

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

# EDGE

*The professional journal for the ice skating industry*

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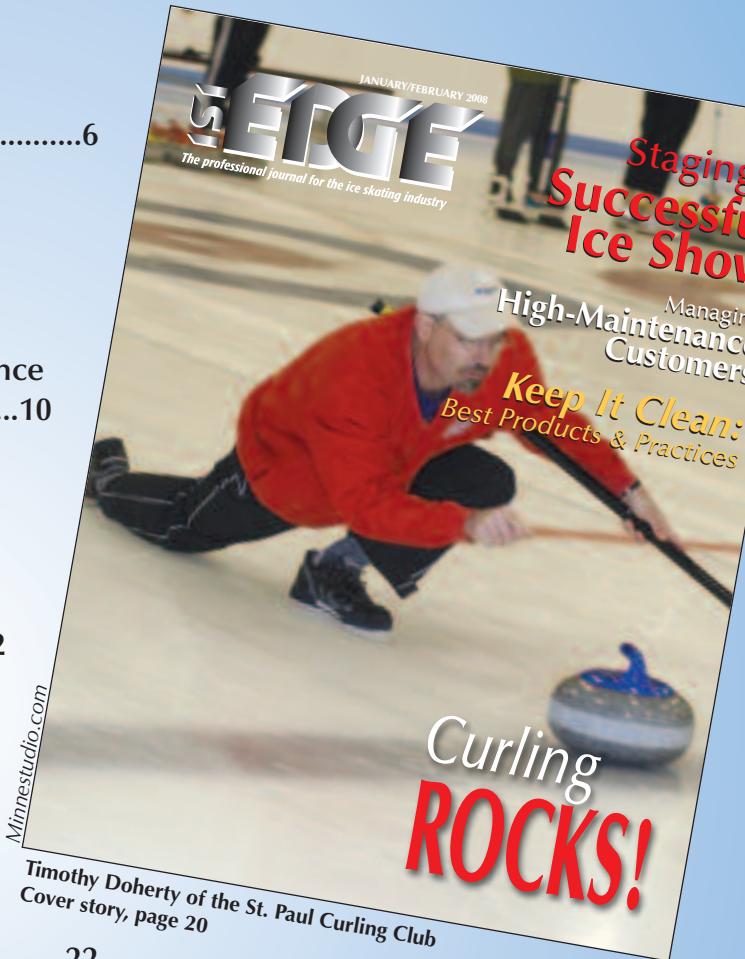
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# CROSSCUTS

announcements

## ISI announces new member benefit: Affordable group health insurance program

The Ice Skating Institute is pleased to announce the introduction of another value-added membership benefit. Effective Feb. 1, a new group health insurance program will be available to ISI Professional and Affiliate members. The plan features medical, dental, term life and hospital indemnity policies at prices that are affordable even to part-time ice skating professionals. CT Benefits Inc. will provide the policies, which will be written by Aetna Insurance Co. Other coverage options are also available on an individual basis. Watch for more information in your e-mail inbox or at [www.skateisi.org](http://www.skateisi.org), or contact CT Benefits at [terry@ctbenefits.com](mailto:terry@ctbenefits.com) or [tj@ctbenefits.com](mailto:tj@ctbenefits.com).

## Wanted: ISI Director of Management Programs and Services

The Ice Skating Institute is accepting applications for the position of director of management programs and services at its new headquarters in Plano, Texas. Applicants should be seasoned facility operators with at least five years of ice rink management and operations experience. Ice Arena Institute of Management (iAIM) certification preferred. Excellent benefits and compensation commensurate with experience. Interested parties may submit a letter of interest and résumé in confidence to [pmartell@skateisi.org](mailto:pmartell@skateisi.org) or mail to ISI Employment, 6000 Custer Road, Bldg. 9, Plano, TX 75023, Attn: Executive Director.

## Happy New Year From ISI's New Headquarters



ISI's staff and board of directors recently cut the ribbon on the new ISI national headquarters building. The Institute's new address is 6000 Custer Road, Building 9, Plano, Texas, 75023. The telephone and fax numbers have not changed.

*Send announcements and photos to [editor@skateisi.org](mailto:editor@skateisi.org). Watch your e-mail Updates for facility news, including construction and openings.*



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# Keep It Clean!

The best ice arena cleaning systems are based on reliable chemicals and equipment as well as a clear understanding of their proper uses

by Peggy Wood

A clean facility is appealing to its users and can be a factor in their choice to keep coming back. But while aesthetics are still key to customer satisfaction, "clean" has taken on a whole new relevance with the recent outbreak of dangerous "superbug" infections — some of which have resulted in death.

The most publicized of these, MRSA (methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus), was, at first, confined to hospitals and long-term care facilities. In recent months, however, it has spread to the general community, particularly into athletic environments.

Staphylococcus aureus is a bacterium that is present in about 25 to 30 percent of the population. For most, the bacterium does not cause illness. In

the past when infections occurred, they were easily treated with penicillin or other antibiotics. Today, these staphylococci have grown resistant to common antibiotics. MRSA infections require longer and more complicated treatments.

Staphylococcus aureus bacteria live on the skin and usually spread through direct contact with a break in the skin or contact with clothing, towels or equipment. MRSA can survive on hard surfaces for up to 24 hours and on skin for several hours, waiting to enter the bloodstream through a cut or abrasion. It is important to have a proper disinfecting cleaning program (check to see if your disinfectant has a MRSA kill claim) supplemented with an effective hand-washing program to prevent and control the spread of MRSA.

Whether your facility

requires a low-, medium- or high-maintenance program, your goal should be to achieve proper cleaning and disinfecting along with reduced soil loading.

## Proper cleaning and disinfecting

Before beginning any cleaning task, be sure that you fully understand how to use the chemicals and equipment for the job. OSHA mandates that every employee has a right to know about chemical hazards within their workplace. A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) provides information regarding each product. Read and understand the MSDS as well as the product label for every product that you use. Also, make sure to use gloves, and goggles when recommended, for your cleaning tasks.

Set up a cleaning schedule for your facility by breaking down the tasks into daily and detail cleaning. Daily cleaning tasks involve procedures such as dry- and wet-mopping, or autoscrubbing, trash removal and restroom/locker-room cleaning. Detail cleaning includes tasks that are done approximately twice a month, such as foaming shower-room cleaning and picking up rubber floor tiles.

Detail cleaning in the shower room may require an acid cleaner. Generally, daily disinfectant cleaners are non-acid and therefore safe to use on a daily basis. Over time, the showers may develop a layer of oily dirt, body oils, soap scum and rust. The best way to clean these soils is with an acid foaming shower cleaner. The foam allows a dwell time so the acid cleaner can break down the soil.

Detail cleaning under the rubber floor tiles requires mopping or autoscrubbing with a disinfectant to eliminate soil, mold, mildew and odor. Divide the area into six sections. This allows the cleaning to be done in a different section every two weeks. Begin the process over every quarter. Make sure the area is completely dry before putting the tiles back.

Prepare the appropriate cleaning solution in the mop bucket, autoscrubber or spray bottle. There's no doubt that super-concentrated chemical-dispensing devices play a key role. They improve efficiency and save time and money. Properly dispensed chemicals save money by accurately mixing the correct amount of chemical with water, saving 30 to 60 percent versus the "glug-glug" method. Chemical-dispensing devices save time by eliminating the guesswork with simple push-button convenience.

Disinfecting cleaning is a process of destroying or preventing the growth of disease-carrying microorganisms. Use a hospital-grade disinfectant daily to reduce the risk of cross-contamination on all skin contact surfaces such as sinks, fixtures, toilets, urinals, flush handles, countertops and showers. The restroom floors may not be a skin-contact surface, however, using a disinfectant to mop the floor will help prevent odors.

*Continued on page 8*

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*Continued from page 6*

## Reducing soil loading

Walk-off mats are the most effective way of stopping dirt at the door and keeping building maintenance costs to a minimum. Approximately 85 to 95 percent of soil can be captured by simply using mats in the main entrance area. Ninety percent is tracked off in the first 25 feet. Consider mats with bi-level rubber-reinforced face nubs that trap more water and dirt and prevent pile crushing, giving you longer-lasting and better-performing mat protection.

Another newer technology for reducing soil loading and increasing efficiency is microfiber. Microfiber (versus traditional string mops and cloths) is a manmade fiber product that is positively charged to pick up the negatively charged soil.

If you choose to stay with traditional string wet mops, choose quality mops. Cut-end mops appear to be a better buy as the initial cost is lower, but looped-end mops with tailbands are a better overall value. Tailbands prevent tangling and reduce snagging on furniture and obstacles. Tailbanded mops also provide much greater surface coverage than ordinary cut-end mops.

A facility can benefit from using an automatic scrubber as a cost-effective way to do more with less. Autoscrubbers mop, scrub and dry flooring in one pass, leaving the floor safer and cleaner than manual processes.

Using and understanding efficient equipment and quality cleaning chemicals can go a long way toward a properly maintained facility.

*Peggy Wood is a training specialist for Allston Supply Co. Inc., a full-service custodial products and program distributor based in Springfield, Mass.*

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# Calming ‘Customonsters’ and Other High-Maintenance Clients

by Kate Zabriskie

It's been more than 20 years since Madonna first sang about being a "material girl in a material world," and since that time, women and men throughout the nation have become more demanding of businesses and what they expect in terms of service. One might argue that this age of the high-maintenance customer is simply due to businesses' inability to get qualified help, and in some cases this is true. However, the fact is that product and service customization, competition and "the customer is always right" have helped create more than a few high-maintenance "customonsters" who, over time, may be more work than they are worth to your business.

To endure demanding customers and give your employees the tools they need to successfully manage that audience, there are several actions you should take when planning your service strategy and tactics.

**1** Determine what you will and won't do to satisfy customers. If you will take back skates or other equipment even though they may not have been purchased in your pro shop, fine. If you will only do it for your "platinum" customers, that's fine, too.

