me perfectly because it combines creativity with athleticism. And I don't have to kick anyone's butt in doing it.

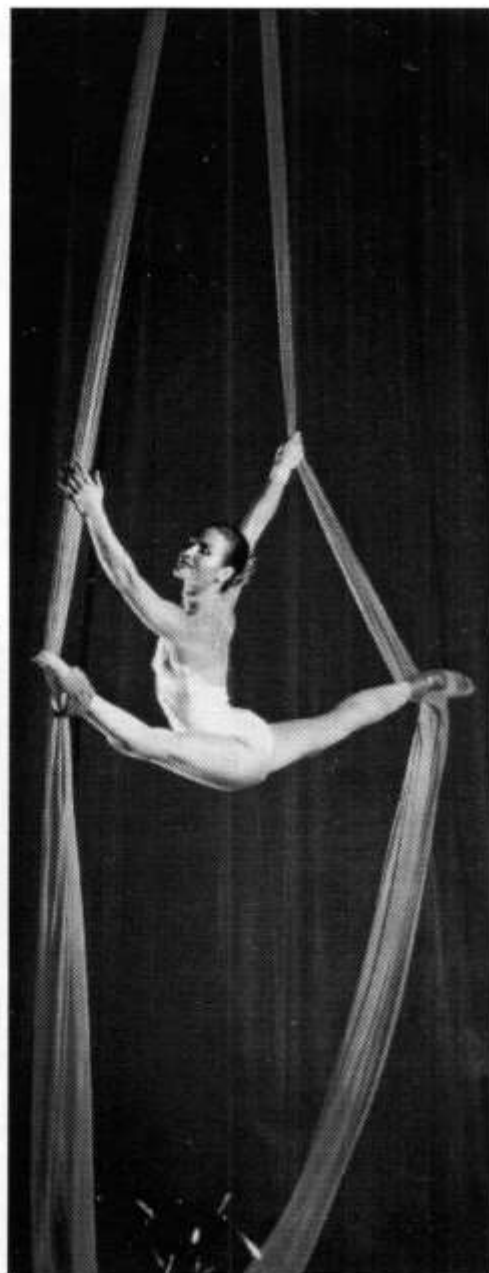
Recently I produced *Secrets of the Circus Revealed* instructional videos teaching sports acrobatics and specialty acts. Hopefully I can teach people the ropes, literally. Children or adults interested in learning, whether for fun or professionally can learn. I also teach workshops and produce my own live shows (see www.secretsofthecircus.com).

I live in Los Angeles now. I have performed at the Grammys, the American Music Awards, the Miss Universe pageant, in "Rush Hour II," and a host of TV shows, movies, music videos, commercials, and live shows all over the world. I can't believe that I get paid to play. Finally I am in a world in which I fit.

If you are interested in sports acrobatics, circus artistry, instructional videos, workshops, shows, or just want to visit my site, please go to www.SecretsOfTheCircus.com.



Aerial Silk Act



Bio

Christine Van Loo

Seven time consecutive elite national mixed pair champion

Female Olympic Athlete of the Year

Athlete of the Decade

USSA Hall of Fame member

Placed in the World Acrobatics Society Gallery of Honor

MUSCLE BEACH



Russ Saunders

May 21, 1919 - May 29, 2001

Canadian Champion Diver, coach, professional acrobat, stuntman &

Russ with Wayne & Whitey doing a one hand on a Jackson style balance.



Russ Saunders

A True "Muscle Beach" Legend

Russ doubled for some of the greatest actors of the silver screen; Gene Kelly, Alan Ladd, Clark Gable, Errol Flynn, Humphrey Bogart, Tyrone Power to name but a few.

But perhaps the most important, he also sat (or hung) for the greatest subject to grace Salvador Dali's canvas; Jesus Christ, which hangs in Scotland's Glasgow Art Gallery.

He contributed generously to activities at Muscle Beach, his ability to work bottom, middle or top working with people from all levels, beginners, young people or adults, mediocre and expert. His ability to make you believe you could achieve the skill kept a lot of people participating in acrobatics at "Muscle Beach"

Harold Zinkin said, "Russ was the most creative innovator at the beach. When I think of the beach, I see long lines of little kids waiting for their turn to do a trick with him ... he would spot even the poorest to keep them from having accidents."

