



## INTERVIEW FROM RON MUNN

*HAD TRAMPOLINE.....  
DID TRAVEL!*

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*It is a great honor for Acrobaticsports.com to have interviewed trampoline legend **Ron Munn**. We would like to thank Ron for his time, his kindness, and the passion that you will find in his detailed answers. His thorough answers should be a source of great enjoyment for all trampoline fans throughout the world.*

**Acrobaticsports.com:** How did you get introduced to trampolining? When was it and what were the circumstances surrounding your introduction to this sport? Did you practice other sports before trampolining?

**Ron Munn:** In my 6<sup>th</sup> year of elementary school (1951) in Amarillo, Texas, when I was 11 years old, a family across the street from the school had purchased a Nissen trampoline, with a solid canvas bed ( 5' x 10"...1.52m x 3.03m.), for their backyard. As soon as I saw it, I realized that I had to climb their fence when they weren't home to give it a try. I had already been very interested in swimming and diving, as well as tumbling, and the thought of being able to bounce high in the air on a trampoline was something I had to try. On numerous occasions I did climb the fence and got the opportunity to bounce with delight and finally accomplished a front somersault. This was the beginning!

The big step came in 1952. During a 7<sup>th</sup> grade school dance, a gentleman by the name of **Nard Cazzell** presented a small demonstration of trampolining by two of his students. Nard had opened a trampoline club in Amarillo with two Nissen trampolines, and went around to schools giving demonstrations in hopes that he could increase the number of students in his club. I, of course, wanted to join, and convinced my parents to pay for lessons for one month, but within that month learned a great deal and continued to take lessons in the future.

The late **NARD CAZZELL** was by far one of the greatest inspirational **TEACHERS** of trampolining. Teaching and coaching are two different things, and Nard taught me everything I know about the mechanics of acrobatics and how they applied to the trampoline. His record of National and International champions is very impressive and includes, among others, World Champion **Dave Jacobs**.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** What did attract you in trampolining at the beginning?

**Ron Munn:** My main attraction was the fact that I was able to learn very quickly and of course the enjoyment of being a free bird in the air. I learned at an early age that because of my size and speed, I would not be able to play the great Texan/American sport of football. Therefore, I found a great sense of accomplishment in trampolining. The sport of trampoline in the late 50's and throughout the 60's was becoming well established in the United States, and since it was a part of gymnastics at the university level, scholarships were available to those who were able to compete at a national level. This, of course, added an additional incentive to become highly accomplished at the sport. Also, the thrill of being able to perform in front of an audience was very exciting.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** In your opinion, what were your strengths and qualities on the trampoline?

**Ron Munn:** From the beginning I was able to quickly accomplish many of the basic skills on the trampoline, and did seem to have the coordination that was necessary. I seemed to have an extra ability of being able to twist quite easily...better than somersaulting. Hence, in the 50's and 60's being able to perform skills that included a great deal of twisting was of benefit. Also, my overwhelming desire to be on a trampoline at all times certainly helped move me along at a greater pace.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Were there some trampolinists or gymnasts you looked up to when you were a young trampolinist?

**Ron Munn:** At Nard's club there was another trampolinist, **Joe Tim Way**, who I certainly looked up to at a young age because of his ability, and also because he received a scholarship to the University of Iowa gymnastics team. I always looked up to **Edsel Buchanan**, who was one of the first national champions, as well as **Robert Elliott**, who was also from Amarillo, Texas and was the National AAU Champion in 1954 & 55 (**Steve Elliott's** father). Also, the late **Frank LaDue**, who attended the University of Iowa, was very inspirational, and who along with **Jim Norman** wrote one of the first books on trampolining, "Two Seconds of Freedom".

I should point out that in the early 50's Frank LaDue, along with **George Nissen**, his wife **Annie** and their daughter, **Dagmar** traveled throughout the world demonstrating the trampoline and helping develop interest outside the United States. The late great trampoline comedian **Larry Griswold** (who performed many years in Paris) was important to me, not only for his knowledge of the trampoline, but also he inspired me at a later date to pursue a professional career with the trampoline. He, along with George Nissen was very instrumental at the very beginning in both the development and introduction of the trampoline. **Ed Cole**, who also attended the University of Michigan, along with Michigan's coach **Newt Loken** were a great inspiration. Most important were George Nissen, **Ted Blake** and **Kurt Baechler**, who were all extremely motivational during my years of, not only competing, but also while working closely with these gentlemen in "business of trampolines".

