

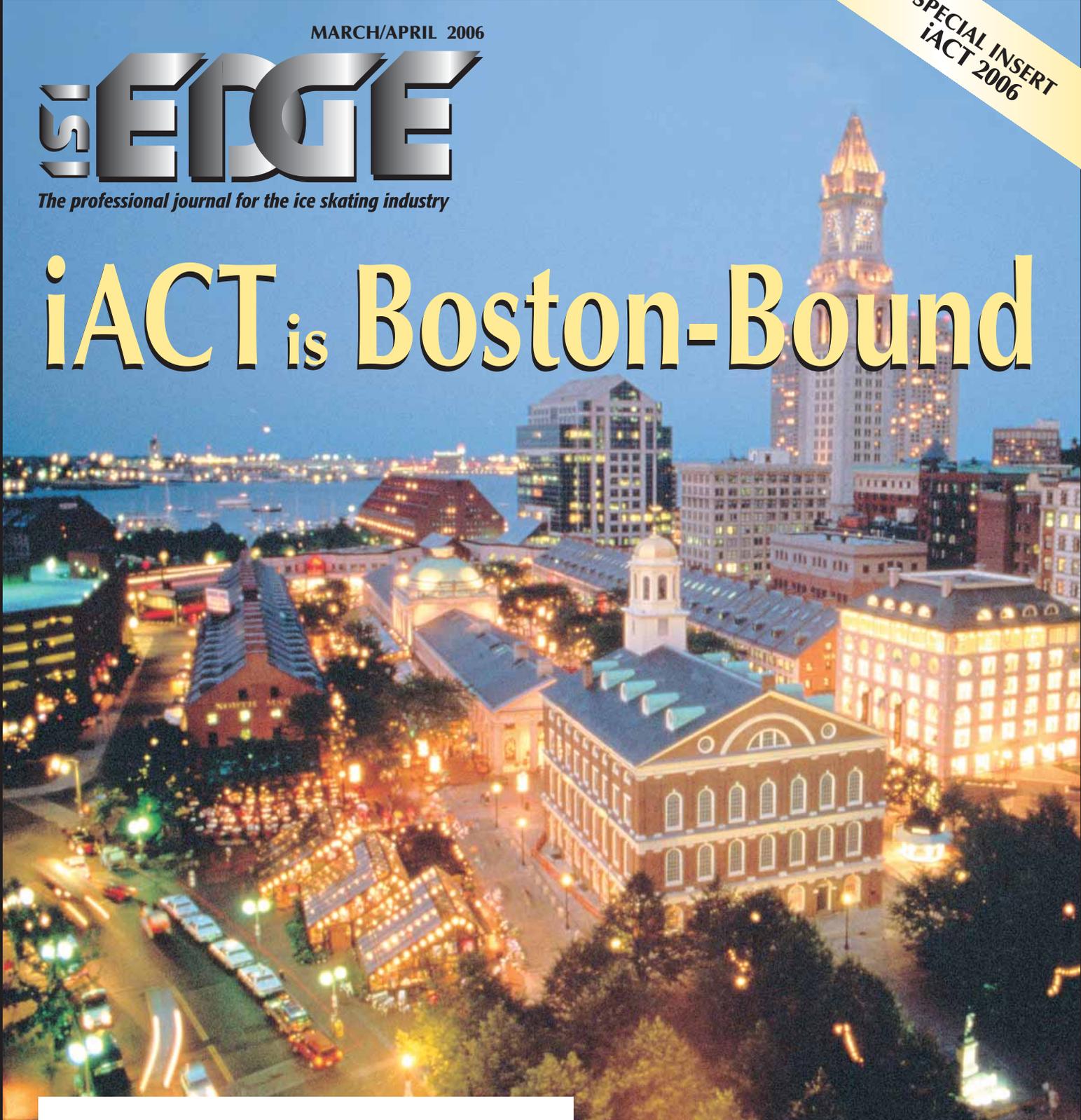
MARCH/APRIL 2006

# EDGE

*The professional journal for the ice skating industry*

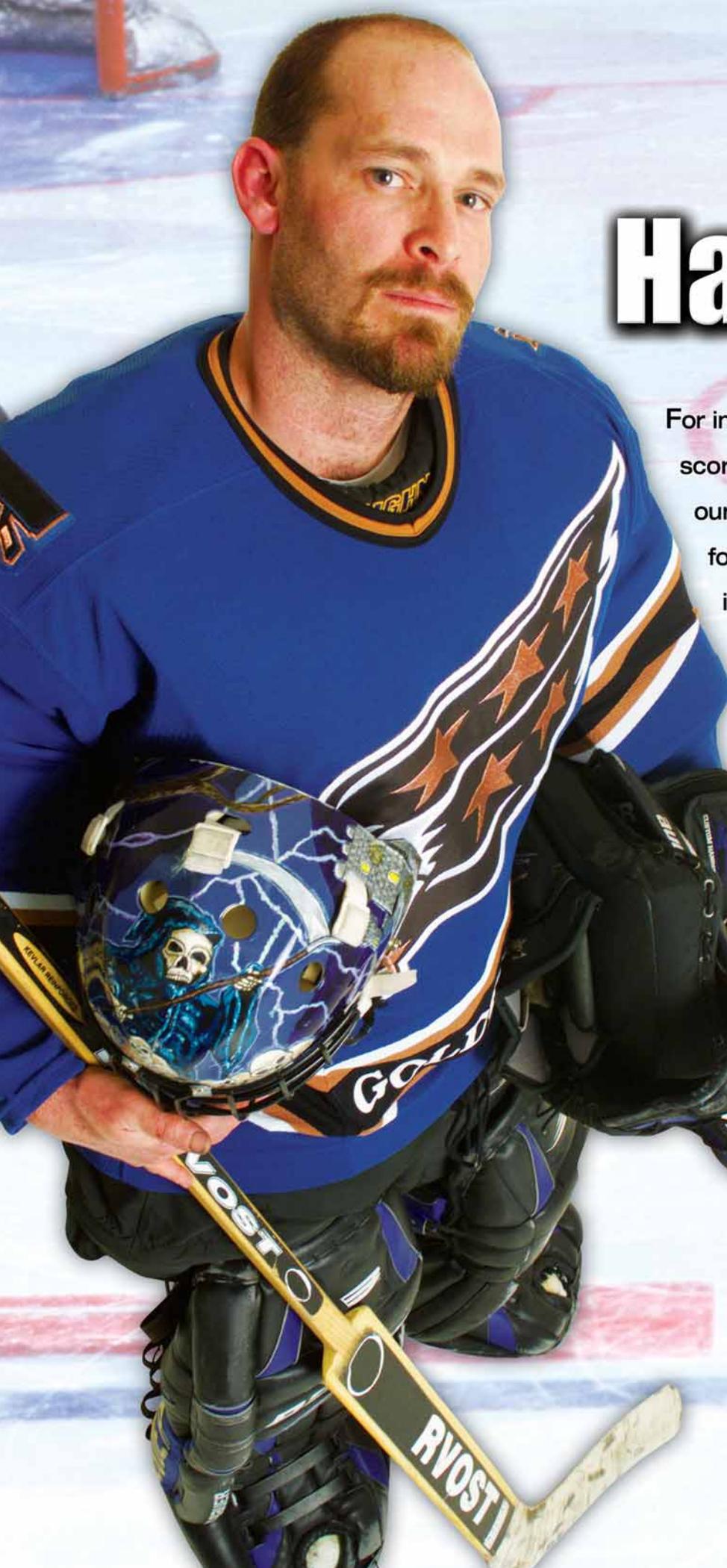
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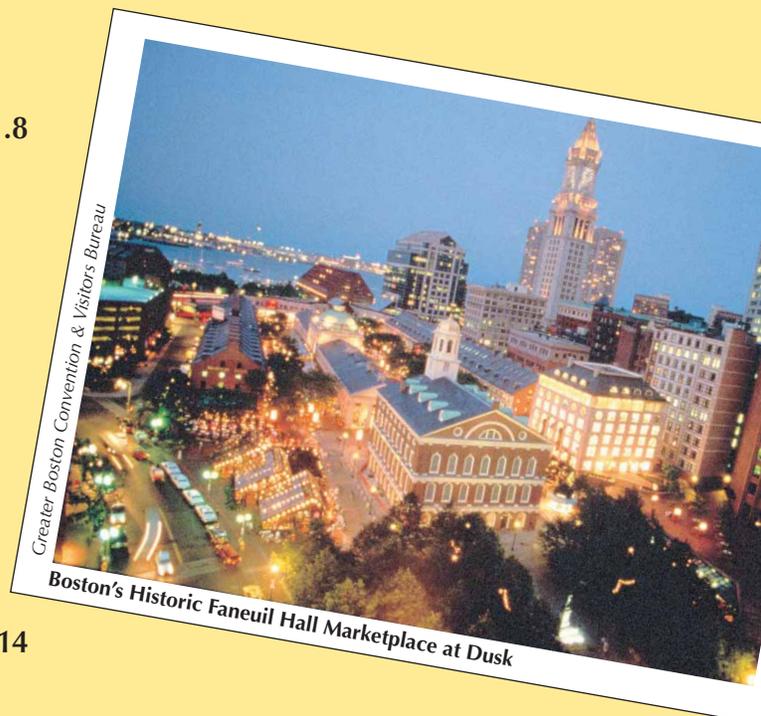
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# CROSSCUTS

## announcements

### ISI recommends low-e ceiling and heat source inspections

DALLAS — As investigation continues into the Jan. 8 fire that resulted in between \$250,000 and \$500,000 worth of damage to Cranston (R.I.) Veterans Memorial Ice Rink, the Ice Skating Institute is recommending immediate and careful inspections of low-e ceilings and any heat sources (lighting fixtures, heaters, etc.) that may come into contact with them. Arena managers and operators should inspect these ceilings for any deviation from original installation standards and get a qualified opinion if they suspect there has been a change. Watch future issues of the *ISI EDGE* magazine for updated information on the Cranston investigation.

### Gunn achieves Olympic goal

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. — Chanda Gunn, the daughter of Skate Zone owner Rod Gunn, played goaltender for the 2006 Olympic women's ice hockey team, which took the bronze medal in the Winter Games. Gunn, 26, was named top goaltender in the 2005 World Championships, where the Americans beat Canada for the gold. A graduate of Northeastern University in Boston, she holds the school's career records in saves and save percentage.

