

NAWGJ NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

August, 1995
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A Publication of the National Association of Womens Gymnastic Judges

NAWGJ LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATE IN TRAINING AND JUDGES' CUP

Yvonne Hodge, NAWGJ President

A two-day workshop for State Judging Directors and National Board members proved to be a valuable and productive meeting for the NAWGJ leadership. Joanne Aschenbrenner opened the 1995 national workshop in Vail, Colorado with an inspirational session on how to keep "our life together" in both our personal world and in our judging environment. Judy Grenfell presented a program on stress relief and self care.

Judges from 48 different states judged routines from a videotape produced by Judy Dobransky and Mel Foster. Each routine was discussed and analyzed and a range of scores was developed. All SJDs went home with a copy of the video to aid in judges training in their states.

The group then headed to Denver to work with national level coaches and judges. Tom Forster, Colorado Aerials, conducted a two-hour clinic on bars (see separate article in this newsletter) and Robin Ruegg followed with a clinic on Start Values.

Following the workshop, many of the participants took their turn volunteering (judges, timers, flashers, runners, and scorers) at the National Judges' Cup held in nearby Littleton, Colorado. Kevin Walters, Champion Academy de Gymnastics, was the Meet Director for the 1995 Cup which featured Level 5 through 9 gymnasts. Kevin ran a smooth competition and numerous awards and prizes were presented. All coaches expressed their appreciation for a national-level competition sponsored



Tom Forster and Colorado Aerial gymnasts conduct clinic for judges

by judges. As one coach said, "It was such a great feeling to have his gymnasts judged by officials from all over the country and to have their scores 'hold up' to the scores they had received all year."

Thanks to all of the judges who helped make this year's competition a success: Carol Arnaut, Jan Adkins, Kathleen Blazek, Dawn Belisle, Judy Bodmon, Bonnie Butsch, Hilary Carlson, Marie Carpenter, Marge Eilers, Pat Gardner, Judy Grenfell, Celeste Hamil, Barbara Haws, Yvonne Hodge, Vickie Kalthoff, Judy Kemp, Maria Kidner, Sylvia Lane, Carole Liedtke, Tiffany Marfred, Mary Lee Martin, Genie McElroy, Cindy McLane, Candace Murphy, Jan Piskin, Sheila Ragle, Stacey Ringoen, Betty Roberts, Margaret Salisbury, Patty Shipman, Lucille Weber, Sharon Weber, and Winnie Witten.

AWARDS PROGRAM ESTABLISHED

One of the decisions made at the 1995 SJD National Meeting was to provide awards for outstanding newsletters and videos produced at the state level. Six awards will be given annually in the following categories:

- Best Interview
- Best Use of Charts or Graphs
- Best Humorous Article
- Best Layout and Design
- Best Informational or Educational Article
- Media Masters Award for Best Video

SJDs will send copies of state newsletters and videos to the Regional Judging Directors for consideration for the awards. Each RJD will bring their nominations in each category to the Executive Board Meeting that precedes the annual SJD workshop. Winners will be selected during the workshop.

Start preparing your award-winning entries now. Become a winner!

NATIONAL UNEVEN BAR CLINIC

Tom Forster, owner of the Colorado Aerials, conducted a bar clinic on June 30th, 1995, for SJDs, National Governing Board members, and Colorado judges. Tom focused on the importance of the gymnast's body line on bars. He feels the straightened body line is the most aesthetically pleasing and teaches his gymnasts to get the toes and feet to the imaginary vertical line first—then the center of gravity will follow.

Gymnasts Theresa Kulikowski and Melissa Leopoldis demonstrated various skills for the judges. A special treat was Theresa's performance of her new skill combination on bars: uprise to handstand, Tkatchev, wrong grip Stalder forward, slip grip release to handstand on low bar.

Together, Tom and Lori Forster, have built the Aerials to be one of the most prominent gymnastics centers in America. Among the accomplishments achieved by their athletes are the 1995 American Cup Champion (Kristy Powell), the 1995 Olympic Festival Champion (Kerri Strug), and the 1994 Olympic Festival Champion (Doni Thompson).

Submitted by Gail McGann, SJD, Vermont

BOWERS IN HALL OF FAME

Carolyn Bowers, Brevet Judge from Ohio, was recently inducted into the National High School Sports Hall of Fame. According to the National Federation, Bowers is largely responsible for the evolution of girls gymnastics in Ohio.

