

by LEXI ROHNER

**BERNIE KITA, 77**  
BETHLEHEM, PA., PENGUIN FSC  
ADULT BRONZE MOVES  
ADULT PRE-BRONZE DANCE

At 72 years old, Bernie Kita felt it was about time to get serious about his fun.

"Skating is the most difficult thing I've ever tried, but it's also the most fun," he said. "It's very exciting, especially pairs."

Kita has five coaches, three dance partners and one pairs partner, 53-year-old Terry Williams.

"They're extremely supportive, although they each have rigorous plans for me," Kita said. "I tell them to fix my bad habits."

Kita's favorite move is a back outside pivot, and his least favorite trick is the back inside three-turn, which he is working hard to perfect. He trains an average of 16 hours a week and is most proud of a pairs show program he performed with double gold medalist Callie Harlan that contained seven elements, including lifts, spins, throws and a death spiral.

"I never thought I could do the incredible things my coaches have taught me," said Kita, who is often found encouraging other adult beginners.

When he's not on the ice, Kita enjoys his wife, Anna Mae, four grown children and 10 grandchildren, who all skate recreationally. Kita also takes ballet and yoga, goes fly-fishing, and is a city parks volunteer, coordinating Eagle Scout projects. During the holidays, he plays Santa Claus and has been featured on the local TV news.

**MARK TAMOGLIA, 67**  
SANTA FE, N.M.  
SANTA FE SC  
ADULT BRONZE

Mark Tamoglia discovered the fountain of youth for himself when he took up skating a dozen years ago.

"It's exercise, social interaction and some of the loveliest people I know," said the New Mexico resident. "I picked the hardest sport and I'm forever grateful for the experiences."

Tamoglia, who opened a personal training gym in Santa Fe 17 years ago, began skating when a nearby rink opened. He sold the gym seven years ago and now works for the owner. At the gym, he helps coaches and younger skaters with their off-ice training.

His coach and choreographer, Martin Levey and Valentina Salge, respectively, are also adult competitors who share his love for skating.

Serving as president of the Santa Fe Skating Club for three years, Tamoglia organized the club's first holiday shows and U.S. Figure Skating-sanctioned competition. He was thrilled to train with Sylvia Fontana and John Zimmerman when they performed for one of the shows.

"I've met so many people to whom skating is significant," Tamoglia said. "The adult skating camaraderie is priceless."

Though he participates in snowboarding, skating is beginning to take priority. He skates five to six times a week, one to two hours a day. Tamoglia also gardens and has taken up ballet.

While he experiences nerves during tests, remembering to have fun reminds him why he skates.

"One of my best memories was winning my first U.S. Adult Championships gold medal in 2010," said Tamoglia, who performed to Joan Jett's "I Love Rock 'n' Roll."

**ELLEN DEGROOF, 60**  
ST. JAMES PLANTATION, N.C.  
PORT CITY SC  
THIRD FIGURE/BRONZE DANCE

Although college, marriage, family and a career took her down a traditional path of life, Ellen DeGroof always hoped she'd someday skate on a big stage.

That dream came true in 2010 when DeGroof, dressed in a sparkling costume, skated with her DC Edge Adult Synchronized Skating Team at a qualifying competition.

"I did not want to waste an opportunity to prove I could do this," said DeGroof, a retired anesthesiologist. "It's the closest I'll ever get to fulfilling my childhood dream of skating professionally."

DeGroof began skating at age 8 with her sisters on a frozen pond at Haverford College near Philadelphia. A member of the Philadelphia SC & Humane Society, she continued skating in the winter until it was time to start college and begin her adult life. She returned to the sport for a brief foray into ice dance but eventually hung up her skates.

After relocating in 2008 to the Washington, D.C., area and more recently to North Carolina, DeGroof discovered a nearby rink.

"It seemed like fate," said DeGroof, whose beloved skates had rotted. "It's amazing to learn how remarkably reliable muscle memory is. My solid background in school figures maintained the fundamentals."

DeGroof has performed in two seasons with the DC Edge and continues to work on her moves in the field. Although there's a huge commitment with weekly practices and weekends away, DeGroof is proud of her accomplishments as the second-oldest member of the team.

"Earning the 2012 Eastern Regional Synchronized Championships pewter medal was exciting, but what mattered most was sharing as a team," DeGroof said.