The point is, you must have rules in place. Otherwise, you are headed for a path of inconsistency and dissatisfaction. To kick off your planning, answer the following questions:

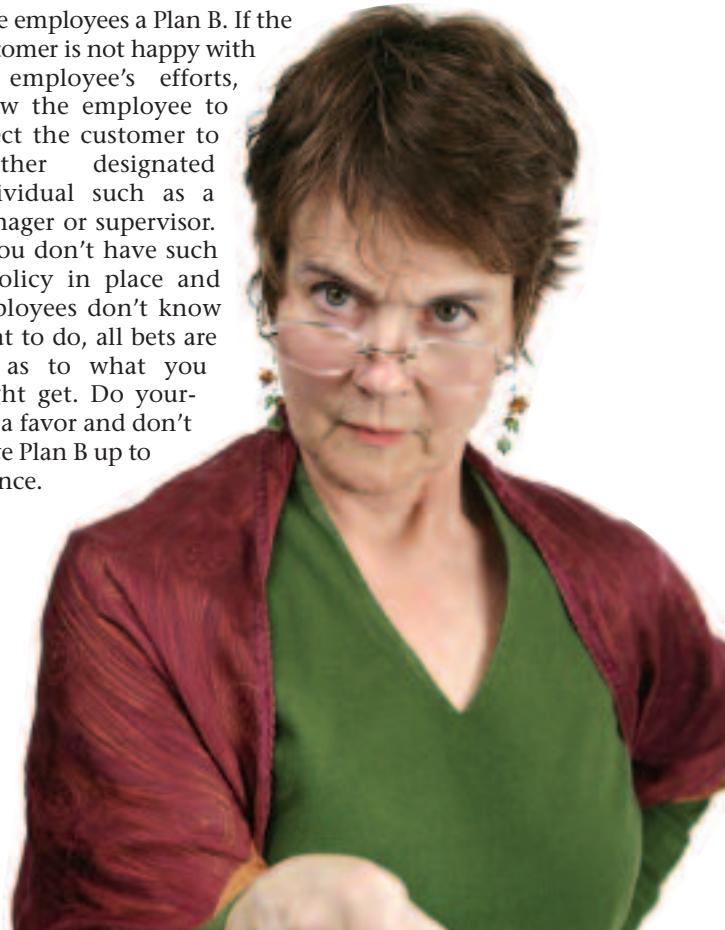
- Are there some customers we would rather not have? If so, who are they?
- How much abuse do I expect to take or expect my employees to take from difficult customers?
- Am I willing to be yelled at? Called stupid, incompetent, etc.?
- What special accommodations will I make to satisfy the demanding when they are justified in complaining, and when they aren't?

**2** Train your employees on the rules you have put in place. Be prepared to visit and revisit this step several times. Turnover and other circumstances will affect your need for training. Furthermore, effectively dealing with "customonsters" is not always an intuitive process. One training session is usually not enough. Practice, practice and more practice make for better service. Your training should include most if not all of the following information:

- Teach your employees to explain your processes to your customers to align their expectations with what you can realistically deliver. "Mrs. Smith, I understand that you want to transfer Sally into the Saturday class. However, the Saturday classes are full and there will not be any new ones opening for another three weeks. Also, if you cancel her Tuesday class, you will be charged the \$25 cancellation fee. In the interim, perhaps moving to the Thursday

evening class would be better for you." Remember to remind employees to stay calm and not to yell, no matter how angry the other person gets.

- Keep the focus on the problem, not the person. If the customer is unhappy that you cannot accommodate her requests today, keep the conversation about what you *can* do.
- Tell your employees not to let the customer make this personal by answering rhetorical questions such as, "Do you have any idea how this affects our family's schedule?" If your employees take the bait, there's no winning. Don't make presumptions about what the customer will be happy with. A reply such as "Mrs. Smith, I'm sure you can make this work into your schedule if it's a priority" is a losing situation, to be sure. A better statement might be, "Mrs. Smith, although it's not the perfect solution, I would like to see if this other class could possibly work for you until we can get Sally into a Saturday class."
- Give employees a Plan B. If the customer is not happy with an employee's efforts, allow the employee to direct the customer to another designated individual such as a manager or supervisor. If you don't have such a policy in place and employees don't know what to do, all bets are off as to what you might get. Do yourself a favor and don't leave Plan B up to chance.



**3** Recognize and reward employees who handle difficult and demanding customers well. It's impossible to expect employees to make the right decision 100 percent of the time. However, if they know you are watching and that you treat every mistake as a learning opportunity, you are more likely to get the best out of your staff.

**4** Never embarrass your employees in front of customers, never yell at them in front of customers and don't immediately assume that the customer is giving you the full picture. "Customonsters" feed on negativity. The last thing you want to do is reinforce bad behavior by communicating through your actions that abuse is acceptable — even if you have decided that you will take a fair amount from the customers yourself.

**5** If all else fails, you may consider freeing your "customonsters" by suggesting other businesses that they might find more suitable. But remember, most of the time you should be able to satisfy your customers — even the material girls and boys, if you have solid processes in place, behave professionally and follow up on any promises you make.

*Kate Zabriskie is founder of Business Training Works Inc., a company that specializes in down-to-earth soft skills training in the workplace. She and her team help people develop the skills they need to be successful at work: business etiquette, interpersonal communication skills, business writing, presentation skills, customer service, negotiation, time management and other essentials. The company's clients include Microsoft, Georgetown University, Schering Plough, the USDA, the United States Coast Guard and Bank One. For more information, visit [www.businesstrainingworks.com](http://www.businesstrainingworks.com) or call (301) 934-3250.*

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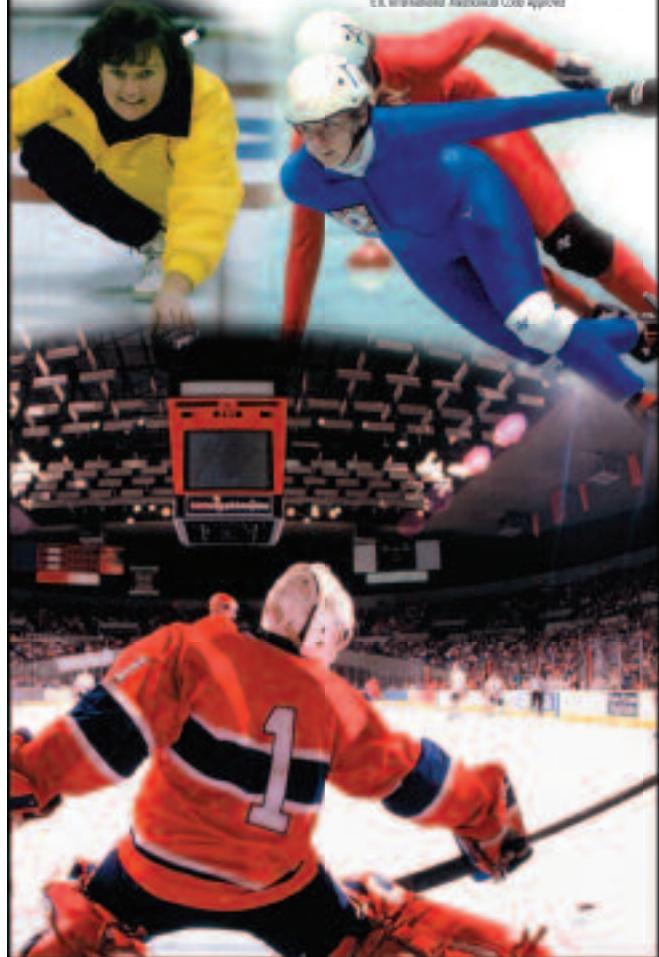
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# That's Right! But Don't Do It Again Today!

by Lynn Loar

**C**oaching has changed for the better in the decades that I've been skating. You rarely hear coaches shouting at children or children crying in the changing room after a harsh lesson — scenarios I remember vividly from my childhood summers in skating camp. People have learned that positive reinforcement motivates better than criticism. However, I've noticed that despite the best of intentions, an occasional negative sneaks in, often under the radar of even very skilled positive coaches.

A coach can unintentionally compromise the process of learning, despite using an exclusively positive approach. This comes about, ironically, because of the coach's expertise, focus and purposefulness. The coach may require the student to repeat a behavior many times, hoping for greater progress or the solidification of gains. The coach runs the risk of becoming focused on these aims and underestimating or missing the skater's signs of fatigue or waning enthusiasm. The coach is an expert whose vision, attention span and buy-in exceed the student's. And the student performing the behavior over and over is expending much more energy than the coach is. The coach's lack of punitive intent is irrelevant to the student, who now realizes that training sessions can be exhausting, even stressful and discouraging, despite the coach's positive enthusiasm.

Coaches of all sports run the risk of impeding their students' progress through excessive repetition of any behavior that requires both mental and physical attentiveness. For example,



landing an Axel is a benchmark for ice skaters. Things can go wrong in so many places — skaters can hesitate slightly during the preparation or at the take-off, lean a little to one side or the other, drop a shoulder, kick the free leg imprecisely, give insufficient pull to their arms, look down instead of up and into the jump, and on and on. Students really *want* to land an Axel and tend to work diligently toward that goal. And then, lo and behold, like magic, after months of work, they land an Axel!

Landing that first Axel is cause for celebration — announcements on

the rink's public address system and on Web pages, photos on camera phones, calls to grandparents — but *not for repetition*. Why not ask the skater to repeat it immediately to solidify the skill? Because the skater will not be able to land another Axel right away. As part of the normal vacillation, the ups and downs of acquiring skill on each component, everything serendipitously came together once *before the skater actually had sufficient technique and control to consistently execute the maneuver*.

The skater will not be able to repeat the Axel without more practice on each of its components. If asked to do it again, the skater will execute a poor encore and become discouraged. The coach, wary of ending on such a dismal note, will have no choice but to ask the skater to repeat the Axel again and again until another is landed. It will not be as good as the first, frustration and fatigue having taken their toll, and the skater will leave discouraged at the ephemeral success that was eclipsed by another 25 or 30 failures.

Not landing an Axel if you've never landed one is not a failure. It is just *practicing*. If you *have* landed an Axel, *not* landing the next one is a failure. Thus, the overly purposeful coach has managed to grab failure from the jaws of success and wave it around the arena by having the skater try to repeat the triumph.