### World's first fuel cell-powered resurfacers unveiled

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — The first-ever hydrogen fuel cell-powered ice resurfacers made its world debut at the University of North Dakota Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) in November. The machine, called the eP-Ice Bear, is being developed by ePower Synergies Inc. of Cordova, Ill. and the Resurface Corp. of Elmira, Ontario, manufacturer of Olympia and Ice Bear brand resurfacers.

### FMC to operate two Boston public ice arenas

BOSTON — Facility Management Corp. (FMC Arenas) has reached agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation to lease and assume operations at two public ice arenas in Boston: the Porazzo Memorial Skating Rink in east Boston and the Jim

Roche Community Arena in the West Roxbury section of the city. The public-private partnerships are expected to provide improved service and facilities, professional operation and affordable community-based ice sport recreation.

### Brentwood Ice Arena hosts 'Accessibility Skate'

BRENTWOOD, Mo. — Brentwood Ice Arena hosted an "Accessibility Skate" event Nov. 11 for individuals of all abilities. Organizations such as the Easter Seals Society, the St. Louis Arc and the Rehabilitation Institute of St. Louis brought clients to learn ice skating through games and activities hosted by more than 80 volunteers. Participants were charged a reduced admission fee, and volunteers were offered free skating passes for a future visit. "The event has opened doors to individuals who would not have considered ice skating as an option for them, and let others know that wheelchairs, walkers and personal assistants are welcome at our facility," said Craig Strohbeck, Brentwood's superintendent and a recreational therapist. "We encourage other facilities to host such an event and work with local service organizations, hospitals, community-based recreation agencies and anyone else who has access to a variety of abilities to support this cause."

*Continued on page 6*

### USFS Disciplinary Notice

The ISI would like to advise its members that the following individuals have been suspended or banned from U.S. Figure Skating membership for improper conduct and, therefore, are not permitted to participate or coach in any USFS-sponsored or -sanctioned activity.

- Roy Cofer
- Daniel Gray
- Tonya Harding
- David Lowery\*
- Gordon McKellen
- Jacqueline Mero\*
- Robert Young

*\*Also banned by the Professional Skaters Association (PSA)*

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

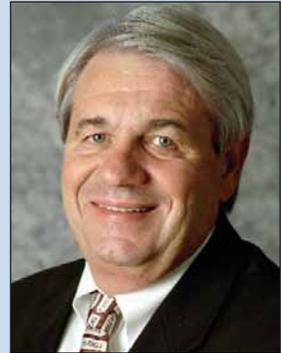
The other day I was reading an article about one of the premier high school track coaches in my hometown of Syracuse. This coach was relating a story about a promising athlete who had been pushed beyond belief by her father. The coach explained to her that she has talent, but at this level she should be enjoying herself while working to improve her skills. She finished the year and quit. When her coach asked why, she said, "Coach, it just isn't fun anymore."

That got me thinking. Is skating still fun? And if so, why? The answer to that question has been driven into my head by my friend Robert Unger. When ISI was in its infancy, it was Robert who established our creed of "participation, not elimination." In all the years I've attended ISI meetings and events, not one has gone by (or ever will) that Robert's voice, in his strong German accent, can't be heard challenging us to live by that motto.

I believe that the ISI philosophy of encouraging participation is as vital today as it was when Robert first spoke those words. It is carried on in word, deed and action by the many great professional members of the ISI. You are the very people whose daily work is to make skating an enjoyable and healthy pastime. You are the ones who keep our recreational programs going.

Since I've been elected president of the ISI, I have been privileged to share many thoughts and ideas with our professional members, and the insights you've shared with me have been eye opening. I am so impressed with how you conduct yourselves. I've watched you encourage, correct and direct your students at competitions. You do a magnificent job. Please accept my compliments.

I hope to see you all in Boston in May for our annual conference, which is going to be jointly hosted with our friends at NEISMA.



**Jim Hartnett**  
President,  
ISI Board of Directors



## WANTED!

### ISI National Events & Skating Program Coordinator

Opportunity for a highly motivated, high-energy individual to serve as the national administrator of ISI recreational ice skating programs and events. The full-time position is based at ISI headquarters in Dallas, Texas, and requires experience conducting ISI recreational skating programs and events in addition to excellent written and verbal communication skills. Work requirements include people and computer skills, work schedule flexibility and the ability to travel. Compensation includes competitive salary and excellent benefits. If you are an energetic, detail-oriented person who would enjoy the challenges and rewards of administering ISI national skating programs and working at ISI headquarters, please contact Patti Feeny at (972) 735-8800 or [pfeeny@skateisi.org](mailto:pfeeny@skateisi.org).

## CROSSCUTS Continued from page 4

### Vernon Hills skating director to cover world events for Eurosport

VERNON HILLS, Ill. — Glacier Ice Arena's figure skating director, Chris Howarth, a member of the commentary team for Eurosport Television, recently covered the European Figure Skating Championships in Lyon, France and the Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy. He will also cover the World Championships in Calgary, Alberta this month. The Eurosport channel is distributed to 104 million households in 54 countries across Europe and in 19 different languages.

### Santee brothers join forces with The Skate School LLC

GENEVA, Ill. — David and Jimmie Santee have joined The Skate School LLC in offering solutions for program growth for ice rink facilities across the United States. David Santee is a two-time Olympian, world silver medalist, ISI instructor representative and ISI representative to U.S. Figure Skating. Jimmie Santee is a former national competitor, former Walt Disney on Ice principal skater, facility manager, educator and leader in the ISI, USFS and PSA. The Skate School LLC operates skate schools in Illinois and Michigan.

### ISI Online no longer password-protected

DALLAS — Did you know that access to ISI Online is now more convenient than ever? You don't even need a password anymore — simply open your ISI Online monthly e-mail and click on the title of any article you'd like to read. If you are having trouble receiving or opening e-mail from the ISI, please add [updates@skateisi.com](mailto:updates@skateisi.com) to your address book or contact Jeff at [jeff@skateisi.com](mailto:jeff@skateisi.com) or call (972) 735-8800. Don't miss out on important, timely industry and organization news and updates!

Send announcements and photos to [editor@skateisi.org](mailto:editor@skateisi.org). Look for facility news on ISI Online, at [skateisi.org](http://skateisi.org).



# We Really Know How to Skate.

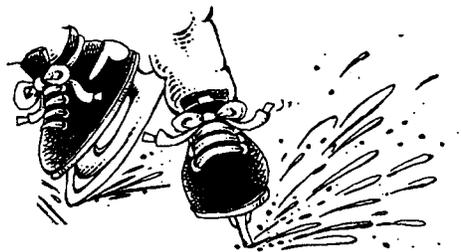
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# Plans, Projects & Priorities

*Capital improvement projects come in all shapes and sizes. Some are emergency measures and others are the result of long-term budgeting and facility audits. ISI members share the details of some of their recent and planned projects.*

## What kinds of capital improvements are you considering or have you recently undertaken?

**BAXTER:** The latest and most exciting capital improvement we recently installed was a surge protection system to our electrical system. The company we worked with guarantees a 15 percent reduction in energy costs over two years. They also carry a \$2 million insurance policy on all equipment that is damaged from a lightning strike or any other power surge that should enter your building. Along with a 15-year warranty, it was an easy decision.

We are also upgrading our 1985 energy management system. Over the years, with upgrades in computers and without an upgrade in software, the effectiveness of the system has diminished. With a hardware and software upgrade, I am projecting a 10 to 20 percent reduction in utility costs.

Not quite as exciting, but certainly the most essential, is the replacement of a 25-year-old cooling tower.

**FIES:** The city of Oakland included the Oakland Ice Center (OIC) in a solar power project that included five other buildings owned by the city. The OIC will generate over one-third of all the power generated. The total cost of the project was \$7,211,893. There were 1,960 solar panels installed on the roof of the OIC. The second part of the project included the installation of energy-saving devices (primarily a contemporary lighting system) that would significantly decrease the Ice Center's energy costs.

**MCBRIDE:** In the past year, we have undertaken a substantial number of capital improvements to our facilities, ranging from total building rehabilitation to the replacement of major building components. The component replacements include ice slabs and chiller systems in two facilities, a chiller system with micro-processor controls in another, replacement of bleachers in two, desiccant dehumidification in three, new dasher systems in four, new roofing in two, new ice lighting in eight and low-emissivity ceilings in three.

Projects we are considering for the next year include sim-

ilar component replacements as well as building automation systems in three of our recently contracted arena locations, along with high-efficiency heating and boiler system replacements in a number of facilities.

**SOLTERO:** We spent \$12,000 on theatrical/disco-type lighting, and we're going to be doing major light shows during all public sessions. We've also almost completely restocked with new rental skates in the last 24 months.

On the operations side, we've done a major retrofit of the engine room, replacing our old compressors with new, efficient ones at a cost of around \$80,000 to \$100,000. We're also finishing a new roofing system now, which involved sealing the existing roof and putting a coating over it, at a cost of \$23,000.

## How did you determine which improvements to make?

**MCBRIDE:** Most of our facilities are over 30 years old and require ongoing building and equipment upgrades to modernize and adapt to the changes in the ice arena business. Energy costs were not a driving factor in facility design at that time, leading to the use of equipment and controls with low initial investment but high energy consumption. Increased energy rates are having a serious impact on our arena budgets. Energy is becoming an increasingly larger percentage of our operating costs, in some cases even exceeding labor costs. We have developed a long-term capital improvement plan for each of our facilities that replaces components based on life cycle, energy-efficiency improvement and changes in the season of operation.

**BAXTER:** With energy costs skyrocketing, there is more concern with older, less energy-efficient equipment. We have an ongoing, 10-year capital improvement plan with an "A" list and a "B" list. We know as soon as a piece of equipment is purchased that we can expect to replace it within a fairly specific amount of time.

## The Participants



**Geary Baxter**  
Manager  
Hamilton Center  
Ice Arena (Public)  
Columbus, Ind.



**Dave Fies**  
Manager  
Oakland Ice  
Center (Public)  
Oakland, Calif.



**Rob McBride**  
President  
Facility  
Management  
Corp.  
Rockland, Mass.



**Louis Soltero**  
Manager  
Ontario Ice  
Skating Center  
(Privately Owned)  
Ontario, Calif.

Every capital improvement moves from the “B” list to the “A” list, is evaluated for function and efficiency, and the best choice is made for the improvement. This process helps take the guesswork out of what to do, when. It also eliminates, for the most part, emergency replacements that can cause downtime and loss of revenue. New technology can have a significant impact on cost and efficiency, as in the case of replacing our gas boiler with a closed-loop water source heat pump to heat and air-condition our lobby. The decision process is easier when you know what impact the improvements will have on the operations of your facility.

