Re. Marta Selmeczi, St. Catharines, Ontario

When creating a website for Marta's club, "Rhythmic Waves", I began to realize how unique this woman is in Canadian Gymnastics! I have no idea if she has been recognized by Gymnastics Canada, but if not, it is about time.

Since I'm more familiar with Rhythmic Gymnastics than other forms of gymnastics, I'm appending a separate sheet about Marta in RG.

The essential information about Marta's accomplishments is on the website: http://www.rhythmicwaves.com/ but I will summarize it here.

History

Having arrived in Canada from Hungary in 1957, Marta started an artistic gymnastics program at the YMCA in 1960. These gymnasts, "The Olympiquettes", started to compete in 1966 and won 15 categories at the Ontario Y Championships.

Hired by the Niagara District Secondary Schools as a part-time Phys. Ed. teacher in 1968, she began the very first "Modern Gymnastics" (now RG) program in the area, together with an artistic gymnastics program and a fitness program: the Lincoln Gymnastics Club. For seven years they were given the opportunity to train at Brock University free of charge, thanks to Dr. Lowenburger, professor of Phys. Ed. She set up, with parental help and the management of her husband plus advise from Brian McVey, the first fully equipped gymnasium in the Niagara Peninsula. It had two floors, one a spring floor for artistic gymnastics, a deep rubber pit for vaulting and high bar, a 45 feet wide ballet mirror, etc. This gym was handed over to Energy G.C. in 1991 when Marta began to focus only on RG.

She also started an annual Gymnaestrada in the area, inviting other clubs to participate, and regularly attracting more than 1,000 spectators each year from 1975 to 1991.

Marta's artistic team continued to earn numerous Regional Championships titles and All-Around Provincial titles on all levels. In 1973, Peggy Campbell became the first Ontario Champion in artistic gymnastics. Brenda Hawrylow, won the Canadian Elite High School Championships in Calgary 1976 and, in 1978, Celia Fenig competed with the Ontario team in Puerto Rico and with the Canadian team at the Maccabia Games in Israel.

Her rhythmic gymnasts won more than ten individual all around titles and numerous medals for individual apparatus in national events. They were

the first ever to reach the finals on the international level and earned a very respectable reputation for Canada. Seven of them went to the RG World Championships and participated in a total of 10 RG Worlds from 1973 to 1991. They also competed at several Four Continents and Pan-American Championships.

Marta's gymnast, Donna Kadwell won the first all-around Ontario Championship in the senior advanced category and also made the Modern Gymnastics National Team in 1973, and in 1974 Kelly Moligian won the Senior Canadian title in 1977, getting gold in every event; also first in 1978. Madelyn Beamer won "Coast-to-Coast" in 1991 and the Nationals in 1992.

Marta's juniors were National champions in for most of the 1970s and her Senior group were the first National champions (in 1971).

Marta was a national coach and also judged at several international competitions, e.g. at Calais.

In 1991, Marta formed the first all rhythmic sportive gymnastics club in the Niagara region: the Rhythmic Waves. That year, her gymnast Madelyn Beamer won "Coast-to-Coast" and she was National Champion 1992, Senior Provincial Champion in 1993. In 1994, Fiona McIntosh was Ontario Novice Champions with four gold medals and the Novice Group got silver at the same event. The Senior Group were the Provincial Champions this year and the following.

Aesthetic Group Gymnastics

In 1996, she travelled with other Ontario coaches and judges to Finland to observe the first International Women's Group Gymnastics Competition - a new sport, later called Aesthetic Group Gymnastics (AGG). This sport was picked up by Gymnastics Ontario, with Marta on the team working out the Ontario rules, and the following year Marta's team won in the young teens category at the Provincial "Red Ribbon" event. In 1999, her team won gold in the Open category; in 2002 they were first in the International and the Open categories

In 2000 her team competed at the first AGG World Championships in Finland and placed 5th of 26 teams from 11 countries – the best placement of all Canadian teams!

In 2003, Marta and three other club owners formed the Canadian AGG Federation (CAGG) with the aim of introducing the sport to other

Canadian provinces. She was also among those who, in Graz 2003, signed an agreement to form an international organization for the sport - IFAGG.

Awards

Several years ago, Marta received an award from the Mayor of St. Catharines for her pioneering work in gymnastics. In 1979 she received the Ten Year Service Ontario Federation Gold Medal for Pioneering Rhythmic Gymnastics. In 1980 she received the Ontario Sport Achievement Award from Premier William Davis and in 2005, she was awarded a life membership of GO.

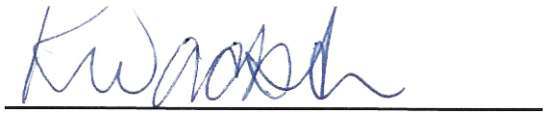
Summary

I hope that you have noticed that over a lifetime of coaching, Marta has **created many champions in the two sports of Artistic Gymnastics and Rhythmic Gymnastics** and that she has done that **through her own coaching ability**! She has not hired other top-level coaches to do the job. **She did this on her own!** And when a new gymnastics sport was created (Aesthetic Group Gymnastics – AGG) she was right there, coaching and creating **AGG teams**, which have participated in several World Championships, becoming champions of the provincial "Red Ribbon" events and even competing internationally at the AGG Four Continents Championships, as well as represented Canada at many World Gymnaestrada events.

My point is that **Marta is completely unique in Canadian gymnastics**. Other club owners may have achieved high results by importing high-level coaches from Europe, but Marta's gymnasts have reached top-levels through her efforts only. She has **personally** coached all these individuals and teams.

In addition, she has brought up three children of her own!

Please consider a special recognition of this very special person who has accomplished what no other club owner or coach in Canada has done!



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Marta in RG

Originally, what later grew into RG was part of artistic gymnastics, called "Optional Team Drill" at the Olympics 1928. As of 1948, this section of the team score was called "Group exercise with hand apparatus" and given separate medal standing in the 1952 and 1956 Olympics where Hungary was in the lead. And Marta came from Hungary.

Marta learned more about rhythmic gymnastics from Mme Abad, member of FIG RG-TC, on visits back home. She also attended many courses here in Canada, one of the first being a Gymnastics Ontario course led by Dr. Taylor and Anne Letheren.

She was one of the founding members of the Ontario Modern Gymnastics Federation in 1969 as well as of the Canadian Modern Gymnastics Federation. As of 1982, she was a member of the Technical Committee.

A major development in Canadian RG occurred when Marta convinced the Lincoln School Board to invite the world-class Hungarian gymnast Maria Patosca (6th at the World Championships 1963, 5th in 1973) to conduct a modern gymnastics clinic for Southern Ontario teachers in 1971. Maria was the first to introduce the ribbon to Canada. Marta advised Evelyn Koop of Maria's presence and Evelyn brought Maria on a tour of the Provinces to successfully introduce the sport to a wider audience.

Later in 1971, the first National RG competition was held in Toronto and Marta's team won gold in both the Free and the Rhythm Stick events. Marta attended the first judging course in Canada, given by Ivanka Tchakarova, from which Marta graduated with the highest score.