

WFSC Men Land Silver Medals at National Championships

by Liz Skinner Grandonica

Craig Ratterree knew he was headed to an award-winning performance when he landed his triple axel near the opening of his long program in the Junior Men's event at Nationals.

Skating to Tchaikovsky's sixth symphony, the 18-year-old then pulled off other triple-double combinations that helped him land the silver medal at the State Farm U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Portland, Oregon in January.

He was thrilled with medaling at his first trip to Nationals, but Craig was moving on to his next skating challenge. In March, he headed to Italy to compete in his first international skating competition, the Gardena Spring Trophy. There he won both the short program and free skate to capture the gold medal.

Craig, who skates out of Mt. Vernon Ice Rink, isn't the only WFSC member reaching for new heights after attaining a goal this year.

Armin Mahbanoozadeh, who at age 13 has been skating half his life, also won silver in national competition. Armin took second in the Intermediate Men's event at the U.S. Junior Figure Skating Championships in Jamestown, New York in December.

For this season, Armin's moved up to the Novice division and premiered his two new programs at the Cherry Blossom competition in April, where he won the short program and was second in the free skate, to finish second overall.

Armin also finished 8th grade this spring and is looking forward to high school. For Craig, he finished up his high

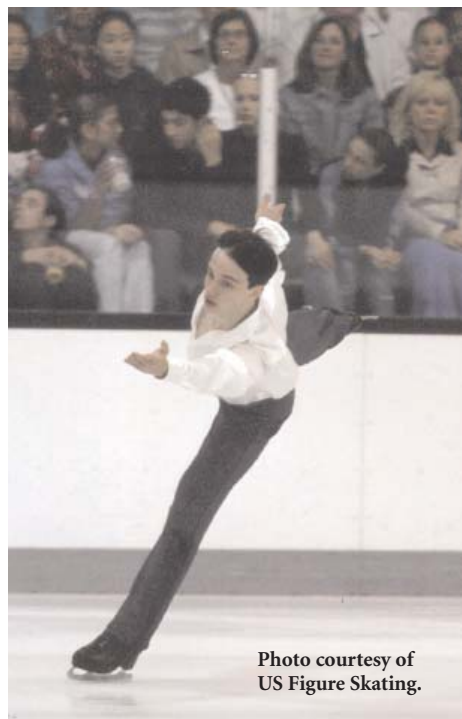


Photo courtesy of US Figure Skating.

In March, Craig Ratterree represented the United States at the Gardena Spring Trophy competition, his first major international event. He came home with the gold medal, winning both the short program and the free skate.

school studies last May. Craig was home schooled during his final school years in order to give him flexibility that could accommodate his skating schedule.

Craig's daily skating regimen includes skating three hour-long sessions, each of which is preceded by an hour of off-ice warm-ups, including stretching, practice jumps and sometimes swimming at the recreational center where he skates and works. Twice a week he also does Pilates.

Sergey Korovin coaches the Colorado native, who began skating when he was

WFSC News

► **Michael Weiss** (Grand Prix Trophée Eric Bompard, Nov. 17-20, Paris); **Craig Ratterree** (Junior Grand Prix Canada, Sept. 22-25, Montreal); and **Armin Mahbanoozadeh** (North American Challenge, Aug. 25-28, Kansas City) have all been named to the U.S. Figure Skating National Team.

► Congratulations to WFSC's gold medalists at the Cherry Blossom Competition: **Craig Ratterree** (Junior Men), **Kristine Musademba** (Intermediate Ladies), **Anne Davis** (Adult Ladies Bronze), **Daisy Campos & Luis Catacora** (Juvenile Dance), and **Victoria Suttora & Ross Gudis** (Pre-Juvenile Dance).

just shy of 10 years-old, in Dale City, Virginia. The "speed" and "jumps" are his favorite parts of skating, despite suffering an injury when he fell jumping during his program at the South Atlantic Regional Competition in October 2003.

Craig's shoulder came out of the socket when he fell and he hit his head on the wall, leaving him with a concussion.

"That was a bad one," Craig recalls. Despite the injury, Craig finished out his program and retained his love for jumping.

