

ON THE EDGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE SPEED SKATERS

MARCH 1989

SOME PARTY!! There will never be another 1st anniversary of the Club, and there just couldn't be another bash like the one we had celebrating that singular birthday.

Everyone who is 'anyone' was there. We rented Berkeley Iceland and decorated the interior to resemble the outdoor oval at Lake Placid; trees, shrubs and artificial snow from Donner Pass! A valet parking service was on hand to facilitate the guests' arrival. Many came in 'stretch' limos looking more like state officials and movie celebrities in their ball gowns and tuxedos.

Among the notable were: Bonnie Blair, Eric Heiden, Guy Daignault, Eric Flaim, Nick Thometz, Brian Arsenau, Andy Gabel, Louis Grenier, Bill Lanigan, Gaetan Boucher, Tatsuyoshi Ishihara, Peter van de Velde, Jaco Mos, Irving Jaffee, Bill Disney, Terry McDermott, Diane Holum, Leah Poulos Mueller, Peter Mueller, Doc Savage, Ard Schenk, Shirley Yates, Cees Verkerk, Yvonne Van Gennip, Dan Jansen, Sylvie Daigle, Franz Veryken (and his byken), Toshinobu Kawai, Jerry Search and Jimmy Hoffa!!

Champagne flowed from two miniature Zambonis set up just off the ice on either end of the red line. Hors d'oeuvres and petit fours on one table, Beluga caviar and Devon sour cream on the other. Nothing heavy, but Wolfgang Puck simply outdid himself. Alice Waters and Jeremiah Tower were responsible for main course and dessert, respectively. Delish.

Two bands were engaged for the evening; Santana with the Tower of Power Horn Section boomed out of the ten foot speakers under the organ loft, while at the other end of the ice, twelve members of the S.F. Symphony were assembled as a chamber orchestra. The amalgam of sounds at center ice made one feel musically schizophrenic. Guests gathered in front of both ensembles to cheer them on.

Sonia Heine was escorted by a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee, and confessed that she would have rather been a speed skater. Never too late; after all, Peggy Fleming comes to our speed sessions every week disguised as Nancy Graves!

After a couple of hours of socializing, imbibing and boundless stomach-stuffing, we cleared the ice for the entertainment phase. Three legged races started off the excitement, followed by tug of war, Zamboni races, leap frog on skates and an incredible exhibition of sheer strength by Ferd Schaffer, who pulled a fully loaded Zamboni around the rink using only his teeth! What an animal.

Bonnie Blair, affected by the bubbly, gave a demonstration of how to do cross-overs while skating clockwise on offset skates. Mary Wong took her to the powder room to 'unwind'.

Eric Heiden flexed his thigh and simultaneously split the seams in both trouser legs.

Vincent Lowe, who went undetected, bit most of the guests on the knee.

Johan Nowack sported a lime green tuxedo with tights in lieu of pants. He could only find three dates to bring that evening. Bummer.

And there was Bill Ulett in a dinner jacket with a 'Members Only' logo sewn over the pocket and a gold embroidered outdoor blade on the back.

Richard Arbib ironed his hair for the occasion. He was seen trying to sell his old Bonts to Jimmy Hoffa, and later was talking to the hand drying machine in the mens' lounge.

Greg Wong videotaped the whole evening, but due to his low tolerance for spirits, he soon got the camera turned around, so we have three hours of Greg's bloodshot eye! Great picture quality, but not very interesting. Next time we'll have a non-drinking 'designated photographer'.

Scott Wong and Matthew Rulloda spent a record \$1121.50 in the ice rink video games. They had to send a cab to a bowling alley for change!

Haze and David Thompson wore matching outfits, however, she later did her Lady Godiva imitation on a dressage horse of hers. (Hooray for our side!)

Bill Robertson had ice studs hot glued to his sew-ups and gave a demo of how to combine his two favorite activities.....very carefully!

