



# In the Loop

News and Profiles from the San Diego Figure Skating Club

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## SDFSC sends a Bumper Crop of Competitors to Arizona for Southwest Pacific Regionals

The Club is very proud to be sending a bumper crop of 22 competitors to represent the club at Southwest Pacific Regional Championships in Scottsdale, Arizona, Oct. 6 - 9th.



shop for the last two years, giving skaters an opportunity to hone basic skating skills during the summer months, and the increasing importance of the home rink's skating school, thus generating many more skaters interested and capable of compet-

The number of skaters registered to compete on behalf of SDFSC is up more than fifty percent over last year, and 140% over the number of competitors the club sent to Regionals in October 2003. This dramatic increase in

the number of competitors is the combined result of the development of a stronger coaching staff at the club's home rink -- SDIA -- the club's innovation in creating and supporting a summer-long moves-in-the-field work-

ing. Our motivated group of skaters will be competing in Juvenile through Senior Freeskate as well as in Juvenile Dance. Results will appear in the next issue of "In the Loop".

**Good luck to all of our Southwest Competitors!**

## Southwest Pacific Regional Championships Exhibition & Reception a Special Night for Local Skaters

USFSA's 2006 Southwest Pacific Regional Championships will be held Oct. 6 - 9th at the Alltel Ice Den in Scottsdale, AZ. The Coyotes Skating Club of Arizona will host these championships.

2006 Southwest Pacific Championships will determine eligibility for the 2006 Pacific Coast

Sectional Figure Skating Championships (Novice, Junior & Senior events) and the U.S. Junior Figure Skating Championships (Juvenile & Intermediate events). Four entrants, in the order of placement, in these qualifying events will be eligible for advancement to the next higher championships.

**Friday, September 30th**, beginning at 6:00 p.m. the SDFSC will host an Exhibition and Reception for club members who will be competing at Southwest Pacific Regionals or Sectionals, to perform their programs in front of family and friends. See page four to read all the details about this exciting special event.

Check out the winning essays written by SDFSC Founders Fund Scholarship Recipients, pgs 8 - 9, and our close up look at Senior Skater, Shandra Eastman on page 7. Don't miss our close-up look at our very own coaches, this time featuring High Achiever **Bob Pellaton**. Then, be sure to stay **In the Loop** by reading about the Club's new **Competitors' Committee** (pg 3), and most recent Gold Medalists (page 11).

## Letter from the Club's President

Let me introduce myself. For those of you that don't know me, I am Peggy Stark's "other" daughter, Suzie Whitehead. I began skating at 18 months old, here in San Diego. I competed in Singles, Dance and Drill team (the predecessor to Synchronized). Amazingly enough some of my coaches are still around today, Wanda Guntert and Claude Sweet.

Having grown up in a family obsessed with skating it was only natural that I followed suit and stay involved with the sport. Although you may not see me at competitions, I am usually there, hidden away in a nice warm room. I am a Sectional Accountant for USFSA. Nope, didn't want to follow in Mom's footsteps, judging is too cold.

Well, enough about me. We are now beginning the 2006 Competitive Season. As I'm sure a lot of you have heard, the club's Board of Directors has formed a new committee, the SDFSC Competitor's Committee. We have appointed Suzan Cioffi chair. Please read on in the newsletter for additional information.

I would like to ask for your support of our competitors by attending our 2006 Competitive team exhibitions. They will be held on September 30, 2005, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

Thank you to all who made our 2005 Summer Moves Seminar such a success. We had great attendance again this summer and the skaters said they learned a lot.

Best wishes and good luck to our 2006 Competitive Team.

**Suzie Whitehead**

## Editor's Letter



*Suzan Cioffi*

It's back to school season, and for me, back to writing and editing this journal. Some summer off!

While I was kept very busy driving from one ice rink to another several hours each morning before work, as my daughter trained with her new dance partner some 30 hours a week, I undertook a new endeavor for the club, to get a Competitors' Committee launched that would try to help provide additional support (financial and moral) to the competitive singles, pair and dance team skaters who had, until this summer, never had any committee charged with actively promoting their interests.

The idea originally came from active skater mom, Yolanda Williams, but she knew that my gritty determination could get it through. She has now joined me in trying to get the newly-approved Competitors' Committee off the ground, helping to organize new fundraising opportunities aimed at lightening the financial load for competitive skaters' families, and doing a better job of shining a bright light on our competitive skaters, their efforts and their achievements.

Being at two of the most active Competitive Skater rinks in the SD area (SDIA and Escondido) this summer has allowed me an up close view of our club's many dedicated and hard working competitors, and has renewed my store of admiration and awe for their discipline, their motivation and their love for the sport.

When I will serve at Southwest Pacific Regional Champion-

ships in October, I will see only a few of our skaters climb the podium, but I will know that **all** of these competitors are true winners, in their lives, and in our community. Remember to stop each and every one of them at some time in the next month to congratulate them for all their hard work preparing for Regionals, and to wish them good luck!

