

Freewheeling skateboard culture is zag-zag Zen

BY CAMILA ALEJANDRA GONZALES
Editor-in-Chief

Skateboarding is a sport, an art and a way of life. It is exercise and therapy. It inhabits an internal void in a way that can feel spiritual.

It can also skin the holy heck out of your knees, bruise your elbows and throw out your back.

Therein lies the rub.

Skating is the Zen meditation of falling down and getting back up. It is conquering fear and shaking off pain. It is a *Kaizen* quest for self-improvement. It is Jonathon Livingston Seagull for terrestrials.

Riding a skateboard is like rolling through life with a squirt of WD-40. Sometimes we confront grumpy people and testy security guards who call us vandals. Other times we roll up on kindly people who flash an encouraging smile and a thumbs up as if to say “keep at it!”

Skating is a transcendental outlet for Jocelyn Osegueda, a four-wheeling introvert who finds expression on her deck.

“I am not the kind of person who likes to talk about my feelings, so I skate when I need to off load,” she said. “The pain from falling distracts me from my emotions and is a way for me to cope. It just cancels everything out.”

Osegueda said she began skating in the seventh grade with her younger brother. They would skate aimlessly around their neighborhood, she recalled, as a way to arrive without traveling in the best of the Taoist tradition.

Injury is a constant possibility, she admitted, but never a deterrent. Skating is a constant dare that needs to be taken.

“Thankfully I’ve never broken a bone,” she said, “but I’ve been messed up a few times.”

Once, while shooting down a ramp at a skate park, she fell in an awkward split,

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CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD — Skating legends like Tony Hawk inspire but do not intimidate recreational skaters who seek a buzz rather than bravura.

Photo Courtesy of Don Arnold / WireImage

Illustration By Edward Herrera / Staff

Photo Courtesy of Tonie Campbell



Q&A WITH OLYMPIAN TONIE CAMPBELL

Track sage predicts bright future

BY ESTEBAN PRECIADO
Staff Writer

Southwestern is the college whose track and field team has neither a track nor a field. What it does have is Renaissance man Anthony “Tonie” Campbell as its track coach. He is an Olympic silver medalist and a coach of Olympic medalists. He is also a devoted mentor to Paralympians, an author and the college’s assistant athletic director.

Campbell and his track squad completed another successful season with a second place finish in the PCAC Finals, but he still does not have the state-of-the-art track facility he was promised when he was lured to SC in 2002. Even so, he pledged to continue to do his best with what he and his athletes have.

Southwestern College replaced its track facility with a parking lot. What was your reaction? Do you think not having a training area is a hindrance for your team?

Replacing the condemned track with a parking lot was actually my idea. I have been the head coach at Southwestern now for 20 seasons. I was hired in 2002 with the promise of a new facility. The school and economy entered a budget crisis, however, and the funds were absorbed. This happened again in 2007 with the (Proposition R) bond measure debacle and misappropriation of funds The Sun reported on extensively. Moving on to 2016 and the newest bond measure, the track was not a priority. The team had not been using the (demolished track). We trained at local high schools.

I proposed to the (former dean) to demolish the track and convert it into a temporary parking lot for construction and student parking (with the commitment that) once our parking issues were resolved, the track would be pushed a priority. Unfortunately, the idea has worked too well. What was (supposed to be) an 18-month temporary situation has turned into four years.

I’m very frustrated with the process.

The fact that I’ve had winning teams despite not having a facility only makes me and others wonder what successes we could have had with a track on site.

Are there lessons you apply that help you evolve as a head coach?

I’m in my 20th season of coaching at this beloved college. I’m still learning and developing. My philosophy is if you think you know it all, you don’t. If you tire of learning, it’s time to retire. Athletes and the sport demand evolution. Last season COVID taught us all to be patient and hopeful. There are great and talented young men and women in this county, especially in Chula Vista. It’s our job to give them the opportunity to compete, improve and move on to university athletic programs or at least leave here knowing more about themselves.

What motivates you to keep going through the ups and downs of a season?

Love for the sport, but most importantly my passion for the mission of helping others (to) be the best they can be.



“My philosophy is if you think you know it all, you don’t. If you tire of learning, it’s time to retire. Athletes and the sport demand evolution.”

TONIE CAMPBELL
SC ASSISTANT
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR



Photo By Nicolette Monique Luna / Staff

SEASON OF GOOD CHEER — Members of the men's soccer team and football team celebrate a goal by the women's soccer team that clinched the league title. Coach Carolina Soto and several of her players said they appreciated the support they received from many of their male counterparts.

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SOCCKER: Lady Jags undefeated on way to league championship

Captain Daisy Harbin said Soto and her coaches were teachers, counselors and advocates all rolled in one.

"The coaches are absolutely amazing," she said. "I can come to them for anything, even if it's not soccer or school. They're a support system for all of us."

Soto said that was a goal of her coaching team.

"The biggest thing for me is showing them that I care, and that our staff cares," she said. "We're a very unique staff. We're three female coaches, so we can connect to (female athletes) well. I think we all bring a very different dynamic to the table."

Thanks to this dynamic, the team

has been able to accomplish so much this year.

A conference championship was step one, Soto said. Her team is now taking aim at the regional playoffs, followed by an invitation to the state championship tournament.

Harbin said the Lady Jaguars are wired to win.

"We have a lot of heart," she said. "It doesn't matter what's thrown at us."

Arredondo described her team as ambassadors for the community.

"We hope to bring back respect to the South Bay because we've been working so hard," she said.

That, she added, would be sweet.



Photo By Nicolette Monique Luna / Staff

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DANCE

King in tights.

