



Academic honors team

First NJ Council Academic Honors Team Selected

Five student-athletes were selected to the first New Jersey Council Academic Honors Team and two skaters were awarded Honorable Mention.

The candidates submitted extensive materials, simulating the college application process. Official transcripts, a 500-word essay from a choice of five topics, a resume, skating requirements, and a log of extracurricular activities and employment were among the required submissions.

Each candidate is a member in good standing of a New Jersey skating club. The skaters were required to pass the Novice level test, the sixth test level of eight tests, in at least one

skating discipline; or to compete at the Novice, Junior or Senior level. Candidates, in their junior or senior year of high school, were required to maintain a 3.4 grade point average, as well as attend an accredited school full-time.

This year's candidates were heads above the requirements. Their collective GPA was 4.2—and their studies included at least six honors and advanced placement courses. The majority are entering their junior year of high school.

The candidates average 8.5 hours of skating a week and participate in 10.7 hours of weekly extracurricular activities. Most passed the Junior Moves in the Field test and competed in singles competition.

Two compete in synchronized skating, and one plays ice hockey.

Three are musicians—playing first violin, flute, or percussion in orchestras and marching bands. Four belong to Honor Societies. Two are Girl Scouts.

They participate in French Clubs, Spanish Club, Asian and Asian Awareness Clubs, Interact, Forensics, Amnesty International, peer leadership, school newspapers and literary magazines, and student government.

They volunteer at the Special Olympics, American Red Cross, 9/11 Remembrance, homeless shelters and church. They are articulate, bright, busy, and caring. They are the future!

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IS A PRIORITY

Just as academic excellence was important in selecting this year's honors team, the committee agreed that the judges should be highly qualified. The panel of adjudicators for the 2003 Academic Honors Team

included three university professors. Each has a Ph.D. The judges reside in New Jersey, Delaware, and Ohio. They are connected to skating in myriad ways. The decisions of the judges are final, and were reached independently.

How They Scored

60% Academic Transcript and Course load

20% Essay

20% Resume, including all extracurricular and skating activities.

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Special points of interest:

- Colleges look for three different characteristics in nonacademic performance: commitment, development, and recognition.
- Resumes should list accomplishments such as participating in competitions, shows, training camps and tests.
- *SKATING* magazine, October 2003

2003 ACADEMIC HONORS TEAM ❧ VICTORIA SCHWANDA

Victoria Schwanda is a junior at North Hunterdon High School where she is a member of the student council. She belongs to the Skating Club of Bridgewater. She is a member of the Girl Scouts and the New Jersey Math League. She participated in the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Conference in 2003. She was awarded the Hunterdon-Somerset County Business Partnership Distinguished Student Award in 2001, and the Academic Achievement Society Award in 2002 and 2003. She has competed at the sectional and national level in synchronized team skating, and is currently competing on the Ice Storm senior synchronized skating team.

"Synchronized skating also requires a lot of strength: physical and mental... Even though we aren't doing triple jumps, it is challenging to endure four and a half minutes of footwork while remaining in correct formation and maintaining speed. Mental strength is also needed to be able to manage team dynamics. Whenever a group of teenage girls gather together, there are bound to be disagreements. Combined with the stress of competition, this could be the recipe for disaster. Not everyone is going to be best of friends with everyone else, so we must learn to respect each other, put our differences aside, and unite to achieve a common goal." ❧



*I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.*
—Howard Arnold Walter, "The Creed"



JENNA ECKARDT

Jenna Eckardt is a junior at Somerville High School where she is a member of the French Club and the track team. She plays the flute in the Symphonic Band. She placed 10th in the state in the National French Exam and has participated in the National Science Olympiad and the National Math League Contest. She is a member of the Skating Club of Morris and has volunteered at the Morris Open. She is a Girl Scout and has worked as a camp counselor at Camp DeWitt.

