

## Sad News

### Sonja "Sunny" Stingl – May 28, 2025



Sunny passed away peacefully on May 28, 2025, in [Lynden, Washington](#) just a short distance from her grandparents' farm-at the age of 91. A beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend, Sunny lived up to her name, bringing light, warmth, and joy to everyone around her.

Born in Bremerton, Washington, Sunny was the daughter of Alfred and Olga Wold. From a young age, she showed a passion for performance, becoming an accomplished figure skater. Her love for skating took her across Canada with the **Ice Capades**, and later, she shared her talents by teaching in San Diego and Sun Valley, Idaho.

Sunny met the love of her life, Karl Stingl, on a skiing trip with friends to Stevens Pass, Washington. The two adventurers quickly fell in love and were married in 1955. With Karl working as a ski coach and Sunny teaching ice skating, they began a life full of shared passions. They raised four children in Edmonds, Washington, building a joyful life filled with skiing, skating, many camping and fishing trips, swimming, tennis, laughter, and-of course-singing happily on every road trip.

Sunny never lost her adventurous spirit. Whether gliding across the ice or setting off on new travels, she embraced life with warmth and curiosity. Her sense of humor, generosity, and steadfast love will be dearly missed.

She is survived by her children: Heidi Adams (Kelly), Sandy Christie (Bob), Kristi Stingl, and Ashley Hunter, wife of her late son Karl Jr.; her grandchildren: Kari Christie (Josh), Jessica Lewis (Jesse), Kate Lewis, and Anna Christie; and her great-grandchildren: River and Rosie.

She was preceded in death by her mother and father, Olga and Alfred. Husband, Karl, and her son Karl Jr.

In honor of Sunny, the family invites you to lace up your skates, head to the mountains and hit the slopes, laugh a little louder, hug a little tighter, and find fun in every day.

A celebration of life will be held at Squaticum Boathouse in Bellingham on July 11 from 11 to 3pm.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/legacyremembers/sonja-sunny-stingl-obituary?id=58580689>

## Our Alumni in the News



Breaking News!!! – A special casting team member from Willy Bietak Productions will be coming to our LIVE event in Sun Valley!! 🌟 Dina Carruthers brings a unique blend of world-class entertainment experience and operational expertise to her role as Manager of Entertainment Operations. With over seven years at the company, Dina has become the driving force behind some of the most memorable special events and productions in the industry. 🌟 Dina's journey to the top of the operations world is anything but ordinary. Before joining Willy Bietak Productions, Dina dazzled audiences across the globe as a professional figure skater. She toured with the legendary **Ice Capades**, enchanting crowds with her artistry and athleticism, and later to the international stage with Holiday on Ice Europe. Her time on tour wasn't just about dazzling spins and gravity elements, it was about learning the art of live entertainment from the inside out, a perspective she brings to every project she leads today.

In addition to Dina's operational leadership, she is a vital member of the casting team at Willy Bietak Productions. Dina has worked with hundreds of skaters from around the world, preparing them for their debut with the company and expertly guiding them through every stage of the rehearsal process. Her deep understanding of both performance and production allows her to mentor new talent with empathy and insight, ensuring each skater feels confident and ready to shine on stage. Dina's hands-on approach and commitment to excellence have made her an invaluable resource for aspiring performers and a cornerstone of the company's continued success.

## Memories

I think we can all relate....

Richard Kreibich – Beautifully written about show skating no matter which show you skated with. We can all relate. Thank you, Richard for putting down your memories (and ours). It's exactly like we remember it.

My fellow skaters, this is my attempt for a short story. Let me know if you like it, I can always erase it. Or share it.

### **Ode to Skaters**

Some memories to share before dementia steals them away.

The truly international group of ice skaters thrived during the golden years of ice shows in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

Young skaters came from countries and cities across the globe.

Before that era, skating was dominated by performers mostly from Central and Northern Europe, North America, and Canada.

We called ourselves "gypsies" as we traveled the world, living out of suitcases in hotels.

In some cases, we traveled in cars, pulling trailers, or some of the boys even lived in VW buses.

We flew between continents on chartered planes, and on land, we moved in buses, trains, or ferries.

We skated in all kinds of climates and on all kinds of ice.

Some places were so hot that we performed premieres on thin ice, risking injuries when skates cracked through layers between freezing pipes.

We were uninsured.

We often played ten shows a week.

There was a stark double standard in salaries between skaters from the West and those from communist countries in the East.

We partied endlessly—so much so that some hotels didn't want us back!

Some skaters spent years skating and clubbing, while others explored every adventure the travels brought. Every year, we had rehearsals for new shows.

Many skating numbers required exceptional skill and memorizing intricate steps.

We constantly changed costumes, applied makeup, and smiled for the audience.

After the last show in a town, the ice was broken down by automated hammers, and laborers loaded the equipment into large trucks.

Our trailers were usually parked next to the sports building, so we often opted to drive through the night to the next town rather than trying to sleep amid all the noise.

We drove in all weather, sometimes hundreds of miles, with nothing more than the address of the next venue.

Tragically, some of our colleagues were lost in car accidents along the way.

