

STREET SCENE

Inside **S²**

Batter up!

The assignment sounded easy. Answer the question, "Is it hard to hit a ball traveling at 70 miles per hour?" Jim Radebaugh was game. After all, he had had some baseball "experience" as a child. He took on the assignment and lived to tell about it, but not without a few minor injuries. Find out about his brush with fame, so to speak, on Page 6D.

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

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Floating: De-stress your life in a tube

By Janice Brunson
Staff writer

Floating, an emerging idea aimed at stress reduction, relaxation and entertainment, is alive and well in metropolitan Detroit.

In a small salon located above an optometrist's shop off Woodward Avenue, a dozen or so enthusiasts float daily in water heavily laced with Epsom salts that has been heated to precisely 93.5 degrees, the body's exterior skin temperature.

Encased in an enclosed tube simulating mother's womb, the worry, anxiety and concern of daily life virtually floats away as one bobs about in the privacy of their own miniature sea.

"It's the total mini-vacation, a complete get-away. It isolates you from the outside world," said Peter Panelli of Birmingham who owns and manages the floatation center, named FlotationEntertainment.

Floating on a sea of salt water is the ultimate in stress reduction, according to Panelli, who first became interested in the concept during the 1980s while recovering from a painful football injury suffered while attending Central Michigan University.

"It's the art of doing nothing," said Panelli's assistant, Ed Vetori who is in the process of opening a second center in Ann Arbor. Vetori has been "floating" for a year, originally drawn to the "art" out of curiosity and now a genuine devotee. Vetori's experience is typical.

"I THOUGHT it was wonderful," said attorney Andrew Broder of Birmingham of his first floatation experience. Broder, who legally represents FlotationEntertainment, wanted to satisfy a natural curiosity and end skepticism about floating.

"I was suspect going into this; I thought of it as bizarre, a fad," he said. "I wasn't certain it was something people would or ought to take seriously."

In fact, the average person knows little about floatation therapy. Many of those who are familiar have seen the cult film, "Altered States," in which a scientist who floats and takes psychedelic drugs is transformed into an ape.

The movie is based on a book that loosely portrays studies conducted by Dr. John Lilly on sensory deprivation in the 1940s and '50s. Using a tank constructed by the U.S. Navy during World War II, Lilly discovered floating in warm salt water with few distractions was relaxing and conducive to learning.

"It's diving deep into one's own mind," Lilly said of floating.

In the years since, floating has gained a certain measure of popularity. Such celebrities as Kris Kristofferson and Robin Williams own float tanks and tanks have been installed in training rooms for the Philadelphia Eagles and Philadelphia Phillies.

"WE WANT TO mainstream floating into corporate America," said Joe Dandy, who, as vice president for FlotationEntertainment, has assisted in designing and manufacturing a state-of-the-art floating tank.

The new tank, constructed entirely in Michigan, debuted at the Home and Builders Show at Cobo Hall in March where Dandy sold four models at \$7,000 each. It is a streamlined version of yesteryear's tank, visually much more attractive and featuring quadra-sound stereo and hi-fidelity video. It also doubles as a Jacuzzi with room enough for four.

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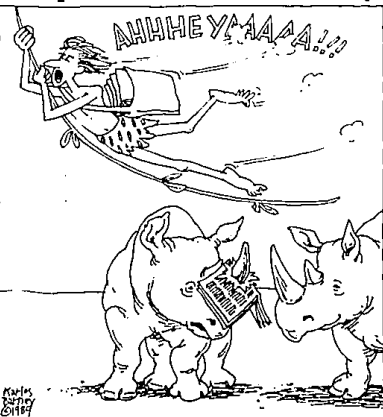


STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Peter Panelli, Mr. Michigan in 1985, soaks in a new streamlined floating tank he and Joseph Dandy are marketing. Panelli owns FlotationEntertainment at 4515 North Woodward.

Warp Factor

Karlos Barney



"I hate the way that boy delivers our paper!"

Yo, 'roadrunners,' start your training

By Tom Henderson
Staff writer

Listen up, couch potatoes. Have we got a deal for you. Follow our six-week training program, and we'll give you a great Saturday night.

This is Street Scene, right? Well, one of the better street scenes you'll see in Observer and Eccentric land is the finish line of the Redford Roadrunner Classic in Livonia Saturday, July 29. But we don't just want you to see it, we want you to be it.

First, more than 1,000 participants run five miles through the streets, then they dance for hours in the parking lot at Veteran's Park, adjacent to the Livonia YMCA on Stark Road, just north of I-96 and west of Farmington.

We can't work miracles with this six-week program. If you live an absolutely sedentary life — if your idea of fitness is twisting off your beer tops instead of using the open-

er — then six weeks probably isn't long enough to get you halfway in shape.

But if you own a pair of running shoes and once in a while go out for a mile or so — even if it's a jog that turtles laugh at — then this is for you.

Why race? Believe it or not, it's fun.

Most entrants at road races are not flat-bellied former track stars. Most, in fact, carry an extra layer of insulation around their waists, and they don't exactly trail smoke off their shoes when they hit the road.

LET'S FACE it. Running around the neighborhood can get pretty boring, even in the nicest neighborhoods. Racing occasionally is the reward for the training.

You're out there with other people, there's water along the way to keep you going, and there's food, music and beer at the finish line.

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Get in shape to run the race

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Week 1 - June 19 to June 24, TOTAL 6 miles						
off	1 ml	off	1.5 ml	2 ml	off	1.5 ml
Week 2 - June 25 to July 1, TOTAL 8 miles						
off	1 ml	2.5 ml	1.5 ml	1 ml	off	3 ml
Week 3 - July 2 to July 8, TOTAL 11 miles						
off	2 ml	1 ml	2.5 ml	1.5 ml	off	4 ml
Week 4 - July 9 to July 15, TOTAL 12 miles						
off	2 ml	1.5 ml	3 ml	1.5 ml	off	4 ml
Week 5 - July 16 to July 22, TOTAL 12 miles						
off	2 ml	1 ml	3 ml	1 ml	off	5 ml
Week 6 - July 23 to July 29, TOTAL 11 miles						
off	2 ml	1 ml	3 ml	off	off	race