

TWENTY YEARS AND ONWARDS...

HICKSVILLE, N.Y... In March 1974, Bruce Bennett, a young college student, was looking for a way to earn extra money to help pay his tuition. A photography and sports buff, Bennett started carrying his camera to New York Ranger hockey games and taking photos from the upper deck of Madison Square Garden.

Subsequently, he stayed closer to home and began shooting the expansion New York Islanders at Nassau Coliseum. After numerous games and dozens of rolls of film, "as a naive 18-year-old I took those photos and sent them to The Hockey News, which was then being run in Montreal, and asked them if they needed a photographer.

"They responded 'sure, we'll give you three dollars a photo, can you get into the games on your own or do you need a press pass?' I told them 'I guess I'll take the press pass' and that's really where I got started."

He worked alone until 1980 when taking on his first employee in readiness for the Islanders-Flyers Stanley Cup Final series. Brian Winkler is still with the business, although now as Studio Director, and BBS added a second employee around four years later. Nowadays the staff count stands at fourteen.

Bruce also recounts the tale of how what was a home-based business found a need to expand and relocate to commercial premises several years ago. "I tried to convince the Housing Inspector I had a lot of friends that would come over at nine in the morning and leave at five in the afternoon. But when they showed up and I invited the guy in, he took one look around and said something along the lines of 'Holy Cow!' The FAX machine was ringing; the film processor was running and people were taking pictures. It was all in the basement of our house.

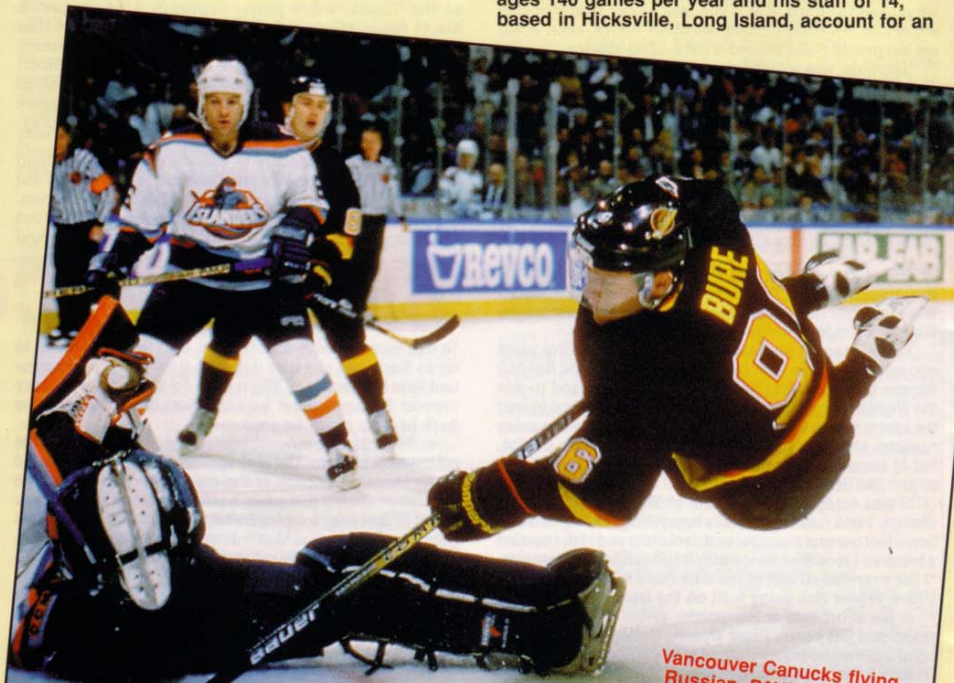
"So it really was time to move out. We found a place on a main road and now we've filled this place to the max. We're bursting at the seams again." Bruce has plans now to purchase the firm's present premises - which he originally took on a three-year lease with an option to buy - then expand it.

His wife, Betty Ann, had mixed feeling over the original move. On one hand she got the basement back and was rid of the noise that

In our last issue on these pages we told you of a new photographic wire service being provided for British ice hockey by our official photographer, Mike Smith and his company PLS Limited. Well, now we look at probably the oldest established hockey photographic agency the world over.... Bruce Bennett Studios, based in Long Island, New York State, is generally recognised as the World's Largest Provider of Professional Hockey Photography and earlier this year celebrated the 20th Anniversary of its beginning. It happened this way....

would often permeate up through the house. But it also meant Bruce - instead of being based at home and "on hand to maybe help out with the kids some days" - leaving the house around 10am each day, often not returning until after a hockey game that night.

