

PASSING ON THE LEGACY OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

or

Laramie Hockey Club Teams Up Again With City at Undine Rink

The archives of the Daily Boomerang and the Laramie Hockey Club will tell the history of how the sport of hockey has grown in our community over the last 25 years. Growth has come about due to the efforts of hockey families and concerned Laramie citizens striving to provide a rink for our city. The Boomerang reported that in 1975 a handful of hockey enthusiasts spearheaded by Dale Wade with newspapers and magazines taped onto their bodies for protection met regularly on flooded tennis courts at Undine Park to play the game of hockey.

It was a group of men and hockey families who were instrumental in building the rink. According to Wade, the club had the rink surveyed in 19?? and Hugh McFadden dug the holes as the hockey families set the posts. Materials to build the walls around the rink were practically donated to the club and families met many nights to nail the boards onto the posts. The city provided hoses to Wade and Bob Coffin to flood the rink and Wade clearly remembered sitting many nights, all night long spraying water on the ice to create ice.

In 19?? The Laramie Women's Club and Chairman Polly Wade purchased \$30,000.00 of used equipment and materials from a mid-west company that would help to increase the length of ice time to five months. **Boomerang** photographer Bruce Mitchell was at the rink the day the flatbed trucks arrived and captured on film the equipment as the families and skaters viewed with amazement their new compressors. According to Mr. Wade, "The flatbed was covered with tubing that looked like neatly stacked spaghetti and boy did we get a surprise when our workers had to stretch it out in the rink and hook it to the connecting headboards. It was quite a job to stretch out eleven miles of tubing 200 yards long and 85 feet wide. Then we had to cover the tubes with layers and layers of soil. We all worked together, we were so happy to have a rink. After the club got the rink up and going, we donated the entire facility to the city of Laramie".

This past August and September, hockey club families were at it again, assisting the city crews at the rink. This time they were not building a rink, but sawing down the rink walls in sections, dismantling the player's boxes, tearing up rotted flooring with crowbars and pounding nails out of plywood. Styrofoam which once served as insulation around the rink, was being raked and placed into plastic bags. The underground tubing was being uprooted and spectator stands were moved to the middle of the rink. City crews also removed the overhead shades, extended the fence on the north end, salvaged the usable lumber and disposed of the scrap.

According to City Parks Manager, Paul Harrison, this is the first phase of an 8 year plan to improve the existing facility. The city will be installing new HDPE (high density poly ethylene) not fiberglass, three foot dasher boards. Spectators will be better protected behind a plexiglas window. Contractors have also installed a new high efficiency refrigeration grid and a secondary chiller unit to facilitate removal of overhead shades. The removal of the shades will improve the lighting and allow for the disposal of wiring above the rink. The 12 foot high fence will eventually be reduced to an 8 foot structure which Harrison hopes will improve the aesthetics in the neighborhood. This is a capital

improvement project funded by the city council through the optional 1 cent sales tax and donations from LAHC. According to hockey club president, Anne May, "LAHC will again make a capital improvements fund donation to the city council in the months to follow. The club will host annual tournaments and have the Hockey Fun (d) raising Auction in the Spring". The club has also donated plywood with the participation from Laramie Lumber to cover pipes and provide a floor for the player's boxes.

Currently there are 118 girls and boys, ages 3-15 registered in the local club. The new USA sanctioned Initiation to Hockey Program, requiring full equipment, has replaced the outdated Learn To Skate Program which began in 1977. Due to the growth of the sport, hockey clubs are popping up all over Wyoming, especially in the north. WAHA (Wyoming Amateur Hockey Association) is currently working with the Wyoming High School Association to consider hockey as a high school sport. December 5, 1995 is the deadline for parents to register children in LAHC. USA hockey requires LAHC to retain a copy of birth certificate and social security number of each child registered. For more information contact: Anne May 721-4160 Jo Burns 742-4057 Heidi VanDiest 742-7917

Here are several
Hope it helps.

beginning stages of learning to skate. An indoor facility would allow for opportunities for all ages in the community. Ice hockey is one of the fastest growing sports in America today and that is why ice rinks are open 24 hours a day in Colorado renting their ice time for \$80.00-\$135.00 per hour. It is not unusual for adult skating camps and competition to be held between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

John Wilkinson mentioned, "it is unfortunate that substantial travel is required by Laramie families because many dollars are being spent outside of Wyoming on a regular basis. It is a shame that players of this caliber have to go to Colorado to get this top level hockey experience". Looking at the car odometer stating the thousands of miles they have driven tells the real story and his wife may probably be needing a new car by the time their son's graduate from high school.

