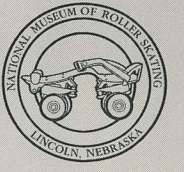


January 2002
Issue No. #80



Historical
Roller Skating

Overview

National Museum
of Roller Skating



Dear Members: As the New Year begins, so too does the museum's annual fundraiser, the raffle. The museum receives donations from many individuals and companies, however, the chief source of funding for our day-to-day activities, as well as the employment of a professional staff, comes from your support of this raffle. Without the raffle, the museum would not be able to fulfill its primary mission of preserving and publicizing the rich history of your roller skating sport, business and recreation. We ask you to continue providing support for this great American activity. Be that lucky one out of 500 purchasers who wins the grand prize of \$5000. Fill out the raffle form on page 10 today and return it to the museum with your \$50 payment by May 8, 2002. The drawing will take place on Wednesday May 15, 2002 after the President's dinner during the RSA Convention in Orlando, Florida. You do not need to be present to win any of the 24 cash prizes. Help us today by sending in your raffle form!

The cover photo on this issue is part of our collection of roller skating queen photos. Unfortunately, we do not have any information about this young lady. If you happen to know who this queen is or where she might have been crowned, we would like to hear from you. Sadly, we did not receive any information on the little girl who graced the cover of our October issue. However, I was able to find information about the couple featured on the July issue cover as the exact photo was published in the October 1955 issue of *Skating News*. The couple, Eddy

Sheppard and Eleanor Holmes-Sheppard, was one of the first roller skating acts to come from the White City Rink. They preformed at many rinks from 1919 to 1922.

In October, the museum's website, www.rollerskatingmuseum.com, was awarded first place in the International Association of Sports Museums and Halls of Fame Communications Awards for websites. If you have not checked out our website, look us up and then let us what you think by sending an email to us at postmaster@rollerskatingmuseum.com. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

The USA Roller Sports National Indoor Speed and Figure Skating Championships will be held here in Lincoln this summer from July 21 to August 11. USARS will be celebrating the 20th Championship that has been held in Lincoln since 1962, 40 years ago. Both George Pickard, museum founder and board officer, and myself have been placed on an alumni committee that has been charged with the duty to reach all of the national alumni and to put on a celebration worthy of those champions. Look for more information on page six and for more on the celebration in the next issue of the *Overview* and in the near future on our website.

Thank you to all of the members for your continued support of the museum.

Deborah L. Wallis

Deborah L. Wallis
Director and Curator

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Phone: 402/483-7551 x.16 Fax: 402/483-1465

Internet: www.rollerskatingmuseum.com

E-mail: postmaster@rollerskatingmuseum.com

Mission Statement: The museum exists as an autonomous entity, to acquire, preserve, research and interpret the history of roller skating through its collection of artifacts, photographs, archival material and other skating memorabilia. It strives to document roller skating's historical progression, current status and its future development in context of the associated people and events.

Historical Roller Skating Overview ISSN 0896-1379 ©2002 is published quarterly for members of the National Museum of Roller Skating. It is available only through membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$35. Send correspondence and change of address to: National Museum of Roller Skating, 4730 South Street, Suite 2, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506 USA.

Her Royal Highness, Our Skate Queen

For twenty-six years from 1950 to 1976, the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association's (RSROA) Roller Skating Queen of America contest was a part of the National Roller Skating Championships. While the contest was associated with the National Championships, the queen contestants were not judged on their skating abilities. The queen became a fixture of the championships and even



1958 Roller Skate Queen of America, Cathy Ray, presents the awards.

participated in the championships by presenting the medals to the winners. However, the RSROA's roller skating queen was not the first queen contest in the roller skating community. During the 1940s, queens were crowned at rinks around the country. Their royal titles varied and ranged from Miss Mammoth Gardens to Queen of the Skating Mermaids to the Apple Blossom Queen. Even the seven finalists for the Miss Washington State Queen were given titles. They were named for the seven days of week, Miss Sunday, Miss Monday and so forth. On the national level, three roller skating magazines held queen contests. In the *Nation's Skater* magazine, they announced that they were holding the very first national roller skating queen contest in the nation in their January 1940 issue. Well-known individuals judged contestant photos sent in by readers and the winner



1964 Massachusetts State Skate Queen Ann Powers with her two runner ups.

was announced at the 1940 RSROA convention. Not be out done, two other roller skating magazines, *Skating Review* and *The American Roller Skater*, also launched

winners of the *Skating Review* contest also won a pair of new skates or a new skating dress.

