

Roller Boogie

Adults play hookey for morning whirl

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Round and round they go. Where and how they stop nobody knows. But nobody seems to even consider stopping once they strap on their roller skates and join the human carousel whirling around the rink.

The young DJ flips on a long-playing disco version of a Motown hit. The concession stand lights flicker on. It's 10 a.m. on any given Tuesday, and adults filter into the Bonaventure Skating Center in Farmington Hills to trade those nine to five blues for a whirl amid the disco lights.

Rink manager Virgil Dooley surveys the scene from behind the concession stand as the skaters, mostly women, lace up their shoes and give the disco crowd a roll for their money.

The blue-jean clad woman with her curls bobbing up and down as she rolls along is really a businesswoman playing hookey at the roller rink.

"I plan my time around Tuesdays," said Mary Casley, owner of Bolinas Reef in Farmington. "My business could be going down the drain and I'd be skating," she laughed.

When she first started skating at Bonaventure about a year ago, there would be about 20 others rolling along with her. Lately, she's noticed an increase in her skating cohorts. Sometimes there are almost 100 others skating in the rink.

THE PHENOMENA isn't confined to Bonaventure. Roller rink owners across the country noticed that their business increased between 50 to 200 percent over the last year, according to Dooley.

They chalk up that increase to advertising and radio giving extra attention to the pastime. Without actually paying for an onslaught of advertising

themselves, the owners are cashing in on disco mania.

More skaters are returning to the rink, reliving the days when a skating guy swung on a frayed cord around their neck.

Gingerly, stiffly making her way around the rink is born-again skater Dorothy McCauley of Hartland. Nattily attired in a red-checked blouse, jeans and navy blazer, Mrs. McCauley is getting her first taste of the sport since she was 9 and skated on the sidewalk in front of her home.

A phone conversation with her friend Jacki Saito of Novi brought out Mrs. McCauley's desire to do something different. Ms. Saito knew exactly where to take her friend — roller skating.

"I like the whole ambience and disco music goes so well with skating," said Ms. Saito.

She's a convert from figure skating who found that wheels can be as fun as blades during a stay in San Francisco.

"IN FIGURE skating you're skating on an edge. In roller skating you want to stay off the edge," she said.

Unlike ice, a roller rink floor isn't slippery.

"You're not going to zip away. You have to push. You're feet don't go sailing out in front of you."

With such advice under her belt, Mrs. McCauley clung to her friend's arm as they skated around the rink. Then she tried a solo flight hugging the railing and looking like she was wondering how she ever agreed to do this.

But by the time another hour rolled around, she was snapping her fingers and skating in time to "Shake Your Groove Thing" booming over the loudspeakers.

"I'm trying to cross over on the corners, but I'm afraid I'll fall," she confessed at one point in her progress. Then she smiled, much like that 9-year-old with the skating key, and sailed off into the colored disco lights.

The lights changed shades and tempo as DJ Larry Parascandolo promised the crowd a slow song. Parascandolo, 19, has spent the last two years spinning records and regulating the lights for Bonaventure.

"It gets you in with the people. You get a chance to meet a lot of people," he said between records.

Parascandolo speed skates at the roller rink and competitively.

HIS GOAL at the moment isn't to become a speed skater. Instead he wants to earn enough money to study business management in college.

A few of the skaters glide off the hardwood rink and over the carpet to the concession stand.

"I'm a star," jokes one of the women, standing tall on a pair of roller skates.

"Doesn't it feel good?" asks another. Dooley smiles and chats with them as he doles out colas and points to the free coffee.

He's been skating for 30 years. He started out at neighborhood roller rinks and moved on to dance, pairs, singles free style and speed skating. His wife, Sue, still competes and earned a silver medal at the Pan American games last year.

Dooley's seen the rinks change from places to take the family for an afternoon to joints notorious as the hang-out of neighborhood hoods. Now, he's watching as the rinks clean up their act and cater to businesspersons, the elderly and children.

In the middle of the crowd on the rink, Dooley watches as a gray-haired man with impeccable bearing elegantly glides through the throng.

William Hushin, 64 of Livonia, is a pressman for the Detroit Free Press until he retires this week.

HES BEEN skating for 25 years, taking lessons from champions who now bear half-forgotten names. He studied with Elsa Mueller, a champion skater who made her class take ballet before they put on roller skates.