**Acrobaticsports.com:** It is our understanding that you were coached by **Newt Loken** at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor. Could you tell us more about him and his coaching techniques?

**Ron Munn:** Upon finishing high school (1958), I had the opportunity of attending several universities on scholarship, having won the 1956 National AAU Championships and placing within the top 6 in 1957/58. **Newt Loken** was the gymnastics coach at the University of Michigan. His great personality and tremendous coaching talent helped him develop outstanding teams on a yearly basis; therefore I accepted his invitation to attend Michigan. **Ed Cole** was attending Michigan at that time, and was also instrumental in getting me to come to Michigan. By the time I attended university, I had reached a high level of skills and success. Therefore, Newt's coaching was to provide additional motivation, support and knowledge for competitions. His wonderful personality and spirit inspired everyone on the team, and certainly added to the success their success. He always had a very positive attitude and the ability to bring out the best performance in everyone.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Who else were your coaches during your career? What were their specificities?

**Ron Munn:** **Nard Cazzell** was my only teacher. **Newt Loken** was my only coach. Nard was a firm believer that each student must learn the very basics of trampolining and master all the different beginning combinations, thereby increasing one's ability to learn more advanced skills. Once complete routines were learned for competition, each training session consisted of doing these routines ..**from start to finish**, rather than individual segments. Working on individual skills was important of course, but most important was the ability of being able to complete entire routines.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you describe a typical practice at the time you were an athlete?

**Ron Munn:** As mentioned above, a typical practice of up to two hours consisted mostly of doing complete routines from start to finish. Over and over again. Keep in mind that when I started trampolining the beds were solid canvas. From there, we progressed to solid nylon beds, then 1 ¾" (1.905 centimeters) cotton webbing beds. Next were 1 ¾" (1.905 centimeters) nylon webbing beds, and finally 1" (2.54 centimeters) webbing beds. I never bounced on the narrow webbing of today's trampoline beds. Accordingly, each practice required a great deal of stamina and work just to get high enough in the air to accomplish some of the skills we were trying to do at that time. Thanks to **George Nissen**, the beds became better throughout the years.☺

**Acrobaticsports.com:** How did you explore the trampoline techniques? Were you an autodidact, or were there some established techniques at the time you were jumping?

**Ron Munn:** When I began trampolining in the 50's, the activity was still somewhat in the formation stages. We were still trying to figure out what could be accomplished on a trampoline, but of course were limited to the amount of height the trampoline beds would

provide. Being able to attempt a triple somersault or multiple somersaults with twists was very difficult, if not impossible to perform...especially in routines. Most routines consisted of fliffus movements, back full twists, forward one and a half twist somersaults, double and sometimes triple twists within one backward somersault as well as backward double somersaults. Stomach landings were used with single and double cody movements. Each individual tried to combine these movements differently within their routines.

I believe I was one of the very first to perform a forward double somersault with a 1 ½ twist within a routine (the 1 ½ twist was performed in the first somersault). When I began competing in 1954 we had to perform 3 routines with 8 skills in each routine. Between each routine we were allowed a 10- second break. There was no penalty for repeating skills.

Sometime in the 60's the rules were changed to 2 routines with 8 skills in each routine with a 10- second break between each routine. No penalty for repeats. After that, it was 2 routines with 10 skills in each routine with no penalty for repeats. Quite honestly, I can't remember when the rules changed again to one routine, but, by that time, I was not competing on an amateur level. Also, around the same time the introduction of compulsory routines started being used. It should also be pointed out that during my competitive years, there was no degree of difficulty rating as there is today. That was introduced sometime in the 70's and was developed by **Bob Bollinger**.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Do you remember your first trampoline competition?

**Ron Munn:** My first trampoline competition was the Southwest Open in Fort Worth, Texas in 1954. I believe I placed third in the senior open division. At the time I was 13 years old.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the first international competition, the 1955 Pan American Games in Mexico City (MEX) that were won by **Donald Harper** (USA)?

**Ron Munn:** The first time the sport of trampoline was in an international competition was the 1955 Pan American Games. At the time I was 14 years old, and was not able to compete in the USA trials, since the age limit was 16. The trials were for the individual who would represent the USA in the trampoline event, as well as all the gymnastic events, and was held in Chicago, Illinois. **Joe Tim Way**, of Nard's Club was old enough to compete in the trials. Since Nard wanted me to gain some experience I traveled to Chicago with Joe Tim Way and Nard to observe the competition.