Why does this happen? Because the coach has a longer attention span, greater stamina (is exerting less physi-

*Continued on page 14*

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cal energy) and a more linear perspective than the student. The first time the student lands the Axel, the student is overachieving, performing beyond his/her ability. The success is a fluke. But what a great feeling! If the coach ends the practice of that skill with that triumph, and adds a bit of hoopla for effect, the skater leaves, chest swelled with pride, at this new ability to do the behavior. The student will come to the next lesson confident and eager, filled with the memory and the feeling of the success, and willing to do many repetitions to hit the target again.

If, instead, the coach asks the student to repeat the behavior right away, the student will try, and will do a poor job. The coach and now-discouraged student will have to dig in and repeat the behavior enough times for another success to occur. The student leaves demoralized, knowing he/she did two out of perhaps 50 or more repetitions correctly, a 4 percent success rate. And, the student will be ambivalent at the next lesson. Even though the coach has exclusively encouraged, the coach has nevertheless compromised the process by going beyond the student's likely success.

Learning curves look very different to the coach and the student. From a

larger perspective, the coach sees a fairly linear path toward the goal. The student, on the other hand, experiences a roller coaster of vacillations, and may not appreciate small incremental steps toward the goal that has not yet been reached. Landing an Axel is a clear triumph, and noteworthy even to the student who cannot see the topography of the forest for all the trees along the way. If the coach stops work on that specific skill at the top of each hill, the student will end each lesson on a high note despite his/her perception of a bumpy and unclear journey.

However, if the coach requires repetition beyond initial success, the student has a very different experience: Following the thrill of victory, the student flounders in the abyss of defeat until finally managing to do the behavior about half as well as the first successful one. From the student's perspective, failure dominates the session. The student leaves frustrated and fatigued, and estranged from the coach, whose vision of success and determination unwittingly damaged the student's experience.

As a positive coach, how do you avoid damaging the process? Overcome your eagerness to have the student

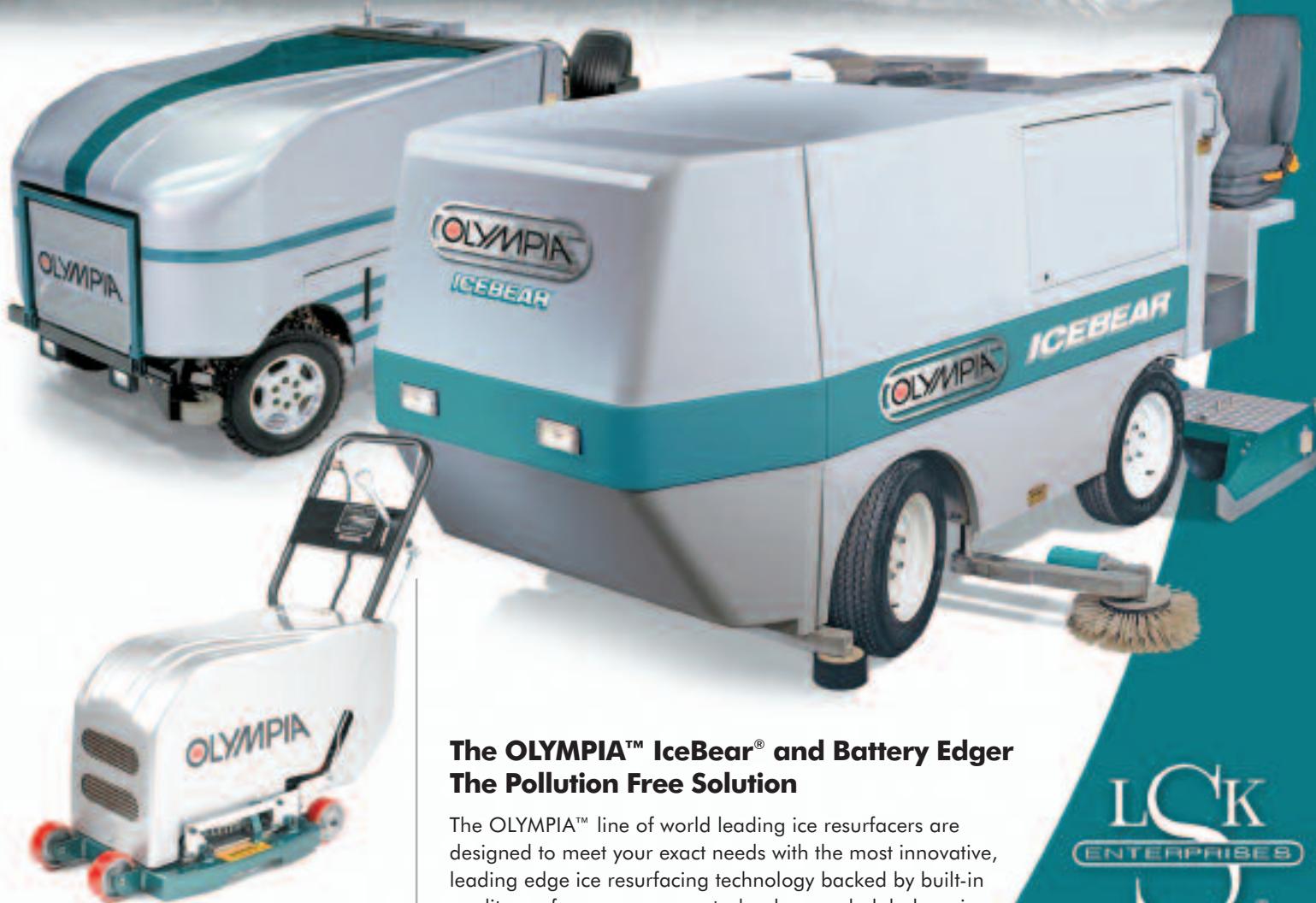
repeat behaviors done well the first time. STOP as soon as the student gets it right. This doesn't mean you stop the lesson, which can feel like punishment to the eager student (and annoy the parents, who think they're not getting their money's worth), but stop work on that particular skill, celebrate the achievement, and go to another activity that is very different. A well-paced lesson will therefore cover more behaviors and fewer repetitions of each behavior. At the end of each lesson, the student can bask in the glow of many successes in many different behaviors and confidently look forward to the next lesson with the purely positive coach.

*An ISI member since 1985, Lynn Loar is a skating instructor at Winter Lodge in Palo Alto, Calif. She teaches beginning through advanced-level skills to skaters of all ages and abilities, as recreation, recreational therapy and as part of physical and occupational therapy treatment plans. She is the president of the Pryor Foundation, a multidisciplinary research and educational group devoted to developing and disseminating innovative applications of techniques to change behaviors exclusively through positive reinforcement ([www.thepryorfoundation.org](http://www.thepryorfoundation.org)).*

The advertisement features a black and white photograph of a white SP-Teri Zero Gravity skating boot on the left, showing its side profile. To the right of the boot is a large, stylized logo for "SP-Teri" with a small illustration of a figure skating above the letter "i". Below the logo, the text "ZERO GRAVITY" is written in a bold, blocky font, followed by "LICENSE TO FLY" in a similar style. Underneath this, the text "The latest light weight skating boots." is displayed. To the right of the text, there is a section titled "Standard Features" with three bullet points: "V notch for optimal ankle flex.", "Low cut back for ideal toe pointing and better Achilles comfort.", and "Cushioned insole for shock absorption with anti friction top cover. Suede synthetic lining to wick moisture from feet and ankle comfort.". At the bottom right, the text "Available at a SP-Teri dealer near you." is shown. At the very bottom, the company information is provided: "SP-Teri Co., Inc. 436 North Canal Street, Unit 1 • South San Francisco, CA 94080 Phone (650) 871-1715 • Fax (650) 871-9062 • [www.spteri.com](http://www.spteri.com)".



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# Boyd Wietecter: The Voice of ISI

by Lori Fairchild

**S**everal individuals come to mind when attempting to name one person who could be described as "the voice of ISI."

Think of someone who believes in the joys of recreational ice skating, a dedicated advocate who has devoted years of service to the organization and its programs. A candidate for this lofty title would possess knowledge of the industry, a vision for its future, strong leadership skills and peer respect. Taking the phrase "the voice of ISI" more literally, picture a person who actually gets behind the microphone as a friendly, confident announcer at major ISI events.

*The voice of ISI.* It isn't an official designation, but if it were, and if the titleholder were required to meet *all* of the above requirements, there might be only one individual who could fill the bill: Boyd Wietecter.

Wietecter has served and represented ISI both behind the scenes and on the scene for more than 30 years. After two years in the U.S. Army, including a tour of duty in Vietnam, he returned to his native St. Louis and accepted a position with the county parks department as assistant recreation superintendent. At that time, St. Louis County was considering the inclusion of ice rinks in several prospective facilities, prompting Wietecter to attend his first ISI conference and tradeshow in 1972 at the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas. In 1976, Wietecter was selected to manage the South County Recreation Complex (renamed the Wayne C. Kennedy Recreation Complex in 1993), which included an indoor ice skating surface, an outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts and a playground.

The complex's ice skating facility has used the ISI learn-to-skate program since the day it opened. It was home to the St. Louis area's first ISI recreational skating competition as well as the city's first synchronized skating team.

Wietecter's ISI involvement grew along with his career. He was elected to the ISI board of directors as District 9 representative in 1979, vice president in 1985 and to two terms as president beginning in 1993. The conference and tradeshow, awards and citations, nominating and legislative committees have all benefited from his participation and leadership.

When ISI began conducting major ice skating events in 1981, Wietecter knew he wanted to be involved in that endeavor, too. "Being a judge was out of the question, as I have a difficult time recognizing anything above a bunny hop or one-foot glide," he jokes, so I looked for other opportunities. Thanks to the urging of Patti Feeney, I tried my hand at announcing at a Worlds event in Dallas, and that seemed to work."

It not only worked; Wietecter's smooth delivery is often mistaken as that of a professional announcer.

"The man with the golden voice" is how I often refer to Boyd," says former ISI board member and current ISIA Education Foundation trustee Jean Albrightson. "He is the *best* announcer! Those of us who are refereeing while Boyd is the announcer are always at ease because he knows exactly what to do and when to do it."

His reassuring voice, seamless transitions and calming influence also have soothed many a nervous skater, parent and coach, even during technical difficulties with music and other dreaded competition snafus.