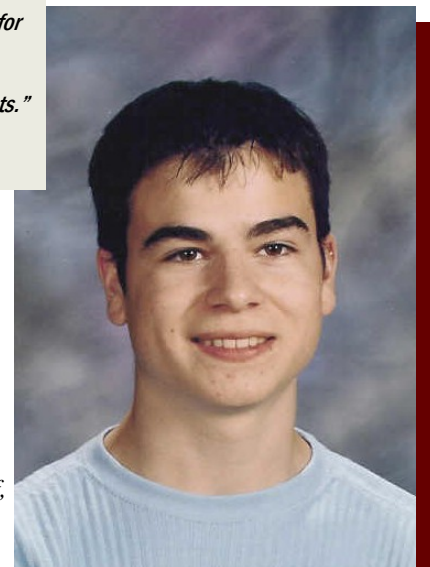
"...There is no doubt that an enormous amount of work, sacrifice, and dedication is required for an athlete even to compete for an Olympic medal. Second place against the best contestants in the world is truly a noteworthy accomplishment...To be a great athlete you must lose first before you can win, and sportsmanship, integrity, and personal happiness matter more than a gold medal. While pushing yourself to win is important, that is not the only quality that makes a good competitor or a true champion." ❧

"While the test provides a basis for contests, it is in principle independent from competitive acts."
—R. Scott Kretchmar

BRANDON ACCARDI

Brandon Accardi is a junior at Washington Township High School, the only high school in New Jersey that was nominated for a Grammy in 2003 for Excellence in Music. He plays first violin in the honors orchestra ensemble. He is a member of the Asian Awareness Club, Interact Club, and youth government. He is member of the Hollydell Figure Skating Club and is a part time basic skills instructor at the Hollydell Arena in Sewall. He competed at the North Atlantic Regional Championships in men's singles.

"I have experienced this philosophy in times when I had pushed myself to accomplish intricate skating programs, putting myself into a frame of mind and justifying as well as questioning my true capabilities. As I reflect back to times like these, I feel like I had a monster within which was disabling me from going forward. This monster is worse than any competitor. This monster is 'insecurity.' We have to get rid of insecurities to move forward. In testing myself, I have overcome many insecurities." ❧



CAROLINE SHIELDS

Caroline Shields is a senior at Pascack Valley High School in River Vale. She is a member of the Volunteer Club, Spanish Club, and “Leaders Educate Against Drugs.” She is a member of the National Honor Society and a future inductee of the Spanish Honor Society. She has taught first grade in religious education at Saint Pius X Church in Old Tappan. She is a member of the American Academy Figure Skating Club.

Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, or risk that you have taken and its impact on you.

“I always prefer falling to double-footing a jump; to fall is to go down trying. I knew that as long as I kept on trying and falling, I would eventually land my axel. Those unattached movements finally melded, and the result was a graceful and fluid axel. While it has been over three years since I first landed the axel, I still feel a tingle of excitement run down my spine when I reenact the feeling of those first landings...In academics, the facts convert to concepts, and the process of learning transforms from memorization to synthesis....In both figure skating and learning, I emerge with a passion for the very thing that I fell so hard on.” ☞



STACEY LEE

Stacey Lee is a junior at Ridge High School in Basking Ridge where she is a member of the Forensics Club, Amnesty International, the Asian Club, and secretary of the Key Club. She plays percussion in the marching band and wind ensemble. She belongs to the Latin Honor Society. She has volunteered at the American Red Cross. She is a member of the Skating Club of Bridgewater.

One of the tag lines in Nike's ad campaign during the Centennial Olympics was, “You don't win silver, you lose gold.” What are the implications of that statement?