Student performances throughout the evening were vibrant and soulful. It was lovely to see such command of dance vocabulary from the diverse ensemble.

It was just as much fun to listen to them.

Discerning members of the audience can correctly predict whether the next number is ballet or tap by the sounds of the dancer's shoes in the wings. When the stage is pitch black, listen for the muffled hint of soft wooden blocks in pointe ballet shoes. Metallic resonance from tap shoes means a uniquely American dance form is about to riddle the stage with its staccato rhythm and ambling joy.

"Danse Mystere" featured a tap number that was magnificent. Working together like dancing drummers, the performers played the music with their feet, accompanying themselves as they flowed across the stage like water crashing down a rocky creek.

Feets of magic abound.

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CAFÉ: Singers bring warmth, creativity to jazz standards

younger singers, but Diane Amore was the embodiment of confidence as she romped through "Ain't Misbehavin'." Her mature and lively performance engaged the audience and elevated the mood.

West Coast Syncopation returned for a buoyant performance of "Shiny Stockings" highlighted by a brilliant scat solo by Dafne Acuña-Burgueño. It was evocative of the great scat singer Fitzgerald and a high point of the evening.

Joselyn Castillo and Adrian-Alfredo Llamas (introduced by director Tracy Burkland as Elvis) were crowd pleasers. As they crooned "Basin Street Blues," they gazed into each other's eyes and shared a captivating performance. An earthy scat by Llamas was more Louis Armstrong than Elvis, though he showed flashes of The King's shimmering charisma.

Haelie Snow, Karen Freeman, and Pablo Gamifio ended the first course of Jazz Café with the soaring classic



ELLA FITZGERALD

Grossmont College's Cadence Vocal Jazz Ensemble haunted the café after intermission. CVJ was relaxed and confident as it poured into "Tea for Two" to re-caffeinate the audience.

Heather Salanga was graceful, sassy and full of feeling with "I'm Beginning to See the Light." Her scat performed was a crowd favorite, earning enthusiastic applause.

Christian Rodriguez, a guitarist in the Grossmont band, stepped to the mic with his axe for his

"Fly Me to the Moon." The rendition was so memorable a u d i e n c e m e m b e r s could be heard humming the tune as they left for intermission. There is no more organic musical tribute.

singing debut with "After You've Gone." He was double trouble with his strong voice and dexterous accompaniment.

"Dream a Little Dream of Me," in the hands of Esteban Soria, was somber and moody. Classically romantic, he sang with such commitment one could imagine he was thinking of someone special.

Eva Baffone said the standard "Honeysuckle Rose" made her feel "honored to sing." Her performance was fast and twisty, enticing listeners with a compelling spin on the melody.

In the generous spirit of jazz, SC and Grossmont shared the stage for a swipe at Fitzgerald fave "A-Tisket A-Tasket" that felt improvised but exciting. Sometimes the best jazz happens when artists and audience are not sure what's coming next.

Tracy Burkland's ensemble was, once again, classy and tuneful. Jazz Café gets five stars for its galaxy of twinkling lights.

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SKATE: Time on the board can be a spiritual respite

scraping her face and much of her body. It was a bad case of road rash, the dreaded asphalt malady of the true believers. She winced as she recounted how badly her wounds burned when she had to scrub them out in the shower. Later the scars became dermatological badges of honor.

Her favorite tricks are Ollies and 180s, she said, but she is most happy gliding the flatlands.

"I prefer to skate street, so I can just have some time to do something I enjoy alone," she said.

Osegeda's kid brother Rafael, 17, said he started skating in the ninth grade. As a youngster he enjoyed bombing hills, doing kick flips, vibing to his music and cruising around with his sister. Skating with Jocelyn brought him peace, he said. Still does.

"The pain from falling distracts me from my emotions and is a way for me to cope. It just cancels everything out."

Jocelyn Osegeda

SKATER

Mark Ramirez, a shy 18 year old, rocked a royal Adidas mask, an oversized tee that flapped around his hips and ivory Converse that were worn out, but hanging on for another session. His shaggy brown hair bounced in wavy curls that cascaded down over his invisible ears. Ramirez started skating his freshman year of high school, he said, and was hooked.

"It's a fun pastime," he said. "Skating is good exercise and a way to destress after a long day. It gets me out of the house and helps me maintain a healthy state of mind."

Ramirez said his favorite aspect of the skate community is that it supports beginners.

Injuries loom, even for the greats. Legendary Tony Hawk recently posted photos of his broken femur with a caption expressing how recovery will be much longer due to his age.

"I am up for the challenge," he said. So, too, his femur.

An HBO skate documentary, "Until the Wheels Fall Off," features Hawk at his philosophical best.

"I found my sense of purpose and shaped my identity through skating, and it nourishes my mental health like nothing else," said the Baron of Bearings. "I've said many times that I won't stop skating until I am physically unable."

Hawk is able again and soaring on his board. So is Osegeda. Nothing can keep devoted skaters off their boards for long. The hills, ramps and roads await like the path to enlightenment...or at least endorphins.

Southwestern College has a mysterious Sunday crew that visitors can hear from a distance, but rarely glimpse. Its wiry members scatter at the sight of campus police or workaholic faculty like finches who spot a skulking cat. Guerilla skaters are to be heard but not seen.

When the heat moves on, the skaters re-enter the arena. Joyous racket resumes.

Jocelyn, Raphael, Mark and Tony are miles away and galaxies apart in ability, but connected through time and space. Skaters are bonded by their universal exhilaration and mishaps. Cool landings become good stories, spills become even better ones.

Skating is life.