**Donald Harper**, who was attending Ohio State University, was the trial winner. Accordingly, Donald Harper represented the USA at the Pan American Games in Mexico City, and won the Gold Medal. This was truly the first international competition in the sport of trampoline. Donald Harper was also an outstanding springboard diver, and represented the USA in the Olympics, winning a medal.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on your win at the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) Nationals in 1959?

**Ron Munn:** In 1959 I won the National AAU competition which was held at the University of Massachusetts. I also won the 1956 National AAU competition which was held at Penn State University. This was the first national competition I won at the age of 15. In 1957 I placed 6<sup>th</sup> and in 1958 placed 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on your participation to some NCAA Championships?

**Ron Munn:** When I entered the University of Michigan (1958), there was a rule at the time that first year students were not allowed to compete in NCAA sport competitions. During my second year at the University, I dropped out of school to travel to South Africa (beginning of 1960) with a trampoline team to perform exhibitions. I did not return to the USA until 3 years later (1962). Therefore, I never completed university nor competed in NCAA competitions. More details on this South African trip will follow.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on your gold medal at the 1959 Pan American Games in Chicago (USA), where you won with 9.55 pts., beating **Harold Holmes** (USA), and 2-time gymnastics Olympian **Abie Grossfeld** (USA), and where you also took a bronze medal in “Club Swinging” we believe?

**Ron Munn:** The 1959 Pan American Games trials were held at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York. Having won the trials, I was selected to represent the USA at the Games which were held in Chicago in the month of August, 1959. Each country competing was allowed to enter three individuals in the event, therefore the USA also entered **Harold Holmes** (tumbling champion) and **Abie Grossfeld** (gymnastic champion) in the trampoline event.

Along with winning the trampoline event, the USA entered me in the Indian club swinging event, as well as Harold Holmes. We had never been involved in Indian club swinging, but did practice for a few weeks before the event, to try and do our best in the competition. The President of the Pan American Games was from Mexico and had a son who was outstanding in the Indian club swinging event, and of course won the Gold Medal. Second place went to another Mexican, and I took third, or the bronze medal. It was more fun than anything else, but in some ways I have received more acclaim from the bronze medal than the gold medal I won in the trampoline event.☺

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Do you remember the routines you competed at these Pan American Games?

**Ron Munn:** The routines used at the 1959 Pan American Games were as follows:

1. Fliffus, fliffus, double back somersault, rudy, back somersault full twist, double back somersault, back somersault double twist, back somersault, back 1 ¾ quarter somersault , double cody. (All somersaults in the tuck position).

2. Double back somersault, rudy, back somersault full twist, back somersault double twist, fliffus, back double somersault, rudy, back somersault, back somersault, triple front somersault. (I believe this was the first time a triple somersault was performed in any competition, and all somersaults were performed in the tuck position).

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the first international competition involving Europeans in 1960 in Switzerland?

**Ron Munn:** As mentioned earlier, at the beginning of 1960 I went to South Africa with a team of 5 other trampolinists to perform exhibitions throughout the country. This team included **Ed Cole** as well as **Barbara Gallagher** (both national champions in trampoline). The tour was for 42 days. The organizer of the tour was Mr. **Olle Areborn** who was the national gymnastics coach for South Africa. During our tour Mr. Areborn and I decided it would be a good business idea for me to stay in South Africa and help start the development of the sport of trampoline along with the manufacturing and distribution of trampolines throughout the country. The decision was made for me to stay, but the team also had an additional obligation to do exhibitions in Germany and Switzerland after the tour in South Africa. Once the tour was over in South Africa, we traveled to Germany and then Switzerland for the exhibitions, and at the end competed in Zurich against teams from Germany, Switzerland and I believe the Netherlands. This competition was organized by **Kurt Baechler** and was the first competition that involved the USA competing against Europeans. Prior to that, in the late 50's, there were European competitions organized by Kurt Baechler of Switzerland, Dr. **Heinz Braecklein** of Germany and **Klass Boot** of the Netherlands.

I was the winner of the competition in Switzerland and received a gold ice bucket engraved with "World Champion" on the side. I then returned to South Africa and with Olle Areborn started a company manufacturing trampolines as well as opening jump centers along the coast of South Africa. After 3 years, I decided to return to the USA (end of 1962), and sold out my share of the business. At that time there was another company starting to make trampolines in South Africa which was owned by **Ron Froelich**. Once I left South Africa, the two companies merged into one company; calling it Ron's Trampoline. Of course today, Ron Froelich is highly involved with trampoline both in the United States and at the Olympic level [NB: Ron Froelich is currently the President of the World Games and a member of the Olympic International Committee. He served as President of the FIT for several years]

After returning to the USA, I was considered a professional athlete under the rules, and therefore was not able to continue competing. At that point, I had decided that I was more interested in pursuing a professional career, both performing on the trampoline as well as becoming involved in the business of trampoline and gymnastics equipment sales throughout the world.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on some of the major other domestic or international competitions you took part in?