Laramie Electronics started after Polly's brother got out of the Air Force. TV was just coming into America and that was the beginning for Wade Electric. Don and Dale picked the site for the tower and collected donations for the tower and a building to build next to the tower. The translator system was pioneered for the city by these 2 men and this allowed people in town and the ranchers to pick up the signal.

Since the refrigeration system was installed in 1983-4 (10 years) Parks spent \$142,000.00 to operate the refrigeration system. \$52,000.00 spent in overall improvements. \$40,000.00 has been spent in capital improvements last 3 years. In the next 5 years \$200,000.00 will be needed to upgrade the current facility. The boards are starting to rot away and may begin to fall in possibly after the next 3 years.

According to a source at Epic their facility is open non-stop, 24 hours a day to accommodate the increasing numbers of individual skaters and hockey teams. One ice rink in Denver sells it's ice time for \$135.00 per hour. It is becoming more common for skaters of all ages to buy precious ice time for practice or training at 11:30 p.m. or 3:00 a.m..

interesting

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The Laramie Amateur Hockey Club

The Laramie Amateur Hockey Association founded in 1975 was spearheaded by Dale Wade, Richard Uren, Rick Baker (a U.W. student from Calgary), Hugh McFadden, Dave Remple, hockey enthusiasts, business men, U.W. students and faculty. The original skating program began on flooded tennis courts at Undine Park, with 52 participants taping magazines to their bodies for pads. The teams skated without padded gloves, helmets, mouth guards, chest plates or face masks. According to Dale Wade kids skated with anything they could get their hands on. Laramie would skate with whatever leftovers other teams would give them. The Denver Rockies Hockey team invited the Laramie Mite team to skate during the breaks to scrimmage against Denver Mite teams. The Rockies and Casper team (both which were established a few years ahead of the Laramie program) gave old equipment to the Laramie club. In the early 1980's regulation equipment became a safety priority and a requirement for competition in all age brackets.

In 1977 a learn to skate program was developed and uniforms were purchased by parents for three teams playing a nine game season. In 1981 The Firebirds (men's team) was organized and played a 20 game season while the four youth teams had increased to 24 games in Denver and Casper. In 1983 there

were 44 active skaters in the Laramie Hockey Club. In 1983 Richard Uren also served as the Laramie High School coach. Currently the Laramie Amateur Hockey Club (LAHC) roster includes the following skaters: 16 Learn to Skate\Phase I (starting at age 3); 10 Mini-Mites (age 5-6); 14 Mites (age 6-8); 24 Squirts (age 9-10); 22 Pee-Wees (age 11-13); 15 Bantams (age 14 and under); and 5 Midgets (age 15-17). The coaching staff lists 20 coaches and assistants to instruct the 125 registered skaters. Coaches include fathers, grandfathers, founders of the club, past members of LAHC teams and U.W. college students (some semi-pro Canadians) volunteering their time.

In 1977 the rink moved from the tennis courts to a regulation size rink 200 x 80 at Undine Park. Modern rink dimensions are increasing in size. Olympic rinks can be larger with new constructions measuring 215 x 85 and larger. Many facilities are increasing the size of their older rinks to accommodate the increased numbers of skaters in the last 5 years. It is not uncommon to split the ice to allow instruction for skaters of different level ability. The current facility is 200 85 and when Laramie's younger hockey teams skate out of town they are usually at a large disadvantage due to increased rink size.

LAHC is sanctioned by U.S.A. Hockey, the national association. The club is also a Wyoming Amateur Hockey Association (WAHA) affiliate and the club skates competitively in the Mountain and Plains League of Colorado Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA). CAHA is a diverse league which spans north to Casper, south to Pueblo, Colorado and west to Vail and Aspen, Colorado. Boulder, Littleton, Arvada and Ft. Collins are a few of the towns within the CAHA jurisdiction.

The belief adopted 20 years ago still remains the club strongly believes in the contribution it is making to the community. At every level of ability and age a person can be incorporated into the program. The club strives to provide a recreation for all skaters promoting skating as a lifelong skill.

John Powell and Randy Wilkison city parks employees work 6 months of the year to prepare, maintain and close Undine Ice Rink. In the last 5 years major improvements have been made at the rink. Due to environmental concerns major changes were made in the refrigeration system that produces artificial ice. The primary cooling liquid ethylene glycol (auto antifreeze) was converted to propylene glycol (food grade antifreeze which is the safest alternative). An additional set of bleachers were placed on elevated ground on the east side to provide better spectator viewing. Hockey club volunteers have been active in assisting the city employees with rink upkeep.

