

POINTS OF VIEW

Rollerblading is in line with her idea of fun

In December of 1992 I bought a pair of Rollerblade brand in-line skates, so I could cross train for downhill skiing.

The first time I skated on them I was hooked. It was winter, and I was desperate for some kind of fun exercise. I was thumbing through Farmington's continuing education paper and found an in-line skating class. It was the beginning of my new job and exercise.

I had a laundry list of criteria for my perfect exercise; I wanted it to be social or solitary, indoors or out, and all year around. My workout had to be convenient; something I could do with my kids, or even on my lunch hour at work. I skated three or four miles to my favorite restaurant to meet my friends for lunch.

Well, in-line skating certainly fits the bill. It's aerobic and anaerobic. It's not jarring on the joints because of the smooth sideways motion. It's also a cardiovascular workout that is fun.

The continuing education program offered at Oakland Community College

taught me the basics and some advanced moves. It's lots of fun for everyone no matter what your age. You'll catch on fast if you have any experience ice skating, roller-skating or downhill skiing.

After completing the basic and intermediate courses, I was encouraged by the instructors to get certified as an in-line skate instructor.

So, in addition to working, going to school, volunteering through my church, and being a mother of two, I've now become a part-time skating instructor at OCC. Thank goodness for Farmington, my mother-in-law, who looks after my kids with love.

The exercise is stress relieving; the instruction is satisfying.

It's exciting and rewarding when a student masters a move that I've demonstrated. In addition to all of this? I've gained a new group of fun friends: instructors Mark Aisasa, Vivian Walls, Karen Kent, Chris Cook, Diane Miller and Rob Condo.

Developed by Aisasa the class is one

GUEST COLUMNIST



CHERYL MAHER

of the first in Michigan held through continuing education and is a college credit course. Classes are every seven weeks at OCC's gym. Day and evening classes are scheduled with open skating on Friday nights. For more information call the physical education department at 471-7717.

For those who want to try in-line skating without the investment, skates and protective gear can be rented at

MGM in Plymouth, Don Thomas Sports in Bloomfield Hills, and Nichols Ski and Sports in Dearborn. Prices start at \$15 per day to \$25 for the weekend.

Like walking and running, skating outdoors is invigorating and fun. I almost forgot to mention, you can pass people on foot with amazing speed. In nice weather any smooth dry surface will do as long as the pavement is dry — even in the winter.

Many parks allow skating including Mayberry, Kensington, Hines and Huron Metro Parks, Levagood and Ford Woods in Dearborn.

Using a para-sail is another fun outdoor activity with your in-line skates.

Indoor skating can be done at U.S. Blades in West Bloomfield, and Roll at the Dome in the Pontiac Silverdome.

Also Mark Farnen, president of the City Rollers Skate, offers open skating at the Michigan State Fair Ground on Tuesday nights. He can be reached at 824-0011. Skating lessons, hockey, ob-

stacle courses and ramps are available. I've tried the ramps.

It looks like I'm not the only in-line skate enthusiast. According to Rollerblade, the sport has grown from 20,000 skates sold in 1980 to 6.2 million skaters in 1990. They now report just over 11 million skaters.

Watch your local news, Camp Rollerblade is coming to town early in summer. It will feature skate clinics, hockey, ramps, and races for novice and expert skaters. There will be free-style competition, and a ski and skate race using downhill ski gates. So, grab your protective gear and your skates, and come join the excitement.

For more information call the International In-line Skating Association at 1-800-FORIIISA.

Cheryl Maher is a Farmington Hills resident, working mother of two toddlers, an OCC student and a volunteer at Trinity Episcopal Church in Farmington Hills.

Anti-OBEers off course in aiming at education

The anti-OBE crowd has the wrong target when it blisters state education bureaucrats and school superintendents over Outcomes-Based Education.

Anti-OBE types have been dominating radio talk shows and letters to the editor columns, passing themselves off as local parents concerned about school quality. In fact, they're taking their cues from Phyllis Schlafly, the very conservative Eagle Forum lady from Alton, Ill.

Their targets should be General Motors, General Electric and Gen. Eisenhower.

The anti-OBEers are different from the evangelical fundamentalists who attack the Michigan Model health curriculum as a tool of witchcraft and Satan. Phil Power has frequently deplored the anti-OBE ideas as irrelevant, more concerned with "inputs" —

how many Carnegie units of English, math and so on a kid slugs through — rather than with "outputs" — what a kid actually learns.

The anti-OBE litany goes like this: OBE fosters "cooperative learning" and group grades while stifling individuals and fostering globalism; OBE's "decision-making classroom technique" and "critical thinking" mislead children, who should be absorbing the religious values their parents want to teach them; "self-esteem" is naughty; and so on.

They emphasize drill and practice, phonics and, above all, Parental Authority.

