

HISTORICAL ROLLER SKATING OVERVIEW

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING
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Lincoln, Nebraska 68506

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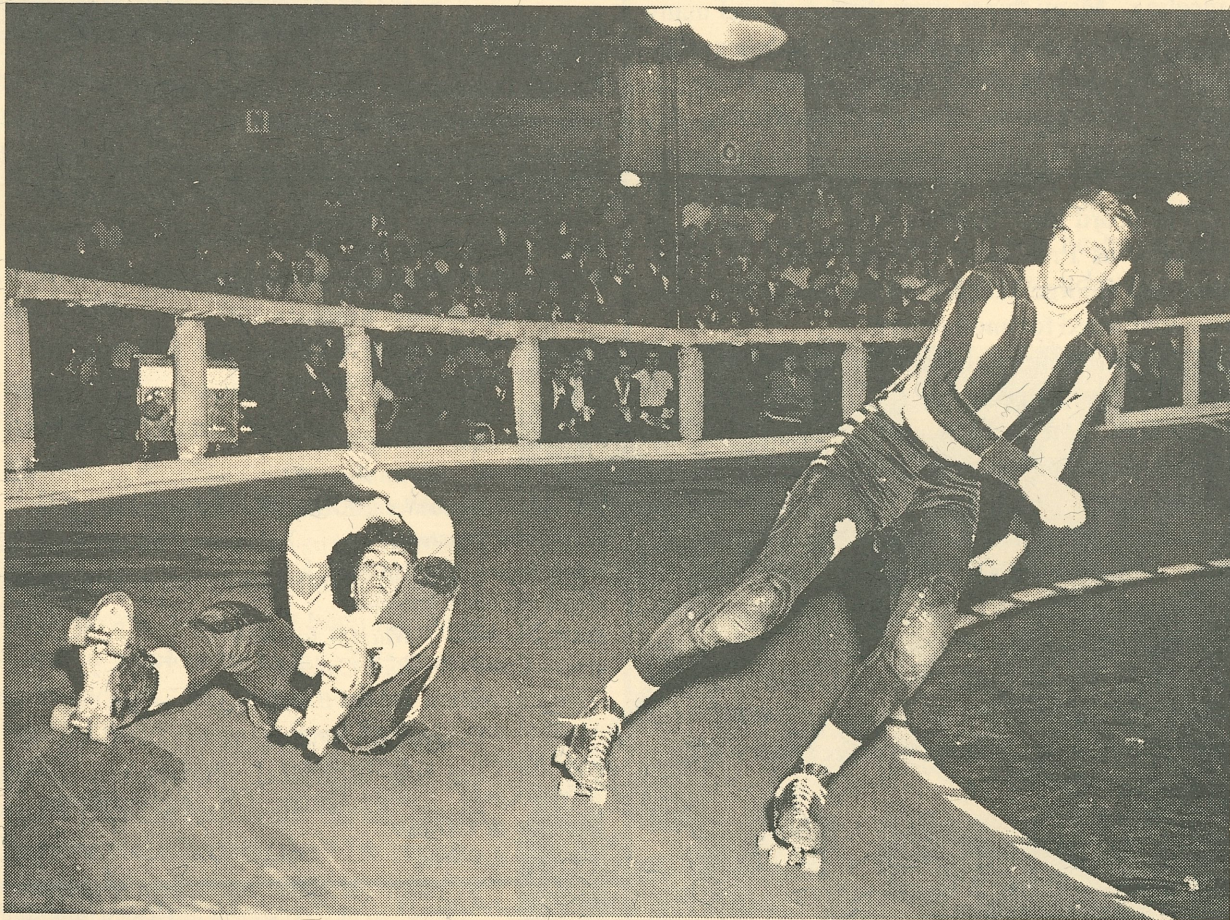
Museum hours: 9-5, M-F

October/November 1996

A Publication of the National Museum of Roller Skating

Issue No. 54

October is the official Roller Skating Month!



Joe Weinmeier recently donated this photograph and many others on roller derby. Joe was an original member of the derby and is featured in this photograph on the right with Hank Goldberg (96.59.76).

