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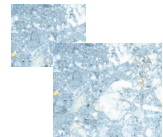
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THE CONQUEST TREASURES: BEAUTY, TALENT & TREMENDOUS ATHLETICISM

by Jon Winslow, CapitalClick.com



(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) REBECCA, TARA, JENNIFER AND LAUREN ARE PART OF THE 2004 ALBANY CONQUEST TREASURES DANCE TEAM SPONSORED BY SUNSATIONS TANNING

Is it a sport? Well, no. Officially, it is not.

Is it pretty clear these ladies are hard working and dedicated athletes? Of that, there is no doubt.

In fact, spend a little time with the Treasures, the dance team that performs during Albany Conquest games, and you will be surprised by just how focused and dedicated these women are. There are 25 members of the dance team. Nine are veterans returning from last season. The other 16 team members were added after a series of open tryouts was in the Capital District earlier this year. A look at the resumes of these dancers may have some surprises.

“Our dancers are very professional,” states Carla Domenico, the Treasures’ choreographer and director.

Domenico has been the Treasures’ director for two years. During that time, she’s worked with dancers whose backgrounds include law school, doctoral degrees, and teaching. In addition to stellar dance resumes, their athletic accomplishments include Division I soccer, swimming, basketball and figure skating.

“We keep our dancers working pretty hard during the season,” Domenico continued. *“Being part of the team is a lot of work. In addition to the physical side – staying in shape and practicing the choreography – there is lot of extra community service work that is required.”*

The Treasures hit the road often, appearing at a wide variety of events from Christmas Tree Lightings to Super Bowl Parties; as Domenico says: *“We want them out in the community. We see them as role models.”*

Because of the demands put on the dancers, interviewing and auditioning new team members is an important job. At each of the team’s three open tryouts,



HEATHER (RIGHT) AND TARA ARE TWO MEMBERS OF THE DANCE TEAM, SPONSORED BY SUNSATIONS TANNING SALON IN LATHAM

Conquest media director Brad Wilson estimated that over 100 women came out. For Domenico, the critical trait she looks for is passion, above and beyond dancing.

"It is actually easy during the interview and while watching the dancing to tell who really has a passion for dancing," she explains.

"You can get a feel from the things they say and the questions they ask. The right people come across energetic and gung-ho."

The Treasures dancers are an integral part of the Conquest's game day festivities. They perform several dances, each with a unique routine and costume. Domenico's routines are primarily influenced by jazz and hip-hop.

Before the game begins, the Treasures have an opening dance to pump up Conquest fans and then continue promoting team spirit with sideline routines during the game. At halftime, the girls per-

form a professionally choreographed show, which includes dancing, kicking and tumbling. In addition, the Treasures remain on the field after the game for a post-game autograph session.

TREASURES PROFILES



**ONE OF THE
NEW CONQUEST
TREASURES:
DANA CAFARO**

"Dancing for a professional dance team is something that I have dreamed about for as long as I can remember. It's hard to believe that it all started almost 20 years ago.

Dancing for a crowd of people made me feel like all attention was on me and it was an exhilarating feeling that grew especially as I got older.

While still taking dance classes at the dance studio and starting college I danced two years with the Albany Attack Lacrosse team and another year with the Adirondack Wildcats Dance Team. Both teams were enjoyable but there were small crowds and I wanted more excitement, more exposure and to be part of a dance team that was highly recognized.

I had heard that the Albany Conquest Treasures Dance Team was holding tryouts for their upcoming third season and decided that is the team I want to be a part of. Besides the fact that they were a phenomenal dance team, they were everywhere. On

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the radio, TV commercials, parades, schools and most importantly they spend a lot of time with local children. I put all nerves aside and decided to try out. It was a challenging experience which included dancing and an interview. There were so many great dancers there that all had something special to offer.

To my amazement I made the Albany Conquest Treasures Dance Team and consider this one of my greatest dance achievements. As a team we work intensely, practice several times a week and promote our team. I know that as a new member of the dance team I look up to the returning Treasures. They have a passion for what they do and present enthusiasm and inspiration to everyone. It will be an honor to take the floor for the upcoming season with the returning Treasures and a privilege to dance for the Albany Conquest Treasures Dance Team."



**NEW TREASURE:
LORI OSTRANDER**

What's it like to be a new Treasure?

"Being a part of this team is a great experience for me. I was on a dance team in college, and once I graduated, dancing was one of the things I

missed most. The Albany Conquest Treasures Dance Team gave me the chance to continue my dancing, make new friends and work within the community.

We work very hard at practice to make

each routine that we do exciting to watch. Our dance director, Carla Domenico, choreographs our dances and keeps us looking like a strong team! In addition to dancing, our job as Treasures is to promote the Albany Conquest Football Team by making appearances throughout the Capital Region.

I am thrilled to be a part of this respected and talented dance team. I am really looking forward to the start of the season and performing in front of thousands of fans. My advice to any girl thinking about trying out for the Albany Conquest? Go for it!"



**RETURNING TREASURE:
BECKY HEIBERG**

"It all started when I was three years old and I took my first dance class. I knew then that dance would be a part of me for the rest of my life. For the next 15 years, I took every class my

schedule allowed. Even during college, dance remained my passion.

Who would have thought the next step from here would be to audition for the Albany Conquest Treasures Dance Team?

I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Sixty other girls, who all had talent and something to offer, was scary enough but then there were the judges who knew exactly what they wanted – and I doubted it was going to be me.

As we all awaited the cut list with anticipation, I made it! Only then did I realize

that a lifelong dream of becoming a professional dancer may actually become reality.

It's already been two years since. All the hard work, practice and commitment is a tiny price to pay for a chance to perform and share something that I am so passionate about. The support that our team receives from our friends, family and thousands of fans is an experience that is a wonderful part of this organization.

Every dancer has so much talent and personality that it has become a privilege working and learning from them. Being a Treasure has shown me the benefits of being part of a team and that dreams really can come true."



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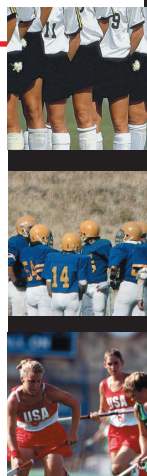
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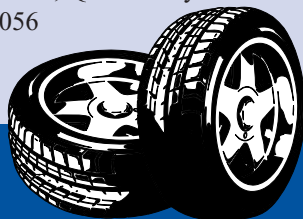
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