

# editorial opinion

## Getting back in shape with very little finesse

My feet squirmed in the tight-fitting figure skates. Taking a deep breath, I stood up and readied myself for the challenge of the decade.

The last time a pair of ice skates graced my feet was 18 years ago. I was 13 and wasn't what one would label a hot-shot skater. But, in the name of good health, I recently decided to don a pair of skates.

Being tied to a desk is ruinous to the health. During the warmer months, a bicycle keeps the arteries free of rust. Ice skating was the safest activity I could think of to keep the heart pumping during the winter months.

A rink manager once told me skating was good for a person's health. Being rather cynical, I figured he was just spreading gossip to boost his own business. But after two years of deliberation, I decided to give it a shot.

So, about two weeks ago, I humbly re-entered the rink.

Things haven't changed much on the recreational skating scene. A lot of kids were hanging around, all looking like they were having a good time and skating with what I found to be an unconcerting air of confidence.

### I SLITHERED ONTO THE ICE.

What? Could it be true that after these many years ice was more slippery? I know that ice skating is much more popular than in the past. Perhaps the increased popularity caused advocates to produce slippery ice, I told myself.

Being prudent, I started out slowly—so very slowly.

I creaked along, wondering if I would make it full circle. Some kid half my size and a quarter my age whizzed by. I rocked precariously, fighting to maintain my balance.

Whoosh, whoosh, the skaters sped by, magnifying the inability of unused limbs to navigate the ice in a respectable fashion.

Once around I made it. My confidence inflated a bit. My strides lengthened.

"I think I can. I think I can, at any rate I'll try," I told myself, mimicking the old children's tale about the little engine that could.

A smile creased my face, as I greeted fellow skaters with an air of confidence. Gosh it felt good. I breathed deeply and skated a little faster.

I stumbled across the surface. In former days I had skated with a pair of hockey skates. They don't have that wretched tooth-edged front as do figure skates. I had to remember that, or I would be sure to fail.



A friend told my not to have the toes ground down.

"If you really get good, you'll need the figure skating toe to do the fancy stuff," she said.

Sure. Sweat creased my brow. Feeling a bit more confident, I unzipped my jacket and thrust my hands into my pockets. Now I was getting that old form back.

My imagination dazed my senses as I whirled along the slick surface.

Here is the famous Olympic skating star, as he performs before thousands of adoring fans, I fantasized.

"Ladies and gentlemen, now coming onto the ice is that international hockey star."

I was really going now. I crouched in a racing position, letting my feet fly around that silly little rink.

Who said I wouldn't be able to skate after all these years?

"Come on kids, just try to keep up with this ice skater."

Turn number four loomed ahead.

"I'll show 'em how to take a corner in style," I thought.

THUMP, BUMP, BANG, SCREECH.

I lay strewn across the ice in disarray, having thrown caution to the wind and forgotten about the tooth-edged toes.

Not only is the ice more slippery than it was before, it's a helluva lot harder, I found.

Dazed, I crawled to the edge of the arena and pulled myself up with the aid of the boards.

Suddenly, it was very cold in that ice rink. I crept to the side, diverting my eyes from those who tittered.

I shall return.



## Hors d'oeuvres by Lynn Orr

### Energy crunch cracked

The snap-crackle-pop of the energy crunch propaganda by now is like a non-stop buzzing in our ears.

If Nancy Dickerson isn't reminding us to conserve for all it's worth, we get those embarrassing gas company commercials belaboring us about how much they care about the environment and the energy supply.

But for all their verbiage, those who make the backs of this country's power needs have failed to convince me of their sincerity. All I have to do is watch Christmas ads on TV.

The power sure is in our hands—and our wallets. If Edison had his way, we'd be dialing down every night but cranking the kitchen cupboards with such energy-consuming items as hot dog cookers, donut makers, and hamburger fryers.

If Edison was sincere about its energy pitch, why don't the big wheels take such items off the market, so consumers have to go back to brushing their teeth by hand?