Curator's Column

Dear Member,

In August the museum received an overwhelming number of visitors due in part to the United States Amateur Confederation of Roller Skating's 60th National Artistic & Speed Championships and the 10th Junior Olympic Artistic & Speed Championships. The Museum Store sold almost every item and many visitors bought memberships.

The museum also had many visitors donate some terrific artifacts including: old roller derby photographs, roller skates, a Laurene Anselmi skating outfit, rink stickers, and many old roller skating magazines. Please check page 6 for more details.

This past August was also the museum's annual board meeting. Many things were discussed and many decisions were made regarding next year's raffle, education, and a new Trustee Emeritii. Former Director & Curator of the museum, Scott Addison Wilhite was voted in as the latest Trustee Emeritii. Bob Bollinger, Charles Wahlig, Ed Young, and Bert Anselmi were also re-elected as board members this year. The council of Bert Anselmi as President, Chester Fried as Vice-President, and George Pickard as Secretary-Treasurer were also nominated for another term.

This past summer also saw the passing of some great men who have helped shape roller skating's history. Harry Ball, Seth Scott, and Leon Barry have all recently passed away. Each one has helped roller skating develop to where it is today. Check page 5 for more information.

In September, I went to the National In-Line Hockey Association's (NIHA) International Championships & Expo in Las Vegas. The museum was able to attend this event because of a marketing grant from the Nebraska Tourism Office. The museum promoted itself and the state of Nebraska. Many who attended the event were educated on roller hockey, in-line skating, and the museum.

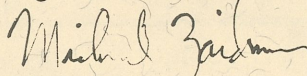
In the June/July issue of the newsletter I mentioned that the museum had recently purchased a bronze statue of two roller skating girls. The museum needs your help in securing the funding for this purchase. With your donation to this statue, your name or company name will be placed on a plaque. A minimum \$250 donation is necessary to be included on the plaque. The donation is tax-deductible. If you have further questions,

please contact me.

Don't forget, October is the official Roller Skating Month presented by the Roller Skating Association (RSA). Check your local RSA affiliated rink for details or call the RSA at 317/875-3390.

Also, the museum now has Nicholas Viscuso organ music tapes for \$15 each. Check page 6 for info.

Thanks for your continued support. Enjoy this organ oriented issue of the newsletter!



Michael Zaidman
Director & Curator

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Michael Zaidman

Historical Roller Skating Overview is published bimonthly for members of the National Museum of Roller Skating. It is available only through honorary membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$25.00. Send correspondence to: Museum Director, 4730 South Street, P.O. Box 6579, Lincoln, NE 68506

LEON C. BERRY



Leon C. Berry, 82, an organist known in the Chicago area as the dean of roller rink rock, performed for many years at such rinks as the Hub in Norridge, the Arcadia at Montrose Avenue and Broadway and the Orbit in Palatine recently died at his home in Park Ridge, Illinois. In 1953, he recorded "Misirlou," a hit that ranked sixth on the Billboard Magazine popularity charts.

Berry was very talented and popular, he introduced classical music to roller rinks, performing such pieces on the organ as "The Grand March" from the opera *Aida*.

He was a student at the American Conservatory of Music and he held a job at the Hammond Organ Company plant in Chicago. A salesman mentioned that he had sold an organ to a roller rink at Broadway and Montrose and had promised the owners he would find someone to play it.

Mr. Berry, who first learned to play the organ as a child in church in Selma, Alabama was hired at \$80 a week by the rink owners. Mr. Berry next performed at the Hub from 1950 to 1967 and subsequently at the Orbit. He also got work performing at the Trianon Ballroom on the South Side. He played during intermissions between such bands as Guy Lombardo and Lawrence Welk.

In the early 1950s, he acquired a massive organ affectionately known as "The Lion." It had been used in the Lake Theater in Crystal Lake and so totally filled his basement that as it was being installed he had to eliminate the cold air return duct for the furnace. *Portions of this article were found in the Chicago Tribune, 1996.*

In honor of Mr. Leon C. Berry, the following LP's backside from Giant Wurlitzer Pipe Organ, Volume 2, 1957 is reproduced.