In 1969, she presented developmental plans and regulations to the Ohio High School Athletic Association for the first Ohio High School Girls Gymnastics Meet. In 1973, the OHSA sponsored the first tournament in any girls sport—gymnastics.

Since 1973, Bowers has been OHSA state rules interpreter for girls gymnastics. She has 29 years of experience as a high school, Junior Olympic, college, national, and international judge. She has officiated at the U.S. Olympic Festival, World Championships, World University Games, and Goodwill Games.

In 1992, Carolyn was inducted into the Ohio High School Athletic Association Officials Hall of Fame.

Congratulations Carolyn!

(Source: National Federation News, May, 1995)

WHEN GOD CREATED ERNA...

...He wanted to present the world with a unique person. Thus began Grete Trieber's tribute to Erna Wachtel. Erna passed away June 8, 1995 at the age of 88. She was "a great athlete, a gutsy lady, a wonderful coach, an outstanding judge, and a legend of the gymnastics community. Of all her accomplishments, we will remember Erna for the best gift God gave — her golden, loving heart."

Erna was a pioneer in women's gymnastics. She judged all levels of gymnastics from beginner to elite, including the 1956 U.S. Olympic team. She was an International Brevet Judge who traveled to Japan, Canada, France, and Germany. Erna was the first inductee into the National Gymnastics Hall of Fame.

She came to the U.S. from her native Germany in 1926. As a gymnast, Erna won numerous honors in local and national AAU meets, the last time at the age of 40! Just a few months after her eightieth birthday, Erna was still going strong and she demonstrated this by performing a kip on the low bars at the Illinois Judges Cup, a meet named in her honor.

Erna is credited for starting women's gymnastics in Illinois. After her team's ninth place finish at the Olympic Games, she conducted tours and exhibitions all over Illinois to increase participation by female athletes in the sport of gymnastics.

Grete Trieber, one of Erna's closest friends and a gymnastics legend herself, said that "Erna was adored by all of us. Her fine intellect, highly cultured mind, and unique humor were equal to her unending capacity to care for and love others. She was like the Caribbean sunshine in the midst of the gray winter of our everyday life. She was exciting, refreshing, and restoring to the soul. We all felt most privileged to share her presence."

Erna's friends are in the process of establishing a memorial scholarship fund for Erna. Information on the fund will be printed in the next newsletter.

Editor's Note: *I have read several tributes to Erna since she died. They were all so personal—I think she affected each one of us that way. I'd like to add a tribute of my own. My daughter, Jennifer who is now 23, had several exciting moments in gymnastics but two stand out in her recollections. Both involved Erna. When*

Jennifer was only eight, she was a runner at the Class I & II Illinois state meet. The runners had all been taught to sit quietly, run quickly and not bother the "Brevet" and "Elite" judges. At the end of the second long day of competition, I looked over at vault, which had finished ahead of the other events. There was Jennifer turning cartwheels on the landing mat. In most situations, I would have been worried that this was bothering the judges. Instead I saw Erna clapping her hands as if she had just witnessed an Olympic performance. Erna threw her head back laughing and seemed delighted with these cartwheels. She even got up from her Head Judge chair and gave Jennifer a few pointers on how to perfect her cartwheel. It must have paid off, because eight years later, Jennifer won the Erna Wachtel Judge's Cup competition. While most of the trophies, medals, and ribbons Jennifer collected are stored away in boxes somewhere, the Erna Wachtel trophy is the only one that is still in her room. It's her own tribute to that wonderful Brevet judge who was kind enough to applaud the cartwheels of an eight year old girl.

Cookie Batsche



*Erna Wachtel
We will miss you.*

WANTED: NAWGJ NATIONAL NEWSLETTER EDITOR

After ten years as editor of the NAWGJ national newsletter, Catherine (Cookie) Batsche is seeking a change in duties. She has enjoyed the time she has spent working on the newsletter but would now like to pursue other ways to contribute to NAWGJ. Applications are therefore being accepted for the position of NAWGJ national newsletter editor. It is anticipated that the new editor will begin no later than January, 1996.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for consideration, applicants must be at least 21 years of age and in good standing with their state NAWGJ association.

Applicants must be certified as a Level 10 or higher judge and shall have journalistic and/or editorial background.