**Ron Munn:** There were numerous domestic regional competitions that I competed in during the 50's, but quite honestly too many to actually remember. Other than the above, there were no other international competitions, mainly because the sport of trampoline had not evolved enough in other countries to the point that they were ready to compete.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Is there a specific reason why you never competed at a World Championship?

**Ron Munn:** The first recognized World Trampoline Championship was held in 1964, which meant that I was no longer competing. The World Championships in the beginning were organized and financed by the Nissen Corporation and under the direction of **George Nissen** and **Ted Blake**. Due to this support and guidance, the competitions continued, and the FIT was formed.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the rules applicable to competitions at the time?

**Ron Munn:** In earlier answers I addressed the requirements for the number of routines and skills at the competitive level. All routines were judged objectively with the high and low scores dropped and the middle scores added together, then averaged. If a competitor fell off the trampoline, or had a break in their routine for any reason, they were allowed to continue, but the bounce count continued and they would be scored only on the 8 or 10 bounces after their opening skill. Of course, the biggest rule among the competitors was to stay on the trampoline.☺ When the degree of difficulty rule came into play I believe the sport improved at the judging level.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the type of trampolines you were jumping on at the time?

**Ron Munn:** In earlier answers I addressed the construction of the beds. When I first started competing the size of the beds were 6' (1.83 meters) x 12' (3.66 meters) and later they went to 7' (2.13 meters) x 14' (4.27 meters). Ninety-five percent of the trampolines during my competitive years were Nissen trampolines. The other five percent were American Athletic Equipment Company trampolines. At that time there were no EuroTramps.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the safety rules that were applicable at the time? Have you been injured?

**Ron Munn:** During competition, the only safety rules were to make sure you had a least 4 spotters. There were no spotting platforms on the ends of the trampolines, therefore spotters were very important. In the beginning, the frame pads did not cover the springs, but sometime in the 60's Nissen introduced side pads that did cover the springs. Of course, in practice, we used overhead spotting rigs. I was never injured seriously.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on some of the most memorable moments from your trips, competitions, or tourneys throughout the U.S.?

**Ron Munn:** Certainly winning two National Championships and the Pan American Games will always be very memorable to me, especially at such a young age. Being part of the USA team at the Pan American Games in Chicago, Illinois, was wonderful, and a great experience. After pursuing a professional career on the trampoline with **Ed Cole**, we traveled throughout the United States giving performances, and at times traveled with a professional water show. When working with the Nissen Corporation, I toured and performed with foreign teams throughout the United States, including the Russian gymnastic team (**Olga Korbut**), Romanian gymnastic team (**Nadia Comaneci**) and the Russian Sport Acrobatics Team.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on some of the most memorable moments from your trips, competitions, or tourneys abroad?

**Ron Munn:** By far, the most memorable times and moments were during trips abroad. After returning from South Africa, I became involved professionally with the Nissen Corporation in traveling abroad to help promote and demonstrate the trampoline. These trips included traveling to numerous countries throughout Europe (including the Soviet Union), Middle East, Africa, Far East and South America. There were many wonderful moments and experiences, but probably two of the greatest were putting a trampoline on top of the Great Pyramid in Egypt with **George Nissen** and also performing in Trafalgar Square in London. During my working years with the Nissen Corporation, I was fortunate to have traveled to 102 countries, thereby accomplishing a dream of one day seeing the world.



First somersault on the Great Pyramid



Ron Munn in Trafalgar Square



George Nissen & Ron Munn on top of the Great Pyramid

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the shows you performed in Europe with **Ted Blake** (Managing Director of Nissen in England and former Vice President of the FIT) and **Kurt Baechler**? What was the strategy behind these shows?