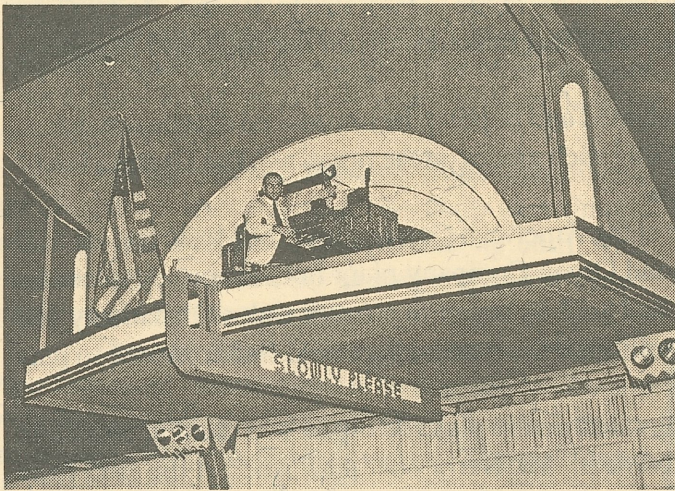
If a poll were taken among average music lovers on their favorite musical instrument, the organ would almost certainly win hands down. Such has it been for many years, and so would it be today. The reason is simple enough. No instrument by itself has the infinite variety, the technical versatility, the esthetic potential and the panoramic tonal beauty of the organ. Name any instrumental effect on the 17th century or modern orchestra, the military band or the jazz band, and a number of other solo instruments and the organ has it. Add to this instrumental variety the element of high fidelity, and you get a by-product like a



*Marie Schram, the organist at Skyborn Skateland, Fairborn, OH, 1957 (82.72.8).
Gift of James D. Sterrett*

record of Leon Berry at the Giant Wurlitzer.

The story of the organ in the history of music is one of constant refinement of an originally fine instrument. Although the first organs were crude compared with modern theater organs, the principle on which they were constructed was so sound that even the earliest models were not displeasing. The first organs consisted simply of a short set of pipes numbering ten to fourteen, with a bellows and a slot device for letting wind into the pipes. Improvements made during the Middle Ages involved the addition of more pipes and the substitution of a lever mechanism for the sliding air valve. The keyboard, in anything like its modern form, came fairly late. When it did come, the heavy wooden action made it necessary to have keys wide enough to be struck by the fist. From all



*Russell Bice in the organ loft at the Arena Gardens, Detroit, MI, circa 1930s (82.46.126).
Gift of Rose Martin*

accounts these early organs had an overwhelming tone. For example, an organ built at Winchester during the tenth century had 400 pipes and two "manuals" of twenty fist-struck keys each. Its tone was such that it could be heard throughout the city.

By the beginning of the fourteenth century the lever action had been improved sufficiently to allow a keyboard very similar to the present one. During the Renaissance organ builders were common throughout Europe. They built stationary instruments for use in churches and portable ones for use in the home. The larger instruments had two keyboard manuals and pedals, and while they had many failings, such as heavy actions and faulty tuning, they had sufficient technical and artistic possibilities to tempt many composers to write for them and many performers to play them. This had important consequences as far as the instrument's development is concerned.

Three factors have dominated the organ's growth and use as a musical instrument--the materials with which it is constructed, its acoustical surroundings, and the stops or effects built into it. As to materials, organs have contained practically every conceivable substance including paper, wood, sized fabrics, alabaster, clay, glass, ivory, tin, lead, iron, copper, brass, silver, and gold. They have been constructed in all kinds of structures, from country cottages to vast cathedrals that tower to the sky. Their stops, originally only a handful in number, through the years have numbered more than 300 different effects ranging from the bass drum to the piccolo.

Originally the organ was an instrument used for accompaniment, either to provide a "ground" or bass for other instruments, or to embellish chamber orchestras. As the organ was perfected, it assumed increased importance as a solo instrument. Through Handel and Bach it received its biggest push forward towards prominence as a virtuoso instrument that could stand on its own merits. Still, even Handel and Bach had relatively few stops with which to work. It remained for experimenters to perfect technical construction to the point where the modern theater organ emerged as a full-fledged instrument capable of playing anything and producing every known musical sound.