While his service as board president and competition announcer have made Wietecter a distinguished and familiar presence at ISI events, some of his most valuable contributions to the organization and the industry are made quietly, without fanfare, performing tasks that others might shun.

"One area that all seem to look to Boyd for guidance in is legislative — bylaws, standing rules, etc.," Albrightson notes. "Need an answer in this area? Boyd will know!"

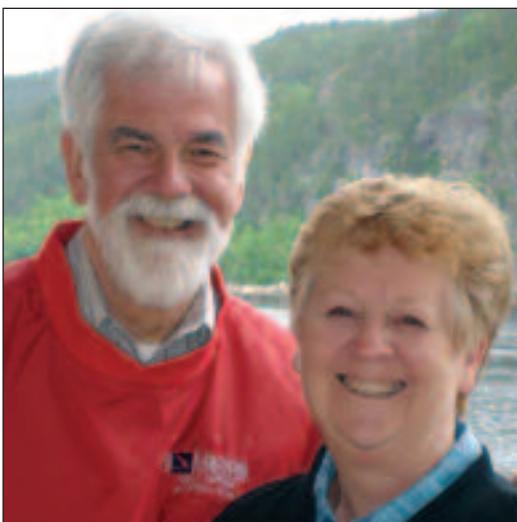
When ISI began considering a scholarship program to provide academic assistance to member skaters, Wietecter once again was quick to volunteer. "This was an area in

which I was very interested since I had received a scholarship to attend Washington University, and financial assistance had been very important for me," he says. He accepted the task of working with legal counsel to write the bylaws for the ISIA Education Foundation and secure 501(c)(3) IRS status. He was elected the first president of the Foundation, which awarded its first scholarships in 1990.

"Boyd absolutely has been the rock of the Foundation," says Larry Fies, former ISI board member and former Education Foundation president. "He not only knows the history, but he knows the legal side. When he hasn't chaired the scholarship committee, he's been on it. He's very intelligent and makes sound, rational decisions. He's the total package."

Wietecter's countless contributions have been recognized with such honors as ISI Man of the Year in 1993 and the Great Skate Award in 1998, and he was named to the ISI Hall of Fame in 2002, the year of his retirement after 35 years of full-time employment with St. Louis County Parks.

"I'm enjoying every day of my retirement," Wietecter says. "My wife of 38 years, Barbara, retired in 1994 after 30 years as a first-grade teacher, so now we have the opportunity to travel more and spend time with our daughter and three grandchildren. One of the things that has made the last five years go by so quickly has been my continued involvement with ISI and its events." ■



Boyd and Barbara Wietecter

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# Serious Education Meets Serious Fun

Annual ISI Conference to Include  
2008 Arena Management and Arena Programming Schools

by Rob McBride, CAE

For the first time in history, the ISI Annual conference will include full iAIM management and programming certification schools, delivering an unparalleled combination of rigorous classroom instruction, networking opportunities with professionals from around the country, one of the industry's leading arena equipment and ice sport apparel tradeshows, and unforgettable social events.

These schools will offer you the

which will serve as an indispensable resource guide to help you improve your operations and implement best practices.

When not in the classroom, students will attend conference social gatherings such as the keynote address, President's Reception, awards luncheon and tradeshow, culminating in a graduation ceremony and closing party.

## Who should attend the conference schools?

The iAIM certification program has been developed to provide every person working in the arena with an in-depth understanding of every facet of the operation.

Arena professionals should earn all four certifications to gain the utmost proficiency in their role by having a complete understanding of the other functions of the facility and how they all interrelate.

If you are trying to decide between the two schools being offered at conference, the management school is particularly beneficial for general managers, office managers and operations staff, and the programming school is essential for skating and hockey directors as well as instructors.

## What will you learn?

The management school covers all aspects of the administration and business of an ice arena, including:

- ✓ Principles and philosophy of arena management
- ✓ Policy development and administration
- ✓ Business and financial management
- ✓ Human resources

chance to learn and grow from the comprehensive curriculum provided in the certification courses without missing out on the renowned ISI conference experience. If you have never attended an ISI conference, you are in for a treat!

The educational content of each school is developed by leading industry experts and accomplished practitioners. The detailed material is provided in 28 hours of classroom lecture and exercises that break down complex subjects so they are easy to understand and implement.

The course materials include ready-made policy manuals for your arena,

- ✓ Insurance and risk management
- ✓ Concession and ancillary income sources
- ✓ Arena marketing, promotion and sponsorship

The programming school encompasses the fundamentals of developing, managing and marketing high-quality ice sport programs, such as:

- ✓ Principles and philosophy of arena programming
- ✓ Program management and budgeting
- ✓ Human resources for programmers
- ✓ Basics of instruction
- ✓ Learn-to-skate and play programs
- ✓ Public sessions and recreational programs
- ✓ Figure skating programs, competitions, shows
- ✓ Hockey leagues and tournament
- ✓ Camps and clinics
- ✓ Non-traditional programming

## How can you afford not to attend?

The iAIM certification schools will prepare you to meet and overcome the challenges that lie ahead. If you are an arena manager or operator, you will graduate better equipped to effectively direct the business and operation of your facility. If you are a programmer, you will learn the most effective methods to grow participation and deliver an exceptional experience to your skaters and players.

Whether you are a "veteran" or new to the industry, you are certain to gain insights and understanding that will help you have an immediate impact on the performance of your arena.

If you are ready to take the next step in your professional journey, register for one of the iAIM conference schools today! ■



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# COACHES' CORNER

by Randy Winship

ISI National Skating Program & Events Coordinator

## *It's Showtime!*

While many of us are knee-deep in winter weather, busy skating schools and local competitions, it's not too early to start planning your spring ice show. It can take many months of preparation to make your "spring spectacular" bloom into a successful show production.

The key to any successful ice show production comes down to only three words: planning, planning, PLANNING! If you do your homework and get everything organized, your event can come off without a hitch and you will be the "star."

Show formats range from an easy exhibition style to a



full-fledged production show. Choose the kind of show that is the best fit for your arena and your skaters. It's not important what type of show you do; what counts is that everyone has a chance to participate in a special skating event without being "judged."

With the Hollywood writers on strike as I write this column, I'll offer my own "Top 10 Tips for a Successful Ice Show."

### **1. Find a place for everyone in your production.**

Make sure everyone — tots, beginners, hockey skaters,

adults and even the national competitors — feels that they have a special part to perform and contribute to the show's success. Some skaters don't like competitions because they are "judged." Your show event can be a good place for them to have fun performing in a group while they show off their skating skills for their friends and family.

### **2. Be careful if you plan "tryouts" for solos.**

Some great show skaters like performing in a show because they don't have to perform for judges (as in a competition). As a tryout alternative, you can set solo assignments by skating test levels or even have a "Cast A" and "Cast B" with alternate performances to allow more skaters a chance at a show solo.

### **3. Get the coaching staff and rink staff working together.**

Whether it's cutting music, designing costumes, building props or selling tickets, if possible, let everyone contribute their "creative input."

### **4. Creativity and variety add "spice."**

Don't just follow the same show routine that you've always done. Make your production numbers exciting and come up with new, innovative and creative ways to use different music in your show. Try to use many types of music so everyone in the audience can hear one of their favorite songs.

### **5. Reuse existing music, costumes and props.**

It's easy to adapt previous show-number routines for competition event entries, and vice versa. Use a family spotlight, team compulsory or production routine that has placed first in a local, district or national competition event as part of your show program. I always made my show finale a new Kaleidoskate number each year, so I would already have costumes, music and choreography ready for next year's competition event.

### **6. Keep the choreography simple.**

Group numbers that don't have much practice time together need to have fun and look good. Those are the important elements for a good show routine. Everyone should emphasize their best skills in the show so they can shine.



## 7. Recruit parents and family members.

They can serve on committees to handle costumes, props, set design, ticket sales, program design, practice-ice attendance, lighting, decorations, etc. Any help they can provide will reduce the workload for the coaches and rink staff.

## 8. Put posters and flyers in local businesses to get the word out.

Have skaters sell tickets to school friends and family. Link

up with the community calendar of events in your local media for some free publicity. If you are bringing in a guest star, the media might be interested in interviewing them before or during a performance.

## 9. Pull together all the pieces.

It takes a good "director" to make sure everything is prepared to come together before opening night. If something isn't coming together or won't be ready, it's time to punt! Be flexible and find another solution that will be both entertaining and appropriate. While a show can be stressful, it should be "fun stress" for everyone.

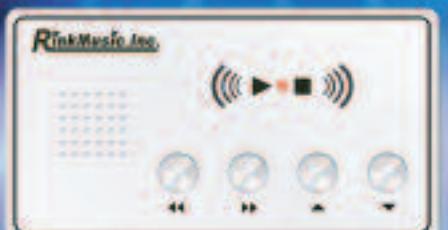
## 10. Make sure the show is a positive experience for everyone.

For many seasonal rinks, the show is an end-of-season event, and good memories will leave them eager to be involved in next year's skating programs and events. Your show can also draw prospective new skaters to your arena. Make sure they can easily find out details for your next set of beginner lessons.

Don't forget to relax and have fun! If you've done your homework, you should have time to enjoy the fruits of your labor. It's a lot of work, but producing a fabulous ice show can be a rewarding experience for you, your arena and everyone involved. ■

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# Curling ROCKS!

The hottest sport on ice is turning up in arenas all over the country

by Lori Fairchild



Minnestudio.com

Burnsville Ice Center and the Dakota Curling Club provided the setting and instruction for last year's MIAMA/ISI curling social during the annual ISI conference in Minnesota.

**C**urling has been around for centuries, first documented in the 1500s in Scotland and Holland, but it has only recently become widely recognized in the United States as a team sport played on ice — not just something done with free weights or in hairstyling.

This often-misunderstood and under-appreciated sport has taken its share of knocks, in part for its slow-moving action (some have dubbed it "the couch potato sport"). But that was before curling was

cool — before it graduated from an obscure Olympic demonstration sport to a full medal sport in 1998. Four years later, NBC televised more than 50 hours of curling during the Winter Games in Salt Lake City, and in 2006, the curling craze hit its crescendo in Torino, where 80-plus hours were televised and the U.S. men's team took the bronze medal.

