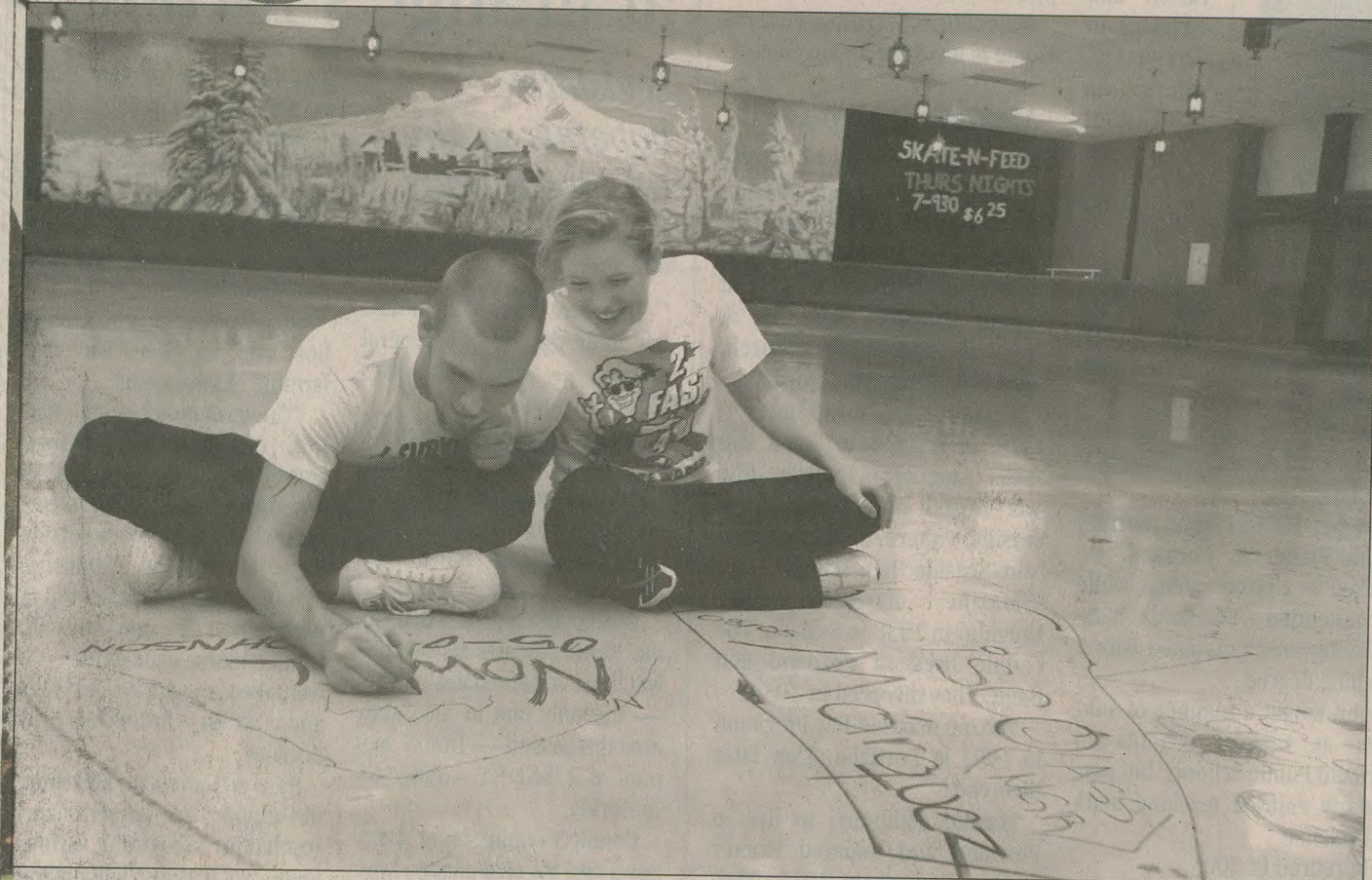


# Out & About

9.20-06

PHOTO BY CAROLE ARCHER - THE GRESHAM OUTLOOK



From left, Gresham Skate World employees Nowell Johnson, 19, and Misty Rollings, 18, sign their names on the original 1974 rink floor. The rink will be getting a new \$100,000 floor and will be closed from Sept. 24 through Oct. 6 for construction. Manager Leslie Mehrlich is inviting past and present roller skaters to come and sign their names for posterity on the old floor from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and from 7 to 10 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23. The old floor will be preserved under the new, smoother floor.



# WEEKEND OUTLOOK

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## Rink still rolling along

Claudia McPherson, 6 with pony tail, and Meianna Oeser, 6 with purple pants, of Portland, hold hands while skating at Gresham Skate World on Thursday, Jan. 2.



