

INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE INDUSTRY!

# RINKSIDER

...in our 58th year!

January-February 2011

## Make a Skatement.....9

The industry's national marketing campaign has officially launched, with a national webinar explaining everything from A to Z. Read on to find out how you can become a part of the roller revolution!

## Book of games, promotions and more.....22

Michigan operator Erika Wymer and industry consultant Bill Carlson have teamed up to create a big book of games, promotions and activities for skaters of all ages, detailing everything from the tried-and-true to the new and over-the-top favorites. It includes an index, how-tos and even prize cards to copy and use.

## What do your employees need?....13

Get insights from two successful long-time operators on what your employees need to know in order to help your business succeed and what you need to know about hiring, training and keeping employees on task and on board.

## Rinks in England, Illinois, and New York, give adults plenty of chances to have fun

By Dionne Obeso

According to Andy Starr, owner of Rollerworld UK in Colchester, England, seeing more adults hit the skate floor is a sign of boom times in

the roller skating world. "When skating picks up, it isn't that there are more children, it's that more people from various age groups are coming in," he said.

While you can't manufacture more children on demand, you can start market-

ing to their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and teachers! Plenty of adults have fond memories of younger days on skates, and others may be learning about the low

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*A group of young women celebrate a bachelorette party 70's style at Rollerworld UK in Colchester, England.*

*(photo credit : Dave Byford)*

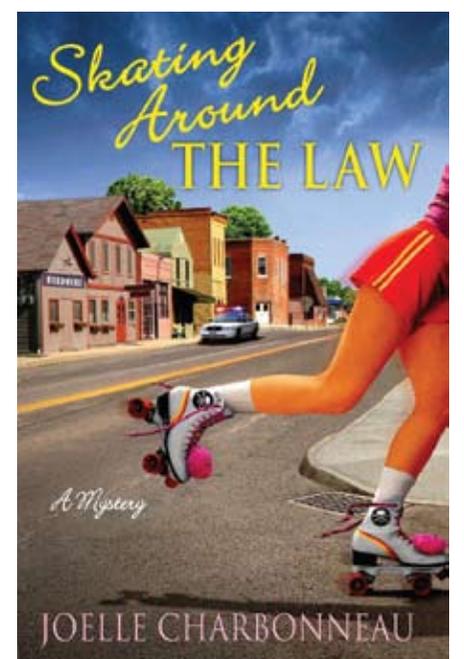
## Mystery author takes World Artistic Championships by storm

USA National Artistic Junior and Senior Roller Skating Champions competed at the World Artistic Championships in Portumio, Portugal, from November 22 through December 5. To help keep the team relaxed, each member of Team USA brought with them a signed copy of the new roller skating mystery, *Skating Around the Law*.

*Skating Around the Law* was inspired by author Joelle Charbonneau's mother, a former World Champion artistic skater. Jaci

Charbonneau's athletic abilities were featured on ABC's *Wide World of Sports* and in the *World Book* encyclopedia. She and her partner took third place in the 1962 World Championships in Essen, Germany.

*Skating Around the Law* (St. Martin's Press/Minotaur Books) is the story of Rebecca Robbins, who returns to her rural Illinois hometown to sell the roller rink inherited from her roller skating



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Mystery author (cont'd from page 1)

mom. When she finds the town's handy man drowned head first in the rink's toilet, her plans for a quick sale disap-



Author Joelle Charbonneau

pear. With the Sheriff more experienced in gardening than murder, Rebecca has no choice but to stay close to the investigation.

"The pressures of competition make any athlete tight and nervous," said Joelle prior to the World Championships. "I hope Skating Around the Law's humor will help Team USA stay loose so they can compete at the highest level."

The USA National Artistic Team is comprised of 46 skaters and coaches who competed in a combination of singles and pairs events. The team returned to the USA from the 2010 World Figure Skating Championships with eleven medals in eight events.

Team USA placed second through fifth in the Junior Women's Figures, second and fifth in Junior Team Dance, and first and seventh in the Junior Team Solo Dance and second in the Inline Women Free Skating categories.

For the Senior World Championship, Jessica Gaudy, National Silver Medalist in World Class Women's Solo Dance, placed 5th in a field of 19 contestants and received good free dance scores. Fellow solo dance team member, Erin Ovens-Scalzitti, won the Silver Medal in the same event; Joseph Farias III finished in 5th place in World Class Men's Solo Dance; and Anthony Deluca finished in 7th place in the men's event.

Aubrey Orcutt/Robert Hines skated a beautiful and confident long program to become the World Pairs Bronze Medalists. Eric Hadley/Siobhan Boismier finished 7th and Alexander Poland/Mackenzie Wriedt finished 8th in the pairs final.

During the Portimao Championships, Kyle Turley won his 20th world championship medal spanning from 2000-2010. He earned a Silver Medal in Senior Mens Figures and a Silver Medal in the Senior Team Dance event with partner and fiancé Heather Menard.

For more information about Skating Around the Law, please contact Joelle Charbonneau at andyjoelle@aol.com (847) 373-1635 or Bridget Hartlzer, Minotaur Publicity, at (646) 307-5553

or bridget.hartlzer@stmartins.com.