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WFSC Men, from page 1

For this year he's been working on a quad. "It's getting there," he said. "But it's a lot harder than I thought it would be."

Craig advanced to Nationals by placing fourth at Easterns in November. And Craig's showing at Nationals didn't come from nowhere. He's had a successful skating portfolio for years.

He placed first in both the short program and the free skate at the South Atlantic regional competition in Charleston, South Carolina last October. Last summer, he won the free skating final at the Liberty Competition in Newark, Delaware.

Though he performs to classical music for programs, the piano-playing skater likes country love songs as well as punk rock bands "Simple Plan" and "Sugarcult."

Envisioning a life after skating, Craig said he expects to join his family in the real estate business. His mom, dad, two sisters and brother are all real estate agents.

He also plans to go to college one day. "I want to get my skating done first; I can go to college any time," Craig said. "With skating there's more of an age limit."

His love of the sport shines through in his attitude. He received the WFSC

Wheeler Award in 2004. It's an annual award given to a Junior skater who's shown exceptional sportsmanship, dedication and achievement.

"If I could decide, I would definitely make a career out of skating," Craig said. "I love to do it and if you can make a living out of something you love, then that's the way to go."

For Armin, before his second place finish at Junior Nationals last December, his biggest wins had been a first place finish at last year's South Atlantic competition; a first place finish in the short program at Skate Liberty in Newark, Delaware last year; and 16th place at Junior Nationals in December 2003.

He's now working on consistency with his triple lutz as he moves into the Novice level for the first time. The "roller coaster" feel of jumping is one of Armin's favorite parts of skating, he said.

Armin, whose last name is pronounced "MA-BANOO-ZA-DE" and is of Persian descent, skates out of Skatequest in Reston, Virginia with coach Traci Coleman. He lives with his parents in Northern Virginia.

He skates five days a week for about three hours a day after attending public school at Cooper Middle School. He also takes Chinese martial art classes, a form called Wushu, on Saturdays.

Armin said he doesn't find it difficult to balance skating and school. In fact, at school only a few of his good friends even know that he skates, he said.

Armin, who doesn't have any siblings, spends most of the weekend trying to relax. An adventurer off the ice as well as on, Armin said he enjoys going with his parents to places they've never been before.

He also enjoys reading and playing the piano. "It's quite relaxing when you have a lot on your mind," he said. "I also like to hang out with friends and play PS2 video games."

Last summer Armin won the Wachovia Securities Diamond Performance Award along with \$500 from the Michael Weiss Foundation. The award funds went to pay skating expenses, Armin said.

"Part went to some badly needed costumes," Armin said. The rest went to pay for ice time, skates and coaching.

Armin said he doesn't expect to make a career out of skating, though he may like to coach a little during college "for some extra money." ★

Update on Fort Dupont Ice Arena

by Kathy Cox, Executive Director

This has been a banner year for our Schools Skate for Fitness program, part of our larger Kids On Ice program. Through our partnership with DC Public Schools, area schools can incorporate a regular skating class as part of their physical education curriculum. This year, thanks to Dolly Davis' oversight, almost 50 schools participated, with almost 40 of them coming on a regular basis. In addition to introducing kids to the joy of skating, the program promotes physical fitness and good nutrition to a population of at-risk youth, contributes to the curriculum in math and science, and encourages students to practice during public skating.

Kids On Ice weekend classes—Learn to Skate, Advanced Figure Skating, Hockey and Speed Skating—are all thriving. The classes are full to capacity and Learn to Skate always has a waiting list. The KOI Hockey Club is playing several games each season against local teams. Six of the speed skaters now compete in area meets. The Advanced Figure Skating group has grown to 15 dedicated skaters.

With the high demand for more Kids On Ice classes, increased interest in adult skating classes, and on-going high school hockey, we are out of ice time! Fortunately, the National Park Service is amenable to considering expanding the facility to include a second sheet of ice. We have approval to do the market study and the environmental analysis. These are big steps towards final approval, and we are hopeful that we will have a final decision by early next year. 2006 will mark the 10th Anniversary of the Friends of Fort Dupont Ice Arena, and we would love to celebrate by moving forward with the expansion.

