

Even Dorothy's shoes don't compare to these gems

Recently, I broke down and bought a pair of magic shoes.

Oh, sure, some folks are lucky enough to find a pair under a toadstool or be given a pair by Billie Burke. But we're a long way from the Land of Oz, so I used good old American greenbacks to get mine.

But, then, I'm lucky. Some persons never do find a pair that fits — pay or no pay.

Actually, a lot of folks in this area have magic shoes. Now, don't misunderstand. We can't fly off to mysterious lands or make witches dissolve. We leave that up to Dorothy.

What we can do is wander up to the local arena, strap on our enchanted wheels and — Shazam! — we enter another world.

I KNOW, I know, you think Barnaby really has lost his marbles this time. Roller skating? That's for kids, right? Well, it all depends on whether you want to be a stuffy old frog the rest of your life or

have a little fun once in a while.

Frankly, I've opted for the fun.

Sure, it took me a while. It has been a good 20 years since I've roller skated.

Like many, I was one of those unfortunates who thought the legal age of an adult should be lowered to about 12. So by the time I got to be 20, I was super-adult.

Lots of persons in their 20s are like that, you know — stuffy in both mind and body.

YOU'LL SEE a lot of those kinds at any of the area skating rinks. They sit around drinking pop and getting fat while their children skate. They figure that's how adults are supposed to act.

Well, along comes 30 and then (yikes) 35, and a body gets to realize it's halfway through the game. No more fooling around with this adult business 24 hours a day. After all, I wear a tie for at least half of that time.

So come midnight, a near-miraculous change takes place. Very, very few of my colleagues have



witnessed this transformation . . . image and all that, you know.

At any rate, the tie comes off, along with the starched collar. On goes the tee shirt and the designer overalls.

Ta da, a new person.

Off we go to our respective rinks. My favorite is

Bonaventure in Farmington Hills. But there are many more — Skateworld in Troy, Riverside in Livonia and Skateland in Westland.

Come to the late night sessions and you'll witness many, many adults who for that precious couple of hours have shed their daily exteriors.

Lights flash and music rumbles as the hundreds roll around the rink bobbing and weaving. Some, even do splits and somersaults. I have yet to reach such majestic heights. I'm still concentrating on bobbing and weaving.

LIKE EVERYTHING else in the world, skates aren't what they used to be. Forget the wooden wheels. Forget the high boots.

The wheels are urethane, the trucks are nylon, and the boots are low-cut, ultra-soft leather.

They also cost a fortune. But what the heck! My feet aren't going to grow any bigger.

Besides, it was a cheap price to pay for a pair of magic shoes.



Tim Richard

'The Gimp' and other barrier tales

These are the stories of three handicapped persons. Two have happy endings.

The first is a Livonia real estate saleswoman who sprained her ankle, was on crutches for more than a week and is still in some pain.

"I couldn't drive a car," she told me, "and when I could hitch a ride, it was the first time I realized the need for a handicapped parking zone."

"I would get out of a car on crutches and realize how good it was to walk far. And what a helluva difference to have a ramp!"

She shops at a Five Mile-Middlebelt group of stores which have wide aisles. It's easy for her to get around there.

Handicapped parking, ramps and wide aisles have all been required by law, and the real estate woman said, "I'm glad somebody in office had the guts to make life more convenient for the handicapped."

Her one complaint is that the doctor and nurse who patched her up never bothered to teach her how to use crutches without blistering her palms and armpits. Otherwise, her story has a happy ending.

A HANDICAPPED gentleman named Paul Malasky called me from Bloomfield Township with the unhappy story of his experiences at a Long Lake Road plaza.

In winter, whoever plows the parking lot piles the snow in the handicapped parking zone. Shoppers leave carts in handicapped parking spaces.

People who aren't handicapped park in spaces reserved for the handicapped. When Malasky attempts to point out the need for such parking and the lot, he said, "People will argue with you knowing that they're wrong. They shame their way through because you're embarrassing them. One man called me 'Gimp.'"

So he is sometimes forced to park elsewhere in an illegal spot and is ticketed by police, despite the handicapped sticker in his lower-left windshield.

