

by LEXI ROHNER

Josephine Lee, 51 and Jim Kamin, 55
Minneapolis, Minn.
Starlight Ice Dance Club, Pre-gold dance

Josephine Lee and Jim Kamin united as an ice dancing couple in recent years when Lee's husband, Kevin, could no longer compete due to his arthritis. Lee and Kamin commemorated Lee's 50th birthday by winning their division at the U.S. Adult Championships. In 2011, they moved into the pre-gold category, where they placed fourth.

Their coaches, Ari Lieb and Laurie Benson, keep the pair inspired and grounded. One of the team's fondest memories occurred in practice while performing the American Waltz. "Every turn on four, no awkward pushes, effortless ice coverage," Kamin recalled. "It was sublime."

The duo gets together for hour-long skating sessions during the week.

"I continue trying to match Jim's incredibly soft knee action," said Lee, the mother of two children, ages 13 and 10.

When she is not skating, Lee is an English and Asian American Studies professor at the University of Minnesota.

"How many workplaces have ice rinks where you can meet colleagues and students?" Lee asked.

While a junior at MIT, Lee became hooked on skating when a rink was built near her dormitory. One waltz jump and she hasn't looked back.

Kamin's love for skating took root at Bowdoin College, where his father worked. Passing his silver dance tests in 1976, Kamin's interest in ice dancing was rejuvenated by a physics professor in 2010 and resumed when Lee invited him to compete with her.

Kamin is a public defender.

Norie Kashimura, 42 and Tom Kohl, 55
Maywood, N.J./Wood-Ridge N.J.
North Jersey FSC, Adult bronze singles and pairs

Norie Kashimura and Tom Kohl joined forces in 2006 upon the recommendation of coach Vladimir Kaprov, after Kohl's first pairs partner stopped skating.

"It seems longer, but in a good way," Kohl said.

Kashimura, a pharmaceutical company chemist, served as a volunteer at the World Figure Skating Championships in 2002 and 2003 and has fallen in love with the sport.

"Skating is my life," said Kashimura, who skates six days a week and is a Basic Skills judge as well as a singles judge in training. "I didn't know

I could be so patient once I have a goal. I want to train and compete well."

She considers the three-turn her enemy, preferring jumps and spins, and would like to medal at the U.S. Adult Championships.

Kohl, a technologies manager at a large financial firm, has overcome numerous injuries in his decade of skating and continues to challenge himself daily.

"We're lucky to train in a competitive and supportive environment at the Ice House," Kohl said. "I'm privileged to have worked with several elite pairs skaters, including John Zimmerman, Artur Dmitriev and Jonathon Hunt."

The toughest part of being a pairs team, Kohl said, "is skating as one, not two singles skaters."

Kohl is working individually on his adult silver test, while he and Kashimura are progressing toward the adult silver pairs test.

"We are working on the split twist, but some of our practice sessions can be pretty amusing," Kohl said.

Sara Panzer, 42 and Rob Lichteefeld, 51
Atlanta and Lawrenceville, Ga.
Georgia FSC, Silver free skate and silver pairs

Having a good time is what drives the longtime pairs team of Sara Panzer and Rob Lichteefeld. They teamed up in 2004 and haven't looked back.

"Our goal is to keep it fun," Lichteefeld said. "When it ceases to be fun, we'll quit. And skating with Sara is all about the fun."

Considered the class clown in high school, Lichteefeld has always enjoyed being the center of attention.

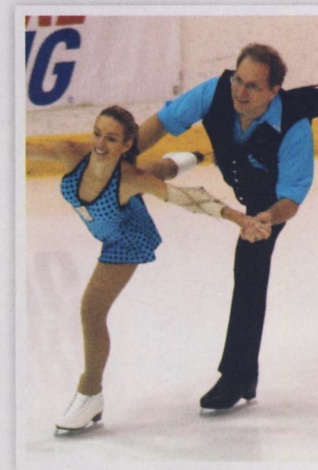
"It's more like showing off for friends," said Lichteefeld, who began skating at age 37. "I also never knew I could be convinced to wear anything sparkly or stretchy."

Panzer began skating 12 years ago because of what she calls a mini mid-life crisis. "I've always loved watching skating and skating on ponds as a kid," Panzer said. "It gives me a great sense of accomplishment."

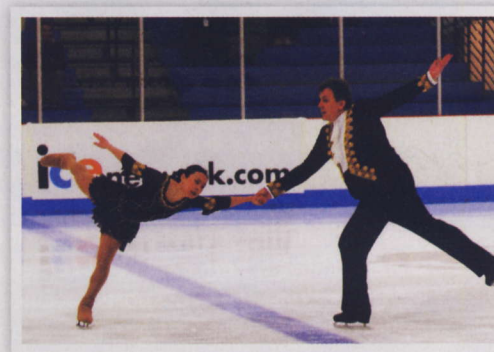
Panzer, an owner of a fundraising sales company, said relocating from New Jersey to Atlanta



Josephine Lee and Jim Kamin



Sara Panzer and Rob Lichteefeld



Norie Kashimura and Tom Kohl

has been a blessing. "I made more friends at the rink in six months than eight years in New Jersey," she said.

Lichteefeld, a software development director, enjoys like-minded friends and the exercise that skating provides. A club board member since 2000, he spent five years as president, among other board positions. He was the venue manager for the 2004 U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Atlanta.

"I have less free time, but I'm my high school weight," Lichteefeld joked.

They train six to nine hours weekly, with three hours devoted each week to yoga and work in the gym. They also attend Oleg Vassiliev's annual Chicago Adult Pairs Clinic. They credit their coaches Tami Mickle and 1960 Olympic pairs champion Barbara Wagner for their success.

"They're extraordinary people," Panzer said. "Barbara has so much energy. I've never met anyone quite like her."

Panzer and Lichteefeld have earned individual and pairs U.S. Adult Championships medals, but hold memories and friends most dear to their hearts.