The RSROA's queen contest was first proposed at the December 1949 RSROA board meeting. The board named it The Roller Skating Queen of America contest and wrote the first rules. 1. Contestants must be at least sixteen years of age 2. Each contestant will be judged on beauty alone but must be able to skate 3. The contestants dress will be a skating costume and skates 4. All states will hold a contest to select a queen to represent them at the national competition 5. Contestants must be residents of the state in which they represent

The queen contests were sanctioned events of the state and national competitions. The first



The Roll-Land skate queen and her court circa 1975.

Roller Skating Queen of America, Janet Lund, was crowned at the 1950 nationals.

In the early 1950s following the first queen's crowning, the RSROA board started to make changes to the contest and its rules. The board decided to publicize the contest more and started by reserving one *Skate* magazine cover per year for the queen. To the make changes to the contest rules, the board established the Roller Skating Queen Committee, which was given officiating duties over the contest. The new rules included that the contestants must hold an RSROA amateur card; the contestants must be single, never married; and professional models were barred from entering the contest. The marriage rule was further clarified in 1955 to state that if a queen married during her reign, she forfeited her title and the first runner up gained the title.

Even with the changes to the national rules, the individual chapters/states were allowed to make their own rules for the preliminary contests. In



1971 queen contestants nervously await their interviews with the queen judges.

the late 1950s, the preliminary queen contests at the rink level were often tied to fund raisers for the March of Dimes or the Heart Fund. Each contestant would receive one vote for each dime donated in her favor. The contestant with the largest amount of donations won the queen title and the chance to go to the next level of competition.

In the June 1957 issue of *Skate* magazine, the editorial extolled the virtues of the RSROA's Roller Skating Queen of America contest in comparison with other organization's queen contests. "To find a comparable type of contest we have to go the 4-H'ers and other wholesome youth groups where the almighty dollar does not play a great part in the determination of entering the contest or the deciding the

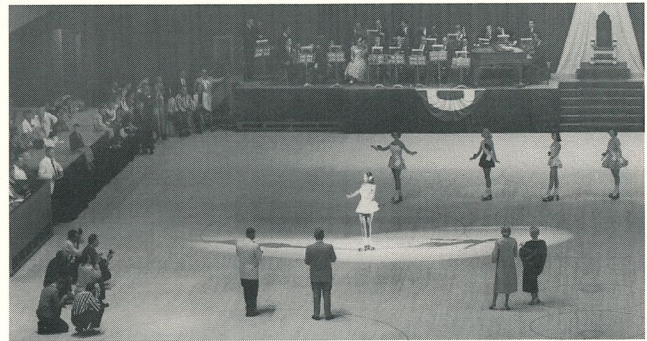


1971 queen contestants in their formal attire for the Queen's reception and dinner.

contest. Compatible with the strict amateurism that prevails in the RSROA Championships, our skating queen is not plied with remuneration, but she gains something that is certainly very lasting throughout her life – we speak of the love and honor her fellow competitors in the biggest roller skating meet of all, the RSROA American Championships." This thinking led the queen contest to evolve beyond a contest simply judged on outward beauty. In 1958, the judging requirements were changed to include poise and personality along with beauty and a year later, entry requirements of good health and good character were added which further evolved the contest to be judged on beauty both inside and out.

While the 1957 editorial extolled the virtues of the RSROA's non-compensated Queen contest, two years later in 1959 the contest made a complete turn around. The

RSROA Board of Directors agreed to enlarge the Queen contest by adding prizes and gifts of high value for the queen and the top two runner-ups. Some of the gifts included watches, clothing, furs, jewelry, jewelry boxes, hi-fi sets and luggage among many other gifts. While the queen's gifts changed with each year, she was always given the queen's trophy and tiara. At the 1960 semi-annual board meeting, the Board created the Committee for Queen Gifts to solicit \$50.00 from the RSROA chapters for the purchase of the queen's gifts. Beyond the gifts the Queen and her court received, the RSROA also provided them



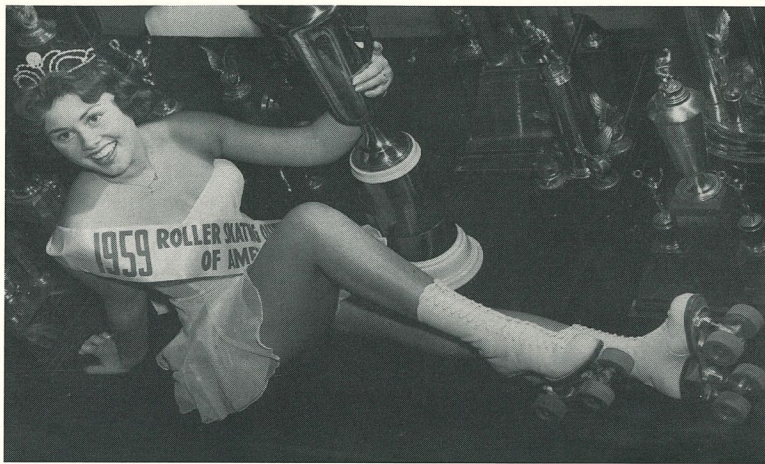
Finalists for the 1957 queen contest parade before the judges.

with a suite of hotel rooms and a car for their use during the championship.