He likes the solution of Palo Alto, Calif., where disabled veterans were deputized and patrolled handicapped parking zones. They issued tickets and took Polaroid photos as evidence. In three months, the problem was cleared up — in Palo Alto, that is.

RUTH RALL PHILLIPS is a University of Michigan doctoral student in architecture who recently received a student achievement award for inventing a simulation game called "Jericho."

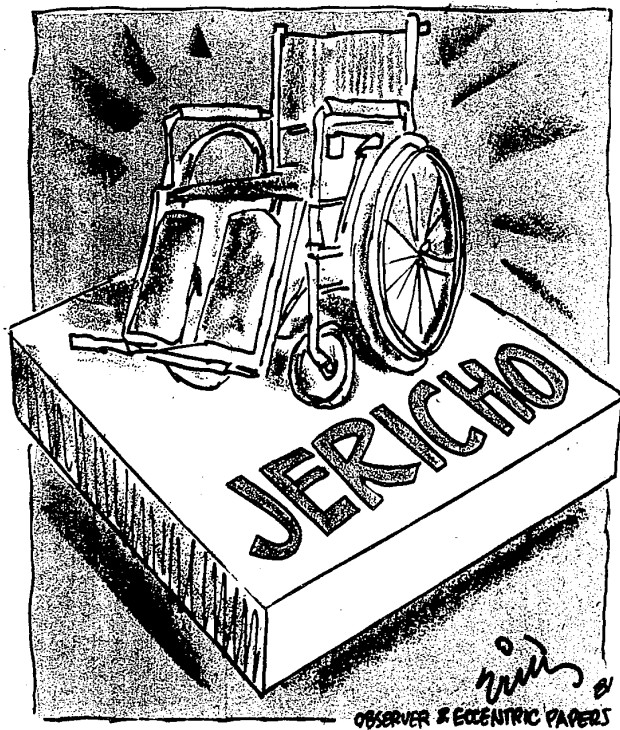
In her game, a person might be assigned the role of a young woman in a wheelchair. She goes with friends to a movie, but the theater is on the second floor of the building. There is no elevator. Her friends go in, but the woman in the wheelchair goes home alone.

Mrs. Phillips' idea is to teach students of architecture, medicine, counseling and so on the problems their handicapped customers, patients and clients must deal with. (Too bad the real estate saleswoman's doctor and nurse hadn't played the game.)

Other sample problems: "Your friends are embarrassed to invite you to go dancing with them." "Your date becomes uncomfortable when you have to enter the building at the loading dock. It looks like your first and last date with him (her)."

Ms. Phillips, who is handicapped, has presented "Jericho" (the walls come tumblin' down — get it?) at workshops for architects, city administrators, planners, doctors and educators.

I'd call that a good beginning toward a happy ending.



Can baseball recover?

This is a very unusual world in which we live.

Just imagine — while the government is attempting to cut or eliminate food stamps from the nation's welfare program and the ranks of the unemployed are slow in shrinking, baseball stars, whose average salary is \$135,000 a year, are out on strike.

What can you think of a fellow earning \$600,000 a season walking out on the dyed-in-the-wool fans and claiming that he and his mates are not being treated fairly?

And how would you feel if you were among those out of work and having difficulty finding employment to read that the ball players are refusing to entertain the baseball followers unless the club owners buckle to their demands?

How would you feel if your family had been using food stamps and was suddenly cut off, knowing that the ball players are complaining about their treatment?

AND IT CAN be that baseball now will suffer an injury from which it may never recover.

The players, through their agent, have been gambling with the future for a long time. This chap Marvin Miller is a cold-blooded individual who seems to care less about the future of baseball than any of the club owners.

While the players have gone out on strike and left the stadiums vacant, it is just possible that fans who gathered in the stands both afternoons and evenings will go fishing and find it more entertaining than looking at high-priced players. They may never return to Tiger Stadium.

AND AS LONG as the players are waging their battle against the owners, they are overlooking the effect of their actions on youngsters who are just getting started in the sport.

Each youngster traditionally has a hero. Fellows like Al Kaline had (and still do have) huge fan clubs. Others honor their favorites in the game of collecting players' pictures. What will they think now that their idol has gone out on strike and turned his back to the fellows who paid hard-earned money to watch him?