Duties

- Be responsible for obtaining articles for four newsletters per year;
- Be responsible for editing, publishing, and distributing the national newsletter;
- Be responsible to the National Executive Officers and/or the National Governing Board;
- Obtain approval from USAG before publishing any technical rule interpretations in the newsletter;
- Attend the NAWGJ Governing Board Meeting once per year, if requested;
- Attend and report on judging sessions at the National Judges' Symposium;
- Serve a four-year term that shall expire in the summer of even-numbered years.

Application Procedures

Interested applicants should send a resume of experience and packet of materials that includes the following information:

- Name, Address, Phone Number
- Judges Ratings
- NAWGJ Background (offices held and volunteer service; years of service)
- Experience with newsletters/journalistic background
- Samples of newsletters and/or other publications you have done
- Availability and prices of printing and mail distribution services
- Availability of desk top publishing capabilities and experience
- Other information that will be helpful in selecting the Editor.

Mailing Instructions

All materials must be postmarked by November 1, 1995. Applications postmarked after that date will not be accepted. Mail applications to:

Carol Ide
NAWGJ Administrative Assistant
1630 Franklynn Drive
Furlong, PA 18925

NEW NAWGJ BAGS AVAILABLE

You won't want to be without these two NAWGJ products: a new judging bag and a new travel wardrobe bag. Both match the color and logo of the new uniforms. The bags may be ordered for \$25.00 each. Buy the pair for the special price of \$45.00. Add shipping charges of \$2.75 if ordering a single item and \$4.50 if ordering two items. These two items are really great and add to the professional look we are seeking in all of our judges.

To order these items, contact Betty Sroufe, NAWGJ Secretary/Treasurer, 2096 Rolling Hills Blvd., Fairfield, Ohio 45014.

NAWGJ WATCH

The NAWGJ watch is also spectacular. The watch-band and logo match the new uniform. The watch is available in two face sizes (small and large) and can be purchased for \$25.00 plus \$2.90 shipping. To order the watch, contact:

Betty Sroufe, NAWGJ Secretary/Treasurer
2096 Rolling Hills Blvd.
Fairfield, Ohio 45014.



The new Wardrobe Bag and Judge's Bag match the navy uniform for a total professional look.



The outside flap of the Judge's Bag zips open to provide access to several compartments and pockets.

COLLEGE TEAM REINSTATED

The University of Bridgeport has settled a lawsuit claiming the institution's sports program discriminates against women. The suit was filed by nine Bridgeport gymnasts whose team had been cut to save money. The suit claimed that the elimination of women's gymnastics worsened the university's already poor record of treatment of female athletes.

"Shortly after the suit was filed, Bridgeport reinstated the gymnastics team. But the athletes continued to pursue their case because, they said, they needed to secure a commitment for adequate money and support for the team."

"According to the plaintiffs, Bridgeport has agreed to sponsor a women's gymnastics team at least through 1997-98, and to pay for all of the team's expenses, including scholarships, equipment, and travel."

Source: Debra E. Blum, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 21, 1995

VARINA'S RECOVERY FUND

Don't forget to send your contribution to the Varina French Recovery Fund, 4841 Millers Farm Court, Duluth, GA 30136.

Varina is continuing to make progress in her recovery from a serious automobile accident last September caused by a drunk driver, who was driving without a driver's license and no insurance. Varina made many contributions to gymnastics. Most judges will remember her as the person who scored our tests and helped us all keep certification activities current.

UNIFORM ORDERS

All judges are encouraged to wear the new navy uniform. Please use the following form to order your NAWGJ uniform. The form in the last newsletter did not reflect the new prices. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you or Midway Uniform Company.

NAWGJ Navy Uniform Order Form

NAWGJ judges may order uniforms from Midway Uniform, Inc. 1625 University Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55104. Phone: (612) 644-1773. FAX (612) 644-2439. Send your name, address, check or credit card information with order.

