



BETH M. HOWARD

WOMEN'S Sports+Fitness

16-PAGE SPECIAL SECTION

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MARCH 1996

ON THE SCENE

When it came time to find someone to cover the burgeoning women's skating scene as part of our special section on in-line skating, we looked for a writer who's familiar with the many facets of the sport.

Beth M. Howard ("Wheel Appeal," page 40) fit the bill. She's been skating for four years and is the co-host of *In-line America*, the first weekly television series devoted to in-line skating, which pre-

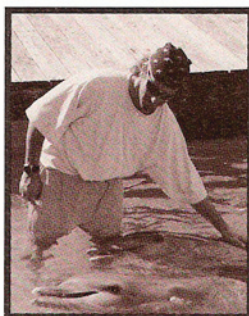
miered in February on the Outdoor Life Network. "I think there'll be even more offshoots of traditional in-line skating as the sport matures," she predicts. "Skaters will always be pushing the limits."



Howard, who cruises the beachfront bike path near her home in Santa Monica, California, is a frequent contributor to *WS+F*.

Many thanks as well to our resident skating expert Natalie Kurylko, who put together the skate review for us. As editor of *Inline* magazine (whose offices are just downstairs from ours) she knows better than anyone else what's hot and what's not. In "Skates That Rate" (page 42), she describes what to look for when you buy skates.

Santa Monica, California, provided the backdrop for our story on spring in-line fashion ("Roll Models," page 46), which was photographed by **Larry Bartholomew**. The weather was perfect, and the women we feature—seasoned skaters all—



were ready to roll. "Everyone who's involved in in-line skating seems to be really high-energy," says

Bartholomew, "so it was a lot of fun to shoot." The photographer, who used to be a competitive skateboarder, now in-line skates recreationally. His work has appeared in *Interview*, *Sassy* and *Outdoor Retailer*.

Karen Titus was so inspired by her trip to Patagonia ("Of Ice and Men," page 58) that on returning home to Chicago, she decided to quit her magazine-editing job and become a full-time freelance writer. "I knew I wanted to do something dif-



ferent," she says. "Going down there made me realize how much I enjoy getting out of the same old routine." An ardent outdoorswoman, Titus will travel next to blustery northern Minnesota to try dogsledding. "I keep waiting to be talked out of it," she jokes. She has written for *Windy City Sports* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

Wheel APPEAL

The fastest-growing sport attracts a wide range of women. By Beth M. Howard

Chances are you've noticed a big change lately on your local streets and bike paths. If you once had to compete with runners and cyclists for space, you're undoubtedly now contending with people who whiz by on in-line skates. And the flood isn't likely to let up anytime soon: In-line skating is the fastest-growing sport in the country.

No matter how you look at it—as the '90s incarnation of roller skating or the pavement version of ice skating—the

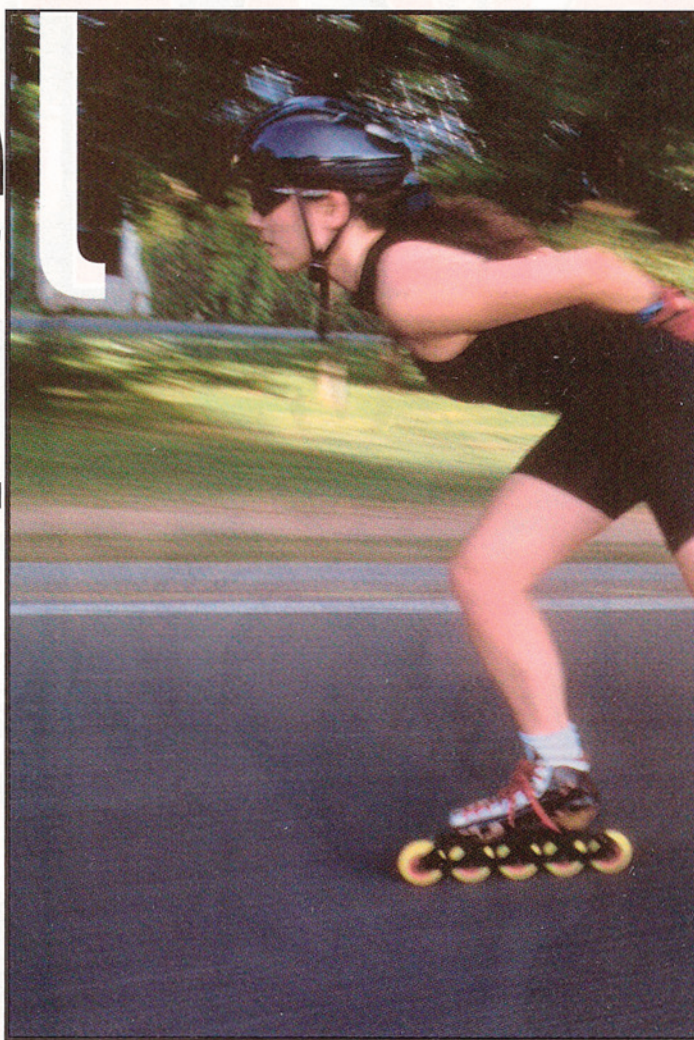
whom you talk to) in the next few years. Incidentally, the sport is attracting as many women as men.