**Ron Munn:** During the 50's and throughout the 60's, the Nissen Corporation both in the United States and in England was very involved in the promotion and advancement of trampoline. They of course wanted to sell equipment, but realized that to accomplish this



goal they must develop the sport of trampoline internationally to become truly successful. Accordingly, there was no better way than to provide shows and demonstrations, as well as helping direct and organize competitions. Being the managing director of Nissen of England, **Ted Blake** was responsible for the development of trampolining in not only England, but also throughout Europe and the Middle East. **Kurt Baechler** was the representative for Nissen in Switzerland, and was also involved with George and Ted in advancing and supporting the sport throughout Europe. At that time, the United States was more advanced in the sport, therefore providing shows and demonstrations was very beneficial for the advancement of the sport in Europe.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Did you do many trips and shows in France?

**Ron Munn:** From what I remember, I believe the only trip to France for a show was in 1966. This trip was organized by **Ted Blake**, as well as **Lou Richmond** who was the representative for Nissen trampolines in France. During that trip, we also performed in England as well as the Netherlands. There were other trips to France, but I do not believe they involved performing.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** In one of your trips to France in November 1966 in Paris, you along with 2-time World Champion **David Jacobs**, and **Ed Cole**, took part in the shooting of a movie (“Les Coulisses de l’Exploit”) that was shown on French TV in 1967. Could you tell us more on this movie and the circumstances surrounding its shooting?

**Ron Munn:** The performances in Paris were organized by **Ted Blake** and **Lou Richmond**. Quite honestly, I didn’t realize we were shooting a movie that was to be on French TV. In fact, I had not seen this movie until **Damien Dorna** of Acrobaticsports.com provided a copy to me. I do remember that the performance took place in the morning in some type of nightclub, since it was the only place where they could find a ceiling high enough. Unfortunately, the ceiling was still a little low, and at one point, I accidentally put my foot through the ceiling.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on some of the other champions you were facing in competitions at the time, or who were your teammates? Could you tell us few words on their qualities on the trampoline, as well as their personalities?

**Ron Munn:** During my competitive years the following individuals were also competing: **Ed Cole, Dick Kimball, Tom Gomph, Steve Johnson, Frank Hailand, Jay Johnson Jr., Harvey Plant, Jeff Austin, Donald Harper, Dick Albershadt, Glenn Wilson, Robert Elliott, Larry Snyder** and **Johnny Hirsh**. Of course, there were others, but unfortunately I don’t remember all their names. Each individual had their own unique style with both skills and form, but I must say that in those days (as well as today) the performers that finished their routines usually won or placed very high in competition. Bouncers at that time, as well as today, all seem to be jovial and easy going. Possibly the trampoline adds to their personalities with humor and merriment. ☺

**Acrobaticsports.com:** When and why did you decide to retire from competitive trampolining?

**Ron Munn:** As mentioned earlier, I stopped competing in trampoline in 1962 since I was no longer eligible to compete under the rules, plus I wanted to turn professional at that time.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** In your opinion, what was the greatest performance or achievement of your career?

**Ron Munn:** Probably my greatest competitive performance was winning the 1956 National A.A.U. Championship. Achievements can be described in numerous ways, but putting the trampoline on top of the Great Pyramid with **George Nissen** will always have a place in my heart as an outstanding achievement. It took a lot of planning and determination. Also, conceiving, establishing and directing the first series of World Age Group Games along with George Nissen and **Ted Blake** ranks very high in work well done.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** What were some of the most difficult skills you performed (in practice or competition)?

**Ron Munn:** The most difficult skills I performed were a triple back somersault tuck, forward triple somersault tuck with half twist in third somersault(triffus), and 1 ½ twisting front double somersault with the 1½ twist in the first somersault.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Who were the most influential persons on your career?

**Ron Munn:** As mentioned earlier, **Nard Cazzell**, **George Nissen**, **Ted Blake** and **Kurt Baechler** all have been very important in my trampoline life.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** What are your relationships with **George Nissen**, the inventor of trampoline? It is our understanding that you married his first daughter **Dagmar** and still live in Cedar Rapids, Iowa? Do you remember your first meeting with him? Could you tell us more on his personality?

**Ron Munn:** As I have mentioned numerous times above, **George Nissen** has been an outstanding influence in my life. Our first meeting took place when I traveled to Chicago in 1955 to watch the Pan American Games trials. We stopped in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on our way to Chicago so that my teacher **Nard Cazzell** could meet George for the first time, and also see the factory that made the trampolines. At the time, I was only 14, and of course have known George ever since then. He is an amazing individual with a great entrepreneurial mind, and also a wonderful and kind person to everyone who either meets him or works with him. Below is a picture with his “kangaroo” friend.☺ Yes, his first daughter Dagmar and I were married in 1980, and just recently celebrated 25 years of wonderful marriage.