For news and results from the 2010 Artistic Roller Skating World Championship and Team USA, go

online to [http://usarollersports.org/events/3681?no\\_cache=true](http://usarollersports.org/events/3681?no_cache=true) or contact Jane Puracchio Wojnarowsky at [jwojn-arowsky@usarollersports.org](mailto:jwojn-arowsky@usarollersports.org).



Jaci (Zimmerman) Charbonneau, author Joelle's mom and inspiration for her mystery novel, with skating partner Rob Shaffer at the 1962 World Championships.

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*Adult fun (cont'd from page 1)*

cost and great health benefits. The key is to give them a way to relive some of those happy moments and have fun in an environment that is comfortable for them.

That's one area where an adult-only skate night can come in handy. Starr holds an adult skate every week, as do

to everyone," he said, and he strongly feels that once you see his rink, you'll want to come back.

Bernstein started his own adult skate out of a feeling of nostalgia. As a child he remembers catching fleeting glimpses of the adult skate, though he was never allowed to stay for the whole

of skaters in nearby Chicago.

By far one of the largest draws to Orbit Skate, however, is the annual party put on by a local group. Near the 4th of July every year, Orbit Skate is host to an adult-only event that runs from midnight to 5 a.m. and packs the rink full all night long. According to

His rink includes a café downstairs and a bar upstairs. Although it might sound scary to invite skaters to drink, Starr claims that they have never had a drunk skater. "We find that when there is a variance in age, there are fewer problems with alcohol," he said, citing that excessive drinking is much more common when a group of people all the same age gather to drink (say, young twenties in a club environment.)

Starr has also recently renovated, cleaning up the lockers by having them repainted, adding bottled drinks and a bean-to-cup coffee machine to his café and pool tables with whacky themes (including checkerboard velvet, a top that looks like tire tracks, and a set that have road markings). They also replaced some carpet and added more mirrors to the reception area to increase the upmarket, clubby feel of the rink. Starr brings a lot of military families in to skate (Colchester is a military town), and also appeals to them with their quasar center (what we know in America as laser tag).

In addition to session skates and skate lessons, some extracurricular activities that are great for drawing adults include roller derbies, which are really in style right now, and adult hockey leagues. Simply drawing parents in can get them thinking about taking to the floor. At Hot Skates, for example, adults can use the free WiFi while their kids skate (rather than dropping them off and leaving).

According to Neff, the key is really in the skaters themselves. "Talk to your skaters about what they want," she said. "We keep our facility very clean at all times; we employ very helpful, friendly, smiley people; and we ask our skaters what they want, what they like, and what kind of music they'd like to hear while they skate." In the end, bringing more adult skaters into your rink comes down to providing what your skaters want from their skating experience.



*Hot Skates in Lynbrook, N.Y., offers a bit of nostalgia for its adult guests with a grouping of disco balls spinning among the lights above the skate floor.*

Jeff Bernstein, owner of Hot Skates in Lynbrook, N.Y., and Jodi Neff, general manager of Orbit Skate in Palatine, Ill.

Orbit Skate also offers adult only classes on Tuesday mornings, complete with free coffee for the students. According to Neff, "A lot of adults who are getting on skates for the first time are really nervous, and having kids all around them makes them even more nervous. It's nice to have a class where adults can come and learn without having to worry about the kids." The adults-only lessons also allow for a less frantic pace, which gives the adults more opportunities for one-on-one assistance from the instructor.

It is for a similar reason that adult only skate sessions are so popular. Sometimes adults just want to enjoy skating without being terrified that a three-year-old might go sprawling into their path. According to Starr, adult-only skate nights have the added benefit of increasing adult attendance on other days of the week. "We often have people come in for our adult skate who then return on Saturday with friends," he said.

To increase this word-of-mouth advertising, Starr also gives free passes to specially targeted groups. A few times a year, Starr sends out invitations to the teachers at local schools, welcoming them to come and skate at a specific adult skate. For these Teachers Night Out events, the school can register as many staff as they want to skate free of charge. He also sends out free adult night skate passes to the local hairdressers. "Hairdressers talk

thing. All of the adults looked so skilled and the skate session felt so magical that he wanted to recreate it within Hot Skates. He keeps the age limit at 24 and up to invite a more mature crowd.

At Orbit Skate, adult events are sprinkled into the schedule with a liberal hand. In addition to adult-only lessons, they host a skate with live organ music every Saturday night. If you aren't sure what to do with live organ music, come early for the class that happens before every organ skate. Neff, daughter of owner Sandra Levin, feels that the adult-oriented sessions and activities draw in the large adult base

Neff, it is the only night of the year that Orbit Skate hits its 1000 person capacity. "People come from all over to skate here, and most of them make a weekend of it and hit the Taste of Chicago that same weekend," she said.

Bernstein also knows that getting adults into the rink can start with something other than skating. His rink uses the slower daytime hours to host a weekly Zumba dance class, and though crossover isn't huge, it is still a great way to get adults involved with the rink in new and exciting ways.

At Skateworld U.K., Starr has a different kind of adult draw: alcohol.



*In addition to adult skate sessions, the RollerBar at Rollerworld in Colchester, England, is a gathering place for adult guests. (photo credit: Dave Byford)*