## **GRESHAM SKATE WORLD**

**For more information:** Call 503-667-6543

**Where:** 1220 N.E. Kelly Ave.

### **Winter Schedule 2003**

#### **MONDAY**

**Healthwalk** — 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$1.50. Stay warm, stay dry and stay inside. Exercise by walking around the rink

#### **TUESDAY**

**Public Skate** — 4 to 7 p.m. Cost is \$4

**Christian Music Night** — 7 to 9 p.m. Cost is \$5

#### **WEDNESDAY**

**Healthwalk** — 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

**Public Skate** — 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$4

#### **THURSDAY**

**Mom, Pop & Tot Skate** — 9:30 to 11 a.m. Cost is \$3.25 per child. Parents skate free

**Public Skate/Homeschool Skate** — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost is \$3.25

**Healthwalk** — 1 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$1.50

**Public Skate** — 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Cost is \$4

#### **FRIDAY**

**Healthwalk** — 8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

**Middle School Dance** — 8 to 10 p.m. Cost is \$5.50. No parents admitted. Student must show identification

#### **SATURDAY**

**Public Skate** — noon to 5 p.m. Cost is \$5.50

**Cosmic Family Fun Session** — 7 to 9 p.m. Cost is \$5.50

**Light Speed Skate** — 9 to 11 p.m. Cost is \$5.50

#### **SUNDAY**

**Public Skate** — noon to 5 p.m. Cost is \$5.50 per child. Parent's skate free.

**Cheap Skate** — 7 to 9 p.m. Cost is \$2



# Skate World w

*Music, lights and special rates help rink survive in changing times*

BY JILL FOREMAN  
of The Gresham Outlook/Sandy Post staff

This adventure on wheels takes place at your pace. The escapade starts when you walk in the door at Gresham Skate World and hear the pulse-pounding music of today's pop artists.

Inside, colored lights spin crazily from a giant disco ball onto the skating rink floor below. People whiz by at all speeds and levels of control.

It's almost too much to be patient until your skates are laced up and you can blast off to catch up with friends.

There are only about 13 roller skating rinks left in the state of Oregon, and Gresham is lucky to have one.

"We're shocked because we've been around a long time and a lot of people don't know we're here," said Assistant Manager Leslie Mehrlich.

Gresham Skate World opened in December 1974, and for many adults today it's a blast from the past. Mehrlich has noticed moms bring in their young children to experience roller skating as they once did.

"I hear a lot of parents who skated when they were in middle school come in and say, 'Gosh it looks the same,' " said Don Norlen, Skate

*"There are very limited things families can do, and this is a pretty economical thing to do. You get exercise and fun."*

KAY BROWN

Secretary and skater at  
Gresham Skate World

World manager.

There's still a mixed smell of rubber and buttered popcorn. Red shag-padded railings soften crowd landings. The walls are bright yellow. Iron lanterns hang down from the ceiling, casting a dim glow over the rink. It is in many ways modern (look at all those rollerblades) and culturally ancient (look, they're doing the Hokey Pokey).

Snack faire hasn't changed, either. Youth still clamor for nachos and cheese sauce, \$3, hot dogs and cotton candy, \$1, cotton candy, \$2, and licorice whips. The quintessential skating games are still popular as well: Red Light-Green Light, Reverse Skate, Couples Skate, Fast Skate, and Dice Game.

No matter the decade or decoration, roller skating offers a unique opportunity to be with friends and blow off steam.

"I like it because I fall, and it's fun when you're yelling and up in the air," said Emily Gilson of Gresham.

"I like coming here for birthday parties. I can eat as many hot dogs as I want," she added.



# athers trendier rivals



FLINT CARLTON - THE GRESHAM OUTLOOK/SANDY POST

**Gresham resident Kendra Coverdale helps 2-year-old Talyn Roberts, left, and Bryce Coverdale, right, around the Gresham Skate World rink on Thursday, Jan. 2.**

Gilson's friend, Miranda Schwabauer of Gresham, 8, celebrating her birthday, estimated it would be "at the end of two days," before she got tired.

"We like going fast and hanging out with friends," said Haley Cameron, 13, of Portland. There is a mutual need for speed among the youngsters.

"There are very limited things families can do," said secretary Kay Brown, "and this is a pretty economic thing to do. You get exercise and fun."

Roller skating's a relief for mother Barbara Haide of Gresham.

"It's free time for me," she said with a grin. "And I like to sit here and listen to the music."

Roller rinks abounded in the early

1980s in the Portland metro area, said Norlen, who has worked at the Gresham Skate World for 25 years. His mother, Betty Norlen of Gresham, was the Skate World manager before him for many years.

"Most couldn't afford insurance," he said of the decline in skating rinks. "Remember when waterslides were popular, too? It was too much liability."

The Gresham Skate World is owned by a California businessman.

"We're lucky to have an owner, who in hard times, and there were many of those, was able to front up some money," Norlen said. "He wants and believes in having something here that a family can do together."

"It would be nice to see more people coming to skate like they did

in the late 1970s and '80s."

In this day and age, Norlen said, promotions become crucial for attracting skaters. The Gresham Skate World has many different options, such as a Christian Music Night, Cheap Skate, Homeschool Skate and Light Speed Skate for older skaters.

"On Friday and Saturday nights we play a lot louder music, a lot more rap," Mehrlich said. "We let them skate faster, we let them get away with a lot more."

Well, crack-the-whip is probably still outlawed.

*Reporter Jill Foreman can be reached at [jforeman@theoutlookonline.com](mailto:jforeman@theoutlookonline.com) or by calling 503-492-5116.*