IF SHELL Oil was so concerned about protecting our resources, why does it mail catalogs crammed with energy-wasting devices to its charge

card customers every Christmas? Obviously, there's a discrepancy between the output of the marketing and public relations segments of the companies, which really isn't anything new.

PR people seldom know what's going on behind the doors of those making the decisions. That's why our office is inundated with press releases that have little in common with what's going on in the boardroom.

For instance, Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. has been diversifying its interests by buying into films and other non-power businesses. Speculation tells me that top management wants to get out of the energy field some-where down the road. Perhaps in 1990. Michigan Consolidated Gas will drop out of the gas altogether. But why does the Michigan Public Services Commission allow a utility company to invest in this manner? Why shouldn't a publically regulated business be directed to invest in the energy future or spend more money on research?

Instead, we have the feds spending our tax money on grants to researchers to come up with alternate energy sources, and the utilities researchers are developing new machines to make

donuts. My grandmother fried donuts in a black iron pan with a large supply of shortening, and I guarantee they were better than anything that come out of one of these donut makers.

OBVIOUSLY, there's a paradox here. Whether it's intentionally designed that way, I leave to further speculation. I prefer to believe that the paradox is the result of public pressure for conservation versus company concern for profits.

There's nothing wrong with profits, but it seems that the desire to present an unspoiled image to the public negates truth in advertising.

I'm not advocating a return to the butter churn. I like my blow dryer and curling iron, but I refuse to buy or accept hot dog cookers. (I would like an egg poacher since I've never been able to manage an unstringy poached egg in a sauce pan, but I can manage without in the same way I can survive at lower temperatures.)

Perhaps if the public refuses to buy most of this junk, at least Edison will get the message. I'd like to see the company say Nancy her fees in unloaded water pics.

## Tinkering Around

by LOUISE OKRUTSKY

### Friends, hucksters and cars

"I haven't seen a place like Detroit where a car is so important," mused my friend from the place behind the wheel of his own vehicle.

We were wending our way through the northern suburbs along with other wayfarers who were staring straight ahead into the night through their windshields as if hypnotized.

"Yeah," I answered, wearily, "getting your first driver's license here amounts to a rite of passage."

"Hmmm," commented my friend whose experience on the road has been mainly out of the Automobile State.

I didn't pursue the subject any longer but dejectedly looked out the car window at the steady rain that glistened in the street lights.

I DIDN'T have a car and I was getting mighty tired of being shuffled around by friends as if I were an over-aged orphan.

My friend is right. Cars are a little too important in this society. Apartment complexes are built in driving distance, not walking distance from shopping centers, drug stores and grocery stores.

In my old home town, if you were without a car, you hopped on a bus to your destination. Or, if you were one of the hardy young, you could hoof it. I used to walk eight miles to get to a downtown shopping area and my only complaint was that the weather was too cold.

I'd walk in the suburbs, too, except there isn't any room on the half-lit roads for pedestrians.

The almighty car takes up all the room and its drivers never set foot on solid ground long enough to realize that sidewalks were meant for human feet as well as stray dog leavings.

But I digress. What I really wanted to talk about is what happens to someone who finds himself outside of the stream of activity because he's lost his car. That's tantamount to bucking the system and strangely akin to being quadruplegic. At first people are sympathetic, then doubtful and then they begin to treat you in the same way they'd handle a difficult child.

CAR RENTAL places have found a special place in my heart. I'm sure they're the logical successors to snake

oil salesmen. Once they know they have you in their clutches, they're willing to drive to drive a distance to make sure you, poor unfortunate, will end up paying for not being four-wheeled like everyone else.

Phone conversations with car rental personnel have a tendency to resemble "Let's Make a Deal."

"When do you need a car?"

"Today," answers the customer.

"Well, we have a car we can give you today. What kind do you want?" said Rent Four Wheels.

"Economy."

"Well, that'll cost you \$14 a day and 13 cents a mile. But we don't have an economy car today, we can give you a luxury car for twice the amount. What kind of credit card do you have?"