**SOLTERO:** The new lighting system was done as a way to drive new business with the light show entertainment. The engine room and roofing projects were done because we had reached the point where they were needed and they offered the opportunity for savings on operational expenses.

**FIES:** The city chose the solar power to reduce the city’s greenhouse gas production and to promote the solar power industry. The city wanted to show that large projects could be cost-effective to generate interest, and also to boost demand for products to increase production volumes and press for lower prices in the long term.

The reasons for the energy-efficient lighting was to reduce lighting cost, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, save energy and reduce the burden on California’s electrical infrastructure.



The 1,960 solar panels installed on the roof of the Oakland Ice Center are part of a city project to reduce greenhouse gas production and to promote the solar power industry. PowerLight Corp. was the solar contractor.



**Do you have a method for prioritizing improvement expenditures? Do your major expenditures tend to be more proactive or reactive?**

**Has your arena ever undergone a facility audit? If so, how did it assist you in your planning?**

**FIES:** The Oakland Ice Center opened 10 years ago and will be doing a facility audit in the near future.

**MCBRIDE:** Yes, each of our facilities has been evaluated with an in-depth facility audit. It has been the most valuable tool we use in developing a long-range capital repair and replacement plan. Our approach to the facility audit includes the assessment of existing building and equipment conditions by mechanical and design professionals. In addition, a future programming plan is part of the audit, since factors such as length of operating season, new concessions and other amenities, types of events and building uses, etc. are all factored into the evaluation and design of facility upgrades. The budgetary impact of capital upgrades, both first cost and life cost, are considered in the planning process as well.

**SOLTERO:** We have not used an external audit team, but we stay aware of what the building needs and lacks, and we make investments to be as profitable as possible for the next decade.

**BAXTER:** Our arena’s employees are dedicated to a very high maintenance standard that includes a monthly audit or assessment. This goes hand in hand with our maintenance

**SOLTERO:** Operational cost-saving measures typically come first. Most of our improvements are efficiency related; the lighting system is one of the few things we’ve done that was not focused primarily on efficiency.

This time around, the measures we’ve undertaken have definitely been proactive, with the goals of driving business and cutting expenses.

**BAXTER:** Our focus is based on need and age. We are very proactive in our approach to capital improvements. The cost savings in being prepared for a major expense outweigh the cost and stress of trying to squeeze every minute out of a piece of equipment until it fails and becomes an emergency.

**FIES:** We put together capital improvement project information and submit it to the city for their approval. Operational cost-saving measures are usually on top of the priority list.

**MCBRIDE:** Our method of prioritizing planned projects places safety as the number one priority. Our second priority is operation-critical items — those components that could severely impact our ability to continue operations if they fail. Since our facilities are self-supporting and not subsidized in any way, protection of the revenue stream is essential to ensuring our ability to implement future capital upgrades.

*Continued on page 10*

The third priority for us is energy-efficiency potential, as the operational savings derived from these investments will help us fund future improvements. The final priority is revenue generation and customer experience improvement potential. We have found that a majority of upgrades include many, if not all, of these priorities to a varying degree and have developed a matrix to score a project based on the weighted averaging of the priorities.

### How do you expect the planned improvements to affect your business?

**MCBRIDE:** I'm confident that our planned improvements will make our facilities more energy efficient, provide our patrons with a better experience and allow us to extend the operational season without sacrificing the quality of our ice or facility conditions.

**SOLTERO:** The light shows have already had a tremendous, positive response. We're seeing new people and customers returning to public sessions. We haven't seen that in a long time. There's also been a wonderful response to the soft-sided rental skate, since the number-one complaint ice rinks usually get is uncomfortable skates. It has really helped get adults to skate and come back for repeat visits.

The verdict is still out on actual savings with the new compressors; we'll have to wait until this spring to start seeing it, but we think the payback will be in three years.

**BAXTER:** The surge protection system and energy management system upgrade will not only improve our bottom line but also improve the efficiency of our equipment. The cooling tower will allow our compressors to run more efficiently.

**FIES:** The customers will not notice any difference in our operations due to the solar panels. The lighting portion of the project has provided a much friendlier environment for the skaters.

The project was funded by a 15-year loan the city acquired. For the first 15 years, projections have the OIC saving an estimated \$10,000 a year, then jumping to over \$100,000 a year after the loan is paid off.

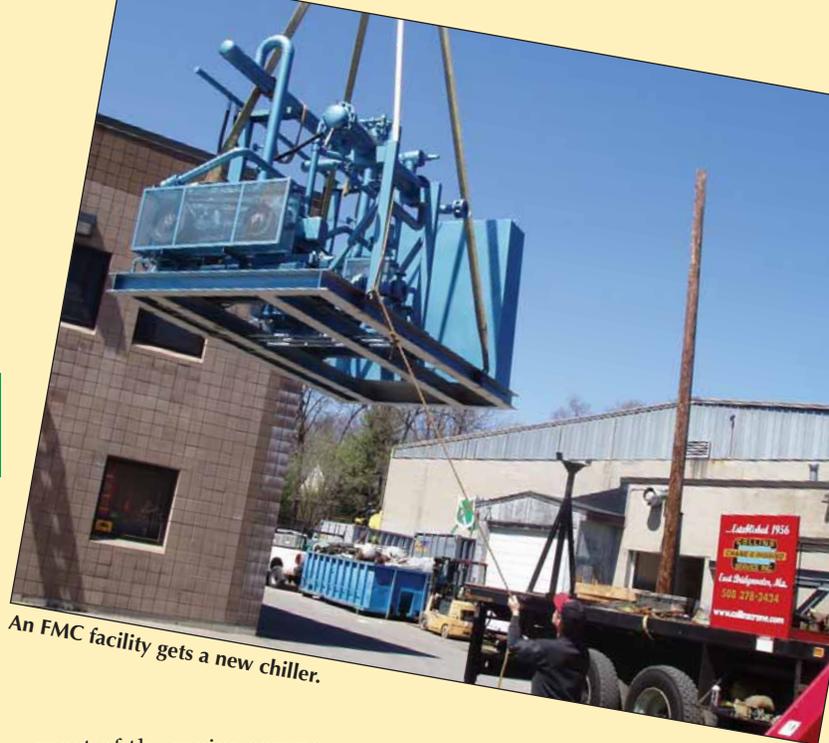


New ice slabs are among the improvements FMC has made in its older facilities.

### Do you set aside part of your budget for capital improvements?

**BAXTER:** Yes, we project our capital improvement costs out 10 years. Within a year of the project, we obtain a couple of quotes and then we set an exact budget number and put it out for bid.

**MCBRIDE:** We typically expend 25 percent of our total annual revenue on capital upgrades. In future years, when



An FMC facility gets a new chiller.

most of the major components have been replaced, we expect to be able to reduce that amount to 10 percent and build reserves for future replacements. It is essential for the stability of our arenas that we continually invest or set aside sufficient funds to ensure that upgrades and replacements are made on an appropriate schedule, based on the age and condition of the equipment. Without a long-range plan and disciplined reinvestment of revenues, replacements and upgrades are too easily deferred and grow to an unmanageable level that threatens the financial stability of the facility.

**FIES:** The city of Oakland has a separate bank account that was funded by the money left over from the original bond to build the facility. This bank account is only to be used for OIC capital improvement projects.

### Have you taken advantage of any incentives or rebates, or creative financing/funding programs?

**FIES:** Pacific Gas and Electric provided a rebate in the amount of \$3,896,002 from the Self-Generation Incentive Program.

**SOLTERO:** For us, the rebate process is so complicated and expensive that we haven't taken advantage of any of them. Just to get to the required R-19 rating was going to cost \$150,000 for one project.

**MCBRIDE:** We have participated extensively in utility design and financial assistance programs when a project has energy-saving potential. In many cases, our utilities have paid a substantial portion of the incremental cost of upgrading systems from standard to premium efficiency and shared the cost of energy-efficient engineering studies, as well as funded system commissioning and facility benchmarking studies. In some cases, zero percent interest financing has been provided for lighting upgrades, which allows us to pay for the new lighting as the savings are realized. ▀

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# Beware the Order Takers

## Are you getting the advice and service that you deserve from your insurance broker?

by Charles H. Cox

It's not clear if brokers have become nervous as a result of the war that New York state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer has waged against the insurance industry, or if they have collectively attended one too many errors and omissions (E&O) seminars. What is clear, however, is that some brokers are becoming increasingly dependent on their clients to do their work!

Policy transmittal letters from brokers to their clients often contain "boiler plate" language, the purpose of which is quite evident: Reduce E&O claims! One broker's transmittal letter suggests that their client should "examine it [the policy] carefully to make sure the limits of coverage meet your needs and that no items have been omitted." Will the client know or understand what has been omitted? Shouldn't the broker offer any advice on limits? Selecting or recommending liability limits is, admittedly, no easy task, and determining their adequacy is often impossible, but have some brokers gone too far to protect themselves against E&O claims by telling their clients to be sure the limits meet their needs? Policyholders do have a responsibility to review their own insurance policies, but expecting some input from their broker is not unreasonable.

Another broker's transmittal letter says, "We have received and reviewed the enclosed policy." That's a good start, but the letter goes on to say, "The policy sets out the benefits and coverage of the (re)insurance we have placed for you in accordance with your instructions. We recommend that you read the policy very carefully, particularly sections that make references to

exclusion/special or unusual conditions, warranties and claims notification." Obviously, the client is on his own here. In this case, the broker didn't even bother to amend the form letter to differentiate between reinsurance and insurance!

**When clients have to specify in writing to their broker how the broker should conduct its business, the broker has been relegated to the role of "order taker" and the buyer should beware.**

Another broker's binder transmittal e-mail told (warned) the client that the coverage bound was written on a "CLAIMS-MADE and REPORTED form." Not true! The policy form was claims-made, but *not* a claims-made *and* reported form. The obvious intention is, again, to mitigate E&O claims against the broker, but it's doubtful that inaccurate descriptions of coverage such as this will serve that purpose.