The addition of gifts was not the only change to the contest in the 1960s. Jurisdiction over the queen contest was transferred from the defunct Roller Skating Queen Committee to the American Championship Committee. Through new connections with the Texas Miss America pageant, the judges for the 1966 queen contest were connected with that group. In fact from 1966 through to 1976, for every championship held in Texas, the queen judges were connected with the Texas Miss America



Nebraska Governor, Frank Morrison, crowns the 1962 Queen, Edwina Young, as her attendants look on.



1959 Roller Skate Queen of America Nicole Hudock.

pageant. The RSROA used this connection to benefit the contest. After discussion on the Queen contest during the 1974 semi-annual RSROA board meeting, the President directed the contest be given over to a committee consisting of members from the National office staff, the public relations firm Public Relations Sport Network and the Texas Miss America pageant. The committee was to devise a queen contest format that would be good for public relations.

Two years later at the 1976 Annual RSROA Board meeting in May, the decision was made to discontinue the queen contest based upon the advice given by the RSROA's public relations firm. "As you know, there is a proliferation of Queen Contests, ranging from a Teenage Queen to Miss America to Miss World to Miss Universe, and, of course, a lot of the major sport events, such as the Rose Bowl, have designated queens as a hostess for the event. We share the feeling that due to the over-

exportation of Queen Contests ... the publicity that RSROA might gain from enlarging the Queen idea would not be worth the effort." The RSROA crowned its last queen in 1976.

For twenty-six years, the Roller Skating Queens of America helped to promote roller skating and used their status to the benefit of the sport. 1976 Queen Lisa Wnuk had a background in fashion and designed all of her skating costumes including the one she wore for the finals of the queen contest. She wrote the fashion column in the spring 1977 *Skate* magazine using her knowledge of fashion design to show the many different options in skating costumes. A few queens even used the

experience they gained in the contest to go on and compete in other similar contest/pageants. Queen Ellen Meade, 1970, went on to win the Miss St. Petersburg, Florida contest and the Miss Florida title on her way to the Miss America pageant. She did a roller skating routine for her talent in both the Miss Florida and Miss America competitions. Unfortunately, she did not win the Miss America title. And other skating queens have just enjoyed the year in which they reigned. Nancy Jeanne Blenman, the 1954 Queen, used her queen crown to hold her veil when she married a year later in 1955.

All in all, as the 1957 editorial stated, we do remember the Roller Skating Queens of America with fondness and reverence and hope that their time in the spotlight was a marvelous and happy year for both them and roller skating.



1960 Skate Queen, Joyce Barnett, with her court Brenda Carter (left) and Susan Marie Huber (right).

Roller Skate Queens: The museum wants to hear from you.

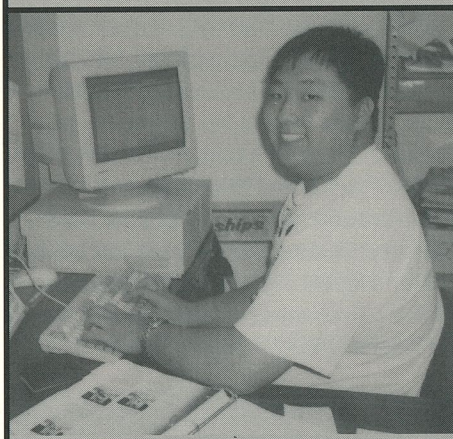
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and artifacts for a possible exhibit.

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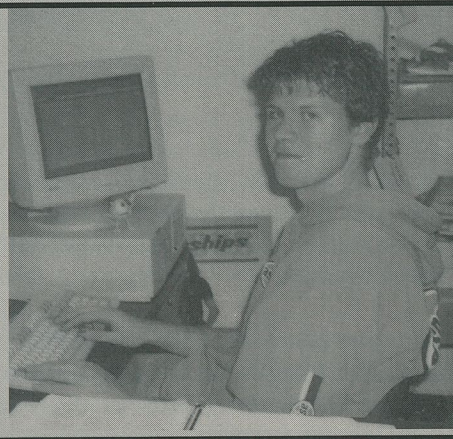
OUR VOLUNTEERS

The museum was very fortunate last year to have a total of twenty-five volunteers. Our volunteers assisted the museum by working on a variety of projects: inventory of the collection, collections data entry, construction of exhibit mounts, categorizing of reference articles along with general office support and general collections management assistance. The following individuals volunteered a total of 135 ½ hours at the museum: Andy Brennfoeder, Dylan Fink, Josh Lauer, Ashley Singer, Lois Wallis and 20 students from the Association of Museum Studies Students.