Style No.	Description	Size	Price	Total
ED 6687	2 button Ladies Coat (fitted; size 2 - 28)	_____	\$105.00	_____
H 9500 sandy	1 button Ladies Coat (boxed; size 2-28 4-24)	_____	\$105.00	_____
ED 9687	Ladies Modified "A" skirt (size 2 - 28)	_____	\$50.00	_____
H 9500 tina	Ladies straight skirt (size 4 - 24)	_____	\$50.00	_____
ED 8687	Ladies Pleated Pant (size 2 - 28)	_____	\$50.00	_____
ED 8787	Ladies Plain Pant (size 2 - 28)	_____	\$50.00	_____
ED 3687	Men's Coat (size 38-48)	_____	\$120.00	_____
ED 2787	Mens Plain Pant (size 26-48)	_____	\$50.00	_____
ED 2687	Men's Pleated Pant (size 26-48)	_____	\$50.00	_____
NAWGJ surcharge (\$2.50 per item)			\$2.50 each	_____
Elastic added to waist band			Yes No	No charge
<u>Shipping Charges:</u>			Subtotal	_____
Up to \$100.00			\$3.50	_____
\$100.01 to \$200			\$5.00	_____
\$200.01 to \$350			\$6.50	_____
\$350.01 to \$500			\$8.00	_____
\$500.01 to \$1000			\$12.00	_____
\$1000 or more			\$18.00	_____
			If COD (\$5.00)*	_____
			Shipping	_____
			TOTAL	_____

*COD orders must include 25% deposit

OPINION: JUDGING THOSE "LITTLE GIRLS IN PRETTY BOXES"

By now, virtually everyone in gymnastics is familiar with Joan Ryan's book *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes*. Ryan's ten-year coverage of elite gymnastics and figure skating caused her such concern that she wrote a book on the tragedies she saw in gymnastics: Julissa Gomez's devastating injury; Christy Henrich's death resulting from her eating disorder; Kristie Phillip's suicide attempt. She provides anecdotes from gymnasts and families regarding the questionable treatment of athletes by coaches and, occasionally, judges. The book has received widespread press coverage and a TV newsmagazine show is scheduled this fall.

Many in gymnastics have responded in defense of the sport they love. Ryan is criticized for the flaws in her reporting: primarily for focusing only on a small number of athletes at the elite level and for reporting too much of the negative and none of the positive aspects of the sport.

I'd rather take a different approach to Ryan's report. Let's take this opportunity for self-examination. Is there anything that we, as judges, can do to help prevent tragedies such as Julissa's, Christy's, and Kristie's in the future? As Christy Henrich's mother said, "The change has got to come in the whole system: judges, officials, coaches, everybody."

What exactly can judges do?

First, let's look at the criticisms leveled at judges. For the most part, Ryan's criticisms of judges are with skating officials. She states that skating officials regularly call parents and coaches of skaters to discuss the color of their costumes, the length of their hair, the weight of the athlete. "One judge reportedly suggested to a top skater that she get a nose job because her nose was 'distracting.' Another encouraged a skater to get breast reduction surgery." Fortunately, similar claims are not made about gymnastics judges and we can avoid these problems by not making the mistakes attributed to skating judges. Our relationship with gymnasts tends to be much more remote and formal. However, Ryan does address the negative impact that judges comments, direct or indirect, can have on gymnasts, particularly comments related to weight and appearance. We must continue to be professional in all aspects of our job and we must be very careful about the words we use when we are around gymnasts, coaches, and parents.

Second, judges are a part of the educational system of gymnastics. Parents and coaches are eager to learn "what the judges look for." We should ensure that our educational activities clearly communicate what we are looking for--good amplitude and execution -- not how "cute" or, as Ryan would say, how "little or pretty" a gymnast is. We must provide a balanced view of the sport—winning is not all that important in the long run; there is life after gymnastics; the Olympics is not the only goal; we are all role models for the children around us. Let's take time at every educational session to ensure we have our priorities straight and that we communicate them clearly. These children are no less precious just because they can't do a double back.

Third, judges must be cautious with the "appearance of things." Judges who are overly friendly to certain teams, coaches, and gymnasts on the competition floor give the appearance of bias—even if it's not true. Parents, athletes, and other coaches may interpret a judge's friendly gestures toward others as evidence of subjectivity. As judges, we must always ensure that our behaviors reflect the objectivity we are trying to achieve with our scores. If we find ourselves being "courted," we should question exactly why this is happening. As Debi Thomas's skating coach said, "it's up to the individual judges to spot if they're being played for suckers or if it's genuine." Sobering thought.

We'd like to hear from you. What do you think judges can do to continue the integrity of our sport. Please send your comments to the NAWGJ Newsletter, 15210 Amberly Drive, #1131, Tampa, Florida 33647.

The Editor

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