**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the personality of some of the other major figures of the history of trampoline like **Ted Blake** and **Kurt Baechler**?

**Ron Munn:** Like **George Nissen**, **Ted Blake** and **Kurt Baechler** were totally devoted to the sport of trampoline, and of course were very instrumental in helping with the development throughout the world. They both were extremely hard working individuals, but at the same time down to earth and very enjoyable to be with. They both will never be forgotten within the trampoline community.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Did you work for the Nissen Company? If yes, what were your functions within the Company?

**Ron Munn:** Yes, I worked for the company for 32 years. I started in 1965 traveling throughout the world performing clinics and demonstrations and from there settled in Columbus, Ohio in 1969 as a district sales manager. In 1974 I moved to Toronto, Canada as the National Sales manager for Canada. In 1977 I moved to the head office in Cedar Rapids, Iowa and became the director of International Sales and Marketing until the company disbanded in 1997. It should be pointed out that the Nissen Company stopped making trampolines and gymnastics equipment sometime in the late 70's and early 80's but the company continued as Universal Gym Equipment, Inc. manufacturing and distributing exercise equipment throughout the world. The main reason for the discontinuance of trampolines and gymnastics equipment was mainly due to the extremely high liability.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Have you ever coached? If yes, could you tell us more on your experiences as a coach?

**Ron Munn:** In South Africa, we opened the Ron Munn Trampoline School, but I quickly found out that my expertise was not in the line of teaching or coaching, but rather performing. I did assist on numerous occasions in helping teach during national clinics that we held in the USA through the USTA, but beyond that, I was not involved in teaching or coaching.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Do you still follow trampoline? If yes, what is your opinion on the evolution of the sport throughout the years?

**Ron Munn:** I try and follow as much as I possibly can. Unfortunately, in the United States very little coverage is given by the media for the sport, therefore the only possible way is via the internet. Interest continues within the United States at the club level, and competitions are still being held on a regular basis, but I must admit that my knowledge of what is happening today is not as great as it used to be. Hopefully, in the future there will be more coverage by the media.

The sport internationally has grown with tremendous success, not only in the outstanding performances of today, but also in the evolution and advancement of the trampolines themselves. The height that the performers reach today is probably twice as high as when we competed. Also, there have been improvements in safety such as the spotting decks, and the addition of an individual throwing in a crash pad during routines.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** In your opinion, why did the U.S. dominate at the beginning of the history of international competitions, and then struggled to stay among the best countries in trampoline?

**Ron Munn:** In the beginning the U.S. dominated the international competitions mainly because the other countries were still in the early learning stages of the sport. In my opinion, the U.S. has since struggled to stay among the best for the following reasons:

- 1.) Because of liability reasons; the trampoline is no longer used in schools throughout the U.S., thereby destroying the feeder system we once had, especially at the university level.
- 2.) There is no longer support by the companies that manufactured commercial trampolines such as the Nissen Corporation or American Athletic Equipment Company.
- 3.) Due to these two reasons, there seemed to be a tremendous slow- down in trampoline activity over many years, but it now appears that via private clubs, the sport is once again attracting young people at a competitive level, along with teachers and coaches.

Hopefully in the future we will see the U.S. competing at a high level once again.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** What are the main differences between the sport as it is now and as it used to be?

**Ron Munn:** The main differences would be the quality of the trampolines, along with the rule changes. Because of the increased height the skill level is much more difficult, along with greater improvement in form throughout routines. Also, there is certainly better overall organization at the international level, along with more competitions throughout the world.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** In your opinion, who were (or are) the greatest trampoline champions of all times?

**Ron Munn:** I have always felt that all champions in their time were the greatest.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** In your opinion, what are some of the greatest performances ever done on a trampoline?

**Ron Munn:** Certainly many of the routines seen during the Olympics, and also in practice would have to be judged as some of the greatest performances of all time, due to the high degree of difficulty and execution. But, once again, great performances or routines are all relative to both the equipment available, and techniques being used at that time. Today's performances are better than 5 years ago, but I would say that 5 years from now they will be even better.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** What is your regard on the fact that trampoline became an Olympic sport?

**Ron Munn:** George Nissen's dream from "day one" was to see trampolining in the Olympics. And, the dream came true! It makes us all very happy. Thus far, I have not attended the Olympics since trampoline was inducted. I have, however, watched the coverage on T.V. My future recommendation to the Olympic committee would be to include synchronized trampoline as an event since I believe it would have greater media and audience acceptance, and would be easier to understand and enjoy. Olympic diving for instance has had tremendous success with synchronized diving as an added event.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** It is our understanding that you have been President of the U.S Trampoline Association from 1975 through 1978, after having been Vice President. Could you tell us more on the main points of your action with this organization?