"After the 2006 Olympics, we got calls from all over the United States, including Hawaii, and we saw our membership surge by more than 1,000," says Bev Schroeder, member services director for the U.S. Curling Association, the national governing body of the sport in the United States.

The association's phone hasn't stopped ringing. Schroeder says there are now 16,000 curlers and more than 140 curling clubs nationwide, and interest in the sport continues to grow.

"We're finding that our greatest growth is in arenas," she notes. "There's a greater awareness of curling now; arena managers are learning that it presents opportunities for their down times, and they don't have to be afraid of what it will do to their ice."

Schroeder says that adding the curling "houses" to the



Bagpipes contributed an authentic Scottish flair to the opening of the Nutmeg Curling Club facility at the Wonderland of Ice.

ice has not resulted in distraction for other rink users, as had been feared by some arena managers.

As for preparation, most facilities do a dry cut, then the local curling club is responsible for "pebbling" the ice with a fine spray of warm water to create a faster gliding surface for the granite rocks.

"When they're finished curling, we just have one resurfacing, and we're back," says Larry LaBorde, manager of the Ice Chalet in Knoxville, Tenn., home of the Greater Smoky Mountains Curling Club.

"Maintaining level ice for curling is actually a way of making sure your ice is in better shape for other activities," adds Eddie Shipstad, a longtime curler and past president of the U.S. Curling Association who was instrumental in the formation of the Tennessee club.

Dean Mulso, recreation facilities manager for Burnsville Ice Center in Minnesota, says the extremely level playing surface required for curling is a bonus for hockey players, too. "We use a laser level and plane high spots or fill in low spots during off-ice hours once a week," he explains. Burnsville is home base to the Dakota Curling Club, which provided instruction to ISI members at the MIAMA/ISI social event during last year's annual conference.

From a business perspective, curling can provide a new exposure for a facility and generate revenue from ice rental during off-peak hours as well as from food and beverage sales.

The Nutmeg Curling Club pays a monthly rental fee at the Wonderland of Ice in Bridgeport, Conn., where a dedicated curling facility opened last year. "But their true value is the foot traffic that they bring into the facility," says Lisa Fedick, president of Wonderland of Ice. "Interest in curling is huge. We've seen a lot of crossover with siblings and parents of hockey and figure skating customers, even some grandmothers."



Larry LaBorde, manager of the Ice Chalet in Knoxville, Tenn., and Eddie Shipstad of the Great Smoky Mountains Curling Club paint the ice for curling.



Voila! The Ice Chalet is ready for curling.

Courtesy of Ice Chalet

Mulso says that curling has provided an added revenue stream for the Burnsville Ice Center. "Since our club curls in a nontraditional season (spring and fall), the revenue has enhanced our bottom line. It requires minimal preparation by our staff and no resurfacing during their stay. All instruction and supervision are provided by the club. If you charge your usual ice rate, you are making a better-than-average income."

While public skating is the primary source of income at the Ice Chalet, LaBorde says curling is another form of profitable programming. "It doesn't beat up the facility at all. We end up making a little over our normal hourly rate, and it's on Sunday nights, when there wouldn't usually be much going on here."

Randy Cumberland, manager of the Dr Pepper StarCenter in the Dallas suburb of Duncanville, Texas, says curling is still new to his area, but he sees plenty of room for growth and profit. "We are probably

Continued on page 24



Every member of a curling team delivers two rocks per game. The granite rocks weigh about 42 pounds each, but strength is less important than balance and strategy.

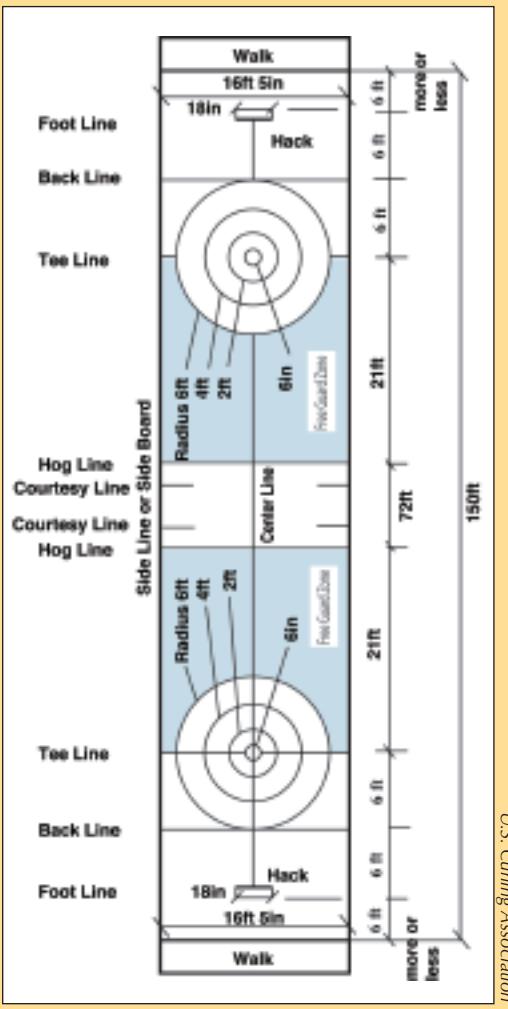
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Prior ice skating or hockey experience is not necessary for curling. Instruction is provided by curling club members.

at a break-even point now," he notes. The D/FW Curling Club plays at the StarCenter on Sunday afternoons, paying regular ice rental fees, usually in two-hour increments. The facility has an on-site bar for post-curling socializing, also known as "broomstacking."

In addition to weekly club rental, many facilities have found curling to be a sought-after activity for corporate team-building, networking and social events — providing another revenue source.

"Approximately 75 percent of all corporate parties at our rink request and participate in curling, followed by a catered meal. We realize nearly two times our ice cost in the food and beverage sales that come with an event," says Mike Bruins, participation development manager at Sharks Ice at San Jose and Sharks Ice at Fremont, home of the San Francisco Bay Area Curling Club. Following weekly league play, he adds, the arena's on-site restaurant is a popular gathering



## Curling sheet dimensions

# Chess On Ice

While the uninitiated might view curling as unexciting, Bev Schroeder of U.S. Curling likens the game to chess on ice.

"It's a finesse sport," she explains. "There's a great deal of strategy and skill involved."

The object of the game is to get more rocks closer to the center of the 12-foot ring than the opposing team.

A team consists of four players: the Lead, the Second, the Vice Skip and the Skip. Each player throws two rocks, and every member of the team plays a role in each shot. The Skip determines whether or not sweeping is required to keep a rock moving. Sweeping involves brushing the ice in front of the rock, creating friction that results in heat which melts a thin layer of ice, which lubricates the bottom of the rock, allowing it to travel farther and straighter (source: curlingschool.com).



*Minnestudio.com*

spot for the club  
curlers.

Curling is traditionally a winter sport, with the official season running from fall through spring. However, ice arenas have the flexibility of offering recreational curling based on the availability of ice time, including year-round or split into more than one season.

The initial investment in equipment can be steep due to the rare high-density granite from Scotland and Wales that is used to make the 42-pound curling rocks. A new set of 16 rocks can run nearly \$8,000. Used equipment can sometimes be found. Last year, U.S. Curling offered a loan program through the World Curling Federation in which startup clubs could borrow a set of rocks for two years before returning them or paying for them. The 40 loaner sets were

quickly dispersed, and Schroeder says the federation has not announced another such program.

Other curling equipment includes sliders (worn on one foot to facilitate sliding) and curling brooms. Advanced curlers often prefer to own their own brooms, special curling shoes and other attire.

In general, the curling club, not the arena, provides all equipment and instruction. Most clubs are members of U.S. Curling, which provides affordable insurance for both players and clubs and can help clubs establish tax-exempt status.

Clubs also host "bonspiels," or weekend tournaments, inviting participation from other clubs. These events tend to be as social as they are athletic, providing opportunities for curlers to eat, drink and make new friends.

The social aspect of curling is one of its distinguishing characteristics. Camaraderie, often over a beer, is part of the curling tradition. Curlers eagerly welcome new players to their sport.

"Curling provides a great social outing for everyone," says Cumberland. "It builds self-esteem and team skills."

"It's a very friendly sport," adds U.S. Curling's Schroeder. "You compete to win, but afterward it's all about the camaraderie and friendship. I've made friends from all over the world through curling."

It's also a sport for players of both genders and all ages, from kindergartners (who curl with junior-size rocks) to retirees. Most curlers have little or no prior ice skating or hockey experience. Besides the "fun with friends" factor, many find it to be an effective stress reliever as well as good physical and mental exercise.

For more information about the sport and business of curling, visit these Web sites:

- usacurl.org
  - worldcurling.org
  - curling.com
  - curlingzone.com
  - curlingschool.com
  - mycurling.com



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## SIMPLE SOLUTIONS FOR SKATING DIRECTORS

by Carrie Clarke, ISI Director of Skating Programs & Services

## Can you keep them?

It's winter, the music is playing, the skaters have arrived — some taking lessons, some chasing their friends around the ice and others cold and clinging to the wall for dear life. But they've walked in your door and paid because they WANT to ice skate. Who could ask for more? Arena owners, managers, directors and coaches love this time of year. It's what makes the slow times bearable and keeps the business in operation.

But what you do now is going to determine what happens to your business six months from now. As a skating director, some of the responsibility for that future business belongs to you.

Take a look at your staff. Are you or your other coaches just walking by and ignoring that young skater on public session who is in skates that are obviously two sizes too big? If so, don't expect that child to come back, or for him to tell his friends how much fun he had at the ice skating rink.

Are your instructors teaching classes that are both productive and fun? Are the skaters leaving each class able to say they learned something new that day — or did they play red light-green light for the sixth week in a row? This would be a great time to introduce a new game or two. How about relay races using hockey sticks and pucks? That usually goes slowly enough to be safe and gives figure skaters a whole new appreciation of the sport!

