

NAWGJ-SC

National Association of Women's Gymnastics Judges—Southern California

October
2003

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2003 Balloon Classic – Another Success

The 21st Annual Balloon Classic was held on September 6 and 7, 2003. Wildfire Gymnastics of Tustin hosted this year's event in their brand new facility. Judges, gymnasts, and spectators alike enjoyed it's spaciousness and amenities including air conditioning and even a kitchen for hospitality.

The theme for the competition was "The Road to Athens," which allowed for a fun and creative motif including Greek columns, togas, and Olympic rings. Not only were there fun awards for the gymnastics competition but also for a "March-In" competition.



Competitors Line Up behind their Toga-Wearing Squad Leaders

The annual Balloon Classic is NAWGJ-SC's principal fundraiser. This year's event raised over \$10,000 for education and support of Southern California judges. With approximately 330 Level 5

and 6 gymnasts and 25 teams competing, it took 45 judges volunteering their time to make the meet a success. Each judge was given a NAWGJ-SC embossed folder at the meet as a token of appreciation. An honorarium was also offered to all judges who volunteered.

Much gratitude is due to Meet Chairman **Gigi Iavarone**. Her countless hours of planning and preparation along with her flair and attention to detail made the meet a great success. NAWGJ-SC would also like to thank Wildfire Gymnastics for their support.

Gigi already has her thinking cap on and a theme in mind for next year's Balloon Classic. With your help it can be better than ever! The first big project will be soliciting donations for the goodie bags as they take the longest to put together. Be prepared, the volunteer list has already been started. Which committee do you want to be on?



Meet Chairman Gigi Iavarone Shows Off Some of the Awards

Thanks to all involved!

So Cal Volunteers at 2003 World Championships

What an exciting time for Southern California Judges! Hosting the World Championships at The Pond, in Anaheim, was an honor, a great moment in history, and a lot of work.

The US Women's Team made history, winning the team gold for the first time at a World Championship competition. This achievement will make the upcoming Athens Olympics even more exciting for all of the United States gymnastics enthusiasts.

Thousands of volunteer hours over several weeks time were put into this grand competition. Some Southern California judges started their volunteer work months in advance when they began planning and coordinating the rest of the volunteers. A good percentage of our dedicated NAWGJ-SC judges were seen with their volunteer credentials all around the arena, in the training gyms, in the press areas, with the athletes, coaches and delegates, and even in the stands. There were still more of our NAWGJ-SC volunteers working behind the scenes, contributing to the largest gymnastics competition in the world. The spectrum of volunteer jobs included accreditation, tagging for drug testing, collection of floor music, hospitality and participant services, information desk staffing, television and radio spotting, medical staff, press services, production, podium access control, policing, technical support for in-house radio, transportation, training gym support, and volunteer coordination.



VOLUNTEER JOBS PERFORMED BY NAWGJ-SC MEMBERS AT 2003 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

- ◆ Accreditation
- ◆ Drug Testing - Tagging
- ◆ Floor Music Collection
- ◆ Hospitality - Participant Services
- ◆ Information Desk
- ◆ Media - Television & Radio Spotters
- ◆ Medical Staff
- ◆ Press Services
- ◆ Production - Podium Access Control
- ◆ Secretary on Floor Exercise
- ◆ Technical Support for In-House Radio
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Training Gym Support




Even those judges who were not able to volunteer, but were able to attend the competition, could see how much their fellow judges enjoyed being a part of such a prestigious international event. When the volunteers spoke about their responsibilities they mentioned how fortunate they felt to be involved; how amazing, thrilling, wonderful and incredible the experience was; and to top it off, gold for the US

women's team! Unanimously, this was an experience that will never be forgotten by anyone who was involved in any way.

Our very own international judge, **Sue Graff**, was on the podium with "Secretary on Floor Exercise" as her assigned responsibility. She was also given the task of scripting the floor exercise routines for the radio commentators. Sue was even one of the gophers as needed. Sue expressed "what a wonderful experience it was to be part of the World Championships. It was so exciting to watch the U.S. win the gold as a team, especially after all of the losses the team had suffered." In regards to being on the podium with the international judges, Sue said, "It was great to work with judges from all over the world, and I felt that the judging was very fair and consistent."

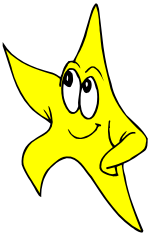
As a member of the Liaison Committee, **Celeste Hamil** started her volunteer position in November 2001. Working with USA Gymnastics and The Pond was an exciting, rewarding and

(Continued on page 3)



QUICK STATS

- ◆ Over 23 NAWGJ-SC Members volunteered at the 2003 World Championships
- ◆ On average, they worked 6 days each over the course of the competition.
- ◆ They averaged more than 36 volunteer hours each during the competition.



So Cal Worlds Volunteers

(continued)

sometimes challenging experience. Celeste was continually in awe of the magnitude of a competition at this level and the kind of details in which she was involved. She was also a Volunteer Coordinator for Event Information Services. This job entailed many hours at The Pond manning the information phone lines prior to the competition. Meeting so many different people in the gymnastics community from the U.S. and around the world was one of the things Celeste enjoyed most about her experience. Another high point for her was "seeing great gymnastics, the best in the world."

Another local judge and coach, **Julie Knight**, was also a member of the Liaison Committee working with USA Gymnastics and The Pond. In addition, she was a Volunteer Coordinator for Line Leaders and the Awards Ceremony. Line leaders were needed not only for the five days of women's competition but also for all of the podium training. One of the most amazing things that Julie learned was "how difficult the small details could be to make a competition like this work." Just following the different formats, getting teams to go in the proper directions and keeping them together, getting presenters to understand where to walk and where to stand before presenting medals was made difficult because of all the different languages. Julie's responsibilities also included coordinating the Women's Judges Hospitality. The activities for judges included local tours, a festival, luncheons, and of course shopping. Julie described her overall experience as "physically and emotionally exhausting but I loved it."

