

Proper clothing takes the brrr out of winter sports

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Taking less-than-graceful pratfalls on the ice instead of skating along can make for a hilarious cartoon episode or comedy sketch, but it can spell danger and injury for careless persons in real life.

Warm clothing, proper equipment and common sense can help turn that picture of bumbling idiocy into one of enjoyment this winter.

Proper clothing and equipment as well as attitude can make a safe winter for sports enthusiasts, according to local recreation and medical experts.

"Skating is easy if you don't have to worry about what's underneath you," said Gene Thibert, general manager of Midwest Skate Co. in Farmington Hills which assembles ice skates and roller skates.

For Thibert, pleading a case of weak ankles as an excuse to skip skating is just an excuse.

"There are very few cases of weak ankles preventing people from skating."

Good-fitting skates support the wearer's ankles and promote proper blood circulation, according to Thibert.

Skates should be between one to two sizes smaller than the size the wearer would usually take for street shoes. Children would take about one size smaller than they usually would.

A GOOD pair of skates should have

leather instead of vinyl tops, Thibert says.

When purchasing the skates, the buyer should wear thin socks so the fitter can see the amount of room between the boot and the foot, he adds.

The distance should be close enough so the shoe needn't be tied very tightly. This style of wearing a skate can cut off circulation and make it more difficult for the skater to stay warm.

Once the proper skates are purchased, the buyer ought to make sure the blades are sharp before skating. Protection for the knees in case of spills is also recommended.

With any kind of sport on ice, the condition of the frozen surface is important and shouldn't be taken for granted, experts advise.

Don't skate outside alone, suggests Dave Justus of Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department. Use the buddy system in case an accident does happen.

But the ice should be in pretty good shape this week, according to Thibert, in view of the cold weather the area is experiencing.

Ground conditions are important in sledding and tobogganing, Justus said.

While some of the saucer-shaped sleds can slide along on snow which allows some of the grass to peek through, bigger sleds need more snow cover for safety.

AND WHILE more snow allows the sled to slide along at a satisfying pace, sledders are advised to watch for tree stumps and debris which could harm them.

In addition to foregoing sledding downhill on a cafeteria tray or an inner tube, sledders should make sure that the end of the hill is clear of others before they push off.

Cross country skiing, a sport which requires at least a four-inch snow base, also demands that its participants dress to stay warm and avoid frostbite.

The key to dressing for cross country skiing is to avoid fabrics which retain moisture. Wool worn next to the skin allows moisture to work its way away from the skin and outward.

Cotton retains body moisture adding to the cold and increasing the weight the skier must carry, according to Chuck Spriggs of Benchmark in Farmington.

Spriggs recommends wool knickers with an outer shell of cotton to resist the wind.

Hat and gloves are also important to keeping warm on the cross country trail.

"Without a hat a person is like a thermos without a top," he said.

ONCE PROPERLY dressed and equipped, the safety factor is more a

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Sledding and other winter sports demand the proper clothing and equipment for safety.

Staff photos by Randy Borst



Covering up against frostbite is essential for skiers, skaters and snowmobilers. Steve



Jastrzemski models a wool hat that can be brought down to protect the face.

INSIDE ANGLES

BY LOUISE OKRUTSKY

HAVE A HOLIDAY hangover? The Fancy Farmers Square Dance Club has a cure for that — a rousing round of square dancing beginning at 8 p.m. on Jan. 9 in the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 12 Mile east of Farmington Road. The club's official first dance of the new year is dubbed "Holiday Hangover." For information, call 476-8771.

BOYS AND GIRLS from 7 to 13 years old are invited to join a cross country skiing class which will be conducted from 10 a.m. to noon on Jan. 10, 17 and 24 in the Glen Oaks Ski Touring Center on 13 Mile. The \$17 fee for the three Saturdays includes ski rental. For those with their own cross country equipment, the fee is \$8. Register before the first meeting at the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department in the city building on 11 Mile near Orchard Lake Road. For further information about the class, call the department at 474-6115.