It was not until the 1920's that the theater organ achieved full recognition. But once it did win recognition, it became such a popular



*Mr. George Lundquist, organist at the Morris & Essex Roller Skating Rink, Springfield, NJ, circa 1943-49 (82.56).
Gift of Mrs. Beatrice Hoffman*

instrument that the interlude featuring a theater organist between showings of motion pictures became the favorite part of the show. Even after the advent of the sound motion picture, such was the popularity of the theater organ that it became-and has remained to this day-one of the most highly demanded forms of entertainment.

Precision engineering and a wider understanding of acoustics have brought about still more refinements in theater organs. Between perfect materials (only wood and metal for the most part are used in modern organs), a variety of some 150 different stops and optimum acoustical surroundings the modern theater organ has no instrumental equal. But assuming that an organ is perfect in every detail, that its live sound is flawless, it doesn't necessarily follow that it will remain so when this sound is transferred to records. It is at this point that the experience, skill and imagination of the recorder and sound engineer comes into play.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions have been made by the following people in memory of Harry Ball, Seth Scott, Marge Lopez and in honor of Betty & Mills Lynn's 50th Wedding Anniversary. If you would like to contribute to any of the funds below or would like to start a new one, please contact the director.

In Memory of Harry Ball

Harry Walker

Annelle Anderson

Maurice & Budd Van Roekel



Harry C. Ball from South Gate, California, began his involvement with roller skating in 1945. As President of the Sure-Grip International Skate Company he has contributed innumerable hours of effort to promote and better the sport, industry, and technology. He has also been a supporter and advocate of the National Museum of Roller Skating as a founding benefactor. Ball's Company, Sure-Grip, provides the annual Wintz Awards to USAC/RS clubs with winning skaters at the U.S. Championships. Harry Ball received the following honors: RSROA Attaway Award in 1980, USAC/RS Life Membership in 1985, RSROA Hall of Fame in 1988, and USAC/RS Distinguished Hall of Fame in 1996.

In Memory of Seth Scott

Annelle Anderson

Maurice & Budd Van Roekel

Seth Scott from Lincoln, Nebraska, began his involvement with roller skating in 1954. He was the fifteenth President (1970, 1971) of the RSROA and was awarded for his efforts as the Chairman in connection with the National Championships in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Scott was operator of the Arena Roller Rink in Lincoln along with the Holiday Skate Center also in Lincoln. Scott was also an advocate and supporter of the National Museum of Roller Skating. Seth Scott received the following honors: Victor J. Brown Operator of the Year Award in 1963 and a RSROA Life Membership in 1981.



In Memory of Marge Lopez

Maurice & Budd Van Roekel

Marge Lopez, from Monterey, California, was a supporter of the National Museum of Roller Skating.

In Honor of Betty & Mills Lynn's 50th Wedding Anniversary

Leita J. Couey/Sparkles Roller Rinks

DONATIONS

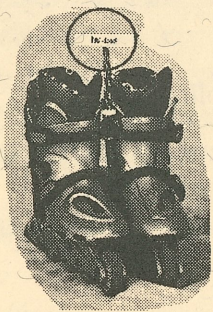
There have been numerous donations to the museum's collection in the last few months. Thank you to all who have aided the museum in strengthening the collection. Pictured here are several of the items the museum has received. Other donors include: Don Ritchie, Today Opportunity Knocks, Larry Good, Marlene McDerment, Jim & Doris Giardini, Laurene Anselmi Patton, E. H. Moore, Anne Boley (RSA), James Pollard, David J. Rotelli, Peggy Young (USAC), Andy Seeley (USAC), Harry Corson, Jr., Chester Fried, Lois Schmotzen, Robert Bollinger, Joe Weinmeier, David "Shorty" Kellogg, George Pickard (USAC), Loretta (Ruehle) Horvath, and Scott Addison Wilhite.



Carl Fritz from Seneca Sports donated this helmet protective combo set along with several hockey sticks and a hockey net.

