Freewheeling skateboard culture is zag-zag Zen

BY CAMILA ALEJANDRA GONZALES
Editor-in-Chief

Freewheeling skateboard culture is zag-zag Zen. 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. Theron 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 Jonathon Livingston Seagull for terrestrials. It is Kaizen, the Japanese word for improvement. It is a quest for self-improvement. It is Jonathon Livingston Seagull for terrestrials. It is Jonathan Livingston Seagull for terrestrials. It is a constant dare that needs to be taken. It is exercise and therapy. It inhabits an internal void in a way that can feel spiritual.

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, "Keep at it!" she said, "but I've been messed up a few times."

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"I'm very frustrated with the process," said Osegueda. "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 2017 with the (Proposition K) 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 school and economy entered a budget crisis, however, and the funds were absorbed. This happened again in 2017 with the (Proposition K) 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 track nor a field. What it does have is Renaissance man Anthony "Tony" 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 hired 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?

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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.
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 as it was to view.

Discerning members of the audience could correctly predict whether the next number is ballet or tap by the sound of the dancer’s shoes in the wings. When the stage is pitch black, listen for the muffled hint of soft footsteps, then connect it to female athletes! We think we all bring a very different dynamic to the table."

The biggest thing for me is to show them that I can do that, and that our staff cares,” she said. “We’re a coaching team.

Soto said that was a goal of her team. "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.

FEET OF MAGIC ABOUND

“Danse Mystere” featured a tap performance engaged the audience and elevated the mood. metallic resonance from tap shoes could be heard hammering the tune as they left for intermission. There is no more organic musical tribute. Esteban Soria, was honored to sing. His performance was fast and trouncy, enticing listeners with a compelling spin on the melody.

In the generous spirit of jazz, SC and Grossmont shared the stage for a swap at Fitzgerald face “A-Tisket, A-Tasket” that felt improvised but happy. Sometimes the heat happens when artists and audience are not sure what’s coming next.

TRACY BURKLAND'S ensemble was, once again, classy and tuneful. Jazz Cafe gets five stars for its galaxy of twinkling lights.

SKATE: Time on the board can be a spiritual respite

"I started skateboarding in fifth grade. As a youngster he enjoyed bouncing balls, doing kick flips, wheelie to his music and cruising around with his sister. Skating with Jocelyn brought him peace, he said. Still does.

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Jocelyn Oseguera

SKATER

Mark Ramirez, a shy 18 year old, rocked a royal Adidas mask, an oversized tee that flapped around his hips, 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.

Inertia, too, 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 challenges,” he said. So, too, for his fans. An HBO skate documentary, “Until the Wheels Fall Off,” features Hawk at his philosophical best.

“Every skateboard box is different, 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 skating on his board. So is Oseguera.

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