Dale Wade one of the original founders of the club and assistant coach of two of the teams has donated over 20 years of service to the Laramie community. The wall boards surrounding the rink were originally built by the hockey club approximately 15 years ago and require new paint each year. Depending upon the passage of the future optional one cent sales tax, projects would include fiberglass dasher boards to replace the rink boards, an extended perimeter fence and improved lighting plan that would eliminate shadows caused by the overhead shades.

1. An upgraded hockey wall/surrounding rink boards that could be replaced with more efficient and safer fiberglass dasher boards that require less annual maintenance.
2. A new perimeter fence that would stand separate from the overhead shades, shades which are needing to be elevated above the fence.
3. Upgrading the lighting system would reduce much of the shading caused by the overhead shades that also need replaced in the future.

LAHC held the First Annual Hockey FUN(d) Night last June for the Laramie community. The fast-paced and very eventful evening provided 25 door prizes, 80 (\$1, \$2, \$5) raffle items, 20 Windmill Hill trees, floral arrangements, shrubs, 25 silent auction items and 32 chattels for the "live" auction. Items included over 20 autographed ALL Sports paraphernalia (caps, shirts, footballs, basketballs, baseball/football/hockey cards, Vancouver Canucks team photographs, hockey sticks) Decorated cakes, dinners for 2, grocery certificates, bicycle tune-ups, haircuts/perms, tools, toys, pizzas, Pepsi, art work, Mike Halterman Bronze, Bronco/Rockies game tickets, pool party, a vasectomy, jewelry, savings bonds, car maintenance, free photography,

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computer software, load of gravel, gymnastic instruction, ski pass, lawn mowers, auto detailing, LAC membership, fishing equipment and trip, bed and breakfast, antique items, set of custom built golf clubs and a Remington Mountain Rifle are just a few of the many items donated for the event. Plans are underway for the 1995 Family Fun(d) night. For more information contact Cody Westbrook.

Twelve year veteran Greg Wertz started playing hockey at age 6 under coach Dale Wade and proved to be one of the top goal tenders in the nation. At age 10 he played for Laramie and on a Fort Collins team at age 10 in the new Epic Ice arena in 1985. He was a member of Pee Wee and Bantam teams in both Laramie and Ft. Collins. In the Midget division he played defense in Laramie and as goalie on a Denver Hyland Hills Team, often playing a total of 65-70 games a season. He attended the prestigious British Columbia Hockey Camp and the International Goal Tenders Camp in Quebec, Canada. Wertz was selected as "top goalie" in our 10 state region and later attended the National Select Camp along with 30 of the nation's top goalies. At age 16 he played goalie for Hyland Hills Midget A Team and advanced to regional competition. Wertz was recruited by West Point, Denver University, Dartmouth College and the #1 Junior A team in the nation at Dubuque, Iowa. Greg, the son of Tom and Marla Wertz, comes from a true hockey family that dedicated many years of their lives promoting and building up the sport of Hockey in Laramie.

HISTORY OF LARAMIE HOCKEY

To look at the past much research has been conducted by Polly Wade one of the original founders a contributing builder of the Undine Ice rink. Polly has collected newspaper articles that date back to 1921. Even though the news is sketchy through the years, the history is rich and educational for our current families. In 1921 the Laramie community supported 3 ice rinks, including one on University property. Today, the City of Laramie Parks and Recreation maintains one lake facility at LaBonte Park and another partially covered rink at Undine Park.

1939- Winter Sports Carnival was held in Laramie with 2,683 spectators. Events included ice dancing, ice waltzing, figure skating and the coronation of an ice King and Queen. The Boomerang reported 516 adults on the adult rink at one time and 800 skaters overflowing on the children's rink. The carnivals were held from 1939-1962. The last follies mentioned was 1967.

The UW rink was located on Lewis and 9th streets behind the new UW Energy building. Tom Kerns a UW player played on a team called the Magnificent 6 with Bill Bragg, Homer Grumann and 3 others played in Laramie on a rink close to the Catholic Cathedral church on Ivinson across from City Hall. They played and won several championships throughout the area. 1943- January high winds caused thousands of dollars in damage to the city and campus. The UW rink was destroyed and torn down.

1947- The rink we now skate on was originally a fort which was built like a stockade with 15 foot high boards with old burlap potato sacks to keep the sun off the ice. In the early 1960's it was condemned and torn down. The old fort warming hut was a large compound then housed wood stoves for warmth. During the war, burlap was a precious commodity and townspeople pooled together their potato sacks to give to the rink. During the war and following all the temporary rinks folded up. The big rink at Undine was worn out so they destroyed it and there were several years before the new rink was developed. The sport of hockey was a forgotten sport in Laramie because a generation of people did not know about the sport of hockey. Starting from scratch was one of the reasons the numbers were so low. Whoever wanted to skate came out and skated.