Some of the other activities he participated in with success were scuba diving, flying trapeze, high wire walking, trampoline, juggling, horseback riding, clowning, ice skating; all activities used in his stunt work. He also flew an amphibious plane, practiced still and movie photography. He was a teacher, choreographer for acrobatics acts and stunt coordinator...

Gary Morgan, actor stuntman, pupil of Russ's... "if there was any one person who deserves credit for keeping the spirit of "Muscle Beach" alive it was Russ Saunders."

Russ doing his special, a front flip over seven people (his record was 14 people). He also flipped over three elephants from a springboard.



Salvador Dali's canvas

"Christ of Saint John of the Cross"

Russ catching Paula Boelsems (his long time professional adagio partner) being pitched by and over "Muscle Beach" regulars.





Alvin Motter and Dewight Davis 1936



Alvin Motter and Joe Shannon Hawaii 1945



Joe Schabacker, Al Motter, Jerilyn Schabacker, and Bea Motter

A Tribute to Alvin Erwin Motter

November 29 1911 - May 9 2003

By Joe Schabacker

I first met Al at the Carmen Theater in Philadelphia in 1937 where he and his partner Dwight Davis (The NCAA Still Rings National Champion) performed their Great Handbalancing act called "Poetry in Motion".

We later met during World War II while he was performing in a USO Show "Out of This World" in the Hawaiian Islands. He was in the Navy and I was in the Marines, and we performed for service men at the evening shows.

Al Motter was born in an Oklahoma farming community in 1911. His family moved to Kansas and then finally to California. In the mid-thirties he formed the Motter & Davis act which over a twenty period played in Vaudeville theaters, Broadway Shows and Fairs in the States, Mexico and other countries.

He taught his two younger brothers to do an act. Eddie (who was blind from age eleven) and just did school assembly shows across the nation.

Al's partners in handbalancing and adagio included names like, Johnny Daum, Dwight Davis, Don Gustuson, Joe Shannon, Dorothy Gage, Mini Sharlock and Lucille Gabrielson. His adagio act was billed as Savoy & Regina.

For years he was a regular acrobat at Santa Monica's Muscle Beach. In his Northridge, California backyard he built Rings, Trampolines and his famous "over the top swing". He taught many visiting children to do acrobatics stunts and was admired by all of them,

* * * *

He is survived by his wife Bea of fifty two years and his brother Justus. Al Matter, will be remembered by everyone as a very skilled athlete who had the ability to do the most difficult balancing tricks with the greatest if ease.

UCLA's "The Four Aces"

Collegial Competition/ Exhibition



1938 was one of those golden years just before World War II. As a small kid in Southern California I was already a veteran of Muscle Beach in Santa Monica where I learned Gymnastics and Hand Balancing from the Masters. In those days there was no Mr. America or body building contests. The name "Muscle Beach" hadn't caught on yet. Muscle Beach was in those early days, Gymnastic Heaven.

One day at the beach in 1936 I met Les Stockton. We enjoyed mutual interests in weight lifting and hand to hand balancing. Les and I became close friends and have remained so ever since. Just for the fun of it and the challenge, Les, his girl friend Abby (nicknamed Pudgy) and I formed a three "man" act. Pudgy sold the act. She weighed only 115 pounds but was unusually strong. She held me in handstands for most of our stunts. I weighed about 135 pounds at that time.

Les and I both attended UCLA. I was a sophomore and he was a senior. Les was the Student Commander of the University R.O.T.C. We worked out together as part of the University Gym Team. Les and I formed one of the first Intercollegiate Gymnastic hand to hand balancing acts. The act was a regular competitive gymnastic event. Les and I won the Intercollegiate Pacific Coast Gymnastic Championship in hand to hand balancing.

We met Don Brown, a pre-med student and long time member of the Long Beach "Muscle Beach" crowd- Don was a fine gymnast and could perform a dead one-arm handstand on either hand. Les brought in his U.C.L.A. wrestling team partner Bob Colburn. Bob was a short but powerful all around athlete.

