

Skater leaves passion on ice

BY CHRIS BONING
Staff Reporter

For freshman Rachel Cook, figure skating isn't everything — it's the only thing.

Cook said the sport has been the driving force in her life for the past several years, so much so that she hesitates to name any activities that are as important to her as skating.

"When I don't [skate], I'm missing something," she said. "I have other interests, but they are so pale in comparison to my passion for skating that it's almost impossible to compare it. When I skate, I feel like I'm more than I am."

Cook said she began skating when she was 6 years old with the help of a little parental prodding.

"My mom took me to the ice arena, and she sat me down and made me look at the figure skaters and asked me, 'Do you want to do this?'" Cook said. "And I said, 'Yes,' because I was 6."

She said that since then she has been involved with the Ice Skating Institute and the United States Figure Skating Association — through which she has competed individually — and the Jefferson City, Mo.-based synchronized skating team, the Capital Classics. The Capital Classics have competed nationally every year since she joined the team in sixth grade, Cook said. She added that most people are unfamiliar with synchronized skating, which can include routines with more than 20 skaters.

"It's very similar to synchronized swimming," she said. "We make patterns on the ice. Sometimes we do lifts — it depends on your level."

Cook said she looks up to French figure skater Surya Bonaly and Kar-

en Kwan, the older sister of Olympic figure skater Michelle Kwan. She said that Karen Kwan was good with choreography, an aesthetic she values above the more technical facets of the sport.

"To me, figure skating is not about technicalities," Cook said. "It's not about how perfectly around they went with a jump or how many rotations it is. It's more about the connection with [what]

the person is feeling and how well they communicate that to the audience. I feel like [if] you have music that you're skating to and you focus on getting all the elements that you need rather than making those elements fit with the music, [you] basically shouldn't have music."

She said that at her level, most of the music she skates to is instrumental, and her favorite routine is set to music from the film

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." Cook said she qualified for nationals individually with this routine during her sophomore year of high school but was unable to attend because of coaching issues.

Cook said she has been unable to skate since she's been in Kirksville because there is no ice arena in town, which is the reason she almost didn't come to the University. She added that she eventually chose Truman anyway because the academic benefits outweighed the disadvantage of not having an ice arena.

"The people here seemed more intelligent, [and Truman] seemed like a more serious school," she said. "The whole point of school is to learn and to improve [your education]. None of the other schools in the area seemed to do it as well as it appeared to me Truman would."

Cook said she hopes to compete

All eyes on

Rachel Cook

"I have other interests, but they are so pale in comparison to my passion for skating."



Photo Submitted

Freshman Rachel Cook, middle, has been ice skating competitively since she was six years old. Kirksville does not have an ice rink but Cook came to Truman because of its higher education reputation.

regionally later this year in St. Louis with the ISI. She added that competing in St. Louis depends on many factors, including a knee injury she previously sustained.

"The big test will be over Christmas break when I go back because I already have a routine choreographed and making sure the routine works, making sure my knee is healed and seeing if I still have the endurance that I had before I came here," Cook said.

In the meantime, she has been keeping busy with the forensics team and belly dancing lessons, although she is also considering taking ballet or hip-hop lessons, she said. Cook added that dancing is advantageous

for staying in shape because she can apply her skating skills to it.

"Figure skating helps with all dance because ... I have endurance, I have stamina and I have posture — I know where my body is positioned," she said. "When they're telling us what to do, I'm more aware."

Cook said figure skating has helped with time-management because in addition to going to high school and training with the synchronized team, she taught multiple skating lessons a week.

"It gave me something to focus on when I needed something to focus on," she said. "Since I coached so much, it helped me work with little

kids, and I got some volunteer hours, which is fantastic. There's something great about helping out people."

Cook also said that so far, she has met only one other person at the University who has figure skated on a competitive level. She added that when figure skating comes up in conversation, most people say they quit soon after they began skating.

"They normally say something along the lines of, 'Oh, that's cool. I did that when I was 5,'" she said. "Honestly, it's kind of sad because figure skating has been the love of my life ... and a passion. It doesn't seem to me that a lot of people have that in a way that I do."

Group home-cooks bread for farmers market

BY PAUL BISCHOFF
Staff Reporter

A small group of young entrepreneurs at Truman are realizing the potential for big business in Kirksville.

About seven weeks ago, the group began baking homemade bread and taking it to the farmers market in downtown Kirksville every Saturday to sell. What started as a couple and a kitchen oven is now growing into a profitable enterprise for Truman graduate student Jerry Jones and his wife, Michelle.

"Michelle and I had been baking a lot of bread recently, and we were just thinking, 'We should go down to the farmers market,'" Jones said. "But we didn't know how it really worked, so we asked Sam [Pounders] and Eric [Tumminia] about it to see if they would know."

Senior Sam Pounders and English professor Eric Tumminia were enticed by the idea.

"We had gotten back from a bike trip this summer and had been inspired by a lot of the farmers markets that we'd seen on the west coast and a lot of the young people that were really there," Pounders said. "So when they said, 'We want to do a farmers market,' I was like, 'Yeah, I'm in. I would love to do that.' There was such a positive response at the farmers market. We sold out."

The group has organized a small operation and set its business into motion. Ingredients are purchased at Hy-Vee or the local Mennonite market. Most of the baking takes place in home kitchens, producing about 50 loaves of bread every week. The work typically



Mayank Dhungana/Index

Senior Brett Wiley sells bread to Kirksville resident Tim Fender Saturday morning out of a trunk because of inclement weather at the farmers market.

starts by soaking ingredients on Wednesday, baking on Thursday and Friday, then selling on Saturday.

"We wake up at 4:30 [a.m.], get there by 5:15 [a.m.] and usually sell out by 10:30 [a.m.] every day," Pounders said. "The farmers market doesn't have any restrictions on if you are baking at home, but ... if we wanted to sell you bread outside of the market set-

ting, we would have to have a full-scale commercial kitchen."

The team bakes numerous types of breads, bagels and baguettes: oatmeal raisin, nine-grain whole-wheat, rustic white, sourdough rye, flax seed, scones, bagels, granola, whole-wheat sourdough, pumpernickel, black bread, rye, ciabatta, brioche, focaccia, biscotti, pretzels, challah and their signature

product, the power muffin.

"A power muffin is a hardy whole-wheat multigrain muffin sweetened with molasses, and it has a lot of bran in it," Tumminia said. "[It provides] a lot of energy — lots of nuts and berries."

The entire operation is fairly low-cost. Most expenses come from the purchase of flour and other ingredients. Members of the team have noticed an increase in the electric bill, and their small, non-commercial ovens are taking a toll. A loaf of bread typically sells for \$3 to \$5, depending on size, and bagels, muffins and scones go for 75 cents to \$1.

"I guess the vision at this point is to have a place that we could bake out of that wouldn't be illegal — a commercial kitchen to sell outside of the farmers market and have open hours and share the space with other groups in the community," Jones said. "If there were any groups that wanted to pitch in on rent and use the space a couple times a month or a couple times a week, we're interested in that kind of stuff. We want to have folk foods and local produce or local farmed products from farmers. It might actually be more lucrative than just a bakery, we're discovering."

The team advised that anyone wanting to purchase good bread should arrive at the farmers market no later than 9 a.m. The market is located downtown on Elson Street between the courthouse and Downtown Cinema 8. It is open until the last week in October, then starts again in May.

"We're turning grains into gold," Tumminia said.

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