

Skating extravaganza is 'ice'ing on the cake

By CORINNE ARATT

It has been said the Southfield ice show is the best amateur ice extravaganza in the country with the possible exception of that put on at the Broadmoor in Colorado. I sincerely believe that even those at the Broadmoor, that mecca for amateur skaters, would have trouble topping the event of last weekend at the Over Center rink. Particularly in the area of production, for where could you find excellent women skaters who are also willing to work for almost six months on hoop-skirted ball costumes that were actually seen for less than five minutes?

There's Jan Miller, for instance, who started in the 45-member women's "ice choir." Mrs. Miller made all of the costumes for the huge toys of "The Enchanted Toy Shop" number constructed them on chicken wire frames with padding and color, wonderful glistening eyes for the owls, and appealing oversized faces and figures for each of the snowmen. There on chicken wire, the cat, the mouse and the huge playful skunk.

Mrs. Miller's time spent on the show is evaded in months rather than days or weeks. TECHNICALLY the show is outstanding for several reasons. For one it moved—

from the set changes to the skaters on the ice. It moved. Too often amateur shows drag along. Not this one. Even with more than 100 skaters on the ice, the pace is clipped, sure and fast. That takes practice—lots of it. Granted, Ron Basten uses a number of metropolitan area skaters for his show, but local skaters had their moments in the spotlights and dark near stole the show. As the soldiers, dolls and little people in the enchanted toy shop scenes, they had been well schooled in how to amuse audiences. All in this show have learned to smile while skating and to play to the audience as well as perform the choreography.

With few exceptions the soloists were integrated into the total choreography. There had to be a few solos to allow for scenery and set changes. But, the fact that many of them were a part of the total sequence is another thing that separates this show from the average community endeavor. And the segues from one number to another were as flow as the skating. IT'S ABOUT as safe as ending through a swamp to jungle out performances to comment about, but "Chair Fishin'" by Ronn Byas and Fred Caducia was both fun to watch and exciting. These two did a slippery, fast number using two straight chairs as props and they did the intricate chair pushing, sliding and pulling to perfection.

If you missed the show and didn't see Anne Parter of the Wyandotte Skating Club in "You're My World" (she has a Janet Lyn's delivery of movement) or Mark Simpson of the Trio, (who skating Club as "George M") then reserve your tickets now for next year and hope they will be there.

Disto Sandy Malek of the Detroit Figure Skating Club with her hula dance in the Ports of Paradise number and Janet Van Camp and Gordon Black in the opening Masquerade. They're from the Lansing Figure Skating Club. And Laura Cannon of the Detroit club as the porcelain doll in the toy shop was a winner.

The combination of nostalgia, grace and grab which the three Dailey men and Carol Fox added had all kinds of appeal. Richard Dailey does the smooth graceful

the dance with Ms. Fox. Ben son, Richard Jr. takes over the girl for an upbeat routine and young son, Scott, comes on with a bit of speed and humor and grabs the lady for some fancy bladework. And in the final elaborately staged bicentennial review, the audience had yet another look at all of those fine soloists. Several ice shows back I asked if they could ever top this.

Well yes, they can and yes they did.

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Maureen Partin gets a final fitting on her costume from Carol Fox before a performance of Ice Company '76. (Photos by Cyd Abbott)

State battles Cowbirds

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will again do battle with brown-headed cowbirds in central Michigan.

An intensive federal trapping program with a predictable capability of capturing 3,500 cowbirds will be put into operation in late April and continue until mid-July.

Among species of Michigan's most cherished values, the pretty cowbirds are second only to the Buckeyes of Ohio State. The vigorous cowbirds have not made life a bowl of roses for birders who revere the Kirtland's warbler, an endangered species parasitized by cowbirds.

There is good reason for Michigan's strong interest in the Kirtland's warbler. The only known nesting colonies of the species in the world are in Michigan, principally in Ogemaw, Oscoda and Crawford counties.

Nesting habits of the female cowbird markedly hinder the survival success of young warblers. The cowbird does not rear its own young.

The cowbird is strictly parasite. The fe-

male deposits her egg, or eggs, in nests of other species.

The Kirtland's warbler population is seriously affected by this, probably because it nests in the jackpine barrens of Michigan, an area not generally inhabited by a wide variety of other birds. In that particular habitat, cowbirds prefer warbler nests.

A female cowbird may even remove eggs from a Kirtland's nest, then lay her own eggs and never return to the nest.

Nearly 80 per cent of warbler eggs in parasitized nests fail to produce fledglings. The eggs may hatch, but the warblers don't survive because young cowbirds raised by the foster warbler parents are larger and more aggressive in the nest.

Prior to trapping operations, begun in 1972, 46 per cent of warbler nests were parasitized by cowbirds.

Since trapping began, cowbird parasitism has been less than 10 per cent. Despite the annual success in trapping cowbirds, which has resulted in more warblers surviving in the nest, the net result has not produced dramatic increases in the Kirtland's warbler population returning to Michigan each year.

Other factors are involved. Warbler losses probably occur during migration. A shortage of suitable nesting habitat is a critical problem for the diminutive bird.

In 1973, the FWS reported 179 pairs of Kirtland's warblers were identified in Michigan during the nesting season. The relative scarcity has generated undue harassment from birders anxious to see or photograph the rare warbler.

Again in 1974, Kirtland's warbler nesting areas will be closed and posted against public entry during the nesting season.

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CHARLIE, WAIT. MY BOAT WON'T GO.

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I WONDER IF I'M STUCK ON A ROCK?

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