We all became enthusiastic partners and formed a four man pyramid act we named the "Four Aces". This formation was a unique event for the University. Representing UCLA we gave several shows a week in venues all over Los Angeles. There has never been anything like it before or since.

Cece Hollingsworth, the famous UCLA Gymnastic Coach gave us his full support. Some of our formations were Muscle Beach standards, but most of our routines were precarious and unique. I remember sitting in the College Library making up stunts with stick man drawings. It was entirely our own individual project; we had no coach or outside help.

Our act only lasted one school year. We each pursued our separate paths and futures that lay ahead of us. Bob Colburn, an engineer, became the Four Aces' only casualty. Bob was killed in the great World War II. Don Brown finished medical school and served in the military. He became a fine heart specialist.

During the war Colonel Les Stockton was the C O. of the Victorville Air Base. Les and Pudgy have been married 63 years. Pudgy was the "Susan B. Anthony" for womens' body building and exercise. She was feminine, beautifully built and proved that women could become great athletes. To this day she still receives correspondence from all over the world. Pudgy was featured on the cover of many famous magazines in those early days.

I spent four years in the Navy. where I served as Staff Instructor in the Physical Instructors

School. The school graduated Boot Camp Commanders, Recreation Officers and Physical Conditioning Coaches. I held the School Navy strength test record.

I spent my working years as a Registered Physical Therapist, from 1947 till 1970 directing my medical rehabilitation center combined with one of the first men and womens gymnasiums. The center was located in West Los Angeles just a half mile south of U.C.L.A. After many hard times business finally prospered. My wife Deloryse and I retired in 1971 and moved to South Western Montana five miles from where I was born.

I am now a very active 84 year old man. I still work out and spend hours in the woods with a chain saw clearing dead and burned trees after the devastating 2000 forest fire that raged near our home. Once a week I do 700 sit-ups in about an hour and fifteen minutes.

I wonder now, how so long ago, we all had the energy and drive to complete tough academic schedules, perform with the Gym Team and in addition give about two exhibitions a week with the Four Aces in schools, universities and many other venues representing U.C.L.A. One week we were even featured at the then famous Ambassador Hotel. Preforming was in our blood.

In this same busy year, 1938, I won the Pacific Coast Weight Lifting Championship in the 132 pound class. After World War II, I and my partner Harold Zinken performed all over the nation with a tough hand balancing act called the Del Rios. We played in Theaters, Fairs, Night Clubs and special events.

After the War making money was tough. Through the years on the road I created a small nest egg to help fund my new one of a kind business venture. Gymnastics has been a wonderful companion all of my life.

BY BRUCE CONNER

**Bruce
Conner**

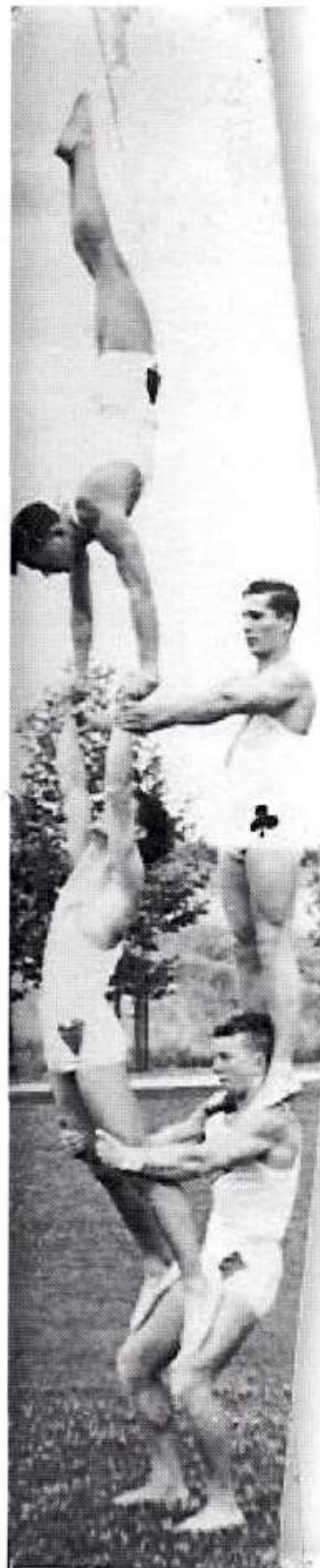


**Bob
Coleburn**

**Don
Brown**



**Les
Stockton**



Tools for Preserving Acrobatics History

A.B.Fredreck, Ph.D

WAS Archivist

Someone said, "Preserving history is just as important as making history." Preserving the history of acrobatics is enhanced by the application of three useful tools. They are chronology, sport genealogy and biography. All three may be used to understand the roots of acrosports of all kinds. Examples of the use of each tool are discussed below.