Twenty-one years on from his somewhat humbler beginnings, Bruce Bennett continues taking photos at hockey games and his company, Bruce Bennett Studios, has grown to become the world's leading provider of hockey photographs. Bruce himself personally averages 140 games per year and his staff of 14, based in Hicksville, Long Island, account for an



Vancouver Canucks flying Russian, PAVEL BURE, a typical Bruce Bennett Studio shot.

BRUCE BENNETT STUDIOS CAREER STATISTICS

GOING into the current season, BBS had already compiled an impressive set of career stats. Just run your eyes over a few of these to see what we mean...

GAMES COVERED...

- NHL Pre-season, Regular Season, Play-offs 2914
- Stanley Cup Winning Games 17
- NHL All-Star Games 14
- International Games & Olympics 259
- Minors, Juniors, College, Old-timer, WHA 173

OTHER NUMBERS...

- Major contributor for hardcover hockey books 12
- Books with BBS hockey photos 127
- Rolls of film shot in BBS history 80,280
- Hockey photographs in print 47,000
- Hockey images produced approaching 3 million

BEEN THERE... SHOT THAT.

- Gordie Howe and Brett Hull together in WHA games.
- Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux lead Canada to victory in Canada Cup (1987)
- Hockey's Biggest Stars - Bobby Orr, Gordie Howe, Bobby Hull, Phil Esposito, Denis Potvin, Guy Lafleur, Mike Bossy, Wayne Gretzky, Bryan Trottier, Peter Stastny, Bobby Clarke, Darryl Sittler, Mario Lemieux, Gerry Cheevers, Grant Fuhr, Patrick Roy, Marcel Dionne, Gilbert Perrault, Stan Mikita
- NY Islanders four Stanley Cups (1980-1983)
- Wayne Gretzky Record breaking most goals in one season - 77th vs Buffalo (1981)
- Mike Bossy scores 50 in 50 vs Quebec (1981)

- Wayne Gretzky Record breaking most points in a career 1851 (1989) Bobby Nystrom's OT Stanley Cup winner vs, Philly (1980)
- NY Rangers break curse with first cup in 54 years (1994)
- Gretzky & Friends European Tour (1994)
- Pat Lafontaine's OT winner vs Washington in 7th period during play-offs (1987)
- Wayne Gretzky's trade from Edmonton to Los Angeles
- Final WHA games
- Rendez-Vous '87 - NHL All-Stars vs Russian Team (1987)
- Mario Lemieux scores in his first game vs Boston (1984)
- Chris Kontos scores four in Tampa Bay opener (1992)
- Sweden's OT victory over Canada in Olympics (1994)
- 1980 Gold-Medal US Olympians addition to NHL Teams
- All NHL Drafts covered since 1982
- NHL Award ceremonies covered since 1982
- Lanny MacDonald winning the Stanley Cup
- Opening Franchise games for San Jose, Tampa Bay, Anaheim, Florida, Ottawa
- Drafting of Eric Lindros
- Lights go out in Boston - Finals 1988

WITNESS TO HOCKEY'S GROWTH WITH...

- Adding WHA Teams in 1979 - Edmonton, Hartford, Quebec, Winnipeg Addition of Vancouver, Washington, Anaheim, Florida, Tampa Bay, Ottawa, San Jose
- Transfer of Atlanta to Calgary, Minnesota to Dallas, Kansas City to Denver to New Jersey



BBS annually manage a nice line in Christmas Cards the world of ice hockey. The latest, received at IHL Bruce and company - plus one or two special guests the ID of - superimposed on a Stanley Cup win months ago everybody looked a lot less happy on t



Right, Bruce ready for action, and above with some (most!) of the gang back at base camp.

annual placement of nearly 5,000 photographs in editorial and licensed products. Photos from Bruce Bennett Studios have appeared in every major publication including Sports Illustrated, Life, Time, People, Us, The Sporting News, and Newsweek. And of course Ice Hockey News Review.

"It is a true passion for the sport that motivates me," said Bennett, who often works seven-days-a-week during the hockey season. "I would like everyone, whether or not they are hockey fans, to enjoy the action of this sport."