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WFSC Adults Skate in Oberstdorf, Germany

by Tim Fisher

On June 10-12th, the International Skating Union (ISU) held its first ever Adult skating competition in Oberstdorf, Germany. 120 athletes from thirteen countries—some from as far as Thailand and New Zealand—enjoyed the beautiful Alpine scenery, superb skating, the unique camaraderie of adult competition, and the chance to show their best under the new ISU judging system for the first time.

The Oberstdorf Eissportzentrum is a stunning facility with three ice sheets, paneled wood walls, natural light, flags, banners and boxes of perfect petunias at the boards. The location is unparalleled—just behind the rink are two champion ski jump towers and overhead are cable cars which carried skaters up into the clouds to the top of the Nebelhorn Alp—elevation 7,296 feet! This picturesque southernmost German village—featuring Alpine chalets with colorful window boxes interspersed with working farms and tourist shops—is popular for both sport and health. Between events and practice, skaters joined dozens of German tourists in the nearby hills, mountain biking and nordic walking along crystal clear streams of melting snow and photographing the exquisite scenery. Popular side trips included a visit to nearby Neuschwanstein, the castle of Mad Ludwig of Bavaria—featured in the movie *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

Long a popular training center for European skaters, the arena echoed with memories of Torvill and Dean, the Duchenays—and yes, that was reigning Ladies World Bronze Medalist Carolina Kostner on the practice ice with a group of lucky adults, debuting the new spiral sequence from her short program.

Washington Figure Skating Club members traveled to Europe in force. One of the largest club contingents and also one of the winningest, we were led by this event's founder, our own **Rhea Schwartz**, called by some the Guiding Light of Adult Figure Skating, who enjoyed boisterous ovations every time



The WFSC contingent at the inaugural ISU Adult Competition included **Carey Thorington**, **Mark Adams**, **Beth Delano**, **Tim Fisher**, **Lydia Paley-Hume**, **Rhea Schwartz** and **Phyllis Howard**.

her name was announced. Rhea started U.S. Adult Nationals, which recently enjoyed its 11th year, with the help of WFSC member and ISU Council Member **Phyllis Howard**, who at the time chaired the US Figure Skating Program Development Committee. Rhea began writing letters to the ISU Council as far back as 2001 about an ISU-sanctioned Adult Competition. As Chair of the ISU Adult Skating Working Group, Rhea and her colleagues worked hand-in-hand with Phyllis and the local organizers to turn this long-held dream into a reality. THANK YOU, Rhea and Phyllis!

WFSC skaters included **Carey Thorington** (4th Silver Ladies III), **Rhea Schwartz** (5th Silver Ladies III), and **Tim Fisher** (3rd Silver Men II). **Beth Delano** skated to a standing ovation in Master Ladies I and a close second-place finish. The Silver Men's II Champion was **Mark Adams** with a point total that exceeded most of the Gold Men's scores. Another local face was renowned International Judge Joe Inman from Alexandria, Virginia, who ran the competition as Technical Controller.

The organizers debuted several innovations that proved very popular with the

participants. Before the competition, an on-ice Draw party, similar to those held at all ISU events, introduced the athletes and officials, and proved to be the perfect place for team photos. While competing, skaters' names were spelled out in lights on the overhead scoreboard. The most prominent innovation was a large and decorative Kiss-and-Cry area where skaters lounged after competing their programs to watch the rest of their flight. After the last skater finished and all the hugs, congratulations and posing for photos was completed, the announcer read the final result for that event. The competitors were able to stand and take their bows before the large and appreciative crowd. Oberstdorf was the first test in competition of a pencil-and-paper variant of the new ISU judging system—instead of the highly computerized version we've seen at Grand Prix events and Worlds—and all were impressed with the swift delivery of the results made possible by an amazing team of accountants. The event ran on-time and without a hitch!