These three dedicated judges are just a few of the many who contributed so much to making the 2003 World Championships spectacular. Certainly, NAWGJ-SC can be proud of the commitment its members have to the sport of gymnastics.

 **Bring on the Olympic Trials!** 

2003 New Judge's Scholarship Winners

The New Judge's Scholarship Program was established by NAWGJ-SC five years ago as a means to encourage exceptional individuals with high levels of gymnastics expertise to pursue judging in Southern California. Scholarships are awarded over a one-year period and are applied towards the costs associated with local clinic registration, books and materials, testing, USAG and NAWGJ first year memberships, and an official NAWGJ uniform. Each scholarship recipient is matched with an experienced judge who serves as a mentor and guides their training and certification.

NAWGJ-SC would like to congratulate the 2003 New Judge's Scholarship recipients: Monica Guadagnini, Kelly Mathiasen, and Stephanie Vittorio! The selection committee was very im-

pressed with their application credentials and would like to share with you a little about their impressive backgrounds.

Monica Guadagnini has been a gymnastics coach for the past 23 years and has spent more than a decade as a coach and manager at Charter Oak Gymnastics. As a youth, she was a judo national champion in Argentina. She earned her Brevet rating in Argentina in 1987 and is eager to get back into judging and become certified to judge in the J.O. program. Monica's mentor is Brevet judge Jami Pillasch. Monica passed her Level 5/6 test in August and is off to a great start!

Kelly Mathiasen is a "home-grown" gymnast having competed in Level 4 through NCAA Division 1 gymnastics right here in Southern Califor-

nia. As a member of the SDSU Aztec Gymnastics Team, Kelly progressed through the J.O. program culminating with 6 years as a Level 10 and qualifying for J.O. Nationals four times. She recently completed a very successful collegiate career at Cal State Fullerton. She coaches pre-team through Level 6 for the CSUF Titan Juniors. Kelly's ultimate goal is to coach gymnastics at the college level. In August, Kelly passed her Level 5/6 test and is working with her mentor, National judge Celeste Hamil, to continue her judge's training.

Celeste Hamil is also the mentor for the other half of the CSUF "duo," **Stephanie Vittorio**. Stephanie began gymnastics at age 11 and quickly moved up through the competitive ranks, qualifying to

Level 8 and 9 Regionals. She was also a member of the Cal State Fullerton women's gymnastics team. She has coached in the CSUF youth gymnastics program for six years at Levels 4 through 6. Stephanie received exceptionally strong letters of recommendation for the scholarship, citing her passion for gymnastics, her attention to detail, and her strong work ethic.

Please join us in welcoming these three outstanding individuals to our Southern California judging ranks!



Check it Out! A Revamped Library

New procedures for checking out training videos and materials are under development and will be implemented on the new web site when they are finalized. In the meantime, if you would like to check out a video for a nominal \$5 fee, contact our new Librarian, **Kris Jackson**, at teamjackson@socal.rr.com or call 714-374-8601. Kris is happy to report that she has recently received Level 7/8 and 9/10 Judge's Training Videos with updated scripts. If you are interested in purchasing your own copy of training videos or materials, check out the merchandise available through National NAWGJ at www.nawgj.org or through USA Gymnastics Online Store at www.usa-gymnastics.org.



NAWGJ-SC

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*Look for our new website
to be launched soon!
www.nawgj-sc.org*

Quick Notes...

Latest Ratings

Congratulations to the following judges who have earned new ratings at the test in August:

Amanda Cooper — Level 10
Monica Guadagnini — Level 5/6
Kelly Mathiasen — Level 5/6

Monica and Kelly are two of our 2003 New Judge's Scholarship recipients. Be sure to welcome them!

Rules and Policies

For 2003-2004 Rules and Policies go to www.usa-gymnastics.org and click on the "Women's Program" button. Then click on "Rules and Policies." There is a link to request a bound copy, or you can look up the information you are searching for and print whatever pages you may need.

Active Status Cards

It is that time again. Be sure your active status card has been properly filled out. Make a copy for yourself and send the original to:

Piper White
6635 Kenwood Bluffs Drive
Westchester, CA 90045

The due date is December 1st.

Service Awards

The following Southern California judges were recognized for their years of service at the NAWGJ-SC Awards Dinner on August 3.

5 years—Ryan Covo, Robyn Elder, Gail Godenzi, Deanna Hanford, and Mary Starkweather

10 years—Denise Cheshire,

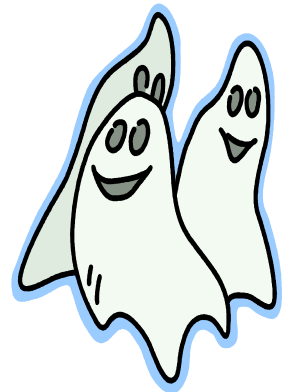
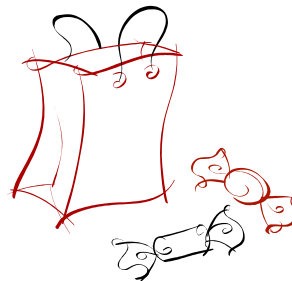
Amanda Cooper, Pam DeGross, Rae Jamison, Liz Ladley, Kathy Thomas, and Eric Will

15 years—Freddie Marcucci

20 years—Suzanne Hecht

Meeting Minutes

Be sure to check the website each month for "Meeting Minutes" from the board. Find out what your association is doing for you.



Happy
Halloween