

One last dance at The Rink

April 27, 2023

Dolores Cullen | Storm Lake Times Pilot



Larry Hadenfeld taking care of the skates on Saturday, April 22, 2023. Photo by Dolores Cullen

Saturday, April 29 was your last chance to roller skate at The Rink. The venerable Storm Lake institution closed for good that evening when the lights went out.

As the sign out front proclaims, it's "the end of an era."

The Rink, or its original name "Fun Land d.b.a. The Rink," has a long history in Storm Lake.

In fact, The Rink could be called living history. Owners Lance and Adah

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Ad Guide



Hadentfeld bought the building at 1405 East Lakeshore Dr. in 1973.

They remodeled it in 1976. Since then it has remained essentially unchanged.

As part of the remodel, the ceiling was lowered and the walls were covered with colorful shag carpet to deaden the sound. The building was built in 1956 and had been a gym. The racket from the old hard-wheeled skates resounded off the cinderblock walls.

An old-fashioned yellow-dial phone with its curly cord is a remnant from a time when kids called home for their parents to pick them up.

“Since they got their own phones, they don’t have to use it so much,” says Adah. She claims a few of today’s kids “didn’t even know what it was.”






The same leather skates, purchased in 1976, are still in use. Originally there were 500 of them. Leather skates cost a fortune today.

Lance passed away in 2009, but his picture hangs in a place of honor in The Rink. Adah, 85, carries on, still adept on skates, still conducting the time honored traditions: the limbo, Hokey Pokey, Chicken Dance, Pop Goes the Weasel — where skaters are directed to change direction every time they hear

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Storm Lake Times Pilot

46 minutes ago

Aurelia's new Mexican restaurant, Iraupato, draws in residents of Storm Lake, Cherokee and farther with their carnitas and homemade salsa after only being open for less than a year.



the word “pop.”

Some of the staples died over the years, like the Snowball. Girls picked a partner from a lineup of boys. A growing squeamishness over holding hands got the better of it.



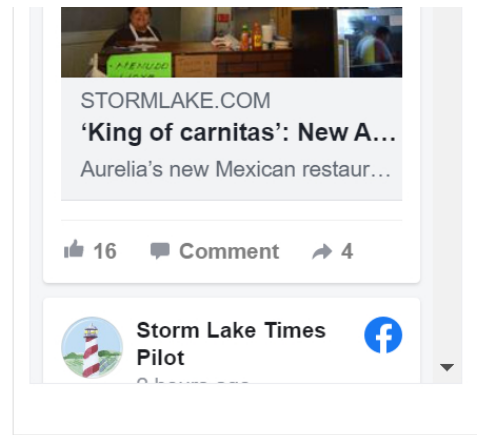
“Can I buy the snow cone machine?” a patron asked Adah last Saturday afternoon while returning her skates. “We will be selling the snow cone machine, but right at the moment we don’t know when,” Adah replies.

She’s been fielding these questions ever since the word got out about The Rink’s closure and the sale of the property, 3.5 acres in all. “They’re running into glitches,” she says. “They’re still figuring out the configuration of what they’re gonna put in here.”

“Who’s they?”

“Kwik Star. It’s not a done deal, but it’s more than likely gonna go through.”

“What are you gonna do with the skates?” someone asks Adah’s son Larry, on duty this busy Saturday.



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“I’m in limbo,” he half-jokes.

The ski ball game, the cotton candy machine; many of the curiosities have drawn interest too.



Adah Hadenfeld (left) holding the bar and directing traffic with her son Larry during the limbo.

Larry and the other three Hadenfeld children have been helpful to their parents over the years, chiefly Barbara who lives in Storm Lake and operates The Rink side by side with her mother. Larry and Vicky live in Center Point and Loren lives in Peoria, Ariz.

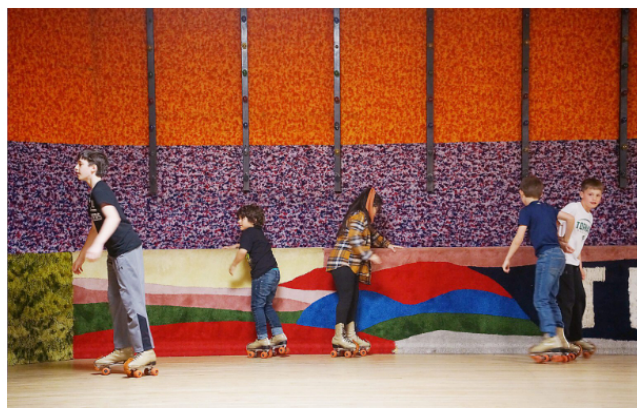
Adah remembers how hard her children worked to help get The Rink ready after she and Lance bought it. Loren was only nine, Larry 12, Barbara 14 and Vicky a junior in high school at the time.

“If the youth are given a chance, they are able to learn,” Adah maintains.

In the beginning Lance worked nights at Hygrade, “till we got it running.”

At one time Vance and Adah traveled the summer county fair circuit for eight or nine years. Their portable shooting gallery and arcade were a hit. The couple slept and ate in the front compartment of one of the trailers.

The Rink closes during the summer when people would rather be outside.



The challenging part of the Chicken Dance comes when it's time to twirl around.

If The Rink is like a museum, Adah and Barbara run the place in the old school manner. “No smoking or drugs, no foul language, no fast skating, no tripping, pushing chasing or tag. No gum chewing,” says one sign.

Another sign says, “Please read posted signs. Thanks!”

When roller skates are turned in, the laces are expected to be placed inside the skates.

There's a stern admonishment for horseplay.

But Adah just as easily calls a child — or an adult — honey.

“It’s like one teacher said,” recalls Barbara. “You teach ‘em discipline. And you teach ‘em how to skate.”

As it turned out, added Barbara, “some of the wilder ones brought their kids here because they knew we wouldn’t put up with it.”

Adah and Barbara hope to find a house together when they finally do retire. Adah says she would like to spend time volunteering. There are five grandchildren who enjoy attention.

Adah wonders if she will miss skating, whether she’ll regret closing The Rink.

“When I’m out there (on skates) I say, ‘Why am I doing this?’ Come Monday, I say, ‘I know why.’”

When The Rink closes Saturday, it will have been open just a few months shy of 50 years. Hours this weekend are: 7-9 p.m. Friday (for ages sixth grade and younger, parents and guardians are welcome) and Saturday 2-4 p.m. and 7-9 p.m.

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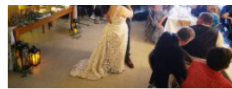
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