There is always something to discover. Ancient and medieval tumbling has been summarized by the Cottrells¹ and is hinted at in other publications but we do not have a good set of records for international, competitive tumbling. The most complete record for national tumbling is from the AAU archives in the United States beginning with Werner Haas in 1886 and Helen Matakowski in 1938. They were the first tumbling champions for men and women in the United States. Tumbling for both sexes was discontinued by the AAU in 1964. Since then, there have been national championships sponsored by other organizations but finding the records is difficult.

The first international tumbling champion was Gallery of Honor (GoH) inductee, Rowland Wolfe of the United States who has the distinction of winning the first and only Olympic gold medal in tumbling in 1932. But who won the second gold in an international open tumbling event? Certainly, the next champion emerged much later. That may have happened under the sponsorship of the International Trampoline Federation (FIT) or the International Federation of Sports Acrobatics (IFSA). The fit's first open tumbling competition was held in Oklahoma City, OK in 1976. Sport acrobatics' first tumbling competition was held in 1974. We also know there were excellent circus tumblers in a non-competitive setting dating from the 1800s. Who was tumbling's first international champion for women? Was it GoH honoree Judy Wills of the United States? (1965-66)? Somewhere, these records have been preserved ... but where? Gaps exist. It is the task of historians to "dig up" the information and preserve

it in media designed for that purpose. WAS president, Bit Copp has suggested DVD technology for such preservation

Sometimes, important information is discovered after long and tedious investigations. At other times, things simply appear without much help to the delight of investigators. For example, we knew very little about Hermann's gym in Philadelphia.³ The first nine US women's national AAU tumbling champions came from that club. Correspondence with a recent GoH inductee, Vera Tzipowitz, revealed much information about Herrmann and other champions he trained. She also gave us some



Figure 1

William Herrmann
Master of the "Manly Arts"
Father of Women's Tumbling
Shown from early photo as a top mounter.

Her habit of collecting memorabilia was very useful and pleasantly surprising to those of us with whom she shared her unique career in tumbling winning the second through the fifth national tumbling titles (1939-42). Her sister Nancy was the runner-up the same

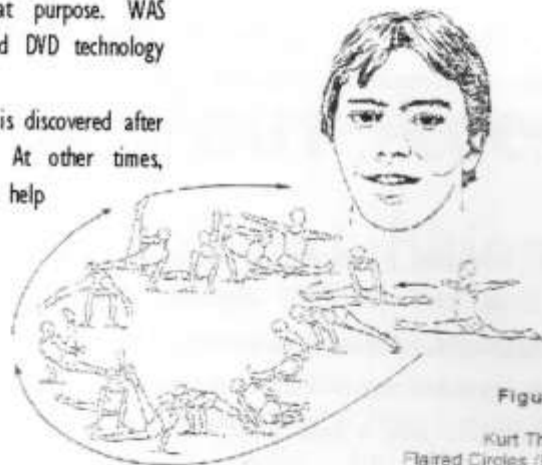


Figure 2

Kurt Thomas
Flaired Circles / Floor Exercise

four years and was inducted along with her sister Vera at the 2003 annual meeting of WAS.