Thank you to all for your generosity in donating your time and talents.



Andy Brennfoeder (left) and Josh Lauer (right), high school seniors, volunteered at the museum during the month of December. All Lincoln public high school seniors are required to volunteer at local non-for-profit organizations and write a paper on their experiences for graduation. Both Andy and Josh assisted in a data entry project.



Giant Reunion Of Competitors Planned For the 40th Anniversary Of Nationals Being Held In Lincoln, Nebraska

Anyone Who Has Ever Won A Medal At Nationals
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But Not Where You Are Currently Living - Drop Us A Line.

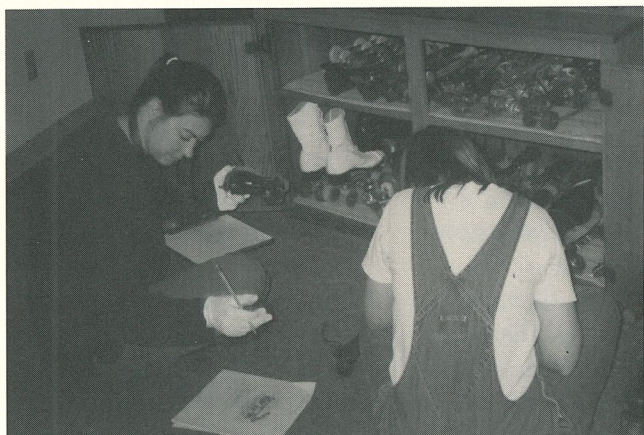
Please contact Deborah L. Wallis, Director and Curator
of the National Museum of Roller Skating
at 402/483-7551 x16 or
by email at directorcurator@rollerskatingmuseum.com or
by mail at 4730 South Street, Suite 2, Lincoln, NE 68506.

More details on the Gala Celebration will come in the near future.

Roller Skate Inventory Completed!

By Jennifer Cook, Assistant Curator

On Saturday November 3, 2001, 20 volunteers from the Association of Museum Studies Students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln worked a total of 68 hours and 30 minutes. In addition to volunteering at the National Museum of Roller Skating, the Association volunteered at the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia in April. Each semester the Association votes for a local



Erin Crombach (left) and Keely Rennie (right) diligently inventorying the skates in the storage cabinet.

museum in which to complete a volunteer project. The Association focuses on small museums, and we were honored to be chosen for the fall semester's project.

The project was to inventory the storage cases in the museum containing roller skates. Two cases had been previously inventoried, which left 20 for the students to complete. We had no idea how long it would take, so were pleasantly surprised when all of the cases were finished by early afternoon.



Mandy Langfald (left) and Mara Linskey (right) smile for the camera.



Emily Dust (left) and Ynju Kim (right) enjoying the odd and unusual skates.

The students arrived at 10 a.m., and were given a short introduction to inventorying, along with a packet of information on roller skates. The students then divided up into pairs and began working on cases. About half of the cases were finished by lunchtime, which consisted of pizza and pop provided by the museum (and Halloween candy from Yunju Kim!). The students dedicatedly stayed until all of the cases were finished.

We cannot thank the students enough! All of the skate cases in the museum have been inventoried. There are still a lot of objects to inventory, including most of the archives, that I am working on, and the general collection. This is the first inventory of the collection that we know of, and will be a great help in the management of our collections.

Again, a huge thank you to all of the volunteers: Eric Bachenberg, John Bench, Zac Beverage, Jennifer Cook, Erin Crombach, Sonya Dollins-Colton, Emily Dust, Jeremy Foutz, Susan Gilbert, Yunju Kim, Mandy Langfald, Mara Linskey, Amber Mohr, Raney Morrison, Keely Rennie, Zachary Roehrs, Carrie Schneider, Claudia Shaffer, and Stacey Walsh.

Thank You!

The National Museum of Roller Skating symbolizes the generosity and commitment of our members. Without our members, the museum would not exist. We are indebted to them. We are pleased to recognize our members for their interest and philanthropy. The following are members contributed to the museum during 2001.