They must have thrown a fit at syndicated columnist Mary McGroarty's description of General Motors' Saturn plant:

"Spring Hill is not just a car, it's a whole way of life... where GM execu-



TIM RICHARD

tives and UAW professionals work in partnership... Spring Hill's premise is that happy workers make better products... because they are making their own decisions, every step of the way. They have 15-member teams that have great latitude and great responsibility."

They probably went ballistic at the recent business story about GE, the

company that nurtured Ronald Reagan. GE is totally committed to the team approach — financiers, accountants, engineers and marketing gurus all working in teams to reach a global market.

And we know they don't like Ike. Dwight D. Eisenhower, before becoming president, penned "Crusade in Europe" in which he laid bare the strategies of himself, Chief of Staff George Marshall and the Allies who won World War II in Europe and North Africa. Rereading Ike, I was fascinated by the many parallels between his style of leadership and Outcomes-Based Education.

"(Marshall) insisted that his principal assistants should think and act on their own conclusions in their own spheres of responsibility, a doctrine emphasized in our Army schools but too little practiced in peacetime."

That's what OBE calls critical thinking — making decisions on your own. American generals operated far differently from the British, Ike said.

"The American doctrine has always been to assign a theater commander a mission, to provide him with a definite amount of force, and then to interfere as little as possible in the execution of his plans."

The irascible Briton, Montgomery, "separated himself habitually from his staff" and would walk into an Allied conference with his personal plan and expect everyone to bow. Ike, as supreme Allied commander, would tap all his officers' knowledge and develop a plan cooperatively. Thank God, Ike prevailed.

Outcomes-Based Education makes good business sense, good military sense and good common sense. And it has for at least 50 years.

Proposal A passage attacks taxes, not school quality

In the aftermath of Proposal A's unexpected landslide victory, some observations on the Michigan political system:

First, as to history. Last week's vote to shift support for schools from local property tax millage to statewide sales tax receipts ended a long, long effort to fix the basis of Michigan's tax system.

Our over-reliance on the value of real property as the best index of a family's ability to pay goes back to the Middle Ages, when land was the only asset worth talking about. Our history as a predominantly farm state in the 19th Century contributed to the assumption that property ownership defined a family's stake in the economy and, roughly, determined its ability to pay taxes.

But as time ran on, the absurdities of a tax system skewed toward real property began to show up. Retired senior citizens, living in a house they could afford while working, found they no longer could make tax payments. Farmers living near the rapidly developing suburbs suddenly found their land taxed not at its value as a farm but in anticipation of development. The final rupture of a discredited system came about when suburbanites by the tens of thousands found their assessments rising at double-digit rates.

At bottom, the real point of Proposal A was to undo as outdated an unfair taxation system that relied excessively on the value of real property. Hooray!

Second, as to political demographics. Make no mistake about it: This election was decided for good when voters living in the suburbs served by this newspaper concluded that a tax shift was inevitable and that the only choice was between an increased sales tax and higher income taxes.

The numbers are conclusive. We have seen two prior efforts to vote tax changes; both were killed by suburban opposition.

In 1992, when voters in Oakland County voted on Proposal C (Cut 'n' Cap), the vote was 42 percent for and 58 percent against. And in 1993, when that Proposal A was on the ballot, the local vote was 35 percent for and 65 percent against.

But the March 15 vote was quite different. Voters in Oakland County approved the sales tax increase in Proposal A by 68 to 32 percent. Why the turnaround? Simple. There is nothing that folks in Michigan dislike more than income tax increases. As long as advocates



PHILIP POWER

could keep the focus on the idea that Proposal A was a vote between increasing the sales tax and the income tax, they were home free.

I remember when in 1972 a labor-liberal alliance tried to override the provision in the Michigan Constitution forbidding the graduated income tax. The effort lost by more than 2-1. But what was so striking to me was that it lost the biggest in blue-collar communities with large numbers of union households. It doesn't make any difference whether people are working class or middle class: Nobody likes to see his or her hard-earned income taxed in one big chunk.

Third, as to future trends. Bear this in mind: Things are seldom what they seem.

Has Gov. John Engler fulfilled his 1990 campaign promise to cut taxes big? No. He did provide over a big and worthwhile tax shift, but you won't find that kind of language in his advertising this fall.

Has Michigan found at last a stable source of school revenue? Not at all. One problem with the sales tax on discretionary consumption is that it can oscillate with the economy. Already some experts are talking about a \$500 million shortfall in a couple of years.

Will the schools improve as a result of the passage of Proposal A? Not necessarily. All Proposal A did was to shift financial support for the schools from the local millage to state sales tax revenue. In and of itself, this has done nothing whatsoever for school quality.

The bottom line: Last week Michigan voters took a big step toward fixing a bad tax system. That's about all.

Phil Power is chairman of the company that owns this newspaper. You can leave a message for him by calling on a Touch-Tone phone at (313) 953-2047, mailbox 1880.



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