Chronology

A chronology is the progressive arrangement of related events in time. My own gymnastic chronology spans approximately 4,000 years.⁴ Gymnasts and their fans are curious about, for example, "Who was the first to do this or that element?"⁵ Making gymnastics history is often marked by the introduction of special elements not seen previously. The ability to "Out stunt the other guy," the essence of competition, has led to the creation of unique elements attributed to one or several persons at a particular point in time. Flaired circles are a good example- Although attributed to Kurt Thomas (pommel horse and floor) by the FIG, several men were performing flaired circles around the time of the Montreal Olympics. A chronology of such nonutilitarian elements from ancient bull leaping in Crete to the "Gaylord II" and beyond is one way to chart gymnastics history. Each new element preserves the surprise and intricacy of its execution in a particular moment in time. Several authors have outlined such chronologies.⁷ We are currently trying to trace a chronology of first performances of tumbling elements. For example we have film footage of Rowland Wolfe performing double twisting back saltos on film in 1932. In an audio interview, Wolfe describes his early attempts to perform a double back. These may have been performed earlier in the circus but not in a competitive setting as far as we know

1 Cottrell, Bonnie and Donnie, *The Teaching of Stunts and Tumbling*. New York, NY: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1936. (Chapter I - "Historical Sketch of Tumbling" pp. 1-41)

2 Listed in *Guinness World Records 2001*, p. 360 These records were established when the sponsors introduced tumbling as a trial event. Later, tumbling was included as a sponsored event.

3 An article by balancer/strong man, Bob Jones appeared in the fourth issue of *Acrobat* ("William J. Herrmann-A Tribute," Sept.-Oct., 1949, pp. 12-13)

4 "4,000 Years of Gymnastics" presentation at the USAG Congress, Denver, CO 1996 (Copy available from author.)

5 "Moves," "tricks," and "stunts" are popular terms for "elements" derived from distinct families of gymnastics movements. Frederick's "Table of Elements" has been published in one of USAG's early Safety Certification Guides-

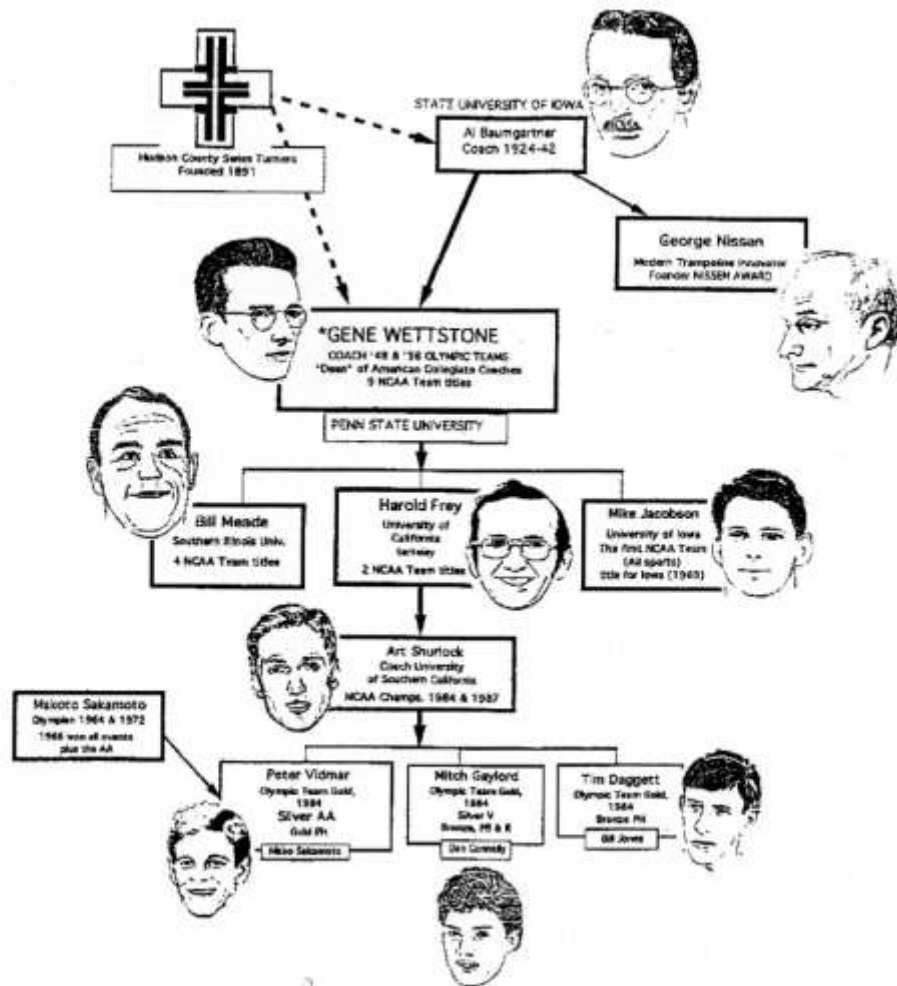
6 Gymnastic elements are commonly defined as movements that have little or no utilitarian value. For example, a flaired spindle on the end of the horse is unique but has no practical value in every day life.