**Ron Munn:** The USTA was formed in the early 70's to help increase activity for the sports of trampoline, tumbling and double mini-tramp. It was originally organized with the support of the Nissen Corporation. At that time the AAU held the international recognition with the FIT for international competition. The United States Gymnastics Federation had broken away from the AAU, and in time gained international acceptance by the FIG, and likewise it was felt by numerous individuals that the USTA should be the governing body within the USA for trampoline, tumbling and double mini-tramp via the FIT.

My actions within the USTA were to help support the sports via clinics and competitions, as well as developing regional activities throughout the USA and providing newsletter information to all members on a regular basis.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Have you ever been involved in an official capacity with the USA Gymnastics Federation?

**Ron Munn:** No, I have never been involved within an official capacity with the U.S. Gymnastics Federation.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** You have been a member of the FIT technical committee for several years. What were your main actions within the FIT?

**Ron Munn:** In the 70's, I was a member of the FIT technical committee. Our action was to oversee the rules and regulations and make any improvements or changes that were necessary.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us more on the circumstances surrounding the eviction of the AAU from the FIT and its replacement by the USTA in 1976?

**Ron Munn:** I would say the main reason for the change was the lack of support and activity from the AAU to the sports of trampoline, tumbling and double mini-tramp. The USTA's main interest was in these activities, whereas the AAU was involved in numerous other sports and did not give our sports as much support as we felt they deserved.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** What are your activities and occupation now?

**Ron Munn:** I am fully retired and will be moving to Arizona within the near future.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Do you still jump on a trampoline from time to time?

**Ron Munn:** Due to some lower back problems I no longer bounce on a trampoline, although I do wish I could.☺

**Acrobaticsports.com:** If there is anything you could do differently, what would that be?

**Ron Munn:** My career has been wonderful and I would not change a thing. Although, if I could do anything differently, I would have spent more of my time swinging a golf club rather than bouncing on a trampoline.☺

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Is there a message you would like to send to the trampolinists across the world?

**Ron Munn:** Yes, the standard trampoline line: "When in trouble, do a double – When in doubt, barani out!"

**Acrobaticsports.com:** What have been your relationships with French trampoline personalities throughout the years?

**Ron Munn:** My only relationship with French trampoline individuals was **Pierre Blois** when we were both on the FIT technical committee, and in knowing **Bernard Ammon** through the FIT.

**Acrobaticsports.com:** Could you tell us a few words in French for the readers of Worldtramp.com?

**Ron Munn:** Although I do not speak French, below is an article from the Montreal French Canadian newspaper "Perspectives" published in 1978 regarding my adventure with **George Nissen** and the Great Pyramid in Egypt. Hopefully your readers will find it interesting.☺

# Ché~ops!

dire à Napoléon Bonaparte: «Soldats, du haut de ces pyramides, 40 siècles et deux Québécois vous contemplent!»

Une partie de cache-cache avec les gardiens, deux des leurs soudoyés pour \$1.50 et Pic et Robert entament l'escalade des gros blocs qui forment de monstrueuses marches d'un mètre de hauteur. Une heure d'effort et les voilà prêts à admirer le spectacle son et lumière quotidien d'un point de vue fort privilégié. Jadis recouverte d'un placage de pierre polie, la pointe de la pyramide a disparue pour laisser place à une plate-forme carrée d'environ 5 m sur 5 m faite de blocs irrégulièrement érodés.

PAR HENRI COLOMBANI

6 heures du soir, 25°C, la nuit commence à tomber sur Gizeh ce 23 mai 1977. Vêtus de leur éternelle chemise de nuit, coiffés de leur tuque raide de crasse et fièrement armés d'antiques pétoires, une dizaine d'Égyptiens patrouillent, comme tous les soirs, le pied des pyramides, pour empêcher les pilleurs de tombe ou autres maraudeurs de pénétrer dans les mausolées.

La vieille pyramide de Chéops, immuable témoin de nombreuses tempêtes humaines, s'apprête à vivre l'un des événements les plus farfelus de son histoire.