How many of your students have a routine to music? Many, I'm sure! Why not schedule one to do an exhibition after each ice resurfacing? It's wonderful practice for the skater and inspiring to new skaters. These exhibitions don't require an ISI endorsement and don't need to be performed by your highest-level skaters. The beginning skater often can relate better to the little Alpha student skating to her favorite song. This is also a good time to allow your synchro teams to try out their new routines for the season. Many new skaters are terrified to go out and perform alone, but the thought of being out there with friends in matching costumes is quite appealing.

How about paying a coach to give free 15-minute group introductory lessons to beginners in a coned-off section of the ice during the busier sessions? If a first-time skater can even just walk forward, wiggle backward and do a simple "helicopter" spin her first time out, you'll certainly have her wanting to come back again.

Are you badge testing your skaters? Do they know there are more to earn after the one they have? If so, many will want to get the whole set.

This is also the time to start publicizing something wonderful taking place next semester — either a spring show or an in-house competition in which every participant will take home a medal.

The skaters at your facility are there because they want to ice skate. That's half the battle. But your marketing and promotional efforts need to continue once they've arrived. Be sure that each one has a reason to return once the weather warms up, and your numbers in the coming year will be better than the last. ■

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Athletica.

# He Shoots ... He SCORES!

Some of the next generation of future NHLers are enrolled in ISI youth hockey programs right now, and they are waiting, just waiting, for Hockey Skills 3, when they can finally learn how to shoot the puck. For hockey's newest and youngest players, hearing "He shoots, he SCORES!" is just as exciting as catching that first glimpse of Santa at the local mall. This moment is huge!

Beginning youth players are just learning how their bodies work. Flailing arms, missteps and stops gone terribly wrong are commonplace for hockey's primary set, and when you add a puck to the mix, you can bet your paycheck that chaos will follow. To add insult to injury (figuratively, I hope), learning to put the puck exactly where it's supposed to go takes coordination, strength and discipline. So how can instructors take a rink full of out-of-control but highly passionate little guys and effectively introduce them to the finer points of shooting?

By making the drills "more funner," of course!

These two drills are a sure-fire way to help little kids focus on the puck without even realizing that they're learning anything at all.

## Hockey Bowling

Set up bowling pins behind the red line and place the kids behind the blue line. Load the players up with lots of light-weighted pucks. The object is to stay behind the blue line and shoot as many pucks as fast as they can until all of the pins are knocked down. It helps to put a couple of assistants behind the bowling pins to constantly reload the kids' supply of pucks. Once they begin to understand the activity and are starting to aim when they shoot, divide the group in half, and the pins, too. Have the two smaller teams compete against each other to be the first group to knock down their five pins. (I like the rainbow foam bowling pins that I found at [athleticstuff.com](http://athleticstuff.com))

## Puck Piñata

For kids who are skilled enough to lift the puck, this is a great activity for special events, such as any time there's a holiday that falls on a lesson night. Hang a piñata filled with treats from the top bar of the net. Have the kids take



Five-year-olds get ready for a puck-shooting drill disguised as a game of hockey "bowling" at the Ashburn Ice House.

turns shooting at the piñata until it breaks open and they rush in to gather the goodies. Where you place the players depends on the shooting skill of your students. A well-shot puck will rip through the piñata, so you may want to do a dry run without the piñata first to make sure that the kids are far enough away to make the shots challenging. You could also incorporate some skating and passing into this drill to increase the difficulty. (Props to Coach Rob Lorenzen, Ashburn Xtreme '99 team, for this great idea.)

When teaching hockey's youngest, try to talk less and move more, use teachable moments well and do whatever you can to keep those smiles on their faces. A great first coach is arguably the most important gift that any athlete could ever have!

*Wendy Marco is a professional hockey skating coach for players from Mini-Mites to the NHL. She has been a featured speaker at the International Hockey Skating Symposium and is a presenter at USA Hockey CEP Level 4 certification clinics. Her instructional DVD, "Breaking Out of the Ice Age," and more unique hockey skating tools can be found at [www.ColdRushHockey.com](http://www.ColdRushHockey.com).*





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# Five-Year Fund Drive Launched

The ISIA Education Foundation has launched a fund drive to raise \$250,000 over the next five years to ensure the ongoing ability to provide academic scholarships to ISI skaters and to pursue additional Foundation goals.

Since its inception in 1989, the Foundation has directed all of its fundraising efforts toward the scholarship program, which has awarded more than \$215,000 in scholarships to 70 ISI skaters.

"Now it's time for the Foundation to pursue the additional goals for which it was founded," said Foundation President Donald Bartelson. "These include educational programs related to administering and officiating ice skating competitions and the development of materials designed to encourage continued interest in ice skating as a recreational activity and a competitive sport."

Pledge amounts will range from \$500 to \$10,000, and all are payable over the period of 2008 through 2012 with options of annual, semi-annual or quarterly payments. "The amounts were designed to attract both individuals and business entities to be involved in this fundraising effort. An individual can become a

## The Original Learn-to-Skate Program

The weSKATE™ Kit contains everything you need to organize, promote and administer a successful learn-to-skate program. For more details, contact ISI at 972.735.8800 or [weSKATE@skateisi.org](mailto:weSKATE@skateisi.org).

The weSKATE™ Kit will take guesswork out of your learn-to-skate program. The kit contains:

- weSKATE™ class management software
- Tips on how to structure class schedules and semesters
- Information to be distributed to beginning skaters and their parents
- Flyers, posters and other customizable marketing tools
- Certificates of participation and achievement
- Enrollment forms
- Attendance sheets
- Progress reports
- Curriculum cards
- Quarterly updates
- And much more!



### Fund Drive Benefit Packages

#### Pledge Level

\$500

Basic Package: Framed contributor certificate, letter of appreciation from president, listing in *RIS* and *EDGE* magazines

\$1,000

Basic Package + plaque-mounted certificate, Foundation pin

\$2,000

Basic Package + plaque-mounted certificate with bronze bar, Foundation pin, 2 tickets to Benefit Show for duration of pledge

\$5,000

Basic Package + plaque-mounted certificate with silver bar, Foundation pin, 5 tickets to Benefit Show for duration of pledge, name recognition at show with VIP seating

\$10,000

Basic Package + plaque-mounted certificate with gold bar, Foundation pin, 10 tickets to Benefit Show (with name recognition and VIP seating) and dasherboard banner for duration of pledge

part of this fund drive for as little as two dollars per week. The Foundation has also developed an extensive benefit package for each pledge level in the program," Bartelson explained.

Representatives from the ISIA Education Foundation will begin contacting individuals in the near future. Contributors may also use the pledge form (on page 32) or contact the ISI office at (972) 735-8800 for more information.

*Continued on page 32*



2008 ISI Ice Arena  
Conference & Tradeshow

MAY 26-30, 2008

Adrian College

AUGUST 10-15, 2008

The days of intensive  
training and education  
will be utilized in the areas  
of arena management,  
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and design.

## 2008 iAIM Programs

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The Ice Arena Institute of Management (iAIM) is offering the following educational programs at two locations next year – the 2008 Ice Arena Conference & Tradeshow in Anaheim, California, and at the Adrian College in Adrian, Michigan.

Both locations will provide four days of intensive educational training and an opportunity to interact with those experienced in all aspects of ice arena operations. The Adrian school attendees will have the opportunity to get both classroom and hands-on training simultaneously, while Conference & Tradeshow attendees will enjoy the convenience of getting certified while attending the industry's No. 1 annual event.

### 2008 ISI Annual Conference & Tradeshow

Hyatt Regency Orange County  
Anaheim, California  
May 26-30, 2008

- Certificate of Arena Management (CAM)
- Certificate of Arena Programming (CAP)

Tuition: \$725 plus hotel and meals

### Adrian College

Adrian, Michigan  
August 10-15, 2008

- Certificate of Arena Operations (CAO)
- Certificate of Arena Design, Construction and Renovation (CAD)

Tuition: \$725 plus room and board



Space is limited, so register today!  
Download your registration forms at [www.skateisi.org](http://www.skateisi.org).



## 5-Year Fund Drive Pledge

I hereby pledge a total of \$\_\_\_\_\_ toward the ISIA Education Foundation Fund Drive. I understand all pledges may be paid over a period of 5 years.

- \$500
- \$1,000
- \$2,000
- \$5,000
- \$10,000

- I wish to be invoiced:
- Annually
  - Semi-annually
  - Quarterly

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law (IRS #36-3638131).

***Thank you for  
your generous support.***

Mail to: ISIA Education Foundation  
6000 Custer Road, Building 9  
Plano, TX 75023

## It's Scholarship Application Time!

The ISIA Education Foundation has awarded more than \$200,000 in scholarship funds since its inception in 1989. As a skating instructor or ice arena manager, you play an important role in publicizing the Foundation's efforts and supporting your applicants.

- Make the Foundation scholarship brochure available to your skaters who are between the ages of 12 and 16. Hand it out, mail it with your registration forms, display it in your facility and mention it in your newsletters.
- Assist your skaters with the application process.
- Remind your high school seniors that the application deadline is March 1.
- Write an evaluation or letter of recommendation, if asked.
- Help skaters document their service hours.

**Deadline: March 1**

Scholarship application and criteria are available on the ISI Web site: [www.skateisi.org](http://www.skateisi.org).

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## Wisconsin Ice Arena Management Association (WIAMA)

by Tom Hammill, 2nd Vice President

WIAMA has begun planning for the 2008 spring conference April 24-26 at the Wilderness Hotel & Convention Center. Kicking off the conference will be the annual golf tournament, which will again be held at Trappers Turn, one of the top courses in the state. Seminars will feature top instructors, the exhibitor tradeshow, roundtable discussions, the annual attendee hockey game and networking events.

WIAMA is continuing to explore the option of adding a new figure skating track to the conference; more details will be available as the conference agenda develops. Those who have some ideas to contribute may contact me at [tom@omnicenter.net](mailto:tom@omnicenter.net).

In other news from Wisconsin, skating at Red Arrow Park is a popular outdoor winter activity in Milwaukee. Skaters can warm up in the nearby Starbucks. The cafe has a special floor to accommodate skate blades.

Capital Skating School is in full swing for the fall semester, under the direction of Madison's own figure skating gold medalist, Cesca Supple.

