

Rotations

Newsletter of the Wagon
Wheel Figure Skating Club



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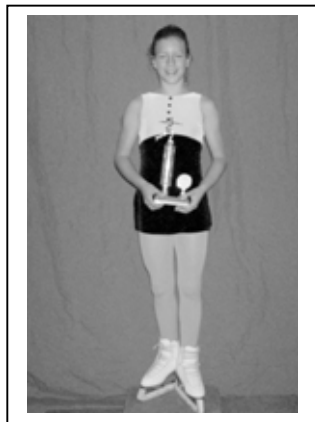
October–November 2004

What Makes GCFI Successful?

Last month, Wagon Wheel FSC hosted the annual Greater Chicagoland Fall Invitation (GCFI) figure skating competition at the Northbrook skating rink. Skaters registered for almost 500 slots in the three-day competition, which spanned beginner to adult skaters, short and long programs, and helped to launch our fledgling Theater on Ice group. Here we explore what it takes to stage a major competition....

Skaters, of Course!

Skaters registered for close to 500 spots in various events on September 10 through 12. Compulsories and early events held on Friday saw skaters from beginners to novices with short programs flocking to the West Park Sports Arena (Northbrook rink).



It's all about the skaters, like these winners!

But aside from the obvious focus on skaters, who else is involved in staging a competition?

Lots of Volunteers

Behind the scenes at the Northbrook competition, scores of volunteers made the three-day event happen. It began with registration of skaters. Lisa and Tina are experts at handling check-ins, scratches, and music management for the hundreds of skaters at GCFI.



Twin registrars verified that skaters were present and had turned in (as well as later picked up) their program music.

It can be challenging to introduce the skaters—especially during half-ice events such as compulsories. But although many Wagon Wheel board members took a shot at announcing and playing program music, John was a master at multitasking at the microphone!



John kept a smooth voice and upbeat disposition during his three days of announcing the skaters. Well done, John!

Ever wondered how the judging and scoring of skaters happens? Judges and accountants, that's how! We must never forget that the judges and accountants are volunteers as well. Here are one of the judge/referee panels and two computer-literate accountants on duty.



At left, judges look pleased to be analyzing skaters' programs. On the right, accountants calculate the ordinals to determine skaters' places following each group of competitors.

And how were the scores transferred from judges and accountants to the results wall and trophy room? That's where skaters volunteered as "runners" to post results for participants and convey medal lists to the awards room, where still more volunteers presented trophies and ribbons to skaters who "placed."



At left, cheerful runners carry results from judges to the results wall and awards room, and volunteers distributed trophies and ribbons to skaters.

All of the other diligent volunteers cannot be listed here—the ice monitors, refreshment providers, volunteer coordinators, etc., etc.—but please accept our heartfelt thanks for making this GCFI such a great experience!

Holiday Exhibition Plans

Wagon Wheel will hold its annual holiday exhibition on Sunday morning, December 19, at the West Park Sports Center ("Northbrook rink") at 10 a.m. All Wagon Wheel skaters are encouraged to participate in the event or come to cheer on our most accomplished skaters during this fun event. Qualifiers for the Upper Great Lakes regional championships receive their participation reimbursements and congratulatory introductions at this event, so be sure to mark your calendars!

Wagon Wheel Board Walk

This series interviews members of our club's board to familiarize members with the people who serve them and understand whom to contact with questions or issues about figure skating. This issue interviews one of the club's vice-presidents, Lanny Nelson.

Q: Where do you work and what is your position?

LN: I'm a Certified Pharmacy Technician at Osco Drug in Huntley.

Q: Who are your family members and which of them have been skaters? What types of skating activities have they done?



V.P. Lanny Nelson

LN: I've often said that my kids quit skating and forgot to tell me—but that's not the case. My husband Ralph served on the Barrington Area Figure Skating Club board at its inception. Our younger daughter, Judi, tested to the Junior level and skated on the Starlets Synchro Team. She is now a physical therapist, married, and living in California. She is still interested in skating and plans to get involved with the USFS medical committee at a future point. My older daughter, Christi, also tested to the Junior level and skated with the Starlets Synchro Team at its start in 1980. She is a Novice-level singles and pairs judge and a National Synchro judge. She is married and lives in Morton Grove. Yes, my one-year-old granddaughter, Athena, has a new pair of skates that she is growing into. She attended her first qualifying competition in Colorado Springs at age 2½ months!

Q: What is your fondest skating memory?

LN: I have too many "fondest memories" of skating to begin to say. Among them would be the 1995–1997 Starlets Synchro Team that won three National Championships in a row; Michelle Kwan's short program at the 2002 National Championships in Los Angeles; and Deanna Stellato winning the Novice Ladies Championship in Salt Lake City in 1999. I can't wait for this year's qualifying season to start. Wagon Wheel has nine wonderful skaters competing at Upper Great Lakes in Iowa in October.

Q: How did you become interested in being on the Wagon Wheel board? How long have you served?

LN: In the mid-1980s Wagon Wheel was going through some tough times financially and politically. The club was moving around and people were becoming dissatisfied with the board and leaving the club. By default I ended up on the board as Vice-President. I served as membership chair and sanctions chair. When the President resigned, I became President and served in that capacity for quite a few years. I am currently one of two Vice Presidents (Joan Viviano serving as the other VP).

Q: What are your duties on the board? At what functions do you represent Wagon Wheel?