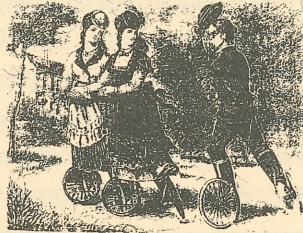


Betty Ann Danna donated this 1995 Pan Am flag signed by Team USA.



Wayne Cimperman of In-Line Accessories donated this Skate Handle for carrying and storing skates.

MUSEUM STORE



A. 1880s roller polo
Sizes S, M, L, XL \$10



B. 19th C. skate design
Sizes S, M, L, XL \$10

C. Hall of Fame T shirt "Built For Speed" featuring George Moore & Vivian Bell Sizes S & L \$5

D. *The Evolution of the Roller Skate: 1820-Present* \$10

E. Museum logo patches \$3

F. Gold Museum logo pins \$3

G. Tan Museum logo on burgundy mug \$5

H. Cheret Lithograph-from the 1870s \$16

I. Museum logo silver paperweight \$7

J. Museum postcards: ¹Vaudeville Skaters, ²1930s roller hockey team, ³1940s children's speed skating race, ⁴drawing depicting "The Judge", and a ⁵drawing depicting a woman on skates in the late 19th century. *¢.50 each*

L. William Wegman's "Roller Rover" postcard *.75 each*

M. Nicholas Viscuso organ music tapes \$15

Quantity	Item No.	Price	Total

Check Cash
 Visa Exp. Date _____
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 Name _____
 Address _____
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 Mail to: N.M.R.S., 4730 South Street, Lincoln, NE / 68506

MEMBERSHIP

The National Museum of Roller Skating would like to thank these members who have recently contributed to the ongoing success of the museum through their continued support.

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Loretta & Ralph Horvath
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- Associate Patron \$100
- Patron \$250
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Questions, or to order by phone, call (402) 483-7551.

Benefits extend one year from join date. Allow 2 weeks for processing.

Membership includes a subscription to the museum's newsletter, *Historical Roller Skating OVERVIEW*, 10% off in the Museum Store, and a museum membership card.

Make a
note of this!

Daylight
Savings
Time
Ends

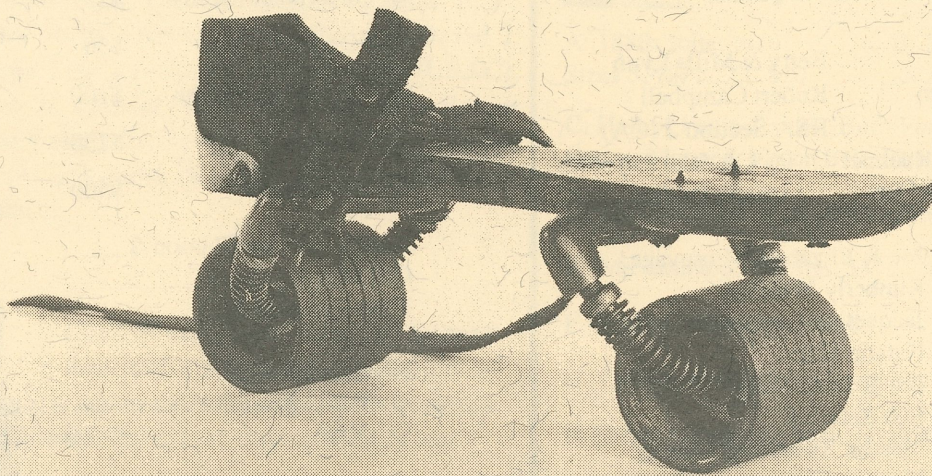
October 27!!



Another Museum Artifact

The "Rariai" roller skate made by Jos. Cam and Sons in Sheffield, England, circa 1870s. It features one of the most unusual truck assemblies in the museum's collection. A spring on either side of the wheel allows the "rocking action" while also keeping the wheel in place when the wearer wants to skate straight. The tension on the springs can be adjusted by four separate screws at the top end of each spring.

(L87.60a on loan from John & Vilma Fanthorpe)



If you have a change of name or address, please
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