Enjoying his first glimpse of Adult skating ever in Oberstdorf was Ottavio Cinquanta, the President of the ISU, who attended as a spectator throughout both

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Ice Force One Brings Home the Bronze

Team medals at the U.S. Synchronized Team Skating Championships

At the Feb. 23-26 national competition, held in Lowell, MA, Ice Force One skated to a medley of music by Santana with a performance described as “entertaining and competitive” by U.S. Figure Skating. “Our goal was to entertain the crowd and to cap off our season with our strongest performance possible—and we did it!” remarked Stacey Sickels Heckel, coach and team member. Jennifer DeSimone, the team’s coach and choreographer, added, “We came to perform our personal best. These skaters have put so much into this season—three hours every Sunday, hours of training between practices, and balancing personal life and a passion for skating. Their final performance made all of the months of effort absolutely worth it.”

The team has a strong roster of 18 women. These are professionals, but not all skating professionals. They are mothers, lawyers, skating instructors and other professionals ranging in age from 25 to 30 plus! The 2004-05 team attracted skaters from Maryland, Virginia, Washington DC, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Ice Force One began its season by earning the gold medal in December 2004 at



the Annual Cape Cod Synchronized Skating Classic. In February, they earned the silver medal in the Masters division at the 2005 Eastern Synchronized Team Skating Sectional Championships in Buffalo, New York.

Stacey Heckel writes, “What I am most proud of this season is the harmonious team dynamic that we experienced as a group. We had, without question, the strongest group of skaters we have ever had on the team. That might have resulted in a more tense and competitive atmosphere, but the opposite occurred. While we

certainly hoped for a medal, we had bigger goals: individual athlete development, greater knowledge of synchronized skating, and gelling as a team. Each skater brought her ‘best self’ to the team, and the result was a positive ‘force’ all season—it puts new meaning into Ice Force One!”

The team currently practices on Sunday evenings at Cabin John Ice Arena. They plan to add a second team in the Adult Open Division for the 2005-06 season. For further information contact Stacey Sickels Heckel, 410-350-4944 or coach@iceforceone.org. ★

Fort Dupont, from page 2

Willem Polak, board chairman, was selected as a 2005 Washingtonian of the Year for his work on behalf of Fort Dupont!

With ongoing support from the Washington Figure Skating Club, our loaned equipment program continues to be very successful. All of the Advanced Figure Skating group and many of the Learn to Skate students are outfitted in gently-used, higher quality skates and dresses. We greatly appreciate the many

donations we receive from area figure skaters.

At WFSC’s invitation, we held a bake sale during the Annual Free Skating Competition at Mount Vernon Ice Arena in February. All funds raised support the Kids On Ice programs and we greatly appreciate everyone who purchased items! Several of the Advanced Skills skaters volunteered as runners for the competition and enjoyed being a part of the event and learning more about how competitions work.

The Kids on Ice Learn to Skate Program

needs volunteer instructors—Saturdays: 2:00-2:50 pm, Sundays: 1:30-2:20 pm, through August 6-7, 2005. Teaching experience not required! Stay for public skating “on the house!” For further information and to volunteer contact Terri Ann Lowenthal at talowenthal@fdia.org or 202-484-3067 (h).

You can also help Fort Dupont by submitting a referral to Angie’s List, a customer satisfaction service referral firm. Check the web site, www.fdia.org, for information and the latest on activities and events. We hope to see you on the ice!

Beverly Kimes Honored by U.S. Figure Skating

by Linda Laurel

The annual meeting of the USFS Governing Council held during May in Columbus, OH was especially memorable for WFSC representatives when USFS and this year's attendees honored club member **Beverly Kimes** by presenting her with a very special 50 Year Judging Award.

Beverly is a National Synchronized Competition Judge and a Novice Competition Judge for Singles, Pairs & Dance. However, many of our club's current skaters know Mrs. Kimes because she can regularly be found judging during area test sessions and competitions, not only for WFSC, but for several other clubs as well. Over the years, test chairs throughout the area have come to rely on Beverly's commitment to the USFS testing program and her willingness to give her time so that the latest generation of skaters can move up the ranks and complete their tests.