LN: My present position as Vice-President enables me to represent the club at the annual USFS Governing Council meetings and as delegate to the Skating Council of Illinois—a relatively new organization of which Wagon Wheel is a founding member. One of the more fun things I do is help organize club and council competitions/exhibitions to show off our skaters.

Q: What is the value of belonging to a figure skating club? What is your vision for our club?

LN: Belonging to a figure skating club is like joining a support group. This is the source of the national information about figure skating, which hopefully gets disseminated. My vision for the club would be to develop well-educated parents, making sure everyone knows and understands the benefits of this marvelous and beautiful sport. Not every skater needs to win a medal but he or she can be fit and disciplined, and have life-long opportunities within the sport.

Q: What changes do you foresee occurring in figure skating?

LN: The new judging system will be altering our sport in the coming years. It is not a perfect system, but I think it will be perceived as a fair system by skaters and the public. This hopefully will garner increased support for figure skating from the outside community and give our skaters another tool with which to improve their skating.

Show Your Wagon Wheel Spirit!

Enclosed is an order form for Wagon Wheel club spirit wear for boys, girls, and adults. In addition to the items on the order form, hoodies in sizes adult small through extra large at \$28 each, in gray and black. To order a hoodie, write in your size and color on the form and include \$28 each.

All orders must be received no later than October 22 for delivery by the holiday exhibition. Order today!

Coach's Corner

Beth Sisofo: Grooming Champion Teams and Pairs

This series introduces figure skating coaches of many flavors who are members of the Wagon Wheel Figure Skating Club. We hope that members will become more familiar with the people who teach them and understand whom to contact when it's time to select a coach for a specific skating situation. This issue features Beth Sisofo, familiar as a long-standing team coach, pairs coach, and also a skating mom.

Q: Beth, who in your family skates?

BS: I had two cousins and an uncle who skated, learning from my grandmother. I got 10 lessons for Christmas. My brother, Frank Sweiding, was a world pairs competitor and world professional champion. My cousin is an ice dance coach in Philadelphia. I was a national competitor with my brother in pairs. We were both also skated singles and dance. Now my two daughters, Colette and Brianna, compete in solo and team skating. Colette is on the Junior Starlights team



Beth Sisofo

Q: How did you become a coach?

BS: With the competitive background I had, I went to the University of Denver and got a degree in sports science and phys ed. Our class was very small, so many classes featured figure skating and we did research on the ice.

Q: What are your coaching specialties, and what types of students do you typically coach?

BS: I primarily coach pairs, moves and freestyle, and synchro team at the Ice House and Buffalo Grove. I teach all levels, beginning to gold medal.

Q: Do you do other skating-related activities?

BS: I'm on the board for U.S. Figure Skating and the Committee for Synchronized Skating. I just represented USFS in Germany at the ISU and trained to become a technical specialist for the new judging system.

Q: What is your fondest memory about figure skating?

BS: I run into people I grew up with; when I go to some obscure place, I encounter people in the skating community. A Finnish National Champion

lived with us for three years; he earned an Olympic gold medal. Pekka Leskinen is now a world judge for skaters like Michelle Kwan.

Q: Who is your favorite skater, past or present?

BS: I admire Michelle Kwan—her attitude through her ups and downs. She perseveres.

Q: What are your favorite moves to watch skaters perform?

BS: I enjoy a beautiful death spiral and a beautiful spiral.

Q: What changes do you foresee occurring in figure skating? Which ones do you favor?

BS: Definitely the new judging system. It will help skaters and get rid of the politics. Everything is going to count—spins, footwork. You can't just jump. Everything's getting graded.

Theater on Ice Group Debuts at GCFI

Skating to music from *The Lion King*, the recently formed Theater on Ice ensemble founded at the Crystal Ice House made its first public performance on Saturday afternoon at GCFI. Coached by Rene Brainard and Zane Shropshire, skaters at many levels dressed as characters from the Disney movie classic and used colorful props to enact the Circle of Life theme.



Wagon Wheel Figure Skating Club

P.O. Box 173

Barrington, IL 60011

Plans of the cast include performing at the Wolves ice hockey game on October 30, plus the club's Holiday Exhibition. Don't miss them!

Club Event Calendar

Continuing through June 4, 2005: Wagon Wheel icetime four hours per week at the Crystal Ice House (Thursdays at 5 and 6 p.m., Saturdays at 7 and 8 a.m.)

Continuing through April 24, 2005: Wagon Wheel icetime at the Northbrook West Park Sports Center rink two hours a week (Sundays at 10 a.m. for skaters having axel or higher skills, and Sundays at 11 a.m. for skaters having double jumps). Contract forms available at the Ice House or Northbrook on Sundays.

October 22: USFS test session for moves, freestyle, and ice dance, Crystal Ice House

December 19: Holiday Exhibition at the West Park Sports Center (Northbrook Rink), 10 a.m. Sign up at the Ice House or call Lynn Brown to register by phone.

Wagon Wheel Contacts

President: Stan Kluzak:	(847) 417-9123
Test Chair: Joan Viviano:	(847) 438-5543
	fax: (847) 726-0206
<i>Rotations:</i> Lynn Brown:	(847) 854-0342
	fax: (847) 854-0344
Membership: Rick White	(847) 516-8908
Wagon Wheel Website:	www.wwfsc.com