In this new era of "commitments to transparency," some brokers may be going too far. When commencing a marketing process for a client, one broker now uses a "placement strategy letter" wherein they establish the guidelines of what they will do or, more accurately, what they *won't* do! In such a letter, the broker actually states that if the client wants the broker to employ certain strategies whereby specifically described information would be disclosed to competing insurers, the client must so direct the broker *in writing*. For

example, the client would have to direct the broker (in writing) if the client wanted the broker to: (1) disclose the names of prospective insurers to other prospective insurers; (2) disclose price, price ranges or coverage terms that the client wants; (3) disclose the

terms, conditions and pricing of the expiring policy; (4) disclose certain aspects of quotes from prospective insurers to other prospective insurers; or (5) provide insurers an opportunity to improve their quote (i.e., give them a "last look"). Insurance buyers should expect their brokers to employ the marketing strategies that will serve the buyers'

best interests and that such strategies will be conducted in an ethical and legal manner.

When clients have to specify in writing to their broker how the broker should conduct its business, and when brokers warn policyholders to beware of policy exclusions or unusual provisions without offering advice or input, the broker has been relegated to the role of "order taker" and the buyer should beware. Some buyers may even conclude that it's time for a new broker!

*This article was previously published in Risk & Insurance magazine. Charles H. Cox is president of Aldrich & Cox, an independent risk management and employee benefit consulting company in Buffalo, N.Y.*



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# Ice Dancing *Lives!*

## How to start an ice dance program for fun and fiscal fitness

by Robert Mock

On the heels of the Olympic Winter Games in Torino, a surge in excitement and curiosity about ice sports will be a welcome gift to ice arenas worldwide. The challenge and novelty of ice dancing should be no exception.

Introduce ice dancing to your skaters, and you add a new dimension to the sport of figure skating that will instill excitement, energy and fun into the skating program at your facility. Another benefit: Many points at ISI events are based on ice dancing.

Everybody at every age can dance. Ice dancing is great for freestyle

skaters who benefit from the edge-work, knee action and emphasis on posture and body alignment. If skaters are having trouble with footwork or moves in the field, ice dance training will develop the skills necessary to be successful. Adults enjoy learning to ice dance as an attainable activity that mixes skating and movement to music in a fun way.

As a coach organizing ice dance activities, you will need:

- The *ISI Skaters and Coaches Handbook (2006 Edition)* and the *USFS Rulebook (Dance Patterns)*
- Low-level dance music

- Familiarity with ISI Dance Tests 1 and 2 and the Dutch Waltz
- The determination to start a new program
- The cooperation of your entire coaching staff

Introduce ice dancing in your group lesson program. During the last few minutes of class, bring the Beta, Gamma, Delta and freestyle skaters together to learn something new and fun.

### Step 1:

- Play dance music (any music with a slow tempo will do).
- Have everybody clap and tap their feet to the music, and count out loud — the louder, the better!
- Select an easy piece of music (popular music works and the kids love it). Have everyone stroke around the rink to the music.
- Introduce quality ice dance music: swing dance and rhythm and blues.

### Step 2:

- Have your group form a circle. Teach them a progressive; it will look like a crossover, and that's OK. Show the group a chasse and combine the movement.
- Have the group perform the progressive/chasse sequence in a circle (counter-clockwise).
- Put a count to the movement: 1-2-3, lift 4; 1-2-3, lift 4. Count out loud.
- Put the movement to music. Use Argentine Tango music. It is slower and more deliberate than even the Canasta Tango music.
- When the group has accomplished the movement counter-clockwise, have them try it clockwise. They will be confused at first, but they will quickly adjust and begin to perform the maneuver.

Later, mini-classes can involve ISI Dance 1 and 2, which are superb for entry-level dancing (see ISI test standards). Additionally, dances can be taught on public, freestyle and special dance sessions.

## Olympic Favorites Train at Floyd Hall Arena

LITTLE FALLS, N.J. — Floyd Hall Arena, on the campus of Montclair State University, has been something of a celebrity haven for the past four years, ever since a group of 13 international skaters and their Eastern European coaches began searching for the perfect training home.

Among the elite skaters who have settled into a rigorous schedule at Floyd Hall are 2004 European and world champion ice dancers Tatiana Navka and Roman Kostomarov. At press time, the Russians are considered the favorites for gold in Torino. Their coaches are Olympic medalists Sasha Zhulin and Yevgeny Platov, who recently signed on as staff coaches at Floyd Hall, charged with helping to expand the arena's ice dancing programs. Three individual figure skaters as well as four additional ice dancing pairs — including Israeli pair Galit Chait and Sergei Sakhnovsky, also headed for Torino — complete the team training under Platov and Zhulin.

Kevin McCormack, vice president of arena operations at Floyd Hall, says finding the ice time for the team was not a burden for the dual-sheet facility. "They skate every day, from about 8 in the morning until about 3 in the afternoon," he notes. "The benefits of having them here have far outweighed any price that we could have charged for the ice."

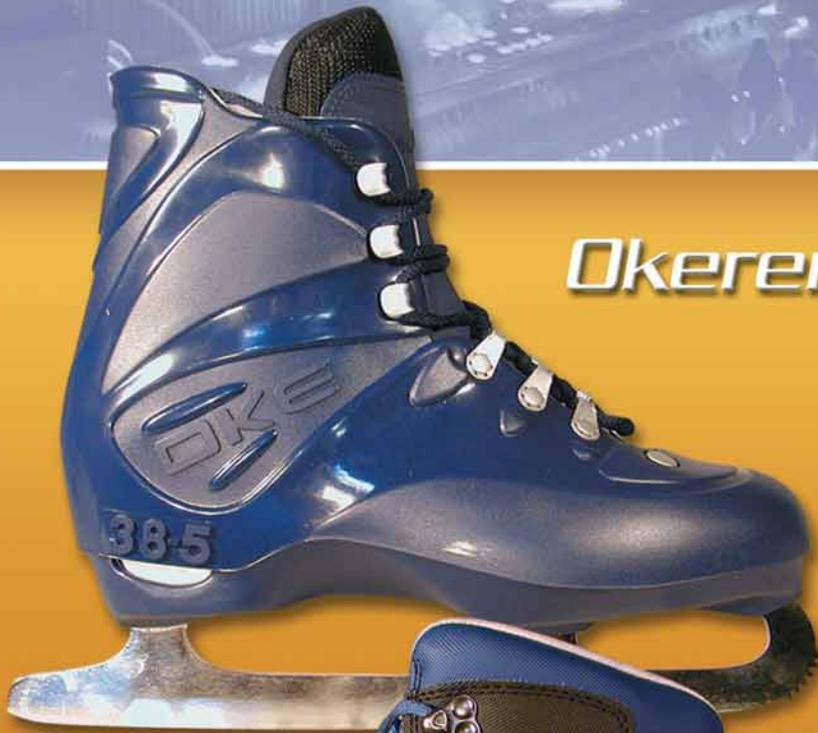
Those benefits have included publicity in the form of a *New York Times* feature article, remote broadcasts by two local morning TV shows and other media exposure. A week before they left for the Olympics, the attention was building to the point of lines forming outside the arena. "That kind of notoriety is priceless to me," says McCormack.

After the Olympics, the skaters are scheduled to compete at Worlds and return to Floyd Hall, and McCormack says he hopes those who retire will come back as coaches. "Our objective is to use this notoriety and the talents of the coaches to develop a program similar to what they have at the University of Delaware. We want to serve all different levels of skaters, and work with the university to create housing for them."

For more information, contact McCormack at [manager@floydhallarena.com](mailto:manager@floydhallarena.com).

—Lori Fairchild

# Inspired by Design & Comfort

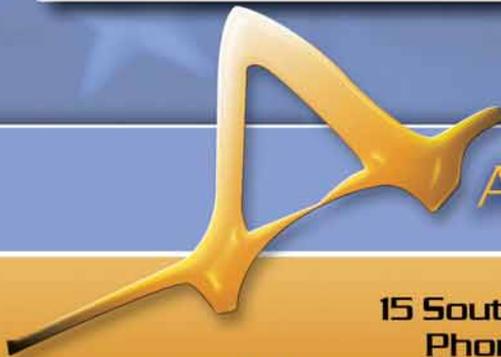


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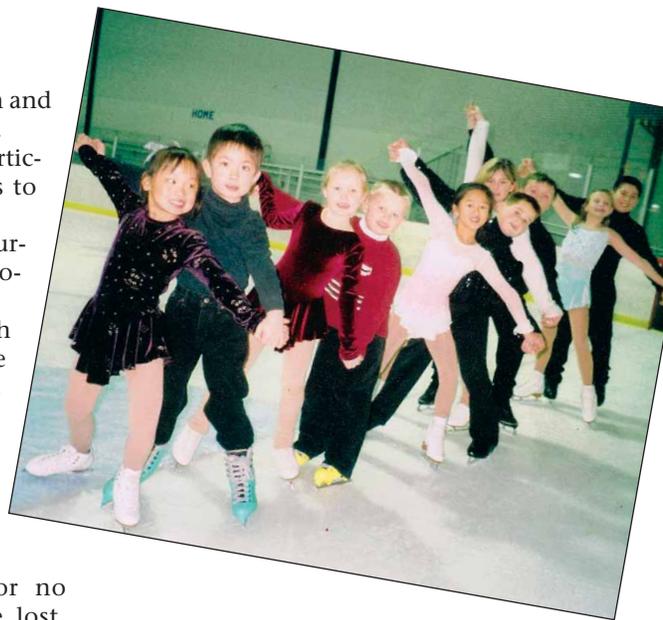
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At many arenas, skaters are dancing at various levels and are focused on passing tests. Is there anything that can be done to recapture the fun and excitement of early classes? Try an MTV program dance session: The MTV generation has a short attention span and needs quickly moving stimuli to stay focused and interested. Activity must be brief, quick, challenging and fast moving. The "MTV" approach will recharge any dance program.

**Preparation:**

- Record at least three 15-minute dance tapes. There should be at least three patterns of music per dance. Always start with one minute of fun stroking music.
- Use low dances that everyone can do. Intersperse the tape with fun dances (Reverse Dutch Waltz, Double Roll 14-Step, Canasta Tango, Viennese Waltz, etc.)
- Make signs that list the dances for each dance program and post the signs for each session.
- All MTV program dance sessions are 15 minutes long.
- The sessions are fast, furious and fun!

- Even non-dancers can join in and follow accomplished skaters.
- All coaches must agree to participate and encourage skaters to attend.
- No lessons can be taught during the 15-minute MTV program dance session.
- Boys should not dance with the same girl twice; solos are great; and girl dancing with girl is OK.
- Coaches will have to help skaters at first, until they get the hang of the MTV program dance.