Now he helps other skaters tighten their skates and learn a few new steps. But mostly, he glides through the rink with the greatest of ease.

You don't have to be a kid to take a turn at the skating rink as is exemplified by William Hushin. (Staff photo)



Proprietor Virgil Dooley prepares some refreshment for skaters who need a break. (Staff photo)



Pretty girls are always part of the scene at the roller rink. This one is Pat Latendresse. (Staff photo)



The sound is what counts for many roller mania fans. Playing the tunes is DJ Larry Parascandolo. (Staff photo)

Staff photos by
Randy Borst

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

WHERE WERE YOU last March? In a loooooong line for your license plates, perhaps. Well, you can skip the lines and order your tabs by mail until Feb. 29. (Leap year gives you an extra day to do this.) Save time and avoid the last minute lines, advises the Secretary of State's office. Remember, April 1 is the day new plates are required on your car. If you don't have them, some nice policeman will stop you — and it won't be to wish you an April Fool's.

THE SOUTH Farmington Baseball League seems to be convinced that spring is when a young person's fancy turns to baseball. Well, they can't help being slightly prejudiced in favor of the baseball diamond. The league will begin registering players for the 1980 season from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 1; 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. March 5 and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 8 at Farmington High School. Girls between 8-18 and boys from 7-16 who live in the area bounded by 11 Mile, Inkster, Eight Mile and Haggerty are eligible. (Gee, you can almost hear the umpire say, "Play ball." If baseball registration is here, can robins be far behind?)

THE OAKLAND COUNTY Health Division is providing two free immunization clinics for the county's children from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 1 at 1280 North Telegraph, Pontiac in the county complex and at 2725 Greenfield, 11 Mile and Catalpa in Southfield.

Any child who is inadequately immunized may be brought to the clinic at these hours. Parents should bring all records of previous immunizations as well as the letter received from the school indicating immunizations needed. Immunization WON'T be given without a parent present to sign consent forms. Anyone with questions on immunizations should call the county health division's nurse on call, 858-1406. The Farmington district has a March 3 exclusion deadline for students who haven't submitted a record of adequate immunizations. This affects children in grade 10 and five.

THE FOLKS at Dan Yessian Associates are busy hyping their new disc, the firm's first commercial 45 to be released late this month. It features Sherry Fox singing to Yessian's music. The title? "Let's Go Back." (It figures it's an appropriate title for an election year.)

THE METRO West Chapter of the Michigan

Steelhead and Salmon Fishermans' Association is having a fishing clinic from noon until 5 p.m. March 2 at the Melvin G. Bailey Recreation Center, Ford Road directly behind the Westland City Hall. The clinic will cover all methods of stream fishing for steelhead trout and salmon. Chapter members will speak on such topics as stream equipment, rods, reels, drift baits, spinner making, trolling methods, best lures and attractors, down riggers, electronic equipment and rod building.

Door prizes of fishing tackle will be awarded to lucky anglers attending the clinic. The United States Coast Guard will have a representative on hand to impart boating safety information and show a movie on the topic.

THE VOYAGERS Singles will host attorney Levon King at 7:30 p.m., Feb. 22 at St. Paul's United Presbyterian Church, 27475 Five Mile, Livonia. King will speak about legal matters concerning singles, and the new probate code. For further information call Alice at 522-3791, evenings.

CHARLES LAUGHTON'S only film as a director, "The Night of the Hunter," will be presented at 7 p.m., Feb. 24 at the Birmingham Temple, 28611 12 Mile, Farmington Hills. The screenplay by James Agee tells the story of a ruthless killer's pursuit of two children who innocently carry the secret of hidden bank loot. There is an admission charge.

FANS of barber shop quartets can listen to their music at 8 p.m., March 7 and 8 in Our Lady of High School Auditorium, 11 Mile and Middlebelt. The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (hereafter referred to as SPEBSQQA for obvious reasons) will send its champion Wonderland Chorus to sing those old favorites in the Hills. Proceeds from the show will be shared between the chorus travel fund to the International Chorus Contest in July and the Institute of Logopedics, the quartet society service project in Wichita, Kan.

The institute teaches children with speech defects and cerebral palsy to communicate. Tickets and information can be obtained by calling 427-5527. General admission tickets are \$5 for Friday and Saturday nights. Student and senior citizen tickets are available for Friday night only at \$2.50.



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