During the Governing Council meeting on May 6, Hugh Graham introduced the other 50-Year Honorees: Chuck Foster, Claire Ferguson and Susan Johnson. Then WFSC member and former USFSA President Phyllis Howard presented us with a vivid and unforgettable vision of Beverly during a spirited and well-received speech. Phyllis highlighted the unique personality Beverly always brings to events when she arrives, as well as Beverly's continued dedication to the sport and the incredible perseverance needed to judge so many events over so many years. Beverly accepted her award, after an energized standing ovation from the WFSC contingent and an enthusiastic reception from all the delegates, with the following remarks:

"I have enjoyed what seems to be my entire life in an ice rink. I even wear winter coats in the summer from force of habit.

"I have learned many lessons: how to pick myself up off the ice, how to stop without the aid of a barrier and to NEVER volunteer. Anyway, I seemed to accept any job no one else knew who to assign it to and again, NEVER to volunteer.

"I have had many highlights in being a

61-year member of the WFSC. I have been President, Treasurer and anything else no one knew who to assign it to. I have been an Eastern Dance Champion and an Eastern Vice Chairman for Dance Judges and I have loved it all.

"Thank you so much for honoring me."

Following Friday's meeting, USFS recognized the 50-Year Honorees with a lovely reception, where delegates happily reminisced to the background sounds of a jazz combo. Everyone had the opportunity to view a large display of photographs, newspaper articles and other memorabilia designed to show some of the significant skating milestones of Beverly and the other honorees.

It was not the end of the evening for Beverly's celebration though, because there was yet another reception that awaited Bev's energetic attendance. This one was hosted by Phyllis Howard and catered by Pat Brockner and Judy Reiner. Many well-wishers stopped by to offer their commendations, including her long-time skating colleague Donald Laws, who joined WFSC the same year as Beverly 60 years ago.

(Anyone wondering what Beverly was doing before the beginning of those 50 years that culminated in her judging award will be pleased to know she was still skating and competing during the first ten years.) Younger skaters, judges, coaches and officials all thanked Beverly for a job well done.

My own favorite story to share about Beverly happened several years ago while I was working an area test session. A bright convertible sports car came zipping into the parking lot. The young skater next to me said, "Oh look, here comes one of the coaches." Needless to say, the skater was quite surprised (speechless, if I remember correctly) when she saw Beverly, one of our judges, step out of the car and head into the rink with her usual bright greetings along the way. Enthusiasm and stamina are good characteristics to maintain on the road to the 50 Year Judging Award; and driving a car you like to get there doesn't hurt either.

Please be sure to congratulate Beverly Kimes for this wonderful achievement when you see her at the rink this year. ★

Study examining characteristics of adult skaters now recruiting!

In recent years, the number of adults (those 25 years and older) who enjoy skating as a recreational or competitive sport has increased significantly. Although young skaters face daunting obstacles in their competitive skating careers, adult skaters often face a different set of challenges to skate, train, and compete. Work and family commitments often limit the amount of time that may be devoted to their skating. In addition, the level of physical conditioning, flexibility, and overall health may further limit an older skater's progress in the sport. It may take longer for an adult to recover from a physical injury, surgery, or other medical condition (related or unrelated to their skating), again limiting the individual's progress. In spite of these issues, many adults continue to learn and love to skate.

Are you interested in contributing to the knowledge about adult skaters? Consider volunteering for an ongoing research study examining the health, exercise and training habits, injuries, and nutritional habits of adult skaters (recreational and competitive). The study involves completing a health history form and questionnaire by mail or email. If you are 25 years or older and love to skate, please contact: Cynthia Ferrara Ph.D, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Dept. of Physical Therapy, 3 Solomont Way, Suite 5, Lowell, MA 01854; Cynthia_Ferrara@uml.edu; 978-934-4399.

Dr. Cynthia Ferrara (Cynthia Kelley) has a doctoral degree in exercise physiology. She is a former member of WFSC, actively involved in ice dancing, and is a member of the board of the USFSA Sports Medicine Society. She currently

Balance Your Skating with Customized Orthotics

by Dr. Raymond S. Solano, D.C.

Once your skates hit the ice, everything changes. Improper balance in the feet can cause changes in the knees and further up into the pelvis and even your spine. Therefore, proper balance and stability in the feet are crucial for skaters wanting to maintain stability and land the perfect jump.