Skaters who have little or no dance experience will become lost, overwhelmed and confused. Coaches should help these skaters adjust to the sessions. Make them feel welcome and encourage them to stay on the session. While no lessons should be given, it is the coach's job to show new skaters how to dance a few of the dances; the coach might even step off the dances with them. A few tips will go a long way.

Remember, if everyone at your

facility dances, there will be no stigma attached or reluctance to dance.

By following these guidelines, you can have fun, enhance and develop the skating skills of participants, increase lesson demand for coaches and increase revenue for the facility.

*Robert Mock, CAM, CAP, is the figure skating director at Center Ice Arena in Delmont, Pa.*

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# HIGH-TECH

## Public Skating Sessions

### Keep the MTV generation coming back with video entertainment

by Bob Bebber

A few rinks around the country are spicing up their Friday- and Saturday-night public skating by offering video entertainment during selected sessions.

Playing music videos that cater to both teenage and adult skaters can add a great atmosphere to general public skating. The Ice Centre at the Promenade (formerly the Sun Microsystems Ice Centre) in Westminster, Colo. has been providing this type of entertainment for the past six years. Friday and Saturday evening sessions are programmed with the 12- to 16-year-olds in mind. A typical session revolves around music videos, in-house advertising of rink programs, concession specials, on-ice rules and live pan and zoom camera shots of skating guests.



A VJ (video jockey) is the key component to making this all happen, and he or she must have a feel for what makes the session a “happening event.” Rink management and the session VJ must pre-screen content on music videos to ensure that inappropriate material is not programmed into a session.

With all the technology available today, there are numerous choices for a system. At this point, there are no one-stop turnkey systems available that are ready to install; therefore, rink operators must seek out vendors and determine what type of system might work best in their facilities.

We recently replaced the Ice Centre’s original system, which was installed in 1999. The first system was an LCD (liquid crystal display) cube-type system with 16 modular cubes stacked in a 4-by-4 configuration. The problem with this type of system is maintaining the uniformity of the different cubes. Because each cube has its own lamp and power supply, this system requires a professional technician to continually adjust and fine-tune the image alignment, as well as the brightness, color and contrast. With technology changing so rapidly, it also became difficult to secure replacement components for the system.

After researching the different systems available and bringing in vendors to display their products, we settled on a dual rear-projector system with DLP (digital laser projection) technology. This system, combined with a 16-by-9 screen, provides the ability to view media in high-definition format. While this sounds very high-tech, the reality is that projector technology has been around for decades and will continue to be used for many years to come, which bodes well for repair, maintenance and availability of qualified technicians when problems arise.

Projectors can be tied into multiple media systems including DVD players, VCR players, cable or satellite television, computer hard drives, streaming video via Internet access and satellite radio with interactive graphics.

When choosing a system, consider the following:

- Does the facility design allow for a good visible location for an installation?
  - The screen should be centrally located at one end of the rink.
  - Will the facility allow for a rear-projection unit (16 feet required behind screen)?
  - Can protective netting be lowered or raised for better viewing of the screen? If not, there may be consideration for a roll-up screen that is raised and lowered by remote control.
- What is the best location from which to operate the system in your rink?
  - You should have a clear view of the ice and the video screen.
  - It needs to be a secure area.
  - An additional hand-held remote control is preferable so the VJ can interact with skaters.

Now for the sticker shock: A complete video system will range in price from \$60,000 to \$120,000. The most expensive component will typically be the projector, particularly in a rear-projection unit, which provides a higher video quality. The most important aspect of the projector is the amount of ANSI-lumens, which relates to the brightness and clarity of the image being projected. In a typical rink environment, where ambient light levels (windows, overhead lights, etc.) can be reduced, about 6,000 ANSI-lumens should be adequate. The higher the ambient light present, the more ANSI-lumens required for the image to be distinct.

Keep in mind that some of these costs can be offset by selling advertising during the use of the video screen, as well as by the improved attendance at these sessions, which will provide an operator the opportunity to promote other rink programs.

Because we have provided the weekend video sessions since opening seven years ago, it is difficult to establish the potential increase that is possible for an existing rink to add this type of

component. We are certain, however, that we draw patrons from a much wider area than is typically common to ice rinks. With today's teenagers embracing new ideas and activities that provide high levels of sensory stimulation, their word of mouth has been our best advertisement for the weekend music video sessions.

Aside from the public skating benefits, we have used our video system extensively in ice shows. One year we used it to spotlight a 45-piece symphony orchestra during a "Symphony on Ice" performance, which proved extremely popular.

A video system can also generate untapped revenue sources by offering a high-profile advertising medium to potential sponsors. Company commercials or slide shows can be packaged into a dasher board and ice resurfer advertising program to increase the value of a sponsorship at your facility.

Video display can be used for in-house purposes, too, to promote and inform guests of snack bar and pro shop specials, learn-to-skate classes, upcoming special events, employee recruitment and public session rules and regulations.

It is difficult to quantify the payback on the installation of a video system in an ice skating facility, but if funds are available and the system is utilized properly and to its full extent, it will increase opportunities for both programming and the ability to generate additional revenues through a nontraditional source.

If the decision is made to move forward with installing a system, the next steps are to: establish a budget, determine what type of system to install, receive competitively priced bids, prepare for installation of equipment and provide staff training.

To gain renewed interest in public skating and add an exciting element to your facility, a video entertainment system is certainly one innovative option to consider.

*Bob Bebber is the general manager for the Ice Centre at the Promenade (formerly the Sun Microsystems Ice Centre) in Westminster, Colo.*



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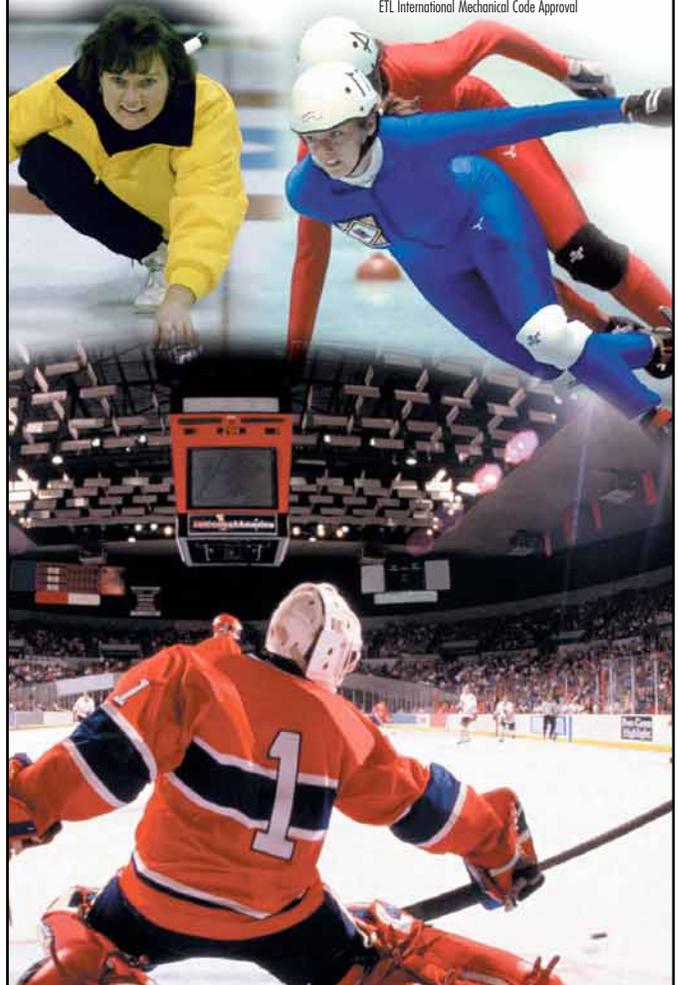


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# iACT is Boston-Bound

by Lori Fairchild

This year's Ice Arena Conference & Tradeshow (iACT), May 31-June 3 in Boston, will be marked by several milestones. For the first time ever, the ISI will co-host the annual event with one of the regional management associations: NEISMA (North East Ice Skating Managers Association). That powerful combination brings together two of the largest organizations in the ice arena industry, offering the convenience of two major events in a single setting and creating more opportunities than ever to learn and network with the best in the business.

Educational sessions have been divided into three tracks: management and hockey; operations and maintenance; and skating directors and instructors.

iACT 2006 will feature more operations seminars and education than any previous conference, with a strong emphasis on hands-on learning. A full day has been devoted to on-ice and on-site arena training for managers and skating professionals. Among the highlights for instructors will be two sessions with legendary coach Frank Carroll.

## Trip Tips

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[www.cityofboston.gov](http://www.cityofboston.gov)  
[www.boston-online.com](http://www.boston-online.com)



A full day of on-site and on-ice sessions for managers and skating professionals will be held at Allied Veterans Memorial Rink in nearby Everett, Mass.



iACT 2006 will be held at the Seaport Hotel and World Trade Center located near historic downtown Boston and waterfront attractions.

Early indicators point to one of the best tradeshow in recent memory, offering ice arena builder/suppliers an ideal opportunity to meet the industry's newest professionals and decision makers as well as reconnect with its veterans.

Pull out the insert in this issue for a complete schedule of the week's activities and sessions.

## The venue

The ISI has hosted numerous ice skating events and iAIM schools in the Boston area in recent years, but it has not held its annual conference in Beantown since the 1980s. Participants are in for a treat.

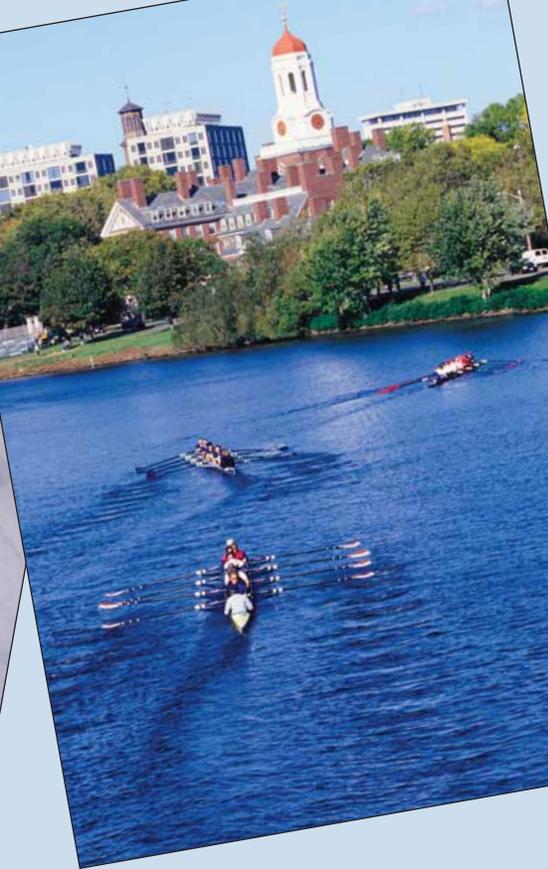
The waterfront Seaport Hotel and World Trade Center



iACT participants will have the chance to spend an evening at the Faneuil Hall TV replica set of Cheers.



