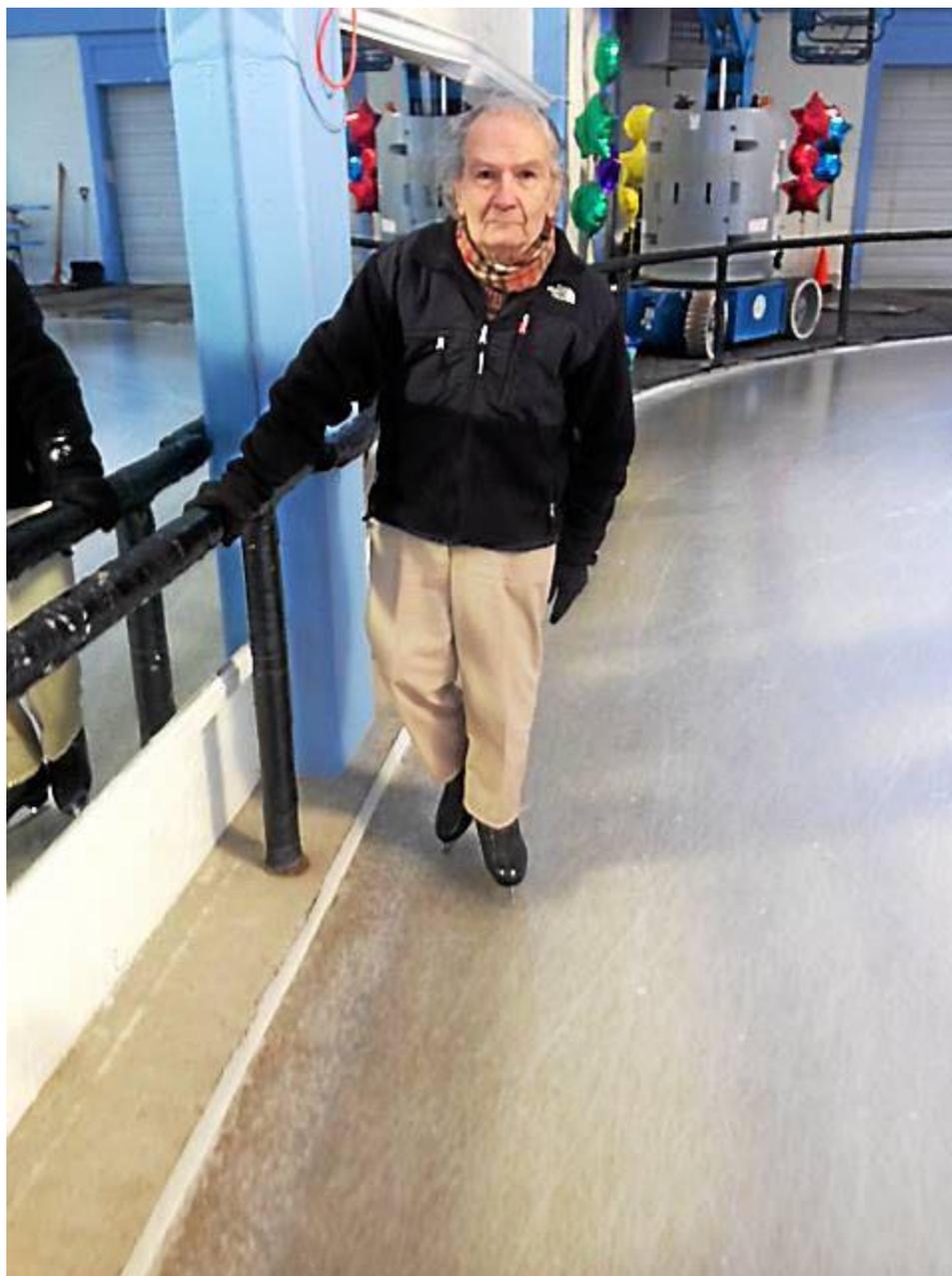


At 90, he's still skating after all these years

Art Tatios takes to the ice regularly at Ardmore rink



Art Tatios of Broomall just celebrated his 90th birthday: A party was thrown for him after his regular skating session at the Philadelphia Skating Club and Humane Society in Ardmore.

If you asked Art Tatios, 90, why he started skating as a young man in the 1940s he has a quick one-word answer, “Women.”

It must have worked, Tatios said he met his wife, Rose, while ice skating. She has since passed away but he continues to skate three or four times a week in Ardmore.

Tatios, of Broomall, has been a member of the Philadelphia Skating Club and Humane Society for about 35 years and had been going to the club since the 1950s before becoming a member.

Before going to Ardmore, Tatios, who lived in West Philadelphia at the time, started skating at the Philadelphia Arena at 46th and Market in Philadelphia about 1947.

Recently a couple of dozen people showed up at the Ardmore rink to wish Tatios a happy 90th birthday – celebrated shortly after he wrapped up his round of skating for the day.

Tatios said he never competed much but did what is known as pattern dancing with a partner.

These days, however, Tatios said he goes out and simply “tries to avoid gravity – keep gravity at bay, that’s all I can do now.”

So, when will he stop?

“I plan on stopping at the end of every season,” Tatios said. But in the end, he said he reviews it and decides to come back.

That’s because skating has its share of attractions. “It’s a combination of social activity, athletic activities and artistic activities – all three,” Tatios said.

It’s that combination that continues to challenge him. “When you are a proficient skater you have to be an athlete underneath it,” Tatios said. “You have to have a strong body, you have to have good flexibility, good coordination, otherwise you are not going to be able to do the requirements. But at the same time, the athleticism is not supposed to show – it’s supposed to be artistic.”

The better a skater someone is the easier they make it look, Tatios said. “People look at good skating and they don’t realize that there’s a steep learning curve and they say, ‘I can do that,’ and they go out

and they can't do it. And they finally join a club and they take lessons, have coaching and they face that steep learning curve," he said.

The better a skater gets, the more deceptively simple it looks to the observer, Tatios said.

When asked what he has seen change among ice skaters over the decades, Tatios points to the skaters' objectives. "Many people joined originally because of the social connections. And that's still there, but it's become secondary." He said many people now treat skating as though they are going to a fitness club and they are just coming in for the exercise.

So why did he come out to Ardmore to skate?

"... At the time, [Ardmore] had a good reputation and this was the place to go," Tatios said. "It's a great building. It has a great history."

But, ultimately, it's all about sliding on ice.

"I love it," he said, "absolutely."