

WORLD ACROBATICS SOCIETY

FALL NEWSLETTER 2007

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The World Acrobatics Society (WAS) 2007 Congress took place at the Hampton Inn Tropicana in Las Vegas on September 18-20. The Congress included a Board of Directors meeting, registration, talks and presentations, the annual awards dinner and induction of the gallery of legends, and the annual membership meeting. A particularly moving moment occurred when Pamela Pond offered a short presentation and a pre-recorded video tape was aired by the now departed and past founder of the World Acrobatics Society, Mr. Bob Bollinger.

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Talks and presentations included a video session conducted by Hal Holmes, 2003 legend, former NCAA tumbling and four time NAAU tumbling champion. Hal was the first to execute a full-in fliffis (in practice sessions). Hal's round-off, flip flop, full, flip flop, tuck double back was his trademark tumbling pass in competition. Yes, it was without a spring floor and on canvas mats filled with horse hair. Abie Grossfeld, 2001 Legend, had spotted and worked with Hal on the skill in 1962 while Charlie Pond was in Columbia South America on sabbatical leave. In the provided video, Hal was wearing the Pond twisting belt and being spotted in the overhead traveling rig by Don Leas, WAS Board of Director and 2004 Legend, at the Men's Old Gym now named the HEK Kenney Gymnasium on the University of Illinois campus nearly fifty years ago. When Hal came out of the belt for his first try on the full-in, it was again Don Leas stepping into spot. Soon Charlie Pond, 2000 Legend, took over the spotting chores. The next video gave the WAS members the opportunity to see some of America's finest tumblers in action in national competition. Frank Hailand, James "Corky" Sebbo, Jeff Austin (2001 Legend), Jay Ashmore, Andy Pasinski, Bill Roy, Tom Gompf (2000 Legend), Jack Wiley and Louis Nocera were all competing their best to win various national competitions. Abie Grossfeld, 2001 legend, ably narrated the old black and white film converted to video and many WAS members participated in the ensuing discussions of what they were watching.

CIRQUE DUSOLEIL "O" SHOW REHERSAL

A special event of the 2007 WAS Congress was a field trip to the Bellagio to see an afternoon rehearsal of the cast of the Cirque du Soleil "O" show. It was a fascinating experience and a rare privilege for the WAS membership. The cast explained that they can't hear the audience during the actual show. They sure could hear the fifty or so WAS members clapping and hooting at all their feats. A little hot dogging was in order by some of the performers as they really appreciated hearing from us. Manu Durand, the "O" show House Troupe Coach and now WAS website designer, expertly and patiently answered questions fielded by WAS members. The Russian swinging sled diving featured everything up to four and halves into the dive well from three directions while the flyers and catchers performed flawlessly from opposite ends of the swinging boat above the dive well. They were sensational! It was nice seeing the athletes out of costume

GALLERY OF LEGENDS

The highlight of the WAS Congress was the induction of ten incredible acrobatic athletes into the Gallery of Legends.

MAX YOUNGER-CONTRIBUTOR-TEMPLE GYMNASTICS COACH

The first inductee was deceased at the time of his induction. Max Younger arrived in the US in 1906. He served the military as a recreation director with a YMCA unit attached to the Marines in central Europe. He enrolled in Temple University, with a scholarship by founder Dr. Russell Conwell, where he earned his Bachelors and Masters Degree. He coached Temple gymnasts to silver team medal in 1948 and a gold medal in 1949. Max became a Professor of Health and Education with his thirty years of service from 1926-56. He compiled a 28 year coaching record of 98 wins and 57 losses. Among his outstanding students are Olympians Chet Phillips (36) and Bob Stout (52). He also coached George Szypula of Michigan State University fame, Carl Patterson and Bill Coco, both Temple future coaches. In 1954 Max was presented the National Association of Collegiate Gymnastics Coaches first annual coaching award. Max was a man of great charisma and very popular on campus. Max had two sons, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

JOEY BOX-PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS-STUNTMAN

Joey Box received his training at the Redlands Youth Circus where he was the featured acrobat on the trampoline, teeterboard and flying trapeze during the early eighties. He was also on the Redlands High School diving team. He performed at fairs in Southern California including Marriott's Great American Circus Days, Boeing Company Fair, and the Disney Circus Fantasy Show. In 1985 Box was on the US High Diving Team at Marineland and Seaworld doing ninety foot dives and ten meter dives off the mini-trampolines. He performed a high dive fall act at the Rose Bowl. He was employed with Bill Brandenburg, Warren Woods and Associates, Director Alex Plasshaert and Danny Castle. Joey has over two hundred credits as an actor, stunt double, stunt coordinator and professional stuntman for commercials, television and feature films. He has appeared in Mission Impossible, War of the Worlds, The Aviator, Titanic, Broken Arrow, Forrest Gump, The Perfect Storm, Miami Vice, Charlie's Angels, Austin Powers, Star Trek, The Fugitive and Baywatch. In 2001 Joey was awarded the Taurus World Stunt Award for the best Ariel stunt.