Sport Genealogy

Dr. Joseph Goehler, a prominent figure in gymnastics history often wrote about the "Big Family of Gymnasts." One nice outcome of being immersed in a sport with a relatively small population of participants and fans is that connections are fairly easy to find but often are not well known. One sort of study looks at the coach as a father or mother figure and gymnasts as sons and daughters. This is the essence of the "Roots Project." "The interesting chart accompanying this article depicts Al Baumgartner, a Swiss Turner lace maker from New Jersey, as a father figure-i! When the lace industry was in decline, he applied for a gymnastics coaching position at the State University of Iowa. His nephew, Eugene Wettstone, an active member of the Swiss Society's team, traveled to Iowa a bit later to compete on his uncle's squad. Wettstone, a teammate of George Nissen, the took a coaching position at Penn State University after graduation and produced a dozen or more college coaches one of whom was Harold Frey who coached at the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois and later at the University of California. There, Frey mentored Art Shurlock and Dan Millman both of whom are GoH inductees- Shurlock coached at UCLA and Millman coached at Stanford for a brief period but is better known as the first world trampoline champion. Three of Shurlock's gymnasts were members of the 1984 Olympic Gold Medal team, the first in US history. They are Peter Vidmar, captain of the team and two of his teammates, Mitch Gaylord and Tim Daggett, Vidmar, still in good shape, performed a version of his gold medal pommel horse routine at the 2003 meeting of the World Acrobatic Society. His original coach Makoto Sakamoto is the only male gymnast ever to sweep all individual events at a national championship (1966) and is the primary coach for Guard Young of our National Team. Many other connections could be made. Fifty charts have been developed for the "Roots Project" and more charts are in the planning stages.

Biography

When gymnastics historian, Brian Schenk, wrote his first book, *Texas Gymnastics: The Faces, The Places*, it reinforced my interest in two ongoing projects using chronology and biography. Faces bring to mind prominent figures in sports of all kinds. Halls of Fame maintain files containing data about such notables. A genealogical chronology such as the one presented here is incomplete since only the highlights of a person's career are presented. There are publications that are devoted entirely to biography, however. We know them as "Who's Who" publications, the most prominent of



Five Generations of Gymnasts

From Al Baumgartner to Olympic Gold

which is *Who's Who in America* published by Marquis and is now in a 58th edition. What about such a publication for acrosports? Bob Bollinger has begun to assemble one. Schenk also published a series of biographical sketches for the Gymnastics Association of Texas. My own work is inclusive of *Who's Who* and *Was Who* in American Gymnastics and a first edition should be available in a year or so. The first such publication was attempted by none other than Frank Cumiskey, an original honoree of the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame and WAS GoH honoree. Cumiskey's publication appeared in 1973 and again in 1977. The problem is that biographies must continually be added and someone must take over the reins of such a project. It is difficult and time consuming. Biographies must be thoroughly vetted by the active participation of those included where possible. The biographer, in turn, attempts to document primary source information by using library resources, the internet and associates

and friends of those under study-The true value of history lies in what it tells us about the limited universe in which we live, work and play. Our awareness of the world of acrosport should go beyond our immediate club or team and should be expanded outward to include the international family of acrodisciplines. We have been able to preserve the lives of many acrosport legends in the World Acrobatics Society's Gallery of Honor. Their interesting stories are featured on the Society's web site, <<http://www.worldacro.org>>, Historians present us with descriptions and analyses of the past that make unfamiliar times, places and faces fit into a comprehensive network. The three toots described in this article are valuable in this important work.

7 For example, *ABC des Kunstturnens*, circulated at the Stuttgart World Championships (1989), identifies elements named for performers by the FIG. *Fik Flack* by Golze and Zeume (1986, Sportverlag Berlin) also list "Firsts" in their chapter, "Erfinder und Patente" ("Inventor and Patents").