The venues were mostly sports buildings, exhibition halls, Roman arenas, or even bullfighting arenas.

The latter were often quite unpleasant, with improvised, stinky dressing rooms.

Our costumes traveled in special crates, which carried hanging outfits, headpieces, boot covers, and other accessories, including our personal makeup cases.

We always carried our skates with us—losing or forgetting them would have had catastrophic consequences in an era when the nearest sports shop could be thousands of miles away.

This was long before Amazon made replacements a click away!

Every skater can tell you about nightmares of losing skates, running barefoot, and being late for a show.

We rehearsed in every new town because ice size varied according to the venue. We also had to temporarily replace ill skaters.

There were photo shoots with journalists and, occasionally, rehearsals for fashion shows in which some skaters participated.

For these gigs, we were often rewarded with discounts on fashion items.

In the “old days,” publicity didn’t come from the internet.

Instead, a truck with huge speakers and a show billboard drove through town, creating noise pollution that locals couldn’t ignore!

In many cities, the entire group was invited to well-catered parties hosted by the city mayor, complete with plenty of drinks.

Nightclubs often offered us free entry as our presence was great publicity for them.

This was a treat in cities like Paris, with venues such as the Lido, Moulin Rouge, and Casino de Paris, as well as the more risqué shows in Hamburg—even if some of our girls were underage in the 1960s.

Some parties, like Halloween celebrations, were unforgettable.

But it wasn’t just the parties.

When they ended, we returned to our hotel rooms and often felt lonely, far from home, family, and friends.

We were a close-knit group, traveling and working together for at least a season, often longer.

There was incredible camaraderie, with no boundaries of politics, nationality, or gender.

Whether gay or straight, we respected and appreciated one another, building lifelong friendships and enduring marriages.

Even decades later, we stay in touch through Facebook groups, Instagram, and reunions in cities around the world.

There are many videos on YouTube to reminisce and for others to witness our glory days.

Becoming a professional skater took immense effort, but we had the best years in the best profession.

Now, our numbers are dwindling, and we miss those who have joined the ranks of “skating heaven.”

## Remember.....



Walt Disney shown with a group of his characters, which performed in a "Walt Disney Toy Shop" fantasy as part of the Ice Capades, during intermission on opening night in Los Angeles on May 8, 1950



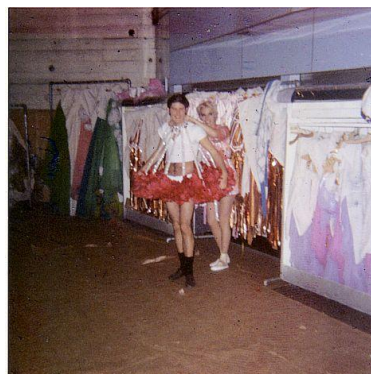
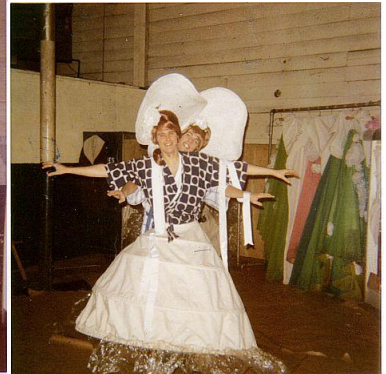
Kids with their moms in 1963



## Backstage Antics



What did you do to get through a three-show day?



Thank you Richard Morse for the fond memories.

## Videos worth checking out

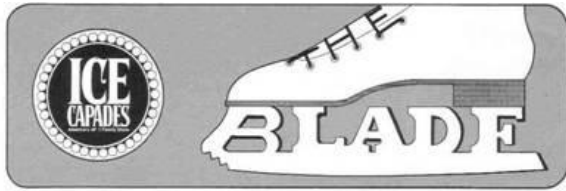
Teri Andrews came upon a few old PBS "Visiting with Huell Howser" videos that she wanted to share with everyone. Thanks Teri.

The first one was produced in 2013 at the Paramount Ice Rink with a history of the **Zamboni machine**.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/zamboni-erk3kd/?source=social>

This next one was produced in 2011. Although not Ice Capades, it is Ice Follies and something most of us will remember.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/frick-6uygxn/?source=social>



The website, [www.icecapadestheblade.com](http://www.icecapadestheblade.com) has been revamped and more information has been added. If you have something to add, please send them.

Look here for **2025 Ice Capades Reunion** information, including reunion pictures

**Cast, Precision & Production Pictures** – Relive some memories.

**Past reunion Pictures** – Check them out for some you may have missed.

**Rosters** – Looking for someone or remembering who you skated with in the show?

**Video links** – have been collecting skating 'You Tube' links from the early years.

**Program Covers** – we had the most beautiful covers

**Past Issues of The Blade** – just in case you missed an issue

**Past Reunion Pictures** – relive the times you attended the reunions

**In Memorium** – remembering those who have left us too soon

Check it out!

## Upcoming Events



CELEBRATING THE JOY  
OF DANCING ON ICE

**Ice Theatre of New York, Inc. ®**

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

Ticket and information at [icetheatre.org/tickets](http://icetheatre.org/tickets)

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