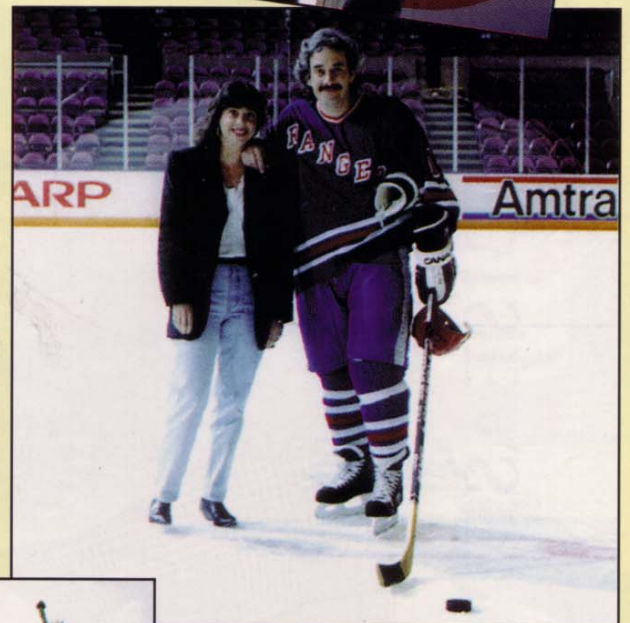
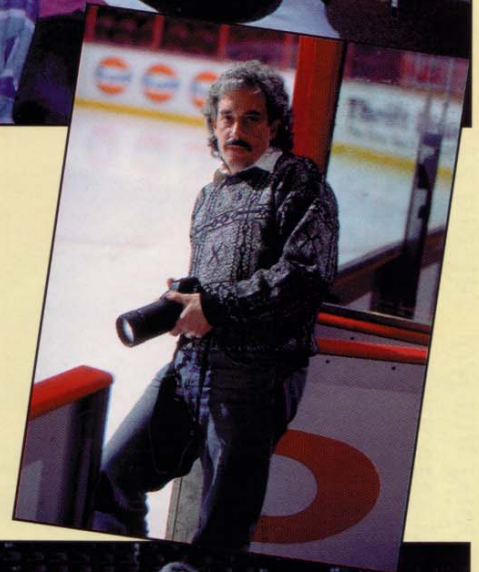
While hockey has remained fairly constant over the past 20 years, photography of the sport has seen many changes. Gone are the days when photographers sat next to the players in the penalty box, often leaning out onto the ice and occasionally catching a player's stick or puck to the head. Today, with protective glass preventing them from an unobstructed view of the ice, photographers must be more creative in their approach.

"Since the feel of the game is different behind the glass, today's photographers have to be more alert and anticipate action much quicker," said Bennett.

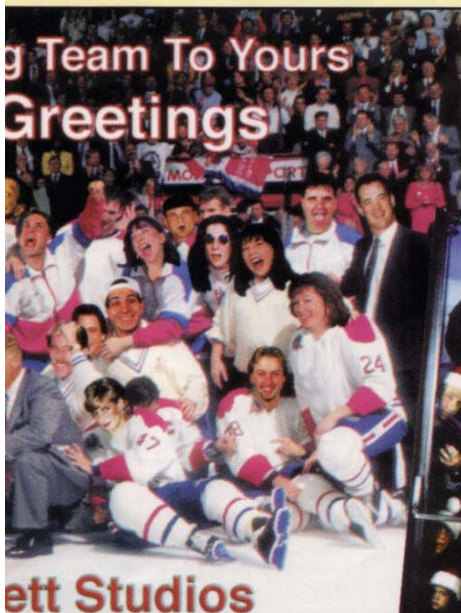
Another major change Bennett has seen has been the speed in which photographs are processed and distributed, "Digital transmission is a large part of our operations," he said. "Every day we transmit photos worldwide through computer modem. Also, we service clients through PressLink, a prestigious organization which sends our photos worldwide electronically."

With that worldwide audience – in addition to North America, BBS regularly place pictures among publications in twelve other countries around the world – and a constant demand for quality hockey photos, it is easy to see why the photographers at Bruce Bennett Studios are kept busy year round. As for the next twenty years, Bruce Bennett hopes his business will continue to prosper.

"We built our business by delivering quality work with a 'customer first' attitude," said Bennett. "Hopefully, that credo will allow us to continue to grow even larger during the next twenty years."



The Bennett Family today. Bruce and wife Betty Ann on the ice at Madison Square Garden after the annual Media v Management hockey game. "The management always wins," says Bruce! Inset are the Bennett's two hockey-loving children, Melanie (7) and Max (4) with another Very Important Lady in the background. Incidentally Melanie has grown quite a bit since first hitting the pages of IHNR back in December 1990 (Vol.8; Iss.9; Page 35.. for avid regular readers).



to their customers and friends around the office recently, featured the faces of that recipients were invited to guess at g team group shot. However, twelve occasion of 'Santa's (NHL) Lockout 94'.