As a finale, rink manager, Scott Cosby gave a Zamboni driving demonstration. He started out with a couple of wheelies and then threw an entire load of snow into the air. Next he did figure eights. (Roman numerals!) He segued into a parallel parking show, using only his index finger, topped off by a few doughnuts. The lights dimmed, signalling the end of an unforgettable evening. The brief fireworks display sent the guests home knowing they had the experience of a lifetime and wouldn't likely see something like this again for a long, long time.....

Some of the Club members lingered over warm Dom Perignon and talked of how to top this years' effort next time. Aren't you sorry if you missed?

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Here's a public session question: What do you get when you have a bunch of figure skaters buried up to their chins in the ice? (Ans: More ice!)

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We are in the process of planning our first race meet. This will be an entry-level experience for all of us; we will be learning details of race conduct and skills such as timing, starting, judging, clerking, etc.. The name of this initial effort will be the 'G.G.S.S. 1st Anniversary Race'. We have decided to save the name 'Gold Rush Invitational' to be our annual event. First we need to learn the 'how tos'. Volunteer for any job you feel is challenging. Call Greg or Mario.

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Sara Bont told us of a secret skate being developed by Inze, that he is certain will be the winner of the next World's Championships. It is a skate with a built-in timer. Set the timer for your desired (record) time. The trick is that the skater knows that after the allotted time, a

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stainless steel blade shoots up from the sole and pierces the foot. Inze believes this is just the kind of motivation the next World's Champion must have in order to skate in record time. Let the Aussie's have this one.

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What blade length is correct for you? Here's some information of interest to those in doubt supplied by Jerry Search, President of the S.C.S.S.A..

<u>Skater</u>	<u>Blade Length</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Shoe</u>	<u>Ability Level</u>
Guy Daignault	15 3/4"	5'-6"	145	7 1/2	World Champion
Amy Peterson	15	5'-2"	120	7	World Team
Tricia Stennes	15 1/2	5'-5"	125	7 1/2	World Team
Lexie Riley	15 1/2	5'-6"	145	7 1/2	National Team
Keith King	16 1/2	5'-10"	155	11	National Team
Charles King	16 1/2	5'-8"	145	9	National Team
David Tamborino	16	5'-1"	110	10	National Champion
Brian Arsenau	16	5'-8"	160	9	Nat'l.Champ/World Team
Mark Greenwald	16	5'-4"	150	9	National Champion
Sasquatch	24	8'-6"	510	18	Big Foot Finals

To determine the correct blade length for you, consult with an expert. It is currently believed that one should skate on the longest blade they can 'handle'. If you are buying blades and hardware from Marty Hill at Built For Speed, he can put you on the correct length with just a few questions about your height, weight and skating purpose. Jerry Search can also help, but he isn't in 'business' for consultation. You'll have to catch him at home, and it'll have to be your nickel. Get a 'blue box', Jerry.

Regarding blade rocker, Jerry recommends not using an extreme radius. A radically rockered skate will turn faster (due to the short ice/blade contact), but you will pay for it in the straights with more frictional drag. Many World class skaters are 'flattening' out their 'custom' or radically rockered blades. It's great to have access to this type of information, thanks, Jerry.

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It is time to vote for a Skater Representative to the A.S.U. Board of Control. This is our 'Senator' or 'Congressperson' to the National Assn.. Three skaters have submitted their names for consideration; only one may be elected. This is the person who, by attending meets all around the country, brings skaters' concerns and suggestions to the big guys. For the past two years, Bonnie Blair has been that person. Also in contention are Tony Knickmeyer and Bob Finkel. To help you in arriving at a decision on people about whom you know little, (except Bonnie), Tony Knickmeyer attends major race meets every weekend all around the country. Bob Finkel is also an active race participant, more eastern oriented (no pun). You can return Bonnie to the job, or give another person a chance...your choice. Since you have the 'priviledge' to vote, do it! A ballot was included on P.18 of the February Racing Blade, or you may get a Xeroxed copy from Gabe. April 1, 1989 is the deadline, and they must be mailed to Dennis Marquard, 1495 Wayne Ave., Lakewood, Ohio 44107. Help our National Association work. A.S.U. members in good standing only; Intermediates and older. See, age does have an occasional priviledge.