Years ago when Babe Ruth was at his peak, he



the stroller

W.W. Edgar

went off on a tangent and quit the game for a while. The daily papers were filled with the pleadings of the kids across the country asking the Babe to come back.

Finally, when the Babe's friends gathered around him and told him of the heartaches he had given the youth of the land, the Babe weakened and returned to his place in the outfield, vowing never again to offend the kids.

SO YOU SEE, the hurts these striking ball players are inflicting on today's youth could turn the kids against the game, and they are the fans who will fill the stands in the future.

It could be, too, that if the players remain out on strike any length of time, baseball no longer will be looked upon as the national pastime. The grand old game with its heroes such as Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Al Kaline and a host of others will become just a memory.

And all because of the greed of players who work only a few hours a day for six months of the year.



discover Michigan

Bill Stockwell

Did you know that Michigan grows the largest vegetables of any state in the nation? Our state Department of Natural Resources reports such giants as a three-pound, three-ounce potato; a 3½-pound carrot; a 10-pound, 8-ounce rutabaga; a 47-pound squash; a 165-pound pumpkin; and a 241-pound Hungarian squash.



Nick Sharkey

U.S. heard bad earful about Detroit

"Joe Louis Arena is only about half-filled tonight. Frankly, Detroit is a city in trouble with its dependence on the automobile industry."

I was in an area that was not blacked out from Friday's heavyweight championship fight between Larry Holmes and Leon Spinks. Before the fight began, Howard Cosell dramatically intoned this message to the nationwide television audience.

Whether suburbanites like it or not, "Detroit" throughout this country means the entire metropolitan area — not merely the area south of Eight Mile and east of Five Points. Problems of the city of Detroit cannot be divorced from those of the suburbs.

I don't mean to exaggerate the importance of Friday's fight. I could never accept Mayor Coleman Young's pleadings that purchase of a ticket to the fight was almost a patriotic act, like buying U.S. savings bonds during World War II. A boxing match cannot determine the fate of an entire area.

BUT I ALSO know that national commentators like Howard Cosell can help determine the attractiveness of an area.

Every city has its own national image. This helps determine what businesses will relocate to an area and whether executives will accept a transfer to a town. Jobs and talent translate into improved economic health for any area.

Like it or not, Detroit doesn't have a favorable image in most parts of this country. Unfortunately, the momentum gained by the favorable publicity gained through the 1980 Republican convention, the Renaissance Center and the coming of a Super Bowl has been lost. A lingering recession has brought to the surface scars which the city was successfully beginning to hide.

HOW DOES A city get an image? The sources are many.

Sports play an important part. Look at Philadelphia. A few years ago it was a city for losers best known for W.C. Fields' mythical tombstone marking, "I'd rather be in Philadelphia." With the success of the Eagles, Phillies, 76ers and Flyers, it's now suddenly become the city of champions. Howard Cosell couldn't say enough good things about the "revitalization" of the city during last year's World Series.

The "murder capital U.S.A." tag of a couple of years ago didn't help Detroit. A high unemployment level and the depressed state of the automobile industry doesn't help Detroit today.

For all of the image problems Detroit has in this nation, perhaps it's worst is within this state. When I lived outside I was amazed at the ill feelings out-staters had for Detroit. Except for an occasional Tiger game, most said they avoided coming to Detroit.

Since I have moved to the Detroit area, I have been impressed by the high regard most natives have for the city. Until the high unemployment levels of the past few years, most Detroiters did not want to leave this area.

There always was grumbling about the weather and the lackluster sports teams. Yet most seemed to grudgingly accept these minor inconveniences as the badge of living in this area.

BUT DETROIT has changed. Natives are leaving in record numbers for the promised jobs of the sunbelt states. This state must attract outsiders to be healthy.

That's why what was said during Friday's championship fight was important. One friend told me that Larry Holmes told Mutual radio network before the fight, "It's going to be a fast fight because I want to get out of Detroit."

Remarks like that can only hurt the image of this area. And that, folks, is bad for all of us. That's why, when Howard Cosell talks about Detroit, I listen.