As I said, its back to school time, and so for many families, its back to the difficult challenge of trying to find a balance between school and skating. We feature in this issue the winners of the 2005 SDFSC Scholastic Achievement Awards, three individuals who have succeeded at that daunting balancing act between school and skating. I salute them all for their achievements. I am particularly proud that one of them is my own daughter, Kassy Kova.

The Club does a good service for our youth, providing scholarships that underline the fact that excellence in academic endeavors, as well as skating achievements and volunteer service, are all highly valued attributes in our community, and will serve them well in the future.

As I launch into my "Year Two" as editor of "*In the Loop*", I see nothing but successes in the past year for our Club: a growing membership; a second highly-successful, club-sponsored Moves-in-the-Field summer workshop; almost 3 times as many individual competitors this year as two years ago; successful Club-sponsored competitions; a strong, diverse and committed group of coaches at our home rink; a huge skating school (700+) that is the envy of the entire West Coast and that keeps generating new aspiring competitors and potential new members; a home-rink management that is innovative and flexible, and the list goes on and on.

We are lucky to be right here in the San Diego Figure Skating Club. Welcome back to ***In the Loop!***

# Scholastic Achievement Award Essays, cont.

## Christine Poletto High School Laureate

Albert Camus once said, "What I know most surely about morality and the duty of man I owe to a sport." I can easily relate this statement to my own figure skating experiences. The lessons and virtues I have learned from being a figure skater will stay with me throughout my entire life. I have learned how to dedicate myself entirely to a set of goals, and to pursue those goals with heartfelt determination. Not only have I experienced chasing these goals as an individual skater, but, also as a member of Team del Sol for many years. We worked as a team and cooperated with each other to pursue a single goal: a gold medal at the national championships. It was our duty and responsibility to be punctual, cooperate with one another, and work as hard as possible at every practice.



Every time I step onto the ice, I know that I have to work hard to make the most of that precious time I have on the ice. I feel obligated to always do my best because that is what figure

skaters are called to do. It is not difficult for me to work hard at something I love. That dedication and commitment carries over into everything else I do. My duty in life is to do my very best and work the hardest I can at whatever task is at hand.

Through my years as a figure skater, I have come to think of my fellow skaters as family. I enjoy every minute I spend at the rink whether it is practicing on the ice, off-ice training, or volunteering. However, it is not always easy to balance my skating life with my school work. Being a freshman in all honors classes requires much time, effort, and dedication to various assignments and projects. It is through my experience as a skater that I have been able to prioritize the various aspects of my life and manage tasks more easily. I have come to know what is important in life. Winning may seem like the only reward there is to a sport, but the skills that I have acquired and the relationships that I have established mean more to me than any medal I have ever won.

## Kassy Kova - Middle School Laureate

Albert Camus once said "What I know most surely about morality and the duty of man I owe to sport". As a skater, I myself have learned so much from skating – essential life lessons.

Every edge that I cut deeply into the ice teaches me a new feeling. I enter my thoughts and realize that if it hadn't been for skating, I might not have learned that progress is, in fact, the result of years of hard work and discipline. A young skater's life is quite difficult, and could never be matched by an ordinary kid's schedule. From a clock timed 3:30 a.m. to 7:45 p.m., a skater skates, educates herself at school, and completes homework with all her might. This life gets more difficult for a skater who strives to excel at school and in skating.



With skating, there isn't one day I can call ordinary. Having six advanced classes requiring full effort, education has to be my first priority. Skating is a very close second. When projects are expected the following day, I cut my sleep from eight hours to five. Major projects unbalanced my schedule to the point that I force myself to run on very few hours of sleep. The following morning I push myself to try and skate my best. Skating has taught me so many ways to work hard and persevere to achieve my goals in school and on ice.

I also recognize that skating has clarified my understanding of the duty of man to his community. As a skating community, we all depend on those who cheerfully donate their time. Throughout the years, volunteers around the world have shown their love for this gracious sport by contributing countless hours to the figure skating world. Seeing all these wonderful people volunteer has taught me a lot about the "duty" of each person to contribute. On a personal level, during 2004 Synchro Nationals, my mom was the Volunteer Coordinator, and I got to help her all year long with the endless odd jobs as she prepared for the event. And now that my mom is Editor of "In the Loop", I pitch in this year with "post-production", preparing each newsletter for mailing. And, every morning, as my mom takes me at 4:15 to open the ice arena, and she greets each skater with a cheery "good morning", and plays music for the early freestyle sessions, I have learned from her that a good deed can only be done by a good heart.

The light figure skating has shown me is also thanks to my hard-working coaches. I work each morning under the watchful eye of my coaches. In addition to teaching me skating skills, their lessons about hard work, discipline and practice, and a willingness to try again if success is not found on the first try, have left a life-long imprint on my character.

Although I have learned much from sport, I owe a large part of the development of my morals to my mother. I never could have developed skills on the ice or at school if it wasn't for her. A strong parent behind a scholar and skater can make a world of difference. She has always given support and guidance for my schoolwork and skating. A parent who loves and supports their child can greatly improve her skills and her attitude.

I believe that figure skating has motivated my family and me to do great things on and off the ice. With tight schedules, discipline, love and charity, figure skating has lit my torch and grown a commitment to excel and to contribute to my community in my heart.