SCOTT BARCLAY-CONTRIBUTOR-ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY GYMNASTICS COACH

Scott Barclay is a native of Oak Park Illinois where he took up swimming and diving and progressed to recreational gymnastics. He soon found himself competing on pommel horse and trampoline at Oak Park HS. His senior year he finished third in the state behind Bart Conner and Mark Gadowa. Barclay accepted a scholarship to Arizona State. He helped the Sun Devils to a second place finish in the 1978 NCAA tournament earning All-American honors on parallel bars and the all-around. He was a member the US national team and competed in the Hapoel Games Israel, went on tour in Australia and competed in the Spartakiad Games in Moscow. Retiring from competition with a torn biceps, Scott did volunteer coaching under ASU's Don Robinson and directed the ASU Fellowship of Christian Athletes. He came out

of retirement to perform and compete in the Kurt Thomas Professional Tour. Scott resumed coaching at ASU while the Sun Devils won the 1986 NCAA championship. He held the position as assistant coach under Robinson until ASU officially dropped the men's program in 1993. Barclay continued to volunteer coach the men's club team while he was earning his masters degree in exercise and wellness. Scott coached ASU to eight USA Gymnastics National Club Division Championships during a thirteen year span. Under his command, the ASU club team is self funded and virtually receives no funding or recognition from ASU! Scott and his wife Dona own the Aspire Kids Sports Center in Chandler, Arizona. With an enrollment of 1500 students, Aspire offers a variety of athletic programs for children and is the state of the art training facility for ASU men's team.

JACQUI COOPER-EXTREME SPORTS-FREE STYLE SKIER OLYMPIAN

Jacqui is a freestyle skier and a member of the Australian team for thirteen years. She is a four time Olympian (94, 98, 02, 04,). Cooper has amassed thirty-six World Cup Podiums and eighteen WC victories including WC championships in 1999, 2000 and 2001. She was the 1999 FIS World Champion. She is the first woman to perform a triple-triple on snow. Cooper plans to compete in the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver. Jacqui is participating in very dangerous sport and understands the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. She over came a shattered knee injury in 2002 only to crash in the 2006 Olympic finals after leading and setting record breaking scores in the qualification round. Jacqui's world record scores in water ramp and snow have motivated her to continue to compete. She is still at the point of her career where she chooses to continue competing because in her heart she knows she can still get better.

FRANK GORMAN-DIVING-OLYMPIAN

Frank Gorman, a 1959 Harvard graduate, was discharged from the US Navy in 1965. He served the US government for two years as an Ambassador of Good Will to Central and South America. Olympian Frank Gorman was the silver medalist on the three meter springboard in the 1964 Tokyo Games contributing to a US medal sweep in that event. An NCAA and AAU All-American, Gorman was the Eastern Collegiate one and three meter Champion in 1959 and 1960 and the 1964 Olympic Trials three meter Champion. Gorman was active in Southern California Olympian activities, US Diving, US Aquatic Sports, and the US Olympic diving committee. Frank is an internationally A-rated judge for the sport of diving. He has judged the high diving and cliff diving events in Mexico, Italy, Greece, Switzerland and Hawaii. In 1998 he was the Vice Chairman of Nexus Information Systems. Gorman is retired and resides in Sherman Oaks, CA with his wife Pati. They have three grown children and ten grandchildren.

NANCY THURSTON-PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS-STUNTWOMAN

Nancy took gymnastics lessons starting at age eight. She moved onto diving, competing in high school and receiving a scholarship to Illinois State University. She was inspired when attending Hobie Bilingsley's Diving Camp. She went to California in 1990 performing with the US high diving team. Thurston performed five shows per day diving from the ten meter platform using mini-trampolines, a sixty foot perch and an eighty foot perch. She became a member of American Acrobatics after an introduction to Danny Castle. She performed flying trapeze, aerial ballet and hand-balancing with Danny and his wife. Diving was her stepping-stone to stunt work. Her television credits include: Providence, Ally

McBeal, Nash Bridges, Lois & Clark, Baywatch Nights, and Charlie's Angels. Thurston's film credits include: X-files, Swordfish, Charlie's Angels, The Rock, Sergeant Bilko, Up Close and Personal, George of the Jungle, Titanic, Might Joe Young, Armageddon, and Patch Adams. Nancy has doubled for actresses such as: Melissa Joan Hart, Reese Witherspoon, Drew Barrymore, and Joan Rivers. Some of Nancy's specialized stunts include firearms & weapons, car collisions, stair falls, ninety-three foot falls, water sports, rappelling, fire-burns, rollerblade, horseback, air rams, tumbling and circus performance.

