

INSIDE!

Twenty-one albums later,
Sonic Youth wades in
at the Cain's.
H-3



Derby deeds



Their quads are laced up and they're ready to roll: Green Country Roller Girls Bianca Willard (left, aka Damsel De'Vil), Stephanie Oliver (aka Steph Infection) and Lora Gambino (aka Malicious Mabel).

Fast, tough, sassy, bruising ... these women can roll!

By JENNIFER CHANCELLOR
World Scene Writer

They're married. They're single. They're artists, photographers, biker chicks, store managers, accountants and mothers.

They have names such as "Steph Infection" and "Rosie the Wrecker." Some are tattooed. Some have streaks of color screaming through their hair.

These women have different personalities, different careers and different upbringings. But one passion pulls them together twice a week, every week: roller derby.

Originally invented as a form of novelty entertainment by struggling film publicist Leo Seltzer in the 1930s, then popularized on television through the '80s and again this year via the A&E cable channel's show "Roller-girls," the raucous roller skating sport is enjoying a revival with grassroots support and league start-ups across the country, including Tulsa's Green Country Roller Girls.

"They're so tough, so dedicated," said Wayne Bartels, coach of the Green Country Roller Girls derby league. "A lot of these girls are just beginners. We're teaching them so much. I'm learning a lot, too, from them."

Bartels has a lot to offer. He's been speed skating for 31 years, "since I was 6 years old." He also is an ice speed skater for Tulsa's Blades in Motion, a

competitive ice speed skating team. He's honing his craft with the Blades' coach, Burt Speed ("Yes, that's his real name," said Bartels), a veteran, three-time national speed skating champion who holds four speed skating world records, he said.

AmeriKa (Jen Walenciak), Malicious Mabel (Lora Gambino) and myself all stumbled upon their MySpace Web page within a few days of each other and began chatting. Shortly thereafter, we all met up to talk about getting this thing off the ground."

Less than three months later, the troupe already is more than 35 strong. "New ones find us every week," she said. "We have also had a number of girls drop out for various reasons. One of our original founders recently had to drop out because she thinks she fractured her tailbone," Galloway said. "It's great exercise, bonding and fun, but it's also a little rough."

Each member volunteers her time. Nobody is paid to skate, and the coaches coach for the love of the sport. Local businesses have embraced the start-up league, too. "We're really lucky to have Roller City and the Board Shop as our first sponsors," said Gambino. Both are local businesses, and both donate space, time, gear and guidance to the league.

"Roller City's rink is absolutely outstanding," she said. "The Board Shop has provided us with the best available safety gear, and they let us use their store to hold our weekly meetings during those first few months. Without them, we would really be struggling."

SEE DERBY H-6

Derby dictionary

Blocker When the other team's jammer comes through the pack, the blocker prevents the jammer from passing. The blocker also helps her own team's jammer pass the pack.

Bout Public derby match.

Jammer The only person who can score for a team. Her object is to score one point per opponent she passes.

Pack Two teams of five skaters in formation alongside each other.

Pivot Sets the pace for the pack. She may take over the jammer position once the star jammer is in her possession.

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roller_Derby, www.aetv.com/rollergirls/

The GCRG originally formed last year, but was recently re-energized by a group of dedicated fans of the sport, according to Nancy Galloway (aka Elektra Violette), GCRG event and promotion coordinator. "In March of this year,

Bianca Willard aka Damsel De'Vil

Age: 28

Status: Married

Children: Yes

Works as a professional make-up artist.

"The reason I joined roller derby is because I'm sort of new to Tulsa from San Diego, Calif. This is kinda me, and me coming into myself. I've been doing the mom thing for quite a while, and this is a way to win back my womanhood and win back myself and meet a lot of other really cool moms and empowered women who are really smart and have it together and who are cool and have style ... and really, just like-minded people. I've met a lot of really great friends, and it's been more than I've expected. I'm getting excited about getting into the sport and training really hard and kicking some butt."



Miranda Rivera aka Rosie the Wrecker

Age: 21

Status: In a relationship

Children: No

She's a manager of a retail clothing store.

"I'm gung-ho doing recruitment and retention for GCRG, which means I'm the girl wrangler. I'm 'Rosie the Wrangler' when I'm on duty (laughs). What got me into roller derby was Jen (AmeriKa). I love to roller skate and I could do it all day. My boyfriend is really sick of hearing about it. He's just going to have to get used to it."



Beth Phillips aka Scarlet Devil

Age: 25

Status: Married

Children: Yes

She works in accounting at an electronics manufacturing company and is a wedding photographer.

"I work at an electronics manufacturing company in accounting. Not the most exciting job, to say the least. I've sat behind the same desk for almost seven years now, and roller derby has given me a chance to work through some pent-up aggression. I also wanted a good way to start exercising, and derby is a lot more interesting than your normal gym workout. It's really great to get with a group of smart, empowered, intelligent women who all have a common goal."



Lora Gambino aka Malicious Mabel

Age: 31

Status: Married

Children: Yes

She's a stay-at-home mom and will be PTA treasurer next year at her daughter's elementary school.

"I am in roller derby because I pretty much needed a good reason to get out of my house and do something with the girls and take a break from my family for a few hours. This is something that is outside my normal life. I get all sappy about it, but I just love roller derby. It's really changed my life for the better. My husband skateboards, and when we go to the park with our kids, each one of us has our own set of wheels - a skateboard, roller skates, scooter and a tri-cycle. It's horribly cute."



Nancy Galloway aka Elektra Violette

Age: 38

Status: In a relationship

Children: Yes

"I'm a biker chick, (laughs) I'm an architect, I work for a stone company right now. I got into roller derby after I saw it on TV, fell in love with it, and decided 'I'm born to be a roller derby chick!'"



Amanda Swinney aka Vicious Violet

Age: 25

Status: Married

Children: "I have no kids ... yet."

She works at a Tulsa hair salon.

"I love to skate and I've done it ever since I was a kid. I wanted to skate as an adult but could never get any of my friends to go with me. Now I have a cool group of artistic girls to skate with."



Jen Walenciak aka AmeriKa

Age: 23

Status: Married

Children: Yes

She works in a customer service center.

"I really just need to be around women and women that want to have fun and not have all the personal drama. I love being a mom and wife, but this has given me something just for me ... It's gonna be fun to get out there and beat the crap out of each other in the ring every now and then and not be mad at each other afterwards."



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