This year's closing party will be a harbor dinner cruise aboard the Spirit of Boston.



Photos courtesy of Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau

offer deluxe hotel, meeting and exhibit accommodations. Hotel amenities include a full-service health club (complete with massage therapists), free wireless Internet service and gourmet cuisine at the Aura Restaurant & Bar, winner of a “Best of Boston” award in the upscale seafood restaurant category. One of the most pleasant surprises about this outstanding hotel is that it is gratuity-free.

The World Trade Center’s location on the Seaport property will make the tradeshow convenient to attendees and vendors alike. The easy access extends beyond the conference and tradeshow to historic downtown Boston and its many attractions, as well as Logan Airport.

## The city

Founded in 1630, Boston is one of America’s oldest cities, and it’s considered the country’s most “European” city. Like the world-class cities across the pond, Boston is packed with character and is a fascinating place to explore on foot, so don’t forget to bring comfortable walking shoes. Historic attractions, museums, shopping districts and restaurants are situated in close proximity, making it easy and enjoyable to get around. It’s a big city with small-city convenience.

Boston boasts one of America’s first historic walking trails, The Freedom Trail, a 2.5 mile sidewalk trail that links historic sites cov-

ering two and a half centuries of America’s richest history. You can cover it in a couple of hours or make a day of it, and there are trolleys available when your feet need a break. A self-guided Freedom Trail tour is a great way to brush up on your American history and visit some of the famous sites you studied in grade school: Boston Common, the Boston Massacre site, the Paul Revere House, the USS Constitution (“Old Ironsides”) and the Bunker Hill Monument, to name only a few.

There’s more to Boston than Revolutionary history, though. Food is a major attraction, from the best fresh seafood on the planet to delectable authentic Italian fare. For those who can’t resist snapping a shot of the bar “where everybody knows your name,” Cheers really does exist, as does a TV replica set located in Faneuil Hall. Conference attendees will have the chance to join real-life Cheers owner Tom Kershaw and famed bartender Eddie Doyle for a fun evening on the set (*see insert*).

Home to the Bruins, Celtics, Patriots and Red Sox, Boston is also a sports lover’s paradise, and many would not consider a visit complete without a stop at Fenway Park.

A new Boston Tea Party attraction complex opens this year, featuring the renovated Boston Tea Party ship and two replicas of 1773 ships. And since Boston started as a seaport, it’s only fitting that iACT 2006 conclude with a harbor dinner cruise aboard the Spirit of Boston.

You’re sure to take home a wealth of new ideas and knowledge, new professional contacts and memories of one of America’s greatest cities. ▀

**Top left:** Harvard University, Boston University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are all located along the Charles River, which is known for its rowing, sculling and sailing.

**Top Middle:** Boutiques, galleries and outdoor cafés fill Boston’s tree-lined Newbury Street.

**Top right:** The First Foot Guards, a Revolutionary War reenactment group, participate in Boston’s Harborfest celebration.

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# Skating on Thin Ice: Hockey-Fight Instruction

by David Jacobson

Item No. 4 on Positive Coaching Alliance's recently published list of "Bottom 10 Moments in Sports, 2005" was an incident in Michigan where a youth hockey coach allegedly included bare-knuckle fights among his players as part of a team practice. It's certainly not the kind of attention that youth hockey is seeking.

This kind of publicity takes the spotlight away from the countless Double-Goal Coaches™ who want to win and use sports to teach life lessons, and who truly provide our athletes with an excellent educational experience. What's really disconcerting is that more than one parent on the team in question actually sided with this coach.

When I discussed this incident with an otherwise responsible, civic-minded sports parent, he argued that fighting is part of hockey, and players should be trained to defend themselves. If such sympathies live even in people who typically have the best interests of their children in mind and usually side with PCA and ISI in the movement against win-at-all-cost coaching, then PCA must take this opportunity to clarify its position.

Encouraging children to fight in any sport, other than a martial art, is wrong.

It is dangerous. One of the teens involved in the practice suffered a concussion.

It is unethical. The Michigan Amateur Hockey Association suspended the coaches for three games, put them on probation for two years and ordered them to complete a combined 400 hours of community service, according to the *Lansing State Journal*.

However, training youth hockey players to fight apparently is not illegal, according to this excerpt from a press release issued by the Eaton County prosecuting attorney: "Virtually every hockey parent that e-mailed me attempted to justify the drill as instruction in self-defense necessary to prepare the players for the next, tougher level of hockey. They emphasized that this is not a recreational league, that these players have come from across the nation specifically to train under Coach Bowkus. Their reasoning made practical sense, and I could have accepted self-defense preparation as a justification for the drill had I found any evidence of instruction at all. But there was no coaching of 'defense' tactics before, during or after the drill. The boys were merely called into the center of the group and told to fight, bare knuckles and without any protection. As a result, one youth was seriously injured and appears to still be suffering the effects of a concussion. While the entire situation is regrettable, I cannot find evidence of criminal intent. In short, I

*Continued on page 24*





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cannot conclude that Coach Bowkus intended for any of his players to be injured.”

ISI and PCA espouse a positive, character-building experience for all youth athletes. That implies that the adults who run programs see to the basic physical safety of the children entrusted to them.

No matter how ingrained and integral fighting seems to hockey, it should not be “part of the game.” That’s why fighting is penalized even in the entertainment-driven world of pro hockey.

Adults should never encourage children to fight, let alone provide a forum for them to fight, or encourage or demand that they fight. People who care about the game of hockey should act to rid hockey of violence that dishonors the game.

Here are steps that rink managers, coaches, youth hockey organization leaders and parents can take:

- Establish a positive culture. Culture simply means “the way WE do things HERE.” If the adults in charge say — and enforce — “We don’t fight here,” children will not fight. It also helps to post signs and distribute buttons or stickers with Honor The Game messages.
- Appoint a culture keeper. One adult should serve as a culture keeper, who facilitates communication and reinforces the rink’s philosophy among different constituencies. Culture keepers should attend as many games as possible and be prepared to intervene appropriately if behavior goes awry.
- Address everyone who is involved. The problem in youth hockey violence is not just coaches who advocate rough

play, but the generally positive people, who let fighting slide as “part of the game.” Remember the Edmund Burke quotation: “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

- Publicize and enforce the rules. To be useful and effective, codes of conduct must clearly and explicitly state the consequences that will follow unacceptable behavior. In addition, there must be a predetermined process through which all reported incidents will be handled. Enforcement is a critical component of any meaningful code of conduct.
- Discuss incidents of pro hockey violence. During or after media coverage of a hockey fight, discuss the incident with youth athletes. This is a particularly good time for parents and coaches to issue “You’re the kind of person...” statements, as in “I’m glad you’re the kind of person who has the strength to not retaliate against a cheap shot.”

Underlying all the other Positive Coaching messages that ISI is spreading is the notion that ice sports, and all sports, must be a healthy, safe place for children. Following these tips will help make it so.

*David Jacobson is PCA’s media/communications manager. For PCA’s “Bottom 10 Moments in Sports, 2005” and the “PCA Guide to Discussing Sports Incidents with Children,” please visit [www.positivecoach.org](http://www.positivecoach.org). To learn more about the ISI-PCA partnership and how it benefits your rink, contact PCA at [PCA@PositiveCoach.org](mailto:PCA@PositiveCoach.org) or, toll-free, (866) 725-0024.*

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# Coaches' Corner

by Barb Yackel

ISI National Events & Skating Program Coordinator

Ahh ... springtime! The time of year when coaches' to-do lists are longer than the Mississippi River. (Guess the home-grown Minnesotan in me will never leave!)

As '06 marches into spring, we begin our annual ice show prep, set our summer schedules, complete conference registrations and make sure our tests and memberships are current for the May 1 Worlds entry deadline.

The mandatory ISI rule changes, effective since Jan. 1, should be old hat by now — yet daily we see evidence that the new rules are not clear to everyone. I hope you have purchased the new *Skaters and Coaches Handbook* and are visiting the Web site ([www.skateisi.org](http://www.skateisi.org)) to view rule changes and updates. It is your job to stay in the know.

February brought pageantry and inspiration as we all watched the crowning of our new Olympic champions. I was glued to the TV — how about you? The Winter Olympics always bring a welcome shot of adrenaline to our industry and I'm sure you are all feeling the effects. It makes life even crazier, but remember, this is a *good* crazy!

New programs designed to enhance our national events will debut this month. The Judges' Incentive Program rewards those who help during judging dilemmas at our national events. Each time you serve on a panel, your name goes into a drawing for great prizes. This is a great incentive to be certified and current.

The Judges' Mentoring Program encourages young coaches to be more involved in national events and learn from experienced competition judges and coaches. They will also gain experience in judging and running a national event. Skating directors can e-mail me to get criteria and requirements along with an application; the ISI national office will choose the candidates for each one of the upcoming national events.

I hope you all have marked in red the iACT/NEISMA event dates of May 31-June 3. Believe me, you don't want to miss this one! Innovative, informative and NEW sessions for skating directors, instructors and managers are on the agenda. I want to see you all on the harbor cruise — maybe we will see a whale or two!

**Important Dates**

**Worlds.....Marlboro, Mass., July 24-30**

**Adults.....Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 8-10**

**Artistic Challenge.....Denver, Nov. 3-5**

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- Progress reports
- Curriculum cards
- And much more!



To get your copy of the weSKATE kit, call ISI at 972.735.8800.

## Education Foundation Gears Up for 2006 Fundraisers

Plans are shaping up for the third annual ISIA Education Foundation Golf Tournament, scheduled for Tuesday, May 30, the day before the opening of the 2006 iACT in Boston. The tournament's shotgun start is set for 1 p.m., and box lunches, beverages, transportation, golf shirts, tournament prizes and golfers' goody bags will all be provided. Celebrity foursomes will be available via an Internet silent auction. Entry fees are \$175 for single golfers or \$600 for foursomes. For more details as they become available, watch for e-mail updates and the next issue of the *EDGE*, or contact Lisa Fedick at [lafwonder@aol.com](mailto:lafwonder@aol.com).

