



# There's no upside to performing a diaper change in roller skates

Ned Hickson

It's been more than 250 years since John Joseph Merlin invented the roller skate. Considering that there were no cement sidewalks, asphalt streets or concrete half-pipes in 1760, then one can only assume Mr. Merlin's intention was to commit suicide.

*Hmmm, running myself into a wall at full speed probably won't do me in. But maybe if I was rolling down a hill...?!*

I thought about this during a trip to Eugene last summer, when many University of Oregon students were roller-skating through downtown.

They do this as a way to leave a smaller carbon footprint, which is ironic considering I go through twice as much

carbon in my brake pads by trying to avoid hitting them in traffic. Don't get me wrong. I'm not a roller-skate prude shaking his fist at a generation of whippersnappers with their fancy moves and ibuprofen-free flexibility. In fact, it wasn't long ago (Okay, 14 years) I was lacing up my own skates in a show of dexterity rivaling any speed-skating Olympian suffering a leg cramp at 40 mph.

In this instance, a friend had asked for my help with a skate party for his daughter — a sweet, thoughtful 7-year-old whose vocabulary didn't yet include terms like "compound fracture" or "hip replacement."

After getting skates for ourselves and her friends, we discovered that the rink also had skates small enough to fit my then 2-year-old son, transforming him into what was essentially a human bowling

ball. With a little practice, he became an effective tool for humbling even the most accomplished skater.

However, as we feared, my friend and I were eventually asked to stop rolling my son like a smart missile and actually go out onto the skating area — something that, at first, resembled a pair of blindfolded chimps searching for bananas along the walls of the rink.

To our surprise, we quickly discovered that roller skating is just like riding a bike: Once you've learned how, the more likely it is you'll get cocky and run into a post. Which isn't to say we weren't able to regain at least some of our former skating prowess. At one point, I began free skating in an impressive display of grace and speed that left my friend in awe.

Unfortunately, it also left a group of small children too

frightened to return to the rink, and scarred by the image of a faceless man grabbing at them in order to maintain his balance.

Naturally, it was about this time I realized my son needed a diaper change.

If you've never performed a diaper change in roller skates, you're missing out on one of life's great experiences, just like riding your bike into a parked car or almost making your victory leap over a tennis net.

That's because aside from the normal challenges that

accompany changing a squirmy child, there is the fact that, at any second, you could find yourself under the changing table doing the splits — something that, as far as I know, has only been attempted by Jackie Chan.

The fact that I'm here to tell you the story proves I was successful; the fact that I went from singing baritone to soprano should tell you to which degree of success. I also can't watch any kind of Olympic skating event without a bag of cold peas on my lap.

Does that mean I regret some of the riskier things I've done? Or continue to do as a volunteer firefighter?

Of course not. Sometimes, to get the most out of life? You really have to stretch yourself...

*Ned is a syndicated columnist with News Media Corporation. His book, "Humor at the Speed of Life," is available online at Port Hole Publications, Amazon Books and Barnes & Noble. Write to him at nedhickson@icloud.com*

## New Life donates to SOS



COURTESY PHOTO

New Life Lutheran Church treasurer Dick Slaugh (left) and Pastor Lori Blake (center) present Siuslaw Outreach Services volunteer coordinator Lori Oltman with a check for \$705. This represented several different kinds of donation efforts within the congregation. SOS executive director David Wiegman said, "We are so appreciative of these funds, but also for the ongoing support that we have received. This past month has been very challenging for SOS. Our average number of walk-ins is 29 per day, and we have been seeing up to 63 persons per day for several weeks now."

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For additional info or questions, please email us at [barkforlifeofflorence@gmail.com](mailto:barkforlifeofflorence@gmail.com) or Visit Our Facebook Page Bark for Life of Florence

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