ERIC BERGOUST-EXTREME SPORTS-FREE STYLE SKIER OLYMPIAN

Eric was raised in Missoula, MT in a family of six children. He became the 1989 Nor-Am Freestyle Tour's Aerial Champion in his first season of competition. He had to work hard to pay for training in an expensive sports endeavor. Eric is a four time Olympian (94', 98', 02', 06'). He is 1998 Olympian gold medalist. He has fifteen World Cup wins including the 2001 WC Aerial Championship and the 2002 WC Overall Championship. He won the 1999 World Championships by recording a perfect score on his final jump. Trick wise he has performed quad-quads and the quintuple twisting triple back flip. Bergoust should be credited with numerous equipment renovations that have made the sport safer. He is the leader in innovative technique. In the field of advertising and product promotion, Eric was on the Nature Valley Granola Bar boxes and Kellogg's Raisin Bran Crunch cereal. He is featured on his own Sports Illustrated trading cards, USA Today full page ads. He has done commercials for Gateway, Chevy Trucks, NBC and Allstate. Magazine exposure includes: Sports Illustrated, Newsweek, Time, and National Geographic. Eric has appeared on Good Morning America, The Today Show, Regis and Kathy Lee, NBC Nightly News, and The David Letterman Show.

LINDA METHENY-MULVIHILL-GYMNASTICS OLYMPIAN

Linda is a three time Olympian (64', 68', 72'). Linda won sixteen official US National titles. She is the first US gymnast to qualify for event finals at the Olympic Games. She placed fourth on the balance beam in Mexico City in 1968. Linda competed on two Pan American Game teams winning the all-around in Winnipeg in 1967. She was selected by the American delegation to carry the American flag in the opening ceremonies of the 1971 Pan American Games in Cali. Linda and her husband Dick have owned and operated the National Academy of Artistic Gymnastics in Eugene, Oregon since 1973. Together, they have produced many national team members, at least eight national all-around champions, nine Olympians and nine World Championship team members and medal winners. Linda was selected to coach the 1979 US World Championship team. As an International Brevet Judge, Metheny-Mulvihill has judged the World Cup, four World Championships, and two Olympic Games. Linda and Dick have three children. Their daughter is completing her college education while the two boys help run the NAAG along with their parents.

MAKOTO SAKAMOTO-GYMNASTICS OLYMPIAN

Mako is a two time Olympian (64' & 72') and two time World Championships (66' & 70') team member. He was the bronze medalist in the 1965 World University Games. Sakamoto bypassed the 1968 Olympic Games trials to continue training in Japan. Sakamoto amassed twenty-two NAAU titles and six USGF titles. His first NAAU title was achieved at age sixteen. Mako coached at Brigham Young and UCLA. He

was the assistant coach to 1984 US gold medal Olympic team in Los Angeles. He was Peter Vidmar's and Tim Daggett's personal coach at UCLA and helped coach Mitch Gaylord. Mitch, Tim and Peter were members of the 1984 gold medal Olympic gymnastics team. In 1965 Sakamoto won all seven events in the NAAU Championship. At age sixty, Mako is in great physical condition. On his 53rd birthday, Mako performed 163 handstand dips for thirty minutes without coming down from a handstand. This feat may be destined to be recognized by Ripley's Believe It or Not as an unbelievable record feat. During the era of Japanese dominance in gymnastics in FIG events it was not uncommon to see the many Japanese names in the top world rankings. Sakamoto's name was there as well, only he was an American.

RUDY CARDENAS-PROFESSIONAL ACROBATICS-JUGGLER

Rudy was born into circus life. At age eight he became the first act to open at El Patio, the largest nightclub in Mexico City. By age ten he was working La Urca, the famous casino in Rio de Janeiro. 1948 brought him an appearance in Miami that led to a five year contract with Paramount Pictures. Blessed with speed Rudy could juggle nine balls with an ingratiating mannerism that was a cross between a boy wonder and a bullfighter. Cardenas toured with Bob Hope and made numerous appearances on the Ed Sullivan show. He did a Royal Command performance for Prince Rainier and Princess Grace. He performed for Queen Elizabeth, Winston Churchill, Richard Nixon and three different Presidents of Mexico. Rudy was the winner of the Las Vegas Entertainment Awards and selected Las Vegas' Best Novelty Act for two consecutive years. He received the coveted Cantinflas Trophy, the prestigious Rastelli Trophy in Italy, was named to the London Palladium Hall of Fame and voted best novelty act by Paramount Pictures three years running. Rudy was the only act ever featured on the electric billboard sign in New York on Time Square. It was acknowledge during his prime, that Rudy was the greatest juggler in the world. Rudy's son Dolf received the induction award representing his father.

2008 GALLERY OF LEGENDS NOMINATION

Dick Gutting will be sending out nomination forms for 2008 Gallery of Legends. All nominations and supporting information must be submitted by January 5th of 2008 at the latest or they will not be considered by the nomination committee.

SPECIAL APPECIATION

A special WAS membership thank you to Bruno Klaus for his continued financial support of WAS. Bruno's kind contribution allows WAS to operate and cover expenses that could not be met by any other source. Bruno will be footing the bill for new medallions for the 2008 GOL inductees. Thank you Bruno!!!