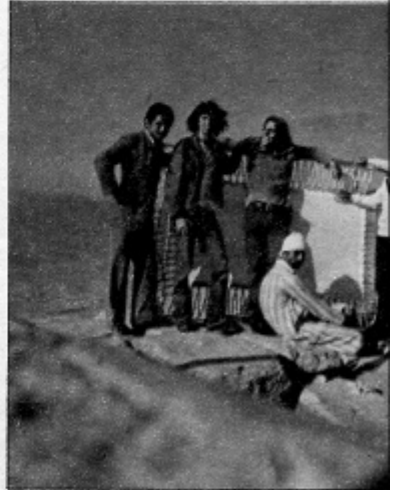
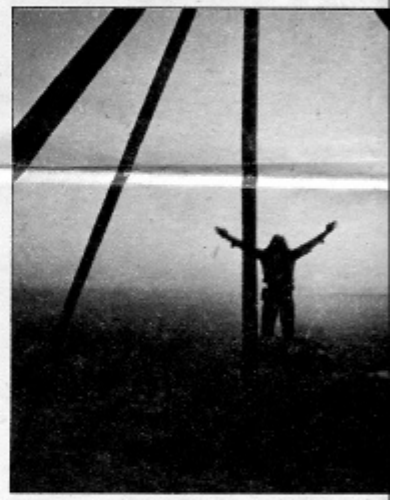
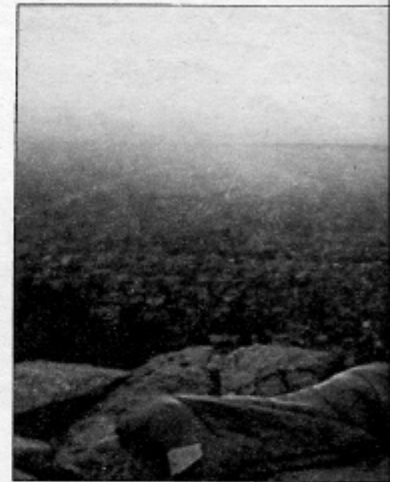
Mon pote André Labelle, voyageur au long cou emmanché d'un long nez, Québécois errant lâché de Montréal à Amsterdam, arrive au Caire après des sauts de puce en Allemagne, en Autriche, en Yougoslavie et en Grèce. André, alias Pico, alias Pic, accompagné dans ses pérégrinations par son fidèle copain Robert Lagendyk, décide donc d'aller rendre hommage aux pyramides. Sitôt dit, sitôt fait. Lorsque vers 18 heures le pied de la Grande Pyramide est atteint, un désir irrépressible s'empare d'eux: dormir au sommet. Complètement saugrenu et formellement interdit, bien sûr. Manifestement une idée d'infidèles. Passer la nuit à la pointe de ce géant de 150 mètres est en soi une performance peu commune, qui aurait pu faire

blés se révèlent être une trampoline. La trampoline bien calée au bord de la plate-forme et voilà Ron sautant, rebondissant, virevoltant, risquant à chaque saut la chute de 150 m et la mort certaine, les pieds de la trampoline reposant sur une pierre pourrie qui peut s'effriter à tout moment. Et Ron saute, tourne, bondit: l'incongruité de la situation fascine les 5 spectateurs qui, figés, attendent l'accident qui n'aura pas lieu. Pic et Robert déclinent l'invitation d'admirer le désert et le Sphinx la tête à l'envers, 3 m au-dessus du sommet de la pyramide et 153 m au-dessus du sable. Quinze minutes durant, Ron se livre avec euphorie à ses exercices. Le pari est gagné. Le tandem va devenir héros dans son lointain Iowa. Il est temps de redescendre car, au pied du monument, les jeeps et les soldats égyptiens alertés dressent un inquiétant comité d'accueil.

Une dizaine de fusils braqués sur leurs poitrines marquent la fin de la descente pour les deux Américains, les deux guides égyptiens et leurs complices canadiens d'un instant, qui commencent à envisager sérieusement un séjour dans les geôles égyptiennes.

Car, après tout, c'est un sacrilège, une profanation qui ne peut être tolérée.

Heureusement pour Pico et Robert, le «Louis de Funès» de l'Iowa parlemente avec les soldats qui finissent par laisser partir nos amis et les deux Égyptiens. Qu'est-il advenu de Ron et de son copain? Nous ne le savons pas, mais les relations entre les États-Unis et l'Égypte étant au beau fixe, nous pouvons imaginer que l'ambassade américaine a su intervenir.



En page couverture, Ron Munn à 153 mètres au-dessus du désert.

De haut en bas, Robert Lagendyk dans son sac de couchage, enfin, toute l'équipe, les deux Égyptiens, les deux Québécois et les deux Américains, à dr.