Each year, nearly 500,000 visit Pettit National Ice Center,



Tom Hammill

which is home to skaters of all ages and abilities, including speed skaters, hockey players, figure skaters, skating school students and even senior skaters.

Wisconsin Amateur Hockey Association has been asking for help in equipping their sled hockey team. Donations can be sent to Don Kohlman, made payable to WAHA Sled Hockey. They are also looking for associations to have their PeeWee, Bantam, Midget or high school programs to donate one hour of ice time to have their able-bodied team play our sled team. They will bring the equipment for teams to play in the sleds. This a great team-building event and an opportunity for your kids to experience, for one hour, what it is like to be disabled.

## Arena Managers of the Mid Atlantic (AMMA)

by Trudy Ivory, Co-Director

AMMA's annual fall mini conference was held Oct. 16-17 at Wheeling Park Commission near Oglebay Resort in West Virginia. We had 16 people present, representing eight facilities from West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Attendees included arena managers, hockey directors and figure skating directors.

We started our conference with dinner at a local restaurant called "Undo's." We returned to Wilson Lodge at Oglebay and had a great time that included a much-needed break



Trudy Ivory

*Continued on page 36*

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*arena solutions team*

*Continued from page 34*

from the ordinary. Our "cruise director," Erin, did a great job of keeping the party fun.

The next morning we all arrived (yes, on time) at Wheeling Park for a day filled with worthwhile information. Our first speaker of the day was John Simon from Rochester, N.Y., who gave us an overview of a new software package. He was followed by Howard Wolf from Square One Medical, whose informative presentation was on the Zoll AED Plus Automated External Defibrillator. This is one of the most user-friendly AEDs I have ever seen. The machine gives feedback on chest compressions and the electrodes are one piece, which takes the guesswork out of where to place them. It uses standard lithium batteries, which can be purchased wherever camera batteries are sold and will last five years. The pricing on this AED is very competitive and quantity discounts are available.

After a delicious lunch provided by our hosts, Rico Coville and Nat Goudy, Ed Howe from Becker Arena Products gave us information on Becker's extensive product line. Its vinyl products include line kits, goal creases and in-ice logos. Ed brought along a display that included videos, their new skate rack system, rubber flooring and custom logos.

We concluded our day with everyone giving an update on what is happening in their respective facilities. We have scheduled our next meeting for April 16 at the S&T Bank Arena in Indiana, Pa. The arena was the former Indiana Ice and Expo Center and is now under the direction of White Township Recreation Complex. Milt Lady will be our host, and we are looking forward to seeing the improvements of his facility. Please make a note of the date and plan on attending. More info will be available in March.

## Minnesota Ice Arena Managers Association (MIAMA)

by Joseph M. Balzer, President

Hockey and figure skating is in full swing and all of our rinks are buzzing with energy and enthusiasm.

We are looking forward to the spring workshop in May in Mankato, a southern Minnesota city. Our three-day fall conference will be in early September at Grandview Lodge in Nisswa, Minn.

Newly elected MIAMA board members and officers are: Dave Van Vickle, Purpur Ice Arena, Grand Forks, N.D. (Northern Minnesota); Mike Shiggee, Eden Prairie Community Center (Western Metro); Paul Ostoff, All Seasons Arena, Mankato, Minn. (Southern Minnesota); Craig Flor, Mariucci and Ridder Arenas, Minneapolis (member-at-large); Travis Larson, Xcel Energy Center, St. Paul, Minn. (vice president); and Joe Balzer, Richfield Ice Arena, Richfield, Minn. (president). We owe a debt of gratitude to our outgoing members for their service: Garry Hadden, East Grand Forks Arena (Northern Minnesota); Russ Rose, Buffalo Civic Arena (Western Metro); Bob Furland, Albert Lea City Arena (Southern Minnesota); and Doug Brady, St. Croix Community Center (member-at-large and president).

We continue to grow as an organization with 177 facility members and 64 vendor organizations. Our Web site, [www.rinkfinder.com](http://www.rinkfinder.com), had more than 75,000 unique users in



Joseph M. Balzer

2007. Member facilities sell their available ice through the site, and many rinks sell hundreds of their open ice times by advertising them. We are now attempting to increase our advertising potential because of the high rate of exposure to skaters and their families. For more information on advertising on this site, please contact Travis Larson, at [tlarson@rivercentre.org](mailto:tlarson@rivercentre.org) or call him at (651) 726-8160.

On a personal note, I was fortunate to be elected as the new president of MIAMA and I look forward to the coming year with anticipation and an eagerness to help our organization grow to new heights. It is an honor to be a part of such a prestigious and well-respected organization.

## Ice Rink Owners of California (IROC)

by Bert Blanchette, President

The owners and managers in ISI District 15 met and discussed the current status of business in southern California. Hockey continues to grow, but the summer was flat for public skating and learn-to-skate. We will all be expecting a utility rate increase, as announced by the Public Utility Commission.

The Oxnard Ice Skating Center business was purchased by the Channel Islands FSC and the Riptides HC. They are running it under their not-for-profit status and are in the process of finding land for a new freestanding facility.

We're looking forward to being the host district for the upcoming ISI conference and tradeshow in Anaheim, and we're working with the ISI office staff on a variety of fun event ideas.



Bert Blanchette

## North East Ice Skating Managers Association (NEISMA)

by Tom Morton, President

The absence of posted first aid notices at facilities that recently experienced such incidents as a patron's heart attack and a Freon leak has prompted NEISMA to prepare a first aid sign for ice rinks. Ed Peduto has designed a simple sign to be posted in various locations throughout the rink, indicating the location of first aid kits, ice packs, blankets, defibrillators, flashlights, telephones, etc. The sign will be made available to NEISMA members, accompanied by a cover letter with posting instructions.

NEISMA continues to address safety matters as well as its ongoing emphasis on instruction and training programs, maintenance and operation matters, utility costs, publication of articles of interest for the NEISMA membership, conferences and seminars, and information on vendor products and services.

Recently one of our vendors called to complain that he had not received word of one of our local area meetings, and he would have volunteered to help. We appreciate that kind



Tom Morton

of complaint! Thanks to that vendor for such a display of interest and support. Of course, with hat in hand, I apologized for our failure to make him aware of the meeting.

As the members of our board of directors like to say, "NEISMA continues to look to the future."

## Metropolitan Ice Rink Managers Association (MIRMA)

by Lisa Fedick, Secretary

ISI District 3 is proud to have hosted the largest Artistic Challenge event to date, at the Wonderland of Ice in Bridgeport, Conn., Nov. 3-4. The event, which was run by ISI's Randy Winship and Carrie Clarke received nothing but accolades from skaters, parents and coaches, and everyone left with a smile.

MIRMA/ISI District 3 was joined Oct. 16 by a large group from District 1 for a combined 2007 fall managers' seminar, hosted by Kevin McCormack at the Danbury Ice Arena in Danbury, Conn. Scott McCoy of FMC Arenas presented his "Made in the Shade" promotional fundraiser for skin cancer awareness, which is a program I would like to see adopted at the national level. Another presentation focused on fire safety and emergency preparedness, featuring regional fire offi-



Lisa Fedick

cials as well as representatives from the major arena insurance carriers. Our thanks to ISI President Jim Hartnett, iAIM Chairman Rob McBride and ISI Executive Director Peter Martell for their participation and support at the combined district meeting.

The District 3 instructors' seminar will be held on Feb. 7 at Sport-o-Rama in Monsey, N.Y., with David Santee as the guest speaker.

On a personal note, I would like to sincerely thank everyone for the outpouring of support that I received following the sudden passing of my father, John Fedick. Although many were uneasy about my decision to have his wake at his beloved Wonderland of Ice, it turned out to be an amazing and respectful event attended by more than 500 people. This made me realize that our buildings truly are an integral part of our communities, not just for ice sports, but as places where people of all ages can congregate for unlimited purposes and be part of an extended family. It is my hope that we can all encourage this.

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# CALENDAR

## ISI-endorsed competitions & shows/exhibitions

Deadline for the next EDGE calendar: January 15

For regular calendar updates, see [www.skateisi.org](http://www.skateisi.org), event info

### COMPETITIONS

#### JANUARY

- 5-6 **Brockton, Mass.**  
Bay State Blades  
Brockton  
2nd Annual Brockton Blizzard
- 5-6 **Plymouth, Minn.**  
Plymouth Ice Center  
Blizzard Blast
- 11-13 **Webster Groves, Mo.**  
Webster Groves Ice Arena  
Show-Me State Games
- 12-13 **Fort Myers, Fla.**  
Fort Myers Skatium  
City of Palms ISI Competition
- 13 **Greenfield, Mass.**  
Bay State Blades  
Greenfield  
Midwinter Classic Invitational
- 17-20 **Mamaroneck, N.Y.**  
Riverdale Ice  
Lake Placid ISI Championships
- 18-20 **Westland, Mich.**  
Mike Modano Arena  
Tropical Days
- 18-20 **St. Peters, Mo.**  
St. Peters Rec-Plex  
Missouri State Invitational
- 19-20 **Centennial, Colo.**  
South Suburban Family Sports Center  
ISI Competition
- 19-20 **San Diego**  
Kroc Center Ice  
Kroc Center Ice 2008 ISI Open
- 19-20 **Gillette, Wyo.**  
Campbell County Ice Arena  
2008 New Year Ice Breaker

#### FEBRUARY

- 1-3 **Glenview, Ill.**  
Glenview Ice Center  
February Freeze
- 1-3 **Woburn, Mass.**  
Lansing Chapman Skating Rink  
Bay State Games
- 8-10 **Blaine, Minn.**  
Schwan Super Rink  
2008 Frosty Blades
- 8-10 **St. Louis**  
Wayne C. Kennedy Recreation Complex  
18th Annual Sweetheart Open
- 8-10 **Eugene, Ore.**  
Lane Events Center-ICE Love To Skate
- 8-10 **Niles, Ill.**  
Niles Park District Iceland  
25th Annual Sweetheart Open
- 15-17 **Oldsmar, Fla.**  
**Tampa Bay Skating Academy 2008 Winter Classic**
- 15-17 **Oxford, Ohio**  
Goggin Ice Center  
2008 ISI Miami Open Competition
- 15-17 **Southgate, Mich.**  
Southgate Civic Center  
ISI Winter Competition 2008
- 16 **Oak Lawn, Ill.**  
Oak Lawn Ice Arena  
Reach for the Stars
- 17 **Salem, Mass.**  
Viking Skating Club  
28th Annual President's Day Competition