During 1942-1946 Dale Wade attended and played hockey for the Canadian University of New Brunswick in Fredericton on the east coast. He also played for the Capitals, a semi-pro team in New Brunswick. At that time, the National Hockey League (NHL) was comprised of only 6 teams (the expansion had not taken place). The teams were the: Toronto Maple Leafs, New York Rangers, Detroit Red Wings, Chicago Blackhawks, Boston Bruins, and Montreal Canadians. Wade recalls playing practice games against some of these teams in the off season. "At that time there was no such thing as expansion teams, so these NHL teams were real eager to play other organized teams. Teams who didn't make the Stanley Cup play-offs continued play against any other team available." Mr. Wade came to Laramie in 1957, founded Laramie Hockey and served as President of the hockey club. In the 1970's Denver supported the Colorado Rockies Hockey Team. Mr. Wade was instrumental in arranging for Rocky team

more info about Wades

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members to come to Laramie and give pep talks to the kids periodically. The Laramie Mite team also skated against Denver teams during time-outs at the Rockies games. Mr. Wade will remain versatile by assisting coaches Harry Schlegal with the Pee Wee's and Bob Peterssen's Mite's.

When the existing rink at Undine was built in 1977, the post hole diggers kept hitting the concrete from this pre-war 1940's structure. Project **R.O.O.F.** (Roof Over Our Future) was spearheaded by the Laramie Women's Club to improve the conditions of the rink to enable a longer skating season for the community.

Originally the club desired to build a roof over the existing Undine ice rink, but when the time came to have the city match the women's club funding. At the time the city and the neighbors didn't want to have a butler type hut. They wanted to hide the obnoxious looking building and by the time all the ideas were expressed the figure quickly mounted to \$200,000. The club then changed the R in roof to Rink of our Future. By researching the hockey magazines to find a used system to produce artificial ice. Over the years the obsolete system required latched pieces and had to be replaced by more modern types of machinery. the club decided to purchase a compressor, motors and a cooling tower to make artificial ice. It was purchased by ROOF for \$30,000 in hopes to extend the ice skating season to 5 months. The ice equipment was installed by the city and the 11 miles of pipes under the rink were installed by city volunteers, adult and youth hockey players, and families during the evenings and weekends.

1981 March 14-25 years ago (1956) 700 people observed the 2 performances of the Laramie Ice Follies at Undine Rink. 125 skaters skated 1 1/2 hours under the direction of Ray Johnson. the theme was Toy Shop.

April 1, 1981-25 years ago (1956) In the 4 months the city ice rink was open 17,000 skaters were on the ice. 9,500 children skated free on weekday afternoons. 5,993 admissions were recorded for evening skating (.25 /admission fee). 1,476 skated on Saturday afternoons (.10 /admission fee).

May 17, 1981 2% severance tax on gas and oil approved by the Wyoming Legislature indicated that Laramie expected to receive approximately \$2.2 million for the 1981-82 budget and \$2.75 million fore every year following.

Richard Uren was the design engineer for Laramie's present rink in **1983** and was the only rink in Wyoming. Teams from Colorado and Wyoming continue to travel to Laramie to play Hockey. Many of the cities in the state of Wyoming now house indoor facilities are: Rock Springs, Casper, Jackson, with a growing interest in the Cheyenne area.

Feb. 6, 1983- February 12 Free cake and punch and entertainment on the hour (5-10 minutes each) for figure, hockey, curling, curling stones skills, hockey drills and other demonstrations. Music will be provided, free skate sharpeners, Curling stones -U.W. President Crane and Bob Burns who coined "Top of the World Curling Club in 1931". demonstration.

February 15, 1983 Skate-a-thon Valentine Party 1:00-4:00 games prizes, demonstrations of ice hockey, curling, figure skating, etc. Cake and Punch. 300 attended. Concessions were available for the hungry skaters and spectators. Paul Kanaly provided Rock on Wheels music. Prizes awarded for the individual and team for most money collected, oldest and youngest skaters, dance team routines. Free skate rental, drawings and skate sharpening available. Donation bucket were available at the rink. Skate pledge forms were distributed from Wade Electric.

1993-October- the Laramie Parks and Recreation workers under the direction of Paul Harrison added a 10 foot high chain link fence and two extra sets of bleachers at the east side of the rink. As the sport of figure skating and hockey grows, spectators have also increased. During the majority of hockey games (even at 7:00 a.m.) the stands are full with crowds pushing against the chain link fence on both sides of the viewing area. An exhibition of individual female ice skaters had similar results during an evening performance. The bleacher area was crowded and spectators were lined along the fence and hockey board area in order to watch friends and family members.