WOMEN'S AGLO Fellowship, Detroit Northwest-Farmington Hills chapter, will present Beverly Glen, singing in the chapel at the Mercy Conference Center, 28600 11 Mile, east of Middlebelt, Gate 4 (blue door), in Farmington Hills at 7 p.m. on Jan. 12. Ms. Glen has appeared on the PTL Club and the 700 Club and has her own radio program.

LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS of Oakland and Livingston counties can receive help in paying their heating bills this winter through the Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency. The organization will determine the eligibility of those applying for assistance and make arrangements for bills to be paid directly to vendors such as Consumers Power, Detroit Edison and fuel-oil dealers. Depending on the applicant's income, payments range from \$125-\$200. This is a one-time only payment program.

The three major eligibility requirements include the existence of a heating-fuel-related emergency and household income level and level of the family's liquid assets being within program guidelines.

Recipients of ADC, general assistance, supplemental security income or food stamps are automatically eligible. Persons seeking assistance should be able to present a 30-day past due or shut-off notice in cases where natural gas or electricity is the source for heat. If fuel oil is used, the applicant must be able to declare need and prove use.

There is a toll-free energy hotline for use in setting up appointments and making referrals to other agencies that can help in paying emergency energy bills. The number is: 1-800-482-9250.

ADULTS FOR KIDS with the cooperation of Scott Colburn's Saddlery offers special rates in the Invitational Cup Team Rodeo at 8 p.m. on Jan. 16 at Joe Louis Arena. Flyers are available at the

Farmington Community Libraries, at Scott Colburn's or by calling the Adults for Kids message center at 855-3252.

START THE YEAR by giving blood to the Red Cross. The mobile unit, this time sponsored by WKBD-TV, will be ready for those corpuses from 1-7 p.m. on Jan. 8 at Mercy Center, 28600 11 Mile in Farmington Hills. For an appointment, call 474-9726 during blood-drive hours.

From 2-8 p.m. on Jan. 20 in the First Presbyterian Church, 26165 Farmington Road, the mobile unit will also be collecting blood. For an appointment, call 474-8170 during blood-drive hours.

(For all the generous donors who show up to either blood drive, I.A. dedicates this Count Dracula salute: bleh, bleh, blehblehbleh.)

THE 33rd ANNUAL meeting and educational conference of the Michigan Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc., sponsored by the Detroit Association of Occupational Health Nurses, will be conducted from 7-9 p.m. on Jan. 16 and from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 17 in the Hyatt Regency Dearborn, Fairlane Town Center. The program will center on occupational dermatology. It is open to all registered nurses. Registration should be completed by Jan. 12. Contact Esther Guldner, 453-0579.

FAMILIES IN CONFLICT will be the focus of the January sessions of the "Exploration of Family Values" series at Madonna College in Livonia. Margaret Sosnowski, a psychologist and commissioner of public welfare in Philadelphia, will discuss confrontational family relationships at 7 p.m. on Jan. 15 in the Science Lecture Hall, Academic Building at the college on Schoolcraft and Levan in Livonia. The lecture is free and open to the public. Another installment in the series, a film called "In Celebration," which examines conflict between generations, will follow on Jan. 22 at the same time and place.

THE OAKLAND SINGLES, an organization offering activities to singles in south Oakland County, will sponsor its first party of the year at 8 p.m. on Jan. 18 in Angie's Lounge, 30806 Orchard Lake Road, south of 14 Mile. A mix of oldies, rock and disco music will be offered for dancing. There is a \$4 cover charge at the door.

THE FARMINGTON Community Center will offer a chamber music concert series monthly from February through May in the center at 24705 Farmington Road. The first program will be at 3 p.m. on Feb. 1. It will feature Charlotte Merhserson on the violin, Richard Phipps on the cello and Fontaine Laing at the piano in a performance of Mendelssohn's "Trio in D Minor." The trio will also play shorter selections for violin and cello. For further information, call the Center at 477-8404.

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