For all the time it takes to put that perfect edge on your blades, doesn't it make good sense to keep blade guards on until you actually step onto the ice? Of course, you may want to use your blades like mine-sweepers, finding every piece of debris on the floor, ie: candy, hair pins, screws from the bottom of figure skates, or even the possibility of your blade slipping between the seam in the matting and grinding your carefully applied edge to the concrete beneath!

Avoid this calamity by wearing your guards onto the ice. 'But', you say, 'I'll slip and fall.' Try this: buy 3 feet of 1" wide stair tread no-skid strip paper at your local hardware. It looks and feels like coarse, black sandpaper with a peel-off backing. Prepare the bottom of your leather guards by wiping with denatured alcohol or other non-oily solvent. Abrade the bottom with a rough rasp or coarse sandpaper. Cut a strip for each guard, about 1/2" short of both ends. Apply a small amount of rubber cement or contact cement (real gooey stuff with a brush attached to the bottle cap) to the last 1" at the heel and toe. Peel off the backing and apply the strips. Carefully wipe away any 'goo' that squeezes out as you press them into place. If there is more ooze later, don't worry, it is easily 'rolled' off after it sets. Wrap the guards with masking tape, rubberbands or anything that will hold the stripping in place overnight.

Now you may brave even the most hazardous treks from the changing area to the ice. You will coolly and casually stroll out onto the ice, to the amazement of your fellow skaters, who will be waiting for you to do a pratt-fall and go 'splat'. Make sure to put your name on these when you are done. Something this handy has a way of disappearing at ice rinks.

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CAUTION: If you are planning to buy a pair of molded shell skates (Bont, Laberge, Swift, etc.) be advised that 'standard' sharpening jigs are not compatible with this type of skate. If you have a Viking Flat Top, Joha, Planert or other type that was designed for outdoor blades or 'old style' off-sets, you will need to make a purchase! The jigs aren't tall enough to accommodate the higher boots of the new style skates, and with the unusual angles of the blade-set on molded skates, the boots sit at odd angles in the jig, and there just isn't enough distance between blades to house the boots.

At least three jigs are compatible with molded skates. Dave Knickmeyer's hand machined beauties, Dennis Pennington's black, square tubing machines from Australia and the A.L.S. (Automatic Leveling System) from Marty Hill at Built For Speed. If you have relatively large feet, wear Bont custom skates (ultra wide) and use a radical setting on your blades, you may not have a choice. Only the A.L.S. jig may accommodate your skates; it has the greatest distance between blades. The Knickmeyer and Pennington jigs may be disassembled for travel, the A.L.S. must be cleverly packed in your gear bag by 'nesting' skates and equipment around it. It is a wide piece of sheet metal bent in a 'U' shape. For those who are exquisitely meticulous, the A.L.S. offers a significant advantage in that it is a 'flat top' jig. This gives you a reference plane to visually check your rocker, as well as giving you a constant surface on which to use a run-out gauge to determine in 1000's of an inch, the curvature on both blades as well as comparing blade height.

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A jig that is another option, requires the removal of blades every time you sharpen. The Laberge flat jig. It is a cast aluminum tool that is as compact as the lid of a shoe box. Because it requires the removal of the blades, it isn't very practical to someone needing to sharpen between heats, or the not-so-mechanical skater, but it is the most precise and the least expensive. Repeatable accuracy is critical if you use bi-metal blades such as Chevron or Swift, or Titanium Oxide coated Laberge Gold blades. So little metal is removed in sharpening these that anything less than microscopic accuracy makes for more work every time! Since the blades are mounted by their angle brackets (cups), the blades are unfettered, allowing you to de-burr easily while they are in the jig. Another contribution to accuracy.

