

City

short stories and advice
from around the region

Lights

Voices

I have been skating since I was 11 years old and have been coaching for 24 years. I have a degree in coaching and sports management from California State University, Sacramento. I open the door to Skatetown Ice rink in Roseville shortly after 5 every morning during the week. I teach the competitive skaters in the morning and then the adults and recreational skaters in the afternoon. I am usually there until 5 p.m. Most of my lessons are private lessons; however, I do teach group classes and Learning Exchange classes.

Sacramento is starting to gain a large group of competitive skaters. It takes tremendous commitment from the parents and the skaters—time as well as emotional and financial commitment.

I skated competitively for about 10 years. I would get up at 3:30 in the morning, and my father would drive me down to the Bay Area. Then he would come home, go to work and go back in the evening to pick me up and take me home. On weekends I would stay with ice-skating families and take a bus back to Sacramento. I look back at what my parents did for my skating career, and it was amazing because it is so hard to believe a parent would have the time to do that. Both of my parents worked at the time, and my mom was going to school to get her umpteenth master's degree.

I still remain pretty active with the skaters. I teach power classes and I chase

the kids around the ice. I am 43 now and 24 years ago I was doing double axle jumps. When I skated competitively, very few female skaters were doing the triple jump and nowadays it's a requirement for the skaters to be competitive at the upper levels.

Jayne Throckmorton figure-skating coach



RUSS BAIN

Skating is a sport of confidence, and the skaters have to practice because the more they do the moves, the more confidence they gain. But the psychological aspect of the sport entails finding ways to get through to the skaters. With the small ones, I will draw pictures on the ice to get them to learn skills. The older kids, I will show them what I want them to do and with the adults, I have to figure out how I am going to get them to do the moves. Adults tend to analyze things more than children do, and they have to know in their minds exactly what they are going to do before they do it.

The people who really want to skate work hard and have fun doing it. I think having fun is very important to their commitment level. You have to have the desire, passion, the fun and the support to really be a serious competitor. Anyone who attains a certain level in a sport, there is a definite fire in that child and in that person.

It's wonderful to see the skaters grow as people. I try to inspire them to be the best that they can be through hard work, dedication and perseverance.

—Dawn Blunk

Patrick Powers

STEP INTO: A hot bath with lavender oil with a cold beer. It's a simple luxury—a tub full of warm water beckoning you to step in and wash away your cares. Add



some bubble bath—perhaps some Calgon or your favorite Bath & Body Works scent—and you're good to go. Or climb up a notch on the serenity scale and pour in some lavender oil. Add a cold beer and you have the stress-relief remedy of one Sacramento-area public relations guru. "It sounds silly, but the smell of lavender reminds me of southern France," says Patrick Powers, owner of Powers, Friends and Associates, a firm specializing in the restaurant and hospitality industry. "And the beer, well, I love beer."



Powers, who also is vice president of the Sacramento Public Relations Association and volunteers with numerous local charities, admits his botanically based bathing ritual may earn him a few jabs. "I know people will kid me about the bath," he says, "but at least the beer is macho."

STEP AWAY FROM: Helping friends move. "If you have a strong back, a weak mind and a truck, go ahead and help them move," says Powers, who says he's endured smashed hands and sore backs after helping people move. "[It] reminds me of the bumper sticker I spotted on the back of a pickup truck: 'Hell no! I won't help you move.'"