Aha. Catch 22 of the banking world. Credit. If you don't have a car and have studiously managed to pay off your debts and most of your purchases in cash, you're really bucking the system.

IF BANK AMERICARD has certified that you have the ability to honestly get into debt and scrupulously avoid paying for your purchases, you can accrue enough credit to be trusted to owe even more money.

I had forgotten about that little hitch. I haven't even applied for a major credit card. I didn't think I'd need it.

Another friend of mine, who has a good idea of my rather straightforward payment practices, likes to remind me that the great sprawl of suburbia doesn't resemble a Ham-tramck grocery store where the owner knows you personally and will trust you to owe him for the week's food supply.

"Get a checking account, will you," she told me in exasperation as she drove me back to work.

"I will," I said.

I will because I usually get bank checks or money orders and I live too far from banks and post offices to slink in and out fast with the necessary paper.

Getting a checking account now.

represents acquiescence to a lifestyle I've managed to avoid.

But the good thing, if there is a good thing, about sliding your car into a drainage ditch during a snow storm is that you discover that people aren't that bad. Friends have a way of appearing and making you feel truly glad because they care about you.

I HAVE discovered there are still Good Samaritans in the world. One member of the vanishing breed stopped to help me. His name was Bruce and he drove a late model Mustang. He thought he was going straight home to Wixom after the holidays but he made a few detours for me. He insisted on taking me to get my head x-rayed, although I insisted it wasn't necessary. Then he helped me in a fruitless search to find someone to get my car out of the ditch. When he left, after retrieving my belongings from the downed auto, he didn't ask for anything in return nor did he accept my offer of at least a warm dinner for his trouble.

If that wasn't enough to boost my faith in humanity, friend and professional cohort Harry Maube outdid himself in patiently helping me to get my car towed as well as sitting with me one evening to make sure I was all right.

What really made me count my blessings was my heretic friend who is amazed by Detroit's driving habits. When I confessed to him that I was a little nervous because the doctor had told me to wake up every few hours in case I had a really serious head injury, he volunteered to get me up by telephone in the middle of the night. Since my head hadn't stopped hurting, I decided to play along, figuring that he'd sleep through my 3 a.m. awakening.

HE DIDN'T forget even though he had to get up earlier in the morning than I. To really top it off, he and his girlfriend helped me stock my empty refrigerator and kept me laughing when I really wanted to go into a corner and feel sorry for myself.

Now that I'm a member of the Four Wheelers race again, with a car loaned to me by yet another generous co-worker. I have to admit, I feel more than relieved. When all my friends rallied together, I even turned down help in renting a car because I had already accepted one loaner.

If the weather holds up, I'm sure I'll regain my equilibrium.

Right now I'm looking forward to being self-propelled so I can plan my free time. With all this shuffling around, I haven't had the time to take an after-dinner walk.

## From our readers

### Student urges millage defeat

Editor:

In regards to the article on Monday, Nov. 21, 1977, concerning the possible one mill proposal for Schoolcraft College, I, a medical record student, class of 1978, would like to discourage any increase in property tax in favor of Schoolcraft College.

The article mentioned a request for a 25 per cent refund made by the medical record students, however it did not mention that our request followed an announcement in the Plymouth Observer (Oct. 6, 1977) stating Schoolcraft College boasts a \$95,000.00 profit for the fiscal year.

We feel our request was valid in view of our being disrupted in the middle of our program and moved to the Garden City elementary school that they call a "Satellite Campus." In addition to the move, the equipment we were promised will not be installed until Christmas holidays, leaving only four months to be utilized before our graduation. The Garden City "satellite campus" also has inadequate library facilities, no access to computers for a required data processing course, no anatomy and physiology (also required), no security personnel, or health care facilities (which have already been required. When a student slipped and fell in the hall, there was no first aid available, or provision for transporting the student to the hospital.) The lack of child care facilities and food services also have inconvenienced many.

Why should Schoolcraft College receive another mill increase when they boast profits now? Evidently available funds have been distributed unwisely, or else why would an established program like medical records (nine years) be moved from a campus where all the requirements for the degree program are available, to where, if the facilities are brought up to par the cost would be enormous?