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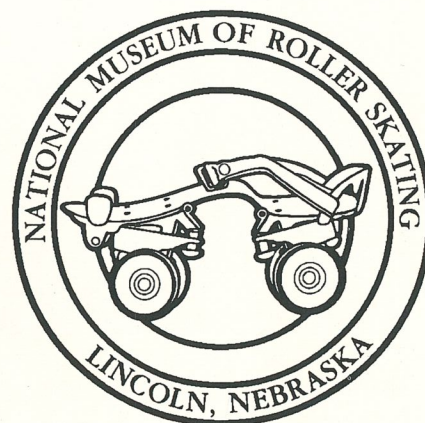
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Our Members



Donations

The National Museum of Roller Skating's collection has grown each year because of donors who have contributed to the growth of the museum. If you have an artifact that you would like to donate, please contact the museum before donating. Thank you for your continued support! The following donors have contributed to the collection:

Samantha Brunker
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MEMORIALS

The Patron Memorial Plaque was created to honor those individuals who have contributed to the growth of roller skating as a sport, recreation or business. A plaque may be purchased for a minimum contribution of \$250. Please fill out the information below if you are interested. All other donations are recognized in the newsletter.

*In memory of Al Caprara
by Annelle Anderson and Nellie Anderson Billie*

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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING 2002 Raffle

PRESERVING OUR PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Price \$50. Total of \$10,000 in cash prizes. Grand prize \$5,000! Drawing to take place, May 15, 2002, at the RSA International convention during the President's Dinner. Ticket holders need not be present to win. All proceeds benefit the museum.

The National Museum of Roller Skating is a publicly supported, charitable organization.

Purchaser _____

Address: _____

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Cut or photocopy and mail with payment to the museum

Where: At the RSA Convention

When: Wednesday night, May 15, 2002

Why: To Give You A Chance To Win while helping the National Museum of Roller Skating.

Prizes Consist of:

15 winners of \$100 each

4 winners of \$250 each

3 winners of \$500 each

1 winner of \$1,000

1 winner of \$5,000

Total Prizes: \$10,000

Tickets are sold for \$50 each

How: Buy a raffle ticket from the museum by calling 402/483-7551 ext. 16 or by sending in this form.

Ticket holders need not be present to win.

Deadline for this form is May 8, 2002.

Send to: 4730 South Street, Suite 2, Lincoln,
NE 68506

Thanks

The National Museum of Roller Skating would like to thank these members who have either joined or renewed membership with the museum since our last issue. Thank you for your support!

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Patricia Hanaway

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Total Enclosed \$ _____

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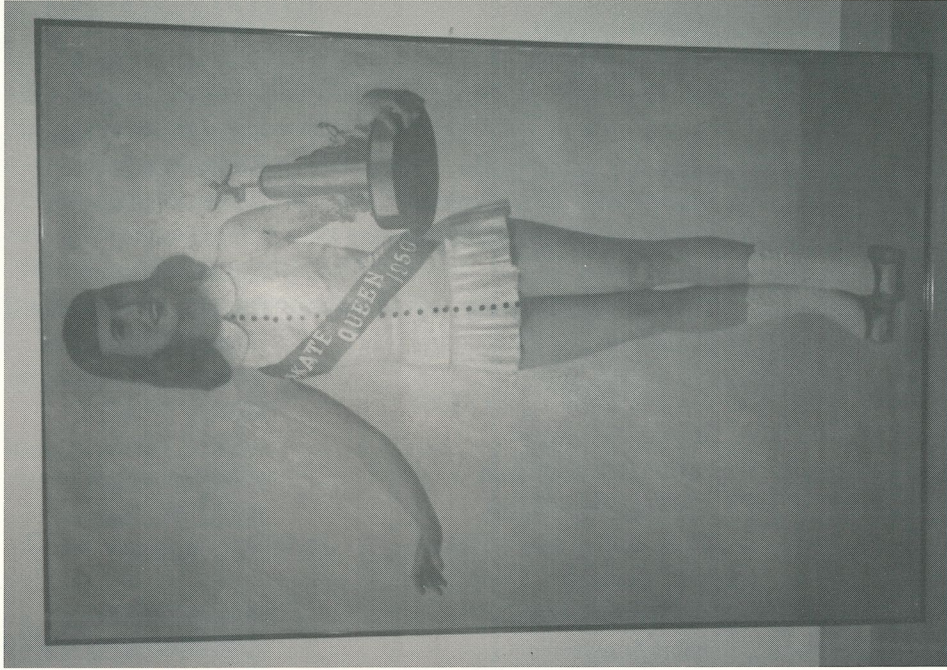
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Another Artifact



Portrait of Phyllis Riggs, the 1950 New York State Queen, from the museum's art collection.

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