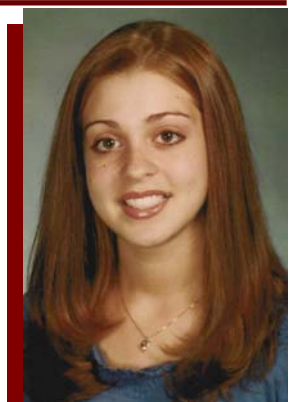
“The moment I stepped off the ice and embraced my coach, I knew that I had surpassed a personal goal. Triumph and utter happiness overwhelmed me, and even the silver medal I received did not change my feelings. My placement mattered not; I had reached the summit of my own mountain. Only when athletes lose their passion for their sport and measure their success with medals, have they truly lost. The more I read the tagline, though, the more the essence of the line became clearer. I failed to realize that Gold represents more than simply winning. It is a milestone representing everything that brought the athlete to that position: sweat, ambition, pain, perseverance.” ☞

Victoria Rompilla ☞ HONORABLE MENTION ☞ Roseann Villalva



Victoria Rompilla (left) is a junior at Verona High School and a member of the Garden State Skating Club. She plays ice hockey in addition to belonging to the French Club and French National Honor Society. She is on the literary staff of *Avant Garde*. She is a basic skills instructor at the Woodridge Ice Center. — *“I push myself every day to try and break new boundaries and create new goals to achieve.”* ☞

Roseann Villalva (right) is a senior at Edison High School and a member of Upper Mountain Skating Association. She writes for the school newspaper and is active in her church youth group. She is a member of the Ice Storm senior synchronized skating team. — *“Testing in figure skating is a general and steady path toward excellence.”* ☞





NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF FIGURE SKATING CLUBS REPORT

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ABOUT NJCFSC

The New Jersey Council of Figure Skating Clubs was formed in 1963 as an interclub council member of the United States Figure Skating Association. The NJCFSC is a 501C3, tax-exempt organization. For more than forty years, the NJCFSC has hosted its annual skating championships and supported skaters in their attempts to excel through scholarship and awards.

The NJCFSC has grown in its outreach. This year 32 skaters were awarded Competitive Skater Assistance Scholarships, and nine synchronized skating teams were awarded grants including the Princeton University Skating Club. NJCFSC also promotes the Ice Storm, a senior-level synchronized skating team, and a network of high school figure skating clubs.

The NJCFSC Academic Honors Team and the Officials Development and Education Program are two new outreach programs. Our mission reflects the goals of U.S. Figure Skating today—promoting achievement and participation. We strive to recognize excellence in both education and athletics. ❧

OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

NJ Council of Figure Skating Clubs Academic Honors Committee

Susan L. Ward,* Chair
Lynda Dillman,* Parent
Laurie Gazzale, Official
Wendy Mangum, Athlete
Ruth Necco, NJCFSC Treasurer
Sara K. Ward, Athlete

Ex-officio

Loris Chen, NJCFSC President
Barbara K. Price,* Vice-Chair,
Scholastic Honors Program

*Members, US Figure Skating
Program Development Committee



NJCFSC Academic Honors Team Program is dedicated to the pursuit of academic achievement and participation in the sport of figure skating.

Funding for the 2003 Academic Honors Team was provided by the New Jersey Council of Figure Skating Clubs.

The Honorable Mention candidates were sponsored by Carlin & Ward, P.C. Attorneys at Law, Florham Park, New Jersey.

Each Academic Honors Team member will be awarded \$500 and a certificate. *Each Honorable Mention candidate* will receive \$100 and a certificate.

Notification will be sent to the principals and guidance counselors at the students' respective high schools, as well as to the presidents of the skaters' respective New Jersey figure skating clubs.

The Academic Honors Team Program Committee plans to sustain this program through donations and corporate sponsorship.

Skaters who are in their junior year are encouraged to apply again next year.

The Academic Honors Program Committee hopes to expand the program to support a Collegiate Honors Team in the near future.

If you are moved by the dedication and excellence of our candidates, please consider supporting our outreach programs. To receive future updates and information about sponsorship opportunities, please return the enclosed form.

"In the end it is upon the quality and commitment of individuals that all group movements depend."

— Robertson Davies ❧