8 *Roots of American Gymnastics*, by A.B. Frederick is a gymnastics genealogy and is being prepared for a third edition. This publication diagrams the primary teams, clubs, coaches and contributors to the sport in America by way of a series of charts such as the one accompanying this article.

9 The official name was the Swiss Gymnastics Society of Hudson County, N.J. The Society won a record seventeen national AAU team titles with such notables as Al Jochim, Frank Cumiskey, Frank Haubold and Arthur Pitt all of whom were national all-around champions. Jochim accumulated seven national all-around titles. "Turner" in German means "Gymnast." The German Turners, many of whom arrived in the United States in 1848, formed the first national federation of gymnastics clubs, the North American Turner Bund.

(To bring your attention to our ad page)

SPONSOR AD MART

DID YOU KNOW THAT... In George Washington's days, since there were no cameras, one's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many "limbs" were to be painted. Arms and legs are "limbs" therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression "Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg."

As incredible as it sounds, men and women took baths only twice a year! (May and October). Women kept their hair covered, while men shaved their heads (because of lice and bugs) and wore wigs. Wealthy men could afford good wigs made from wool. The wigs couldn't be washed so to clean them they could carve out a loaf of bread, put the wig in the shell and bake it for 30 minutes. The heat would make bigwig big and fluffy, hence the term "big wig." Today we often use the term "here comes the 'big wig'" because someone appears to be or is powerful and wealthy.

In the late 1700 many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board was folded down from the when and used for dining. The "head of the house-hold" always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor. Once in a while an invited guest would be offered to sit in this chair during a meal (who was almost always a man). To sit in the chair meant you were important and in charge. Sitting in the chair, one was called the "chair man," today in business we use the expression title "Chairman, or Chairman of the Board."

Needless to say, personal hygiene left much room for improvement. As a result, many women and men had developed acne scars by adulthood. The women would spread bee's wax over their facial skin to smooth out their complexions. When they were speaking to each other, if a woman began to stare at another woman's face she was told "mind your own bee's wax." Should the woman smile, the wax would crack, hence the term "crack a smile." Also, when they sat to close to the fire, the wax would melt and therefore the expression "losing face". Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A tightly tied lace worn by a proper and dignified lady as in "straight laced".

Common entertainment included playing cards. However, there was a tax levied when purchasing playing cards but only applicable to the "ace of spades." To avoid paying the tax, people would purchase 51 cards instead. Yet, since most games require 52 cards, these people were thought to be stupid or dumb because they weren't "playing with a full deck".

Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what was considered important to the people. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, and bars who were told to "sip some ale" and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. "You go sip here" and "You sip here" The two words "go sip" were eventually combined when referring to the local option and thus, we have the term "gossip".

At local taverns, pubs and bars, people drank from pints and quart sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in "pints" and who was drinking in "quarts" "Hence the term minding your "P's" and "Q's"