The joints in your body that bear weight (ankles, knees, hips, pelvis, low

back, neck) are like links in a chain. If your feet are not balanced, then every joint (and the connecting muscle, tendons, and ligaments) above may become injured over time due to unnatural twists and strains that you place on your body as a skater. Pain may occur because of these postural imbalances.

In addition, every time your feet hit the ground, a shock wave travels all the way

through your body. If your feet are balanced, they can absorb much of that shock. If they are not balanced, over time the shock can cause you additional stress/strain.

We all have several small bones in each foot and each bone serves a purpose. When any of these bones slide out of position, then the proper biomechanics of the foot is lost. For skaters, it is imperative to have proper lower limb biomechanics for landing jumps and injury prevention.

There are certain conditions that can be traced back to improper foot balance. Over pronating or “flat feet” is a common condition where the feet roll inward and collapse the normal arch. Heel pain, plantar fasciitis, and lower back pain are other conditions skaters can sometimes experience with improper foot balance. Proper balance and stability through the use of custom orthotics can correct these and other problems.

Orthotics are specific and versatile. They can be moved to different shoes and boots, depending on your lifestyle. A custom orthotic is designed in many ways. The more common and effective way is to take a cast impression of both feet in the standing or weight-bearing position. This is the most accurate way to look for instability. Once the cast impression is taken, it is sent to a lab that designs an orthotic insert specifically for you. I see patients in my office that have been prescribed orthotics for their boots, running shoes, cleats, and even dress shoes.

Now you know why it is important to make sure your feet are giving you the proper support your whole body needs. If they are not, it is time to ask your doctor whether custom-made orthotic inserts are meant for you. ★

Dr. Raymond S. Solano is a Chiropractic Physician with a private practice in Falls Church, Va. He was recently featured in the Washington Post as an “expert” on spinal health. He is a board member of the USFSA Sports Medicine Society and currently works with skaters from all levels. Please send questions to docsolano@aol.com or by calling (703) 536-4366.

An Interview with... *Jaya Kanal*

by Ellyn Kestnbaum

For much of the history of figure skating as an organized sport, from the late 19th to the late 20th centuries, one of the most important parts of skating training, testing, and competition was a series of exercises known as school figures. Skaters attempted to draw perfect circles on the ice with their blades in figure-8 patterns of two circles touching, and in some cases three circles strung together. The more advanced figures also included three turns, brackets, counters, rockers, and loops, all judged on how accurately the skater could trace the shapes on the ice.

Figures have not been competed internationally since 1990 or nationally in the United States since 1999, and the figure tests are no longer required for skaters coming up through the ranks. They still have much to offer, however, as a means of learning skating technique.

Last summer, Cabin John coach **Jaya Kanal** offered a class in school figures that attracted several adult students. This winter and spring she was able to offer a similar class through the WFSC, which also attracted some younger skaters.

What level students were you working with?

The adult class in the summer we had people who would be the equivalent of working on pre-preliminary and preliminary and one prejuvenile. In the class this time through the club we had everything

from preliminary through novice moves level skaters.

So how did you structure the class?

Well, since none of them had done figures we actually started at the beginning with the forward outside and inside eight. Believe it or not that can take a whole class. And when they started to get the hang of those figures, I started to introduce them to the back outside and inside eight as well as the forward serpentine. One of the main reasons I wanted to introduce them to the serpentine, the three-circle figure, was because there is no equivalent field move. The first time they have to do a change of edge is in the power pulls. Many of them really didn't know how to set up a proper change of edge on a long axis. Plus, the idea of a three-circle figure was kind of intriguing to them—that they would have to go 1½ circles on one foot. So this was really our focus for many of the classes—just the basic eights and the forward serpentine. We did start to introduce the threes to center and the second-test threes. Some of the kids actually got double threes (the ones who had double threes on their moves tests). A couple of the kids worked on brackets, and one girl worked on counters. Because she had never done serpentes, she initially had trouble aligning her counter properly; she hadn't learned how to change to that new circle first with the change of edge and then turn later.