The popularity of in-line skating has even spawned variations of the sport—anything from speedskating to skate dancing to roller basketball. The latter sounds tricky and is, but it's also exhilarating, says 33-year-old Rhonda Rubinstein, an art director from New York who started playing shortly after she bought her first pair of skates. "It combines speed, skill and team spirit. And you don't have to be a Michael Jordan to play."

You can do anything on skates, from street dancing to playing basketball.

numbers are impressive for a pastime that really caught the public's eye only five years ago. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, close to 22 million people were in-line skating by the end of 1994, and that figure is expected to increase anywhere from 30 to 50 percent (depending on

Whether the interaction you crave is competitive or social, you'll find plenty of in-line-related opportunities to get out into the world. You could, for example, join one of the skate clubs that are popping up all over (see "Skate City USA," page 41), an excellent way to meet fellow skaters and compare notes.



Join for the technical and moral support if you're a beginner; advanced skaters will relish the motivating camaraderie.

If you have a need for speed,

nity across the Bay in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park. "It was beautiful to watch; the skaters were so graceful. I bought speed skates a month later." That was three years ago. Last October McCown was the first woman across the finish line in the prestigious Athens-to-Atlanta ultramarathon, an 85-mile in-line race. "It makes me feel so good that I can pick up a sport at 30 and reach some level of expertise in it."

How about picking one up at 39? That's what Donna Vano did, and it wasn't just speed but the kind of extreme skating known as aggressive. Characterized by what many people might consider crazy moves—jumping cars, sliding down railings—this style of skating arose

you might consider trading in your four-wheeled skates for some faster five-wheelers. Thirty-three-year-old racer Kelly McCown used her recreational in-line skates to commute to work in New York City. When she moved to Berkeley, California, to finish her law degree, she discovered a whole speedskating commu-



when young, flexible, baggy-clothes-wearing skateboarder types started looking for ways to outdo one another. Relatively few women do "vert" skating, which involves dropping into 10-foot-high half-pipes, but Vano, now 42, is leading the way. "It's my fountain of youth," she says. "It makes me feel so good, even though I get smashed to smithereens."

Vert skating is risky, to be sure, but so is just cruising down the bike path if you don't know what you're doing—particularly now that skaters are out in full force. "In-line skating has become so popular in Los Angeles that it's like driving on the freeway," says L.A. denizen Malissa Thompson, 33, who skates along the beach. "And

people bring their driving attitudes with them. They come up behind you saying, 'Hey, get out of my way.'"

New York City poses similar problems, but the trouble is likelier to be real drivers instead of driving-minded skaters. "Garbage trucks and moving vans are the biggest obstacles," Rubinstein observes. "Even so, I skate to work. It's much more efficient, and once you start skating, walking is the most tedious, boring way to get anywhere."

If you haven't already discovered the joy of skating, now's the time. Whether you're a novice or an old hand, you'll find what you need in the following pages, including the newest women's skates and clothes that are ready for action.

Skate City USA

Here's a look at the skate scene in a few hot spots around the country.

Boston Blading

The Yankee spirit thrives here. You'll spot speed skaters training along the 11-mile Minute-man Trail, which stretches from Cambridge to Bedford, or along the Charles River bike path.

Skate night: Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. from May to October. Call the Inline Club of Boston, 617-932-5457.

Miami Nice

Some call it a fashion runway; in any case the skating path along Miami's South Beach is clearly the place to see and be seen. It's not unusual to spot beachgoers heading for the sands or waiters rushing to work on their skates. The city's skating groups aren't highly organized, but its streets and neighborhoods are skater friendly.

In-liners Love New York

A kaleidoscope of characters makes New York City's skating community the colorful place it is, and the best place to catch up with them is in Central Park. Its 6.2-mile paved loop offers challenges for skaters at all levels. Elsewhere, try the Battery Park City Esplanade or Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

Skate night: Tuesday at 8 p.m.

Call the New York Road Skaters Association, 212-534-7858.