1993-1994-LAHC hosted three final season tournaments at Undine Ice Rink. Over 1,000 athletes from Wyoming and Colorado. Over fifty traveling hockey teams and 300-400 families and parents were in attendance throughout the season as well as for the three events. When Laramie hosts a tournament, there is always a waiting list for entry. The Laramie club always receives many wonderful compliments from traveling teams about the friendly spirit of the Laramie community. This continued community effort from Laramie club parents, businesses, motels and individuals is the reason we have long waiting lists for

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teams desiring to compete in Laramie tournaments. It is not uncommon for a Laramie tournament director to have a list of 10-15 teams on a waiting list, especially from southern Colorado. Teams from New Mexico have expressed an interest in traveling to Laramie to skate.

1994-Times have sure changed from the past where kids who loved to skate would spend hours of time on the ice and sign a piece of paper making a commitment to a group later formed into a team. Now days all registration is conducted on computerized triplicate forms with processing capabilities preparing statistics for a national roster of teams, coaches and members registered in USA Hockey.

1995 A NEW GENERATION OF HOCKEY CONTINUING THE TRADITION OF HOCKEY IN LARAMIE

The Laramie Amateur Hockey Association founded in 1975 by Dale Wade and a handful of hockey enthusiasts has certainly changed over the last 20 years, moving from a flooded tennis court to the outdoor rink at Undine Park. The numbers of participants and supporters continues to grow. Currently there are 120 skaters aged 3-17, from 80 families enrolled in the Laramie Amateur Hockey Club. Families from Walden, Ft. Collins, Cheyenne and Wheatland drive to Laramie 2-3 times a week during the winter months for their children to play hockey. Ice hockey is the fastest growing sport in America, with roller hockey fast approaching. Ice hockey reaches the age span from 3 year old skaters to 80 year old coaches who love to teach hockey skills. L.A. Kings standout, Wayne Gretzky who holds 62 National Hockey League records, said in the March 1995 Hockey Magazine, "the biggest advantage to playing organized sports-is you learn everything in sports that you are going to learn in life. You're learn about pressure, how to be unselfish with your teammates, about winning and losing and what it's like to prepare for something you have to do." The sport of ice hockey recently celebrated the 35th anniversary of the U.S. Olympic team winning the gold medal in 1960 at the VIII Winter Games in Squaw Valley, California. Interest has grown tremendously in the last 15 years with added accomplishments of Team USA defeating the Soviets in the 1980 Olympics in Lake Placid. People now look at ice hockey as a great sport, they want to watch it, play it and participate in it.

LARAMIE COMPETES IN COLORADO LEAGUE

Laramie competed in the Colorado Amateur Hockey Association last winter and placed exceptionally well considering the disadvantage of having an ice rink 16 weeks during the winter. Laramie competed against strong Denver suburbs, such as Littleton which supports many teams in several age categories. For example, one ice rink supplies ice to 7 mini-mite teams, 5 mite teams and 11 squirt teams. Due to the growth in this sport, 6 new indoor ice rinks are being built in the Denver area. Laramie Hockey Club has a lot to be proud of with the announcement last month from CAHA headquarters in Denver. Laramie was listed as the only club in the entire Mountain and Plains Region that had no misconduct penalties. Laramie had a total of 120 registered hockey players and not once did a Laramie player receive a major penalty or an ejection from a game.

NEW HOCKEY PROGRAM TO BE OFFERED

Beginning fall 1995, LAHC will offer an new program called Initiation to Hockey which will replace the traditional learn to skate program. This new program is open to all age groups and will be taught by adults knowledgeable about ice hockey. One goal of the program is to provide entry level skills into the established competitive hockey divisions. LAHC will conduct registration for all teams in early September. In the past, information has been distributed through Albany County School District.

ICE PRACTICE IN LARAMIE AND COLORADO

Laramie hockey teams begin ice practice as soon as the city rink located at Undine Park opens. Approximately one-half of LAHC skaters travel to Ft. Collins to practice during the months the Laramie rink is closed. Last year 25 skaters attend hockey camps in Colorado during the summer. Due to the climate, Laramie teams have approximately 16 weeks of total ice time, compared to the year around ice time provided to competitors in Casper, Colorado, Idaho and Utah. The Laramie teams did exceptionally well considering the limited ice time. The Laramie Pee Wee team finished 5th in conference play, just nudged out of the four team play off tournament for the championship title. The Laramie Squirt team