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Adults Bring in the New Year in Style!

by *Caroline Thorington*

The 4th Annual New Year's Invitational Adult Skating Competition was held at the Ashburn Ice House on February 5th and 6th, 2005. WFSC had thirty-two members skating at the competition. Many of them entered multiple events, covering every category from Compulsory Moves to Pairs and all levels and ages from Pre-Bronze to Masters Ladies and Gold Men. This year there were competitors in both Dance and Pairs, at the Silver and Bronze levels.

WFSC had many winners at the New Year's Competition. The most unusual first-place win was shared by **Carol Dors** and **Janet Long** in Silver Ladies IV FS. Carol and Janet both skated very well to the end, with the judges dividing their ordinals into an unbreakable tie. **Jennifer McManus** skated very strongly to capture first place in both the Bronze Ladies FS II/III/IV and the Bronze MIF. In Pre-Bronze Ladies FS I, **Rebecca Curry** won the Gold. **Eva Przygodzki** skated a very graceful program to win in Silver Ladies

FS II and **Beth Delano** landed clean double jumps in her gold-medal Master Ladies FS program. **Lena Shirinian's** beautifully centered spins were fast and fun to watch. They also won her first place in the Silver Spins category. **Tim Fisher's** rubber ducky shower cap had everybody laughing as he took to the ice for Men's Interpretive. His rendition of singing in the bathtub—on ice!—with its inventive moves was a crowd pleaser and won the judge's nod for first place.

WFSC Dancers and Pairs skaters did very well too. In Pre-Bronze/Bronze Dance, WFSC had a clean sweep: **Ann Merz** and **Jim Wilson** won the gold; **Annie Gudis** and **Tim Fisher**, the silver; and **Heidi Corcoran** and **John Hillenbrand** the bronze. **Gabrielle Rudderow** and **Peter Tsai** skated to first place in all three of their dances to win the Silver Dance. Marna Grim of the SC of Northern VA and WFSC's **Stephen Trzaska** skated to first place in the Silver

Pairs competition with some nice lifts.

Many other WFSC skaters won medals at the New Year's Competition. There were 13 silver medalists and 10 bronze medalists. A complete listing can be found on the club's web site. All the competitors at the New Year's competition are to be congratulated for continuing to skate even when the music ceased playing. This happened several times during the Interpretive events. The crowd helped, though. They sang the song for the skater and when the music came back on, the skater was still skating in time to the music! The unplanned ending to the last interpretive program left everyone in a good mood. Ross Luxton of Iceworks SC rolled with the punches and made his fall look like a finish with a flourish.

Congratulations to **Tim Fisher** who won this year's Ed Picken Award for being the top WFSC finisher (he won the silver medal) in the Silver Men's Free Skate. Each year an event is picked by a drawing before the competition. Then the WFSC skater who has the highest finish in that event receives the award.

Following the Interpretive events on Saturday night, there was a wine and cheese reception for all the skaters, judges and volunteers in the lounge overlooking the rink. It was fun to catch up with friends—both those who had traveled to compete and those who were closer to home. The competition attracted many local skaters, but also some competitors from as far away as California, Colorado and Georgia. In all, there were competitors from fourteen different states and the District of Columbia. To judge from the enthusiasm of the crowd watching the events and the skaters participating in them, the 4th Annual New Year's Adult Invitational was enjoyed by all. ★

Traveling to Nationals 2006?

Francis Stroschio is looking for a roommate to share a room at the Hyatt hotel, Jan. 9-15. Cost for 6 nights: \$465. Contact her at (301) 293-2503 or wolfhoundwoods@starpower.net.

ISU Adult Competition, from page 2

days of competition. At the close of each day's competition, three large circular podiums were brought onto the ice and a red carpet rolled out from the side. Every competitor had a moment in the spotlight as each was announced to stirring music, then skated out to receive his or her award. Trophies were presented to the top three finishers and medals to all other athletes. Every skater received beautiful gifts as well as the personal congratulations of Mr. Cinquanta, the German Skating Federation V.P. Sissy Krick and other organizing officials. For those of us who won't make it to the Olympics as skating competitors, this pageantry fulfilled all our fantasies.