Golden Gate Skate

The social scene is centered around Golden Gate Park, where flamboyant freestylers show off their skills and in-line dancing is the latest rage. The Marina Green sidewalks and the Presidio also offer smooth sailing.

Skate night: Friday at 8 p.m.

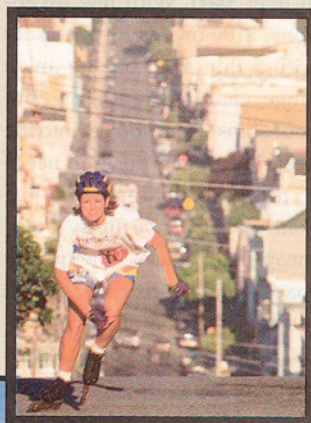
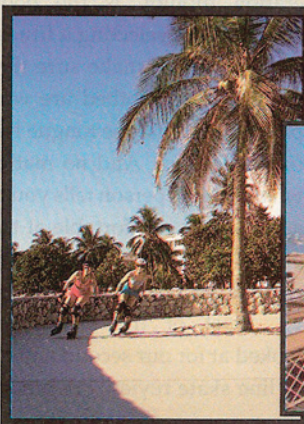
Call the California Outdoor Rollerskating Association.

Free Wheeling in Washington

When security-conscious officials cordoned off a two-block stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue, they created a mecca for Washington, D.C., skaters. For a more tranquil environment, escape to rustic Rock Creek Park, which is mostly traffic-free on weekends.

Skate night: Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.; also Sunday at 12:30 p.m. Call the Washington Area Rollerskaters, 202-466-5005.