Also planned for conference week is the Education Foundation's silent auction, returning after a one-year hiatus. All items will be displayed at the Presidents' Reception on Wednesday, May 31. Selected items will be closed out that evening; the remaining items will be displayed at the Foundation's tradeshow booth on Friday, June 2 and

Saturday, June 3 and closed out at noon on Saturday. All items at the tradeshow will have a "quick buy" predetermined price allowing immediate purchase. The Foundation is still accepting auction donations. Popular items include hockey, sports and ice skating memorabilia; sporting and entertainment tickets; art and consumable items; and gift certificates. Please send your silent auction donations to: Judith P. Sniffen, 50 Perry Ave., Bayville, NY 11709. For more information, contact Sniffen at (516) 628-2240, by fax at (516) 628-2279 or by e-mail at [thesniff@aol.com](mailto:thesniff@aol.com).

The Education Foundation's newest fundraiser is the sale of "Skate Strong" bracelets, which began at last year's ISI Worlds event and continues at all ISI national events, including iACT, this year. The Foundation is also offering the bracelets to member facilities, clubs or districts that wish to help raise funds for the scholarship program and for their own programs. For more information, contact Judith Sniffen at

[thesniff@aol.com](mailto:thesniff@aol.com), Robyn Bentley at [RobynBSK8R@direcway.com](mailto:RobynBSK8R@direcway.com) or Lisa Fedick at [lafwonder@aol.com](mailto:lafwonder@aol.com).

Funds raised from each of these activities benefit the ISIA Education Foundation's scholarship program, which has awarded nearly \$200,000 to outstanding ISI scholar/skaters since its inception.

### Recent Education Foundation Donations

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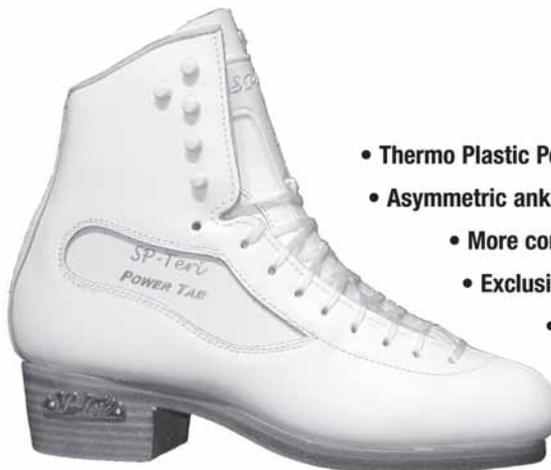
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## North East Ice Skating Managers Association (NEISMA)

by Tom Morton, President

Cost savings in ice rinks is an ongoing consideration for NEISMA, especially now, with the



Tom Morton

rising costs of fuel, transportation, school, food, clothing, etc.

One ice rink manager recently shared with me that his rink had experienced a decline in general skating programs. He said that, because of the increased cost of living, without a commensurate increase in wages, many skaters are looking for ways to cut costs, and the prime targets are recreation, restaurants, travel and sports. This has forced him to take a close look at cost savings in his rink.

The NEISMA board of directors has recognized the problem and has embarked on a program of action in an effort to help inform its membership about cost-saving measures.

Part of this program involves sharing cost-saving ideas. NEISMA refers to the program as "Innovative Thinking." NEISMA is requesting its members to send their adopted cost-saving programs as well as their ideas on new suggested cost-saving programs directly to NEISMA Director Jeff Bardwell, who will publish them in the association's *Rink Rat* publication.

Another part of NEISMA's program of action is to have more cost-saving articles in the *Rink Rat*. Members are encouraged to write brief articles on cost savings and to send them to Bardwell. In the most recent issue, he had an excellent article titled "Low-Cost Energy Savings" in which he cut to the heart of the matter. His suggestion of creating a "measuring stick" is well worth noting.

The NEISMA board is concerned with the cost increases expected this year for our industry. The board encourages NEISMA members as well as others in the industry to share their innovative thinking.



## Minnesota Ice Arena Managers Association (MIAMA)

by Tom Moriarty, President

The days are getting longer, and it won't be long before we can get together in New Ulm for our spring conference on May 2. We will be visiting later this month to look at the New Ulm Civic Center and make plans for the one-day event. Watch our Web site or your mail for information.

Board members Doug Brady and Maurice Slepica are putting together ideas for the fall conference in September at Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge. If you have



Tom Moriarty

an idea for a presentation, I am sure they wouldn't mind your input.

Our [www.rinkfinder.com](http://www.rinkfinder.com) site has added some new features in the past few months, including the open freestyle, open hockey and open skating buttons. This is helpful for our members who wish to download the information for customers seeking those sessions, in addition to other arena events, times and maps to our facilities. I would encourage all members to get your arena information online and increase your revenue.

All of us are struggling with escalating energy costs this season, to the point of 20 to 40 percent increases. I am sure most of us, despite the budget forecasts, are entering 2006 with a projected deficit. What will happen to our hourly ice rates in the future? Will some of us continue to cut summer ice rates, faced with the higher costs to maintain ice in the summer? We have heard the ice rates from other parts of our country: \$250, \$350 an hour! We shook our heads not too long ago at the thought of \$2/gallon gasoline! Is the day of \$150-170 hourly rates soon to be a memory? I believe many of our policy makers, and we, as managers, are pondering the future of ice costs. Our users need to be part of this formula, given the costs associated with putting a skater on the ice today. Most of us have managed in an era of "cheap" energy. Our action will determine our facilities' future, and we need to work with our vendors for long-term energy solutions. What are your thoughts?

I know some arenas have changed out their metal halide fixtures for florescent fixtures. Ramsey County went through this process, working with Xcel Energy and a certified electric vendor. We replaced the fixtures in all of our arenas except Aldrich. We have noticed a drop in kilowatt usage, but we cannot directly track the fixture usage, other than past years' bills. I do know our users like the lights, and in the event of a power drop, the instant-on with the new lights is remarkable.

On our Web site's "Bulletin Board," I see there is a move to installing automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in some facilities. I believe the impact and importance is immeasurable. I'm sure we can recall the incident on the bench in an NHL game this season where a player went down and was saved by the use of an AED. We have installed them in several of our facilities. Staff has been receptive to the training and the knowledge that they can help someone in an emergency. Are you considering installing one in your facility?



## Metropolitan Ice Rink Managers Association (MIRMA)

by Lisa Fedick, Secretary

I hope this issue finds all of you coming off a highly prosperous Olympic experience. I, for one, am still looking for new and creative ideas to ensure that a large percentage of my newest group of "impulse" customers become permanent.

My search always brings me to the



Lisa Fedick

# solutions



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*Continued from page 30*

same place: *education*. The ISI offers so many affordable opportunities for each of us to elevate our businesses and ourselves to that next level. With the Boston conference in our backyard and just around the corner, now is the time to start that iAIM online course, to enhance your area of expertise or to reach outside of your comfort zone and make yourself a true asset to your building and your customers.

The third annual District III Skate for Knowledge Championships will be held May 6-7 at Floyd Hall Arena in Little Falls, N.J. This event is unique in that it will be treated as a Grand Prix final event. The current competition season commenced on April 11, 2005, and will end on May 7, 2006, at the completion of the district championships. Every ISI-endorsed inter-club event in District III throughout the season, as well as the Riverdale Ice ISI event in Lake Placid, the ISI Winter Classic, the ISI Artistic Challenge and ISI Worlds, will be included in the series. Every skater's participation in these named events will be tracked, as well as their placements. Grand Prix points will be awarded for each event skated, in each competition entered. For more information, contact Lisa Fedick at LAFMIRMA@aol.com.

Kudos to Ted Kelton and Riverdale Ice for yet another great event in Lake Placid. Four districts were well represented, with more than 400 skaters participating. As one of the first events in the country to use the new ISI team point structure, the race for the highly coveted team trophies was made even more exciting.

The MIRMA executive board is planning the spring managers' meeting to be held in March, with location and date to be announced. We all look forward to seeing you soon.



## Michigan Arena Managers Association (MAMA)

*by Geoff Bennetts, President*

The last Michigan Arena Managers Association meeting was held at Charles R. Mueller & Sons in Mt. Clemens, Mich. Mueller's is an active member of MAMA as well as an arena supply and service company. As a part of our agenda that day, we were provided with a four-station tour featuring Mueller's blade sharpening, ice stencils, Zamboni maintenance and Fuel Maker service. Presenters at the meeting included: Greg Zivov of Electric Savings and Dave Goran of Magnon Energy Group discussing energy costs and potential money-saving measures; Ray Kraemer of Michigan Amateur Hockey Association; and Toni Cooper of Zigler Performance Group.



**Geoff Bennetts**

The terms for the MAMA officers have expired, and the association plans to hold elections for all positions at its next meeting. Please contact me at gbennetts@suburbanice.com for information. ▀

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- Increase profits



# CALENDAR

## ISI-endorsed competitions & shows/exhibitions

(Events endorsed after March 1 will be listed in the next issue)

### COMPETITIONS

#### MARCH



- 3-5 **Melvindale, Mich.**  
Melvindale Civic Arena  
ISI Winter Classic
- 4 **Columbus, Ohio**  
CoreComm Ice Haus  
Arnold Classic Skating Competition
- 4 **Redwood City, Calif.**  
Ice Oasis Skating & Hockey Club  
Spring Fling
- 4-5 **Irmo, S.C.**  
Ice Land Irmo  
Palmetto Classic
- 4-5 **Highland Park, Ill.**  
Centennial Ice Arena  
The Lucky Stars Open
- 4-5 **Peoria, Ill.**  
Owens Center  
Spring Thaw
- 4-5 **Minneapolis**  
Parade FSC  
2006 Blades of March  
ISI Open Competition
- 4-5 **San Diego**  
San Diego Ice Arena  
2006 California State Games  
Championships
- 4-5 **Fort Washington, Md.**  
Tucker Road FSC  
Skate Annapolis
- 4-5 **Great Neck, N.Y.**  
Parkwood Complex  
Third Annual Long Island Classic
- 10-12 **Park Ridge, Ill.**  
Oakton Ice Arena  
19th Annual Ice Breaker Classic
- 11 **Palos Verdes, Calif.**  
Palos Verdes Ice Chalet  
Pot O' Gold Competition