#### 23-24 Plano, Texas

Dr Pepper StarCenter  
ISI Love to Skate 2008

#### MARCH

- 1-2 **Highland Park, Ill.**  
Centennial Ice Arena  
The Lucky Stars Open
- 1-2 **San Diego**  
San Diego Ice Arena  
California State Games
- 1-2 **Minneapolis**  
Parade Figure Skating Club  
2008 Blades of March ISI Open Competition
- 7-9 **Park Ridge, Ill.**  
Oakton Ice Arena  
Ice Breaker Classic
- 8-9 **Natick, Mass.**  
Bay State Blades Natick  
Natick 37th Annual ISI Competition
- 14-16 **Homewood, Ill.**  
Homewood-Flossmoor Ice Arena  
28th Annual ISI District 8 Competition
- 15 **Pittsburgh**  
RMU Island Sports Center  
Shamrock Skate
- 15-16 **Dallas**  
Galleria Ice Skating Center  
2008 State of Texas ISI Team Competition
- 15-16 **Youngstown, Ohio**  
Skating Club of Greater Youngstown  
ISI Team Competition 2008
- 28-30 **Knoxville, Tenn.**  
Ice Chalet  
39th Annual Mississippi Valley District Competition
- 29-30 **San Francisco**  
Yerba Buena Ice Skating Center  
Golden Gate Skate
- 30 **Franklin Park, Ill.**  
Franklin Park Ice Arena  
Kickline Synchronized Skating Competition

#### APRIL

- 4-6 **El Segundo, Calif.**  
Toyota Sports Center  
8th Annual Spring Fling Open Competition



- 11-13 **St. Louis**  
St. Peters Rec-Plex ISI Synchronized Skating Championships

- 12 **Delmar, Pa.**  
Center Ice Arena  
Golden Blades Championship of Pittsburgh
- 26-27 **Franklin Park, Ill.**  
Franklin Park Ice Arena Spring Fever

#### MAY

- 17 **West Concord, Mass.**  
Sharper Edge Skating School  
10th Annual Skater's Cup Competition
- 23-25 **San Diego**  
San Diego Ice Arena ISI Open Championships

#### JUNE

- 18-22 **Mexico City**  
La Pista San Jeronimo Tri-Americas International ISI Open Championships

# CALENDAR

## JULY

- 5-6 **Evanston, Ill.**  
Robert Crown Center  
31st Annual July Open
- 10-12 Honolulu**  
Ice Palace  
2008 ISI Hawaiian Open



- 28- Aug. 2** **Denver**  
**South Suburban Family Sports Center & Ice Arena**  
**ISI World Recreational Team Championships**

## AUGUST

- 9** **Orland Park, Ill.**  
Arctic Ice Arena  
2nd Annual Arctic Heat Wave

## SEPTEMBER

- 19-21** **Arlington, Texas**  
ICE at The Parks  
5th Annual ISI Open Competition

## OCTOBER

- ISI ADULT CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**2008 San Francisco**
- 3-5** **San Francisco**  
**Yerba Buena Ice Skating Center**  
**ISI Adult Championships**

- 25-26 Rockland, Mass.**  
Winterland Skating School  
22nd Annual Halloween Classic

## DECEMBER



- 5-7** **Burbank, Calif.**  
**Pickwick Ice Center**  
**ISI Artistic Challenge**

## SHOWS & EXHIBITIONS

## JANUARY

- 3** **Glenview, Ill.**  
Glenview Ice Center  
Winter Carnival Synchronized Exhibition
- 27** **Norwich, Conn.**  
Norwich Skating School  
Lights, Camera, Axel

## FEBRUARY

- 22-24** **New Ulm, Minn.**  
New Ulm Figure Skating Club  
Rock on Ice

## MARCH

- 7-8** **Pekin, Ill.**  
Pekin Memorial Arena  
Rated G
- 8-9** **St. Louis**  
Wayne C. Kennedy Recreation Complex  
Annual Ice Recital

- 14-15 Luverne, Minn.**  
Blue Mound Ice Arena  
Broadway: A Skating Revue

## APRIL

- 13** **Brentwood, Mo.**  
Brentwood Ice Arena  
Got to Get Down to Funky Town Spring Ice Show
- 13** **Highland Park, Ill.**  
Centennial Ice Arena  
Spring Exhibition
- 18** **Inver Grove Heights, Minn.**  
Inver Grove Heights Parks & Rec  
Inver Grove Heights Spring Ice Show
- 18-19** **Carol Stream, Ill.**  
Carol Stream Ice Rink  
Museum Tour
- 22** **Arlington, Texas**  
ICE at The Parks  
Spring Fling
- 25-26** **Downers Grove, Ill.**  
Downers Grove Ice Arena  
Museum Tour 2008
- 25-27** **Glenview, Ill.**  
Glenview Ice Center  
35th Annual Ice Show
- 25-27** **Yonkers, N.Y.**  
E.J. Murray Skating Center  
Annual Ice Show

## MAY

- 2-4** **Indian Trail, N.C.**  
Extreme Ice Center  
That's Life 2nd Annual Ice Show
- 3** **Marlboro, Mass.**  
Navin Arena  
Summer Splash
- 3** **Eagan, Minn.**  
Eagan Civic Arena  
Skating For a Living
- 3** **Rockland, Mass.**  
Winterland Skating School  
Winterland Ice Show

- 9-10** **Orland Park, Ill.**  
Arctic Ice Arena  
Ice, Camera, Action!
- 9-11** **Niles, Ill.**  
Niles Park District Iceland  
2008 Ice Show-Once Upon a Time

- 10** **Hoffman Estates, Ill.**  
Hoffman Estates Park District Ice Arena ICE-FM
- 10** **Wasilla, Alaska**  
Brett Memorial Ice Arena  
Spring Ice Show
- 16-18** **Highland Park, Ill.**  
Centennial Ice Arena  
Flights of Fancy Carnival
- 17-18** **Boxborough, Mass.**  
Nashoba Valley Olympia  
Ice Magic



- 27-30** **Anaheim, Calif.**  
**ISI Ice Arena Conference & Tradeshow**  
**Hyatt Regency Orange County**

## AUGUST

- 21** **Arlington, Texas**  
ICE at The Parks  
Summertime

## DECEMBER

- 28** **Arlington, Texas**  
ICE at The Parks  
Holiday in The Parks

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## 2008 Winter Classic

Tampa Bay Skating Academy  
Oldsmar, Florida  
February 15-17  
(Entry Deadline: Dec. 1, 2007)



## 2008 Synchronized Championships

St. Peters RecPlex  
St. Louis, Missouri  
April 11-13  
(Entry Deadline: Feb. 1, 2008)



## 2008 World Recreational Team Championships

South Suburban Ice Arena  
South Suburban Family Sports Center  
Denver, Colorado  
July 28-August 2  
(Entry Deadline: May 1, 2008)



## 2008 Adult Championships

Yerba Buena Ice Skating Center  
San Francisco, California  
October 3-5  
(Entry Deadline: Aug. 15, 2008)



## 2008 Artistic Challenge

Pickwick Ice Center  
Burbank, California  
December 5-7  
(Entry Deadline: Oct. 15, 2008)

Start planning your schedule now because the new competition season is right around the corner.



## May is just around the corner!

### 2008 ISI Ice Arena Conference & Tradeshow

**Hyatt Regency Orange County  
Anaheim, California**

**May 27-30**

It's time to make your plans to join us for the 49th annual ISI Ice Arena Conference & Tradeshow, in one of the country's most desirable vacation destinations. Whatever your role in the ice arena or your level of experience, you'll gain industry insights, network with hundreds of other professionals, preview the latest products and programs — and leave with more than you thought possible. Among this year's highlights are:

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- Guest presenters Ron Ludington, John Nicks and Wanda Guntert
- Energy symposium, management trends and industry roundtables
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## AND ANOTHER THING...

by Peter Martell  
ISI Executive Director

**I**t's no secret that many arena managers don't consider programming their favorite duty, or, in some cases, even their responsibility. In fact, some will do almost anything to avoid it, rationalizing that "it's not my thing, so I'll do what I know best and leave the programming to others."

I recently spoke to a manager who told me that he had delegated a decision about what type of program his facility should use to one of his program directors, who had, in turn, polled other staff members — mostly part-timers or independent contractors — and selected the one favored by the majority. What is wrong with this picture?

Programming drives a facility's bottom line, and like it or not, the bottom line is the *manager's* responsibility. I can think of no other type of business in which a manager would abdicate key decisions to staffers who bear no accountability for the success of the overall business. And yet, this is not the first time I've heard such a scenario from an arena manager.

The reality is that the manager or chief operating officer of any facility or company is ultimately responsible for the selection of employees, programs, products and services required for the successful operation of the business. Requesting input is one thing, but delegating final decisions that directly impact the quality or profitability of the business is irresponsible.

Even more puzzling to me are facilities that relinquish control of skating or hockey programs to outside clubs, organizations or entrepreneurs who have no vested interest in the success or failure of the facility. In fact, in many cases, these "concessionaires" are working in opposition to the arena manager, trying to negotiate as favorable a deal as they can for *themselves* rather than what may be most beneficial for the *facility*.

Programming is not an insignificant responsibility for an arena manager. It is the foundation of the facility's present and future business. Recreational (as opposed to elite competitive) skating and hockey programs can be some of the most profitable activities that an arena conducts. A well-run skating school can generate more than \$1,200 per hour in revenue, and a large house-league hockey program more than \$250,000 per year! It's inconceivable that an arena manager would relinquish control of either program to someone else.

The next time you are considering recreational skating or hockey program decisions, don't put your destiny in the hands of others. Be willing to learn about those parts of the business that you may be unfamiliar with, or invest in an experienced and proven program director. Take control of your facility's future. Yes, it might involve more work and/or expense, but the rewards will far outweigh any additional investment of time or money.

Whatever you do, don't let the tail wag the dog. ■

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