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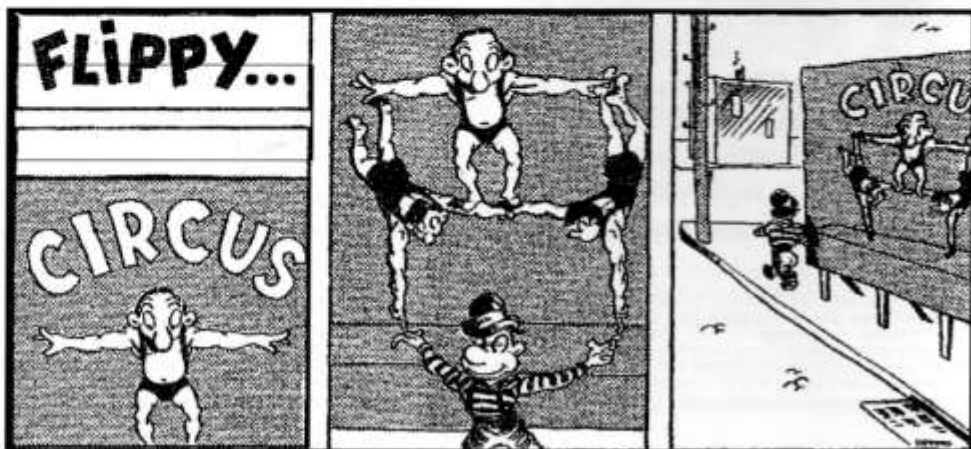
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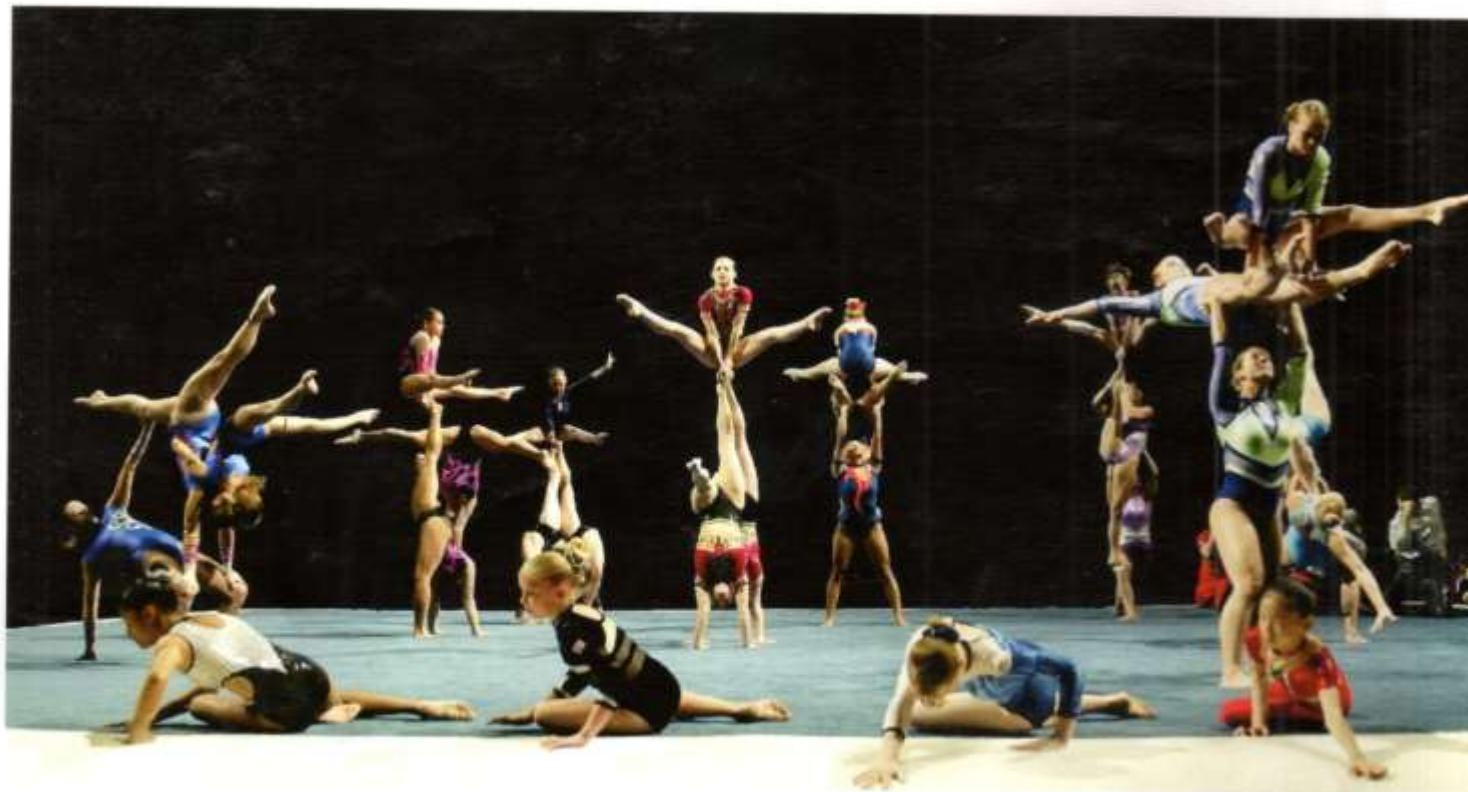
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