

Feature on Marc Sperberg, a junior who owns his own advertising business

# Lifestyles

March 17, 1992

THE REBEL YELL

8

## In-line skates: trendy, healthy and environmentally safe

(CPS)—Tired of cruising crowded parking lots on campus? Forget them.

College students nationwide—predominantly in Minnesota and California—are joining the in-line commuting trend. They are using their in-line skates—basically a combination of roller and ice skates—to travel to and from class, as well as for fun and fitness.

Considering that advanced skaters can reach speeds of up to 30 miles per hour, and they don't have to worry about parking the car or environmental pollution, in-line skates may just be the transportation choice of the future.

"I just don't like being inside a metal box (a car) on a nice day. It's the ideal way to see the cities and get a panoramic view," Team Rollerblade Race

Captain Dave Cooper told *Toledo Magazine*.

Although newly popular, in-line skating, the generic term for the sport, actually dates back to the early 1700s when a Dutch inventor tried to simulate ice skating for the summertime by attaching wooden spools to his shoes. The skates were called roller skates, even though they featured only a single line of wheels. Conventional skates, with wheels both under the skater's heel and toes, didn't develop until 1863 in Massachusetts.

In 1980, two brothers, also hockey players, found an old pair of in-line skates and decided to update them, using polyurethane wheels in a line with a toe break, all underneath a molded boot shell.

Thus Rollerblade, Inc., the

leading manufacturer of in-line skates was born, selling the skates out of the back of a truck to hockey players and skiers as an off-season tool for training.

In 1984, an entrepreneur bought the company and targeted a much broader market.

Industry sales have doubled every year since 1988 and now Rollerblade estimates that about 4 million people own in-line skates.

"It's growing like crazy," said Mary Haugen, Rollerblade spokeswoman. "Our main users are between the ages of 18 and 35. Athletes are still using them for training, and we're seeing a lot of college students using them to commute to and from class."

With the in-line phenomenon taking the exercise world by storm, researchers are

studying exactly what the benefits of the sport are.

A study conducted by the Human Performance Lab at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota found that young men who used in-line skates three times a week for about 45 minutes showed a gain in aerobic endurance and a reduction in body fat.

Another study, done specifically for Rollerblade by the coordinator of Sports Science for the U.S. Speed Skating Team, found that in-line skaters burned about 12 to 15 calories a minute during 30-minute workouts.

Physicians say the skates are a great form of exercise, but that the possibility for serious injury does exist if skaters collide with other skaters, cars or bicycles.

To prevent such a mishap, the most important skill to master is stopping. Retailers and physicians also strongly suggest skaters wear protective gear—wrist guards, helmets and elbow and knee pads. The most common "blading" injury is a broken wrist since it's a natural reaction for people to put their arms out straight when they fall.

The protective gear and the skates vary in price, but generally the skates cost between \$75 and \$330, with pairs of knee pads, wrist guards and elbow pads costing about \$30 each, per pair.

For people not certain whether or not to make the investment, most sports shops that sell in-line skates will rent them for a test run for \$10 to \$15 a day.

## Safe sex a phone call away thanks to 'Condom Men'

Indiana, Pa. (CPS)—Students who find themselves in, well, romantic emergencies at Indiana University of Pennsylvania can just pick up the phone and, voila: there's a Condom Man at the door.

In rain, sleet or snow, the Condom Men promise quick, confidential delivery. All they ask is that you call at a reasonable hour.

Darryl Landfried, Scott Overbeck and John Reiter, who make up the board of directors and act as deliverymen for the thriving company, say business is hot.

"We're an alternative to the drugstore," Overbeck said.

In order to deter prank

calls, the Condom Men ask for the caller's name, phone number and address, then they call the number back.

Overbeck reports that student response has been strong and that 85 percent of the condom requests are from women.

"We were very surprised by that fact," said Overbeck, who noted that his business doesn't advertise, and has relied only on features in *The Penn*, the student newspaper.

Overbeck said the trio's membership in the Association of College Entrepreneurs sparked their interest in forming the Condom Men, which has been so successful that they are thinking about expanding

to other campuses.

"There's a good markup on condoms, though I would rather not tell you what," Overbeck said.

The Condom Men stock includes glow-in-the-dark condoms, which Overbeck describes as "a kind of vibrant yellow," key chains with condoms tucked inside, and discreet matchbooks "so you won't be embarrassed if it falls out of your purse."

Valentine's Day saw a rush on Cupids with condoms hidden inside.

"Really, there's more demand for run-of-the-mill condoms," Overbeck said.

He said the company is

down-playing the exotic protection items and selling more "standard," or high-quality, latex, condoms.

The Condom Men, who get high marks from local health agencies and AIDS support groups, can answer most questions dealing with sexually transmitted diseases and provide literature on safe sex practices if requested.

Overbeck recalls his first delivery with amusement.

"It was raining very hard. A girl had called. When I got there, soaking wet, there was a poster on the door instructing me to slip the condom under the door. She slipped the money back. She was either embar-

assed—or unclothed."

Overbeck's parents, described by their son as conservative, found out about his unusual entrepreneurial operation about an hour before he made a local television appearance as one of the Condom Men.

"I had to tell them. It was a necessity. They were fairly supportive," he said.

Most people call for condoms at a reasonable hour, said Overbeck, except for a recent call at 4 a.m.

"I told them to go to the drugstore," he said.

## St. Patrick's day steeped in folklore and tradition

by Kimberley McGee

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by wearing green and throwing parties where green brew flows. Shamrocks grace the eaves and windows of local "pubs."

St. Patrick would be proud of our zealous effort to celebrate this holiday. He is said to have been born at Kilpatrick, near Dumbarton, Scotland around 373 to 395 A.D. Patrick was captured by the warring Gaels at 16 and sold as a common slave. During his captivity, Patrick experienced spiritual awakening and dreams which the destined saint believed were divinely inspired.

Patrick returned to Ireland after his release, became a priest, and then a bishop. He is said to have converted many Irishmen to the Catholic faith.

St. Patrick is known for many feats of courage and goodwill. He is best known for driving the snakes from the fields of Ireland. It's also said he made snow burn. The sun refused to set for 12 days after his death.

Irishmen have a long history of using alcohol for medicinal and other purposes. Whiskey was said to be a cure-all for problems such as cholera, unconsciousness and fatigue. It was said to give strength to the overworked. The Irish originally created the term, "hair of the dog that bit you." They believed the best cure for a hangover was a shot of alcohol to counteract the damage done the night before.

The Shamrock is a symbol which comes from the saint himself. St. Patrick was teaching his converts a religious story concerning the Trinity and held up the Shamrock to exemplify the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost with the stem representing the Godhead. The Shamrock also fertilized the balmy green fields of the Celts. Scholars have researched the tiny green weeds distant past and discovered it was used in fertility rituals by the ancient Celtic culture. The leaves were burned and the ashes were spread over the fields to enrich growth.

Although the true meaning of the March 17 holiday has been lost through the ages, in fact the exact time and place of the original holiday is unknown, it is still celebrated by the Irish along with the many other cultures that make up this nation.