

Skating season just around the corner

New coaches for Terrace Bay figure skating



Suzanne Thibault (left) and Mark Saranpaa (right) both left Terrace Bay to continue training in their respective fields. Now they're back coaching local figure skaters.

photos by Darren MacDonald

by Darren MacDonald
The News

The Terrace Bay Recreation Centre has hired two figure skating coaches for this winter's skating program.

Mark Saranpaa, who grew up in Terrace Bay, will concentrate on teaching the technical part of figure skating.

Saranpaa competed in the national figure skating champi-

onships held in 1987 and 1989. He was a pairs skater and, in the 1987 championship, he skated with his sister, Heather.

Turned Pro

He received his early training in Terrace Bay, and later continued his training in Toronto, where his sister was attending university.

Saranpaa gave up his ama-

teur status last year, when he coached in Marathon.

"As soon as you start making money in coaching, it's considered turning pro," he explained.

When he was contacted by the Terrace Bay Recreation Centre to coach, he jumped at the chance to coach in his home town.

"I'm still going to do some freelance coaching in Marathon, and in White River, but Terrace Bay will be my home base," he said.

Saranpaa has met many of figure skating's big stars, including Donald Jackson, whom he met at a figure skating seminar in Atikokan. He also met World Champion Kurt Browning at a seminar in Edmonton.

The other new coach, Suzanne Thibault, plans to use

her background in drama to help aspiring figure skaters "express themselves to music."

Background in drama

"I want them to be able to dance without fear of ridicule from their peers," she says.

"I remember when I first started acting, it was a big thing to overcome the awkwardness. I thought my friends would think I was a geek."

Thibault began acting in grade five, appearing in her class production of the operetta Macado.

After acting in a number of school plays, last year she went to Sudbury Secondary High School as a drama major.

Thibault returned to Terrace Bay this year to graduate, and will be helping the figure skating students choreograph their steps to music, as well as helping them overcome their fear of opening up in front of a crowd.

"Once they become familiar with me, I want to teach them

not to be so inward," Thibault said.

"Figure skating can become an outlet for whatever emotion you might be feeling," agreed Saranpaa.

"But the ice surface is also one of the loneliest places in the world, especially during competitions."

Proud of local Talent

According to the recreation centre's Elise Kenney, Terrace Bay is fortunate to have been able to find qualified coaches in their own backyard.

"I think we should be proud that we have two people from our home town helping out the community," she said.

"We should be proud of our own talent."

Registration exchange figure skating this winter will take place on Monday, Sept. 30, at 6 p.m. at the Terrace Bay Recreation Centre. A skate exchange will also be held.

A general meeting will follow registration

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continued from page 1

And, as the average age of Canadian women increases, the number of women at risk increases also.

Joan Kyle, who is also involved with establishing the breast screening unit, said the program aims to visit places like Terrace Bay and Schreiber two or three times a year.

"That's the advantage of the van—we can go to the smaller areas of Northwestern Ontario, rather than just locating in Thunder Bay."

The 40-foot van will be equipped with a mammography unit, an X-ray room and a reception area. It will be manned by a nurse and a mammography technologist.

Women can be tested at the clinic if they're referred by their doctor, referred by themselves, or by an invitation from the Ministry of Health.

When established, it would be the first ever mobile breast screening unit in Ontario.

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