



Kitty Elenbaas, fitness director at the One-on-One Athletic Club, takes John McLellan, a Rollerblade salesman, for a spin on the club's covered tennis courts.

photos by BILL HANSEN

Getting 'in-line' for fun and fitness

By Pat Schulte
special writer

It used to be that going to the roller rink was kind of a rite of passage as we were growing up. For many teenagers, the local roller rink was the place to be on a Friday night. Somebody's mom would drop off a carload of kids and somebody's dad would pick them up.

There was a certain romance about that time in our lives. Many teenagers experienced their first "crush" or "kiss" at a roller rink, choked on their first cigarette, or acted drunk off a can of beer split between three other people.

There also was the excitement of the "chase scene" as you and your friends whipped around in circles, playing tag, while trying to out fox the guy with the whistle.

These days it's hard to say what 12-year-olds are doing on Friday nights. Roller rinks, as we knew them, faded considerably when disco music was liquidated. And as for the standard roller skate, the one with four wheels situated side by side and sporting a toe stop, they've since given way to the "in-line" skates.

You've probably seen them. They look like hockey skates with wheels. They're faster and better able to handle rougher riding surfaces, like asphalt and cement, than a roller skate.

KIDS DELIVER newspapers on them. Teens play street hockey with them. Adults use them to train with, increasing the speed and excitement of the workout while decreasing the joint shock caused by running.

So what we've seen here is a new trend in roller skating that has taken people out of the roller rinks and allowed them to utilize the thousands of miles of asphalt veins that make up the metropolitan area.

And many of those who own these skates have, in the past, undoubtedly spun a few laps around that mirrored ball.

Well, guess what. The One on One Athletic Club in West Bloomfield has brought the old roller rink into the 1990s. On Sundays (5-9 p.m.), One on One kicks the tennis players out of their 25,000-square-foot, air-supported tennis bubble and the Surf's Up Shop from Keego Harbor provides the Rollerblade-style skates for an evening called "One on One's Rock and Rollers... A New Fitness Adventure."

"This is really fitness equated with fun," said Kitty Elenbaas, One on One's fitness and aerobics director. "It helps with 'cabin fever' by getting you out of the house and into a nice big area to move around in."

In its first few months of offering the program, One on One has been averaging 20-25 people. Non-club members are more than welcome to show up, pay a reasonable fee, and cruise around on their own skates or try a pair of the demos that Surf's Up provides.

"WE GET A lot of calls on these skates," said Kurt Manecke of Surf's Up. "So we worked out a deal where we provide the skates and One on One provides the forum to use them."

And just like the old roller rink, One on One provides some games for the younger skaters. Gone is the "Shoot the Duck" game, which is nearly impossible on in-line skates.

Couples skating? Go ahead, if you want. A few of the people there are either there to get a workout or to learn, or relearn, how to skate. The majority of the crew burns circles around those new to the sport, playing tag, throwing tennis balls back and forth and generally having a riot.

"We're really going to focus on the youth," said Ron Austin, general manager of One on One. "We'll have races, tag and freestyle games for the kids along with instructional skating sessions for everyone."

"I like Rollerblading because you get to go really fast and race against the other people," said Joey Slavik, 10, of Birmingham, while showing off the Surf's Up T-shirt he had just won in a race.

"This is totally RAD!" yelled Blair Byrnes, 11, of West Bloomfield. "These things are faster and more maneuverable than regular roller skates."

AND WHEN asked why he wasn't wearing knee pads like the other kids, 7-year-old Brandon Watzman of West Bloomfield confidently replied "That's because I hardly ever fall."

A couple of adults, including Austin, had only been on the skates a couple of times and seemed to be tapping on that roller rink style of the past while nearly remaining upright. And many of the skaters opted for safety equipment.

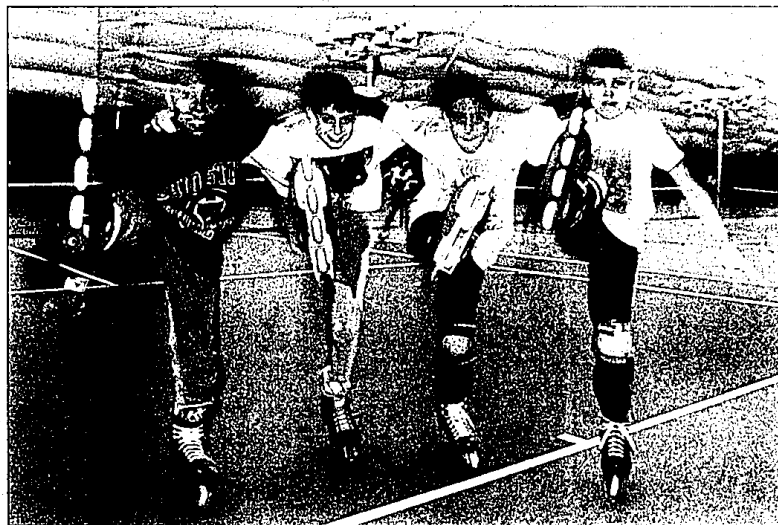
"It's optional, yet recommended," Manecke said.

Jeff Jones, 28, of West Bloomfield, had brought his nephew, Brandon Watzman, to skate. Jones, who used to play ice hockey, started skating with Brandon over the summer. He believes the new style roller skating is tougher than ice skates, "mainly because it's harder to stop in these things."

From a fitness standpoint, the in-line skates "are definitely a fat burner," Elenbaas said. "Not only do they work every muscle in your body, they also help healthy people develop coordination and agility."

Elenbaas added that the skates are a great tool for people who have had knee injuries because they are a "very low impact" training and recreation tool.

The young and the young at heart are having themselves a "rolling blast" in the One on One Athletic Club tennis bubble, showing off their moves and burning off the calories.



Just like a chorus line, it was high kicks around from in-line skaters Jason Hare, 10, of Birmingham, Michael Hertzberg, 10 of West Bloomfield, Aaron Cohen, 10, of West Bloomfield and Robby Everett, 10 of West Bloomfield.



Jason Mansour and Stephen Cohen, both of West Bloomfield, take a breather during the

Rock 'n' Rollerblading under the dome at the One-on-One Athletic Club.

ROLL 'EM OUT

PLACE: One on One Athletic Club, 6343 Farmington Rd., West Bloomfield. Call 626-9880 for information.

TIME: 5-9 p.m. Sundays.

COST: \$5 for non-members, \$3 for members. Demo skates available (retail cost of skates is \$140-180).

WHAT TO WEAR: Layered gym clothes. The bubble may be a bit cold at first.

CONTACT PERSONS: Ron Austin or Kitty Elenbaas at One on One, 626-9880, or Kurt Manecke at Surf's Up, 681-9100.