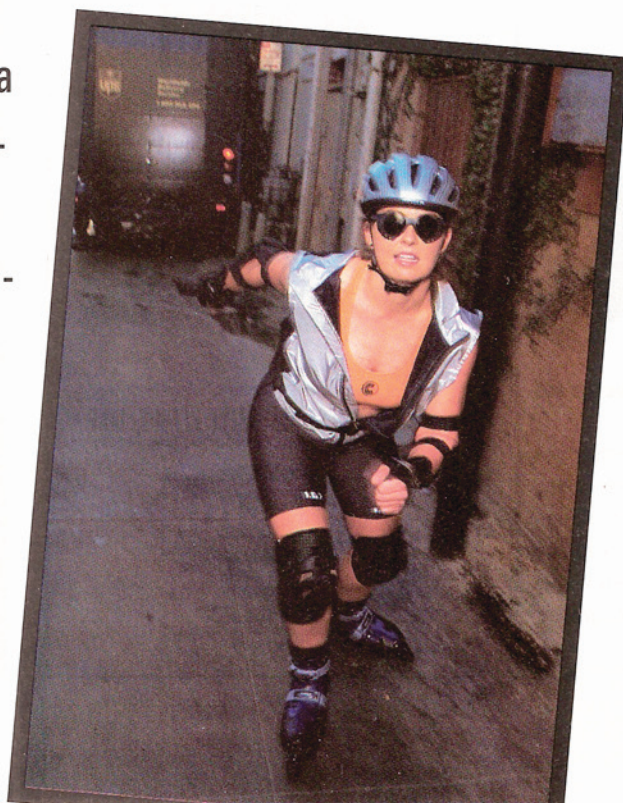
—Alyssa Lustigman



Roll Models

Photography by Larry Bartholomew

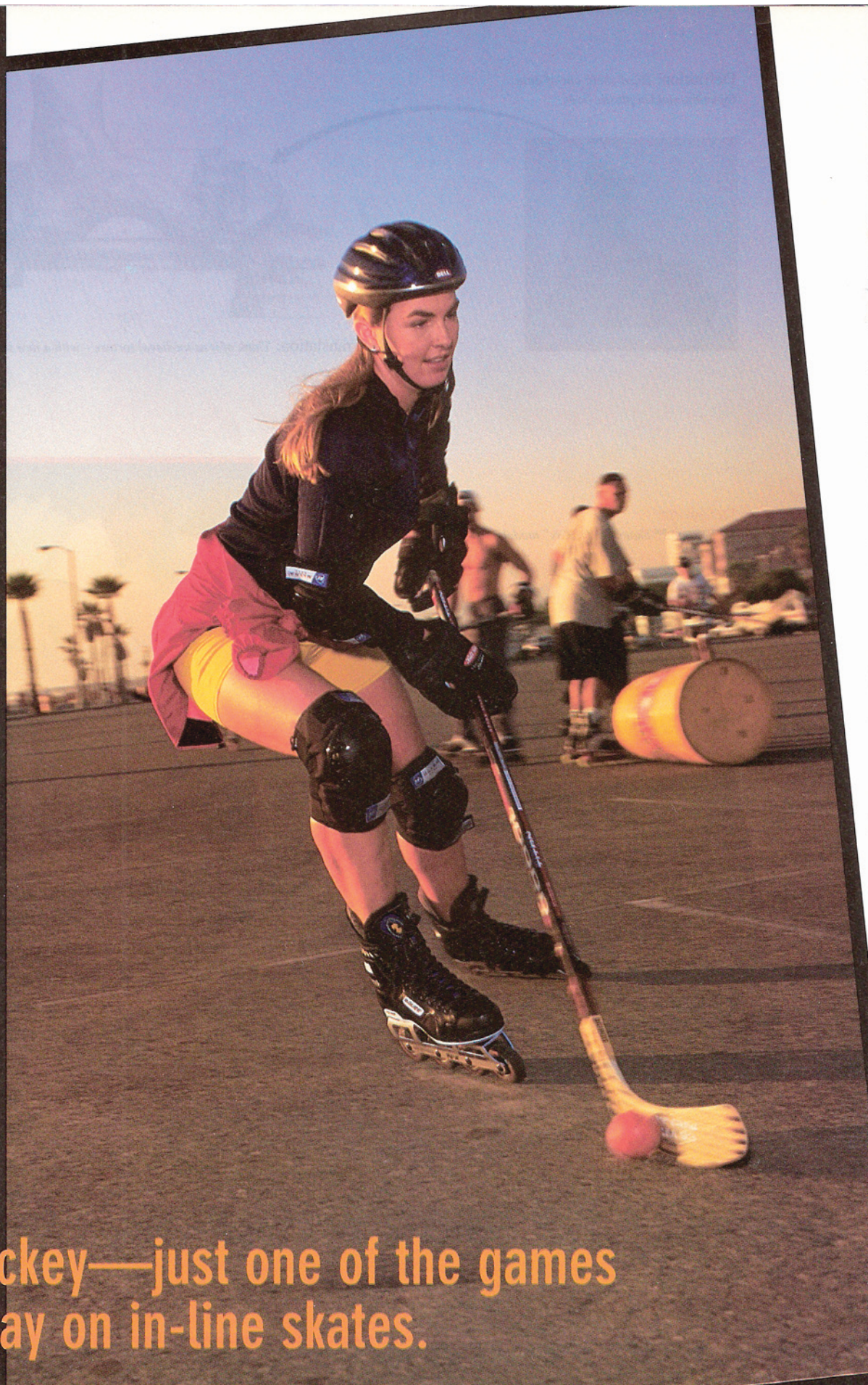
Most women, not surprisingly, say they skate because it's fun and a great workout. But for some it's not just that; it's also a psychic elixir that approaches the metaphysical. "Going for a long skate is like going for a long run," says Eleanor Tydings, a Los Angeles television producer for the educational fitness show P.E.TV. "It's like meditation. I've become so comfortable on my skates that they're a part of me now."



To attain that level of comfort on skates, you need to dress the part. And that means wearing breathable materials that stretch so you can move freely. At left: Eleanor Tydings knows how to dress for skating success in Louis Garneau's in-line shorts made of Lycra supplex (\$27) and Cannondale's sport top (\$30) and reflective Windfront vest (\$55). Roces skates, Giro helmet, K2 Sport Pad protective gear, Oakley sunglasses, Thorlo in-line skate socks and Louis Garneau fanny pack.

At right: L.A. native Kim Bowie demonstrates the in-your-face style of in-line skating. A member of Team Rollerblade for the last six years, she's done funk, hip-hop and street-style dancing on skates all over the world. Here she's swinging in a blue mood showing off a crop top and bike shorts by Dance France (\$28). Rollerblade skates and protective gear, Revo sunglasses, Timex watch and Wigwam in-line skating socks.

Eleanor Tydings goes for the goal. "I used to play ice hockey, and two years ago I started playing roller hockey at the beach in Santa Monica," she says. "Once I figured out the differences between the two sports and found that I still had a lot of power in my legs, I felt really confident." Confident enough to teach others the ins and outs of the game: Every Saturday morning Tydings works with girls aged 7 to 11 at the Challengers Boys' and Girls' Club in inner-city L.A. "They love skating so much, and the program is just for them, since the boys already have a lot of sports." Here Tydings dribbles in a Phin-Tech zip top (\$35) and Rocket shorts (\$30) from Pearl Izumi and a Patagonia Velocity shell (\$98). Bauer skates, Bell helmet, UltraWheels elbow and knee pads, Mission Roller Hockey BiltRite hockey gloves, and Titan hockey stick.



Roller hockey—just one of the games people play on in-line skates.