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## Boxing's going to pump you up

### Unlikely Libertyville fitness center catches converts on the chin

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A stroll down main street in Libertyville will usually reveal a nice mixture of quaint shops with unusual items, places to get good food and spirits. And then there is Wounded Deer, one of the newest establishments.

Believe it or not, boxing is dancing, jabbing and trying to right hook its way into mainstream Main Street.

Natalie Garrett, a 50-year-old resident and mother of two boys, was walking downtown with a friend when she noticed the shop and thought: Boxing. "I thought it would be a little tougher (workout) and easier to get into shape," she said.

"My assumption was correct. It's unbelievable," Garrett said.

Her sons? "They kind of laugh, but I'm trying to get them into it," she said.

It's not just about boxing, it's about fitness training, explains Jim Mellen, shop owner and personal trainer who has had a boxing license for 22 years and is licensed through USA Boxing.

For Mellen, boxing is a family affair with his son Matthew, 10, a fourth-grader at Adler Elementary School who is going to Rockford Dec. 8 and 9 for the Silver Gloves tournament for boxers 8 to 15 years old. At 16 you enter the Golden Gloves, he said.

Mellen's wife "freaked out" when her son took up the sport.

"Then she saw how he took to it. Now she's licensed to work the corner with me," he said.

Mellen has had several different locations for boxing training (he's coached several Golden Gloves champions and state kick boxing champions as well) and he realizes it is a little odd to have a sport associated with a lower socio-economic class in an affluent area. But it's working for him.

But what about the name?

"I run a lot of marathons, and a friend saw me running out by St. Mary's of the Lake seminary (in Mundelein) and he said I looked like a wounded deer," said Mellen. "And I thought 'Wow, what a great name for a boxing club,'" he said.

"Deer are cool. They are fast, tough. If you ever hit a deer, your car gets it. They are beautiful and fast," he said.

So that's how the storefront operation that opened during the second week of June got its name.

"Personal training is huge right now," said Mellen, who has several personal training accounts for people at their homes. "Some people don't like to go to clubs because it's intimidating," he said.

It was a former boxing student, Pete Dunlop, who was living in Arizona and who also noticed how popular the personal trainer movement was out there. The two talked and decided to tap into that in Lake County.

At Wounded Deer there is no boxing ring. He has to take his son to Harvard for sparing sessions in a ring, but there is a body bag and a trainer.

"For some reason people are intrigued with boxing," he said, adding that he has more women than men taking boxer training.

"After 'Million Dollar Baby We' had a lot of girls contact us," he said, referring to the Clint Eastwood movie

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with Hilary Swank about a woman professional boxer.

Garrett said boxing is a very good cardio workout.

"I'm always thinking (when punching the bag), 'When's the bell going to go off,'" she said, referring to the routine where you hit the bag as hard and as fast as you can for two minutes, then rest for a minute, then go at it again.

"The program is 20/20/20: 20 minutes of cardio, 20 minutes of weight lifting and 20 minutes of boxing," said Mellen. "But they can do the whole hour on boxing if they want."

The program can change a person from fat to thin, thin to muscular.

"You just bang on the bag and let your frustrations out. It's so taxing it's unbelievable," he said.

Garrett has enjoyed her new workout regime. Her trainer challenges her and is very encouraging.

"It's more difficult than anything I've tried before, and I am also seeing the benefits, which is icing on the cake," she said.

Boom goes the hook.

"I love this place," she said.