

Recap of 2001 NAWGJ National Symposium



The Nettie winners are as follows:

- Best Layout and Design - Alabama
- Best Educational Article - Florida - "What is Artistry?" by Cookie Batsche
- Best Informational Article - Tennessee
- Best Feature Article - Ohio
- Most Humorous Article - Minnesota - Judges' Christmas Catalog
- Best Educational Video - Arkansas - Bar Grips
- Most Humorous Video - Minnesota
- Best Web Site - Georgia



Wisconsin judges enjoying some free time.

The week started with a National Governing Board meeting, followed by a day-long State Judging Director's (SJD) workshop. The photo on this page shows the SJD's who won the prestigious "Nettie awards." These awards are for the best communications packages-- whether via newsletter, web page, video tape. Congratulations!

The Symposium started Thursday July 12th with an opening session by Carole Ide, followed by a JO update by Connie Maloney. After that, it got hard to choose which session to attend--there were great clinicians with good material to present. Sessions included presentations on the new JO rules, practice-judging sessions for all levels, plus some wonderful presentations by coaches. Over 420 judges attended from throughout the country!

Clinicians included Judy Dobransky, Robin Ruegg, Audrey Schweyer, Cheryl Hamilton, Marian Dykes, Pat Panichas, Linda Chencinski, Kristi Krafft, Valorie Kondos-Fields, Steven and Beth Rybacki, Connie Maloney, Sue Graff, Yvonne Hodge, Julie Knight, Cindy Lord and Ann Heppner.

At a Friday afternoon luncheon, special awards were given out to NAWGJ members for 20 and 25 years of service. There were also prizes for the tennis and golf tournament participants and winning teams.

At the Saturday night banquet, two outgoing Regional Judging Directors were honored for their service--Genie McElroy of Region 2 and Evelyn Chandler from Region 8. Also, two long-term members were recognized for their many years of service to the judges through awards of Life-Time Memberships in NAWGJ. These went to Cheryl Hamilton and Audrey Schweyer. Key-note speakers Steve and Beth Rybacki shared some of their experiences as coaches at the 2000 Olympic Games.

A recap on just a few of the sessions (anyone with notes from other sessions they'd like to share--e-mail rruegg@nawgj.org to share and it'll be posted here):

Julie Knight presented the draft rules for NCAA. A special thanks to her for doing this! The rules have not yet been voted on, but this will happen soon (August I believe). As soon as we know, we'll put a link on the NAWGJ web site to the new rules. Generally, NCAA is adopting the JO rules, but there are some minor changes. The vault table is different. On bars, NCAA is NOT requiring a low bar "B" or a 3-6-7 element. They may add these requirements in a year or so. On beam, NCAA is NOT requiring a hold element. Also, dismounts are required to be "C's;" "B" dismounts will be deducted 0.1 from start value. Again, these are just the proposals and have not yet been finalized.

Valorie Kondos Fields did two sessions--one on balance beam and one on how she choreographs floor exercise routines. Some of her key thoughts regarding floor exercise include: Choreography is seeing pictures, a very visual art. With a good choreographic piece, you will remember pictures. Music motivates the pictures. "God creates, music inspires, man or women assembles." Music is a universal language. After she chooses the music, she then puts together a 1 minute 30 second show that has a beginning, end, a climax and a common thread. Floor exercise is a performance. It is hard to get athletes out of themselves to perform. However, the performance, adding emotion to the movement--is what makes a routine great. Focus is also a key difference between good and great performances.

Kristy Krafft did a presentation on bars. She talked about what is superior execution or an ideal model for "ultimate execution" of a skill. Beautiful gymnastics has:

- Ease--it appears to be effortless
- A sense of timing
- Body position (finish and transition to finish position)
- Amplitude both away from the apparatus and between body parts

- Sequential movement--a folding and unfolding
- Straight lines (or curved lines) with a lack of segmentation

We are "chasing perfection" and all body parts should move in the intended direction of movement. It's a different sport when done well.

Steve and Beth Rybacki shared their thoughts on bars with the judges. They talked about how they feel that judges need to be more involved with the athletes and coaches--that judges need to be in the gym more. They also discussed concepts of good gymnastics as including fluid motion and isolated "freeze" time. When judging the routine, judges need to remember about the artistry of the event--as coaches they felt sometimes the judges are so caught up in the rules, they aren't really watching and enjoying the artistry of the gymnastics. Overall, a good bar routine should be consistent, artistic and dynamic.

After the banquet on Saturday night, over 100 judges participated in Betty Sroufe's "line dancing" session. According to Betty, the participants had a blast. Others just sat by the side and truly enjoyed as well. Carole Ide was there and danced in her bare feet. A good time was had by all!