The previously mentioned article stated "The medical records program is scheduled to move into a main Livonia campus building when one is constructed pending the bond issue" is directly contradictory to that Dean Ted Diebel stated at a meeting with the medical record students on Nov. 9, 1977. He said no plans are in the works to return medical records to the Livonia campus.

Many people are probably unaware that as a result of other bond issues the Applied Science Building was erected on the Livonia campus in 1972. This building was to house the medical record program, along with other programs. Unfortunately the Schoolcraft College administration has seen fit to remove medical records after nine years. Is this the kind of policy that

deserves more support? Was the medical record program moved to Garden City to provide administrative justification for a millage increase?

I for one, and I am not alone, would

urge voters to defeat any bond issue for Schoolcraft College, at least until they rectify the present situation.

MARY E. MILLER  
Schoolcraft Student

### Thanks from garden club

Dear Editor:

Just a note to thank you for the excellent coverage of our November club meeting on "Holiday Table Settings." It was a pleasure to have you

visit our meeting and we hope you will be able to use a few of the ideas presented by Nancy Fassefied that day.

MARION TANTON,  
North Farmington Garden Club

### Sweet Adelines send thank you

Editor:

The South Oakland County (S.O.C.) Chapter of Sweet Adelines, Inc. certainly appreciated your fine coverage of our show, "Stars Off to Oklahoma!" presented on Nov. 11-12, 18-19 at our Lady of Mercy High School in Farmington Hills.

Your interest and support in our charitable endeavor helped us reach and entertain an enthusiastic audience totaling nearly 4,000 during the four presentations of our unique barber-shop musical. We were pleased that you could be a part of that audience,

too.

We were delighted to share our thrilling style of music with your thrilling Sweet Adelines readers. In the near future, we will be proud and pleased to share a portion of the proceeds with The Oakland County Easter Seals Society, our official chapter charity.

Please accept, on behalf of our entire cast and crew, The Oakland County Easter Seals Society, and your readers, our warm and hearty thank you.

MARY BUGIS,  
S.O.C. Chapter

### Is Hogan a bad pop?

Editor:

It was with amazement that I read Mr. Hogan's Nov. 17 column and discovered that he is still living in the Victorian Age when a father was aloof from his children and often functioned as a family despot.

Mr. Hogan states that he spent his life competing with his father to prove that he was just as good a man in his mother's eyes as his dad was. Isn't it bad enough that we must all compete in the outside world? Must this also be carried into the home?

It is true that no father should ever become a strict "pal" to his son, for their talents, interests, and ages are against this.

However, a father can and must show his son he cares, that he is there to help, that he is a model the child can emulate. If the son is to learn, not only must the pattern be set by the father, but the father, of necessity, must be closely associated with the son in the boy's world.

By becoming a part of the son's work and play, the father can set examples for him to follow.

It's obvious that Mr. Hogan has no experience or knowledge of the YMCA Indian Guide program, which is based on the philosophy that by sharing com-

mon experiences, parents and children can understand each other better without sacrificing their roles as persons or as members of the family.

In addition, joining the Indian Guides gives the child another distinct advantage: he can see other fathers with their sons (which isn't a bad idea for dad to see, either) and learn things from these dads that his own father may not be adept in: archery, fishing, wood working, camping and crafts.

Through this group concept, dads assist each other in teaching their sons the elemental lessons of character, courage, and righteous living, and also help their sons make growing up adjustments just a little bit easier.

Mr. Hogan's excuse for not sharing experiences with his son evolve around not being home at 5 because he was changing the world for the better. Fine, but isn't the home and the family the basic place where changing the world begins?

Sorry, Mr. Hogan but your column was a cop-out, an excuse for not doing anything with your son that would show him that you are interested and concerned about him as a person, not a competitor.

DICK ZIMMERMAN,  
National Indian Guide Programs Chief

### READERS' FORUM

Letters must be original copies and contain the signature and address of the sender. Limit letters to 300 words.

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