At the closing night banquet, Mr. Cinquanta declared the event a great success and announced that we should all plan to return next year to Oberstdorf for a second annual ISU Adult Competition. He announced that the skating age would be both lowered to 28 years and raised to

70—to increase the pool of potential competitors. Then the accountants handed out our protocol sheets—showing all the elements, grades of execution, and program components for each event. The next morning—at breakfast, at the train station and in the dining car on the ride back to Munich—skaters were seen comparing notes and strategizing on how to maximize their point totals for next year.

What was the best part? Was it the overall superb quality of skating (including a monster triple toe/double toe combination in Masters Men); the knock-your-socks-off scenery; the fabulous German food, drink and hospitality; putting your friends on the ice; making new friends with a fresh crop of international athletes; or the dozens upon dozens of photos we all brought back? For me, it was the large numbers of friends, family and supporters that joined the athletes for this magical Alpine vacation. See you all again next year! ★

Interview, from page 6

So you had different people working on different figures?

For the first 15-20 minutes, we all worked on the same basic eight. Then I would have them work on figures that corresponded more closely to their moves level.

What would you say is the value of working on figures at this point?

It has many applications to skating today. Skaters learn how to have enough power to make it around a circle on one foot, so their initial push has to be powerful. Perhaps more importantly they learn how to get up on top of their edge and learn how to align their skate and their body to ride an edge for a long time. Making it around the second half of a circle requires great control, and most skaters have never done that. So they learn about power, they learn about body alignment, and they learn about control, because the forces on a skater doing a full circle are rather great. They learn to hold the check of a three turn for a long time, for example. And it's a chance to show them that, at one point, neatness really counted. Some kinds of neatness still count, but the kind of precision that was required in school figures is not required anymore, in terms of the neatness of centers and the pure cleanliness of turns. So they're getting a taste of that level of precision, which is beneficial to their freestyle and their moves skating.

So what do you think the students took away from it?

I think they developed a real appreciation for what it takes to make it around a circle. At first they came to the class and thought, "Oh, how hard can it be to make around the circle?" They gained a new respect for figures and for the discipline that's required. I think they took away a greater understanding of alignment. They embodied greater control on their edges, and I can see the difference when they free skate. And they had a taste of history, which I think is just as valuable as the technical benefits. I explained to them that at one point this discipline was good for 60 and then 50 and then 30 percent of the total score. So it's different than nowadays.

What role did figures play in your own skating?

I did figures for 10 years, from the time I started freestyling, once I got out of group lessons. I went through all my figure tests. I think I was 8 when I passed my preliminary and 18 when I passed my 8th. So it was a 10-year journey. And when I finally passed my 8th, my teacher said "Now you can begin." In a way he was right—it is sort of like building up a vocabulary. All those years of doing the school figures, you build up a movement vocabulary and then you use it when you skate.

Do you have anything else you want to add?

I've had so much fun doing the figures class with the students. It's renewed my

Congratulations to...

... **Sandra Crawford** (Gold Singles/Pairs Test Judge) and **Christina Beck** (Bronze Singles/Pairs Test Judge) on their recent judging appointments.

... **Melissa Glasscock, Joseph Jorgens, Teresa Lin, Emma Phibbs** and **Andrea Williams** on passing the Senior Free Skating test.

... **Erica Coffman, Bobby Crawford, Gabrielle Friedenbergh, Melissa Glasscock, Katrina Gumbinner, Eleanor Hoptman, Jayanti Kanal, Rachel Nevares, Katrina Reyes, Danielle Viola** and **Andrea Williams** on passing the Senior MIF test.

interest in figures (and we all skate them, by the way, with our freestyle boots, so our equipment is not ideal). But I've been reminded of the benefits and also of the joy of this really peaceful activity. It's done traditionally in silence, with no music playing. That's a good way to learn concentration and focus. There's a serenity to figures. There's a serenity to the experience of doing figures. Some people say it's meditative, even, because there's a quiet repetition. So I would say that it's been fun to have the opportunity to revisit this, and I hope that skaters will dip one toe into that water and see what it's like. It's a wonderful part of our sport's history, and I'd hate to see it just disappear off the map, you know. I did notice that, in the last *Skating* magazine, there were some people who had just passed their 8th figure test. So there are people still doing it. ★

**The Blade**

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