All have up-stops and toe-stops, except the Laberge (not necessary). The A.L.S. jig is \$155, Dave Knickmeyer's is \$120, Pennington's is \$95 to \$100 and the Laberge is \$45.

Is 'Speed Skating Equipment' becoming the longest and costliest column in your check book spreadsheet?

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NEW PRODUCTS DEPARTMENT: Not unlike camera 'systems', roof rack 'systems' and stereo 'systems', a system of skate accessories is about to hit the market. All of these products mount directly in or on your skates, and are mutually compatible. First out will be the turn signals! That's right. Using the blade tube to house batteries and other electronics, these include a special mini halogen bulb (bayonet mount), optical quality lenses and a marvel of circuitry that anticipates your directional changes with the use of a mercury switch. Each side is individually powered by two AA Lithium batteries (included), and has a manual override for use during races when you don't want those behind you to know your intentions. One of the guys in the lab said he has modified an early prototype to use aimable strobe lights. Once properly set, these light beams will momentarily disorient the skater behind you with 200,000 candlepower. Great for discouraging imminent passes.

The next step in the 'system' is the Pass Neutralizer. Also utilizing the tubes, this instrument of defense is triggered by a micro switch that is cleverly concealed in the palm of either hand (one for each tube). They are attached by 'hairlike' wires that are easily and comfortably hidden under your tights. They will not interfere with other electronic devices such as pulse monitors, pacemakers, C.B. radios, etc.. The object here is to break to the lead from the start and let the pack form up behind you. As you place your left skate into the turn at the first block, a light squeeze on your left palm and a mixture of white (undetectable) soot and finely powdered rock are shot out of the back of the left tube in the path of the pack. This is proven to cause an immediate reduction in pursuit competition. With a long or segmented pack, you may use the right tube as a follow-up, but the right is used in the straightaway. Just remember to avoid the fallen skaters and the patches of powder on your solo trip to victory. Wait for an ice cut before racing again!

A forward firing model will follow in a few months that propels a bunch of monofilament 'bolo' like gizmos that wrap around both blades of the skaters in front of you and cause them great distress (falling), also giving you a clear road to the finish. Optimally, you could have one of

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each, thereby giving you the ultimate protection. Wipe 'em out in front or rear....electronically.

Tubes are easily reloaded with refills available from the manufacturer, or you may concoct your own favorite medium for any desired effect. Let your imagination run wild. Ultimo Racing Accessories, Yreka, Ca. 97663.

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Some articles that will be included in up and coming issues of ON THE EDGE are: Complete foot casting instructions for molded skates/How to set the blades on molded shell skates from Novice through Extreme/How to sharpen skates, basics, tricks and 'no-nos'/How to true a sharpening stone that has gotten into a rut/Aerobic training and how to determine your proper pulse range/Rockering blades; who should and who shouldn't/Bending blades for racing/Stretching before skating, plus topics not yet determined.

REMEMBER, this is your Club and your newsletter. Please submit your ideas for articles and information for inclusion. Write something up and give it to Gabe (everyone else does) and watch for it in a future issue.

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FOR SALE: Laberge Rouge size 44 with 16 1/2" blades. Earlier model without lace covers. Frank Lafferty (916) 944-8215

WANTED: Laberge Rouge size 40 or 41 with 16" blades. Call Frank Lafferty. See above.

Frank is recovering from a broken shoulder. Get well and back on the ice soon, Frank. (Although, that may be the reason he has a broken shoulder.)

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Thanks to Bonnie Crater for creating gummed pads of 'tear-off' info sheets about our Club that attach to a speed skating mini-poster for placement in ice rinks, bike shops, etc..

GOLDEN GATE SPEED SKATERS
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