- 11-12 **Overland Park, Kan.**  
Pepsi Midwest Sunflower Invitational
- 11-12 **Natick, Mass.**  
West Suburban Arena  
35th Annual Bay State Blades Natick
- 12 **Oxnard, Calif.**  
Oxnard Ice Skating Center  
Third Annual Bunny Hop ISI Open Adult Competition
- 18 **Pittsburgh**  
RMU Island Sports Center  
2006 Shamrock Skate
- 18-19 **College Park, Md.**  
Herbert Wells Ice Rink  
Spring Inter Rink Competition
- 19 **West Caldwell, N.J.**  
Montclair Inside Edge  
23rd Annual ISI Team Competition
- 31-April 2 **Knoxville, Tenn.**  
Ice Chalet  
37th Annual Mississippi Valley District Competition
- 31-April 2 **Orleans, Mass.**  
Charles Moore Arena  
28th Annual Lower Cape ISI Team Competition

#### APRIL

- 1 **Crestwood, Ill.**  
Southwest Ice Arena  
Spring Invitational
- 1-2 **Saratoga Springs, N.Y.**  
Saratoga Springs FSC  
9th Annual ISI Team Competition



- 7-9 **Bensenville, Ill.**  
The Edge Ice Arena  
ISI Synchronized Championships

- 8-9 **El Segundo, Calif.**  
Toyota Sports Center  
6th Annual Spring Fling Competition
- 21 **Boxboro, Mass.**  
Nashoba Valley Olympia  
27th Annual ISI Team Competition
- 28-30 **Sherwood, Ore.**  
Sherwood Ice Arena  
2006 Spring Classic
- 29-30 **Franklin Park, Ill.**  
Franklin Park Ice Arena  
Spring Fever

#### MAY

- 6-7 **Fairfax, Va.**  
Fairfax Ice Arena  
Annual ISI Spring Competition
- 27-28 **San Diego**  
San Diego Ice Arena  
ISI Open Championships

#### JUNE

- 2-4 **New York**  
Sky Rink @ Chelsea Piers  
20th Annual Sky Rink Team Competition

#### JULY

- 13-15 **Honolulu**  
Ice Palace  
2006 ISI Hawaiian Open
- 14-16 **Ontario, Calif.**  
Center Ice Arena  
1st Annual ISI Open Competition



- 24-30 **Marlboro, Mass.**  
New England Sports Center  
ISI World Recreational Team Championships

#### SEPTEMBER



- 8-10 **Nashville, Tenn.**  
Centennial Sportsplex  
ISI Adult Championships

- 15 **Arlington, Texas**  
ICE at The Parks  
3rd Annual ISI Open Competition

#### OCTOBER

- 28-29 **Rockland, Mass.**  
Winterland Skating School  
20th Annual Winterland Halloween Classic

#### NOVEMBER



- 3-5 **Denver**  
South Suburban Ice Arena  
ISI Artistic Challenge

### SHOWS & EXHIBITIONS

#### MARCH

- 3-4 **Pekin, Ill.**  
Pekin Memorial Arena  
The Land of OZ
- 10 **St. Paul, Minn.**  
St. Mary's Point Skating School  
Spring Spectacular  
2006 "The Classics"

- 11 **Luverne, Minn.**  
Blue Mound Ice Arena  
Annual Ice Show
- 11 **Tacoma, Wash.**  
Sprinker Recreation  
Center  
ISI Camp Showtime  
"American Pride"
- 11-12 **St. Louis**  
Kennedy Recreation  
Center  
30th Annual Ice Revue
- 12 **Salem, Mass.**  
Viking Skating Club  
Let Us Entertain You
- 12 **Saratoga Springs, N.Y.**  
Saratoga Springs FSC  
Spring Exhibition 2006
- 17-19 **Jefferson City, Mo.**  
Washington Park  
Ice Arena  
British Invasion 44th  
Annual Ice Show
- 18 **Gurnee, Ill.**  
Rink Side Ice Arena  
Pure Imagination
- 23-25 **Trenton, Mich.**  
Kennedy Recreation  
Center  
Trenton Jamboree  
on Ice
- 25-26 **White Plains, N.Y.**  
Ebersole Ice Rink  
End of Year Show
- 31-  
**April 1 Livonia, Mich.**  
Livonia Eddie Edgar  
Michigan Music  
on Ice
- 31-  
**April 1 White Plains, N.Y.**  
Ebersole Ice Rink  
Night in the Spotlight

## APRIL

- 8-9 **Birmingham, Mich.**  
Birmingham Ice  
Sports Arena  
Club Birmingham
- 9 **Highland Park, Ill.**  
Centennial Ice Arena-  
Highland Park  
Spring Exhibition
- 9 **Franklin, Mass.**  
Franklin Blades  
Skating School  
Showtime '06

- 9 **Vineland, N.J.**  
Vineland Ice Arena  
Spring Show On Ice
- 18 **Arlington, Texas**  
ICE at The Parks  
Spring Fling 2006
- 21-22 **Carol Stream, Ill.**  
Carol Stream Ice Rink  
Fairy Tales
- 21-23 **Park Ridge, Ill.**  
Oakton Ice Arena  
37th Annual Oakton  
Ice Show: Love,  
Laugh & Dance
- 22-23 **Cottage Grove, Minn.**  
Cottage Grove  
Ice Arena  
Animation Ice Station
- 28-30 **Chicago**  
McFetridge Sports  
Center  
Let's Dance
- 29 **Wasilla, Alaska**  
Brett Ice Arena  
Spring Ice Show

## MAY

- 5-7 **Crestwood, Ill.**  
Southwest Ice Arena  
Spring Ice Show
- 6 **Rockland, Mass.**  
Winterland Skating  
School  
Winterland Ice Show
- 10-21 **Highland Park, Ill.**  
Centennial Ice Arena  
A Celebration of  
Colors on Ice
- 12-13 **Houston**  
Aerodrome  
Willowbrook  
11th Annual Spring  
Ice Show
- 12-14 **Niles, Ill.**  
Niles Park District  
Iceland  
Television Treasures
- 17-21 **Glenview, Ill.**  
Glenview Ice Center  
33rd Annual Ice Show
- 19-21 **Franklin Park, Ill.**  
Franklin Park Ice Arena  
Books on Blades-  
Volume 5

- 19-21 **Evanston, Ill.**  
Robert Crown Center  
Skate to the Greats-  
30th Anniversary  
Spring Ice Show



- 31-  
**June 3 Boston**  
Seaport Hotel/World  
Trade Center  
2006 iACT/NEISMA  
Conference &  
Tradeshow

## JUNE

- 10-11 **Boxboro, Mass.**  
Nashoba Valley  
Olympia Ice Magic

- 16-17 **Glen Ellyn, Ill.**  
Center Ice of DuPage  
Tuned In

## JULY

- 1 **Irmo, S.C.**  
Ice Land Irmo  
Summer Sizzle

## AUGUST

- 17 **Arlington, Texas**  
ICE at The Parks  
Summertime 2006

## DECEMBER

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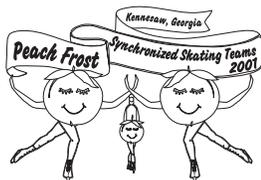
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# AND ANOTHER THING...

by Peter Martell  
ISI Executive Director

As I write this, the U.S. National Figure Skating Championships have just concluded, the National Hockey League has passed the midpoint of its season and the XX Winter Olympic Games in Torino, Italy are just a few weeks away. As is typical during most Winter Olympic years, ice hockey and figure skating are receiving increased media exposure.

Whether it's news about the athletes and their events or advertising for products trying to capitalize on the current enthusiasm for winter sports, this welcome exposure translates into a temporary surge in popularity for ice skating and hockey — and increased business for ice arena owners and operators. The question is, how do we capture that temporary surge in interest and convert it into continued participation?

The first point of contact with most "impulse" skaters or their parents (assuming there's not a frozen

pond down the street) is usually a public skating session at the local ice arena. It is here, as arena owners, that we not only earn the most dollars per hour in revenue, but also get our one chance to make a first impression and convert those "impulse" skaters into "regulars." There could not be a more important activity for determining our future business.

Unfortunately, however, public skating sessions are often viewed and treated by arena operators or staff members as a nuisance or necessary evil rather than a valuable opportunity to meet, greet, entertain and expose the non-skating public to the joy and excitement of skating. Their first exposure will often be a "make or break" experience for them in determining whether or not they will return and, eventually, sign up for learn-to-skate or learn-to-play classes. Therefore, it is critical that their first experience be a positive, pleasant, fun and rewarding one. How do we do that?

First and foremost, we must make it easy and convenient for the general public to participate. That means scheduling public skating at times that are attractive and convenient for the majority of consumers — not when we happen to have a spare hour and a half of open ice time. It also means that we must be consistent with the schedule — not change it from week to week or cancel sessions for last-minute ice rentals.

Next, we must ensure that the

facility is clean, warm and inviting for our first-time guests. The old "frozen barns" of the past don't cut it with newcomers, especially if they have not been raised in skating- or hockey-rich environments (translation: they'll put up with anything just to skate).

Then, we need to provide well-maintained, sharp rental skates, as most beginners do not own their own skates. In today's transient American society, we can no longer assume that everyone who lives in the North owns a pair of skates. This is simply not true, and if northern states' arenas want to attract new skaters, they need to invest in a reasonable rental skate inventory.

Finally, we have to do more than play music as skaters skate 'round and 'round for two hours at a time. We need to remember what business we are in — the entertainment business — and we need to entertain our guests. That means we need to provide regularly scheduled programs and activities for them to enjoy — games and prizes, free introductory lessons and exhibitions — with the goal of encouraging them to sign up for classes.

Overall, we must exceed their initial expectations. We need to remember that public skating session patrons are usually not committed "skaters" — they are just members of the general public who have come to skate for an afternoon or evening of fun and recreational entertainment. If we don't provide it, they will simply go elsewhere!

What's more, in today's increasingly competitive entertainment environment, what worked a decade ago is no longer sufficient. Today's young people have been raised in a fast-paced, technologically advanced society where they have learned to process media and information very quickly and, therefore, are very quickly and easily bored. To keep them involved, we need to "bombard" them with similarly fast-paced media and activities, or risk losing their interest.

Creative planning, effort, energy and possibly even some capital investment are required for programming effective, entertaining public skating sessions that will convert impulse traffic into regular customers. Otherwise, all the free publicity in the world will do little to promote and grow our business and sports if we are losing them as quickly as we (or some external stimuli) can attract them. Let's make the most of our Olympic opportunity and

**Entertain to Retain!**

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