





Dear Members,

Almost eighteen years ago, the National Museum of Roller Skating was founded. Since then, the museum has moved twice, had five directors, a variety of board members, and numerous assistants and volunteers. As we approach our 20th anniversary, the museum needs to find out where we should be rolling in the next century. What expectations are there for the collection, exhibits, education and research? The museum has made great progress over the years and will continue to strive forward. I hope you will voice your opinion on these issues in the upcoming months because your support is crucial!

In July, the museum hired Susan Curtis as the new Assistant Curator. Ms. Curtis graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this past May with a Master of Arts degree in Museum Studies. Ms. Curtis jumped head first into this position and has written the feature article for this month's newsletter about the Mineola Roller Skating Rink. Mineola was one of the finest roller rinks in the country until it closed its doors.

Still available, *Awards & Honors of the Roller Skating Association International*. This book highlights over 300 individuals who have won various RSA awards. Some of the seventeen different awards include Life members, Hall of Famers, Operators-of-the Year, Service Awards, and Achievement Awards. The book is available for \$4 to members and \$5 to non-members plus \$2 for shipping.

In October, the Durham Western Heritage Museum in Omaha will be featuring a pair of roller skates from the museum. The exhibit entitled, "Circus Circus" will show Barnum & Bailey's Pallenberg Bears' roller skates from 1910. The skates will be on exhibit until the end of January.

The next time you visit Lincoln, you might be able to use the new skate park. With the museum's support and other local businesses, the Lincoln Roller Park Association will work with the city to build a new public aggressive skating park. This park will provide kids and adults a safe place to skate, free from traffic problems and unhappy business owners.

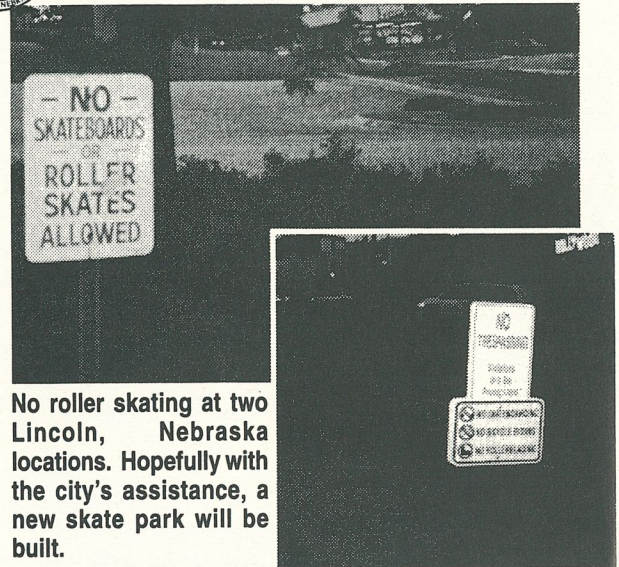
Over the past three months, the museum has received quite a few donations including one of the most unusual pairs of roller skates. Rollerblade, Inc., donated a pair of outdoor extreme in-line roller skates with inflatable rubber wheels and a usable brake system. This donation and others are featured on page six and can be seen in the museum in the Recent Donations exhibit.



For your information, the museum will be closed November 26-27 for Thanksgiving. Also, if you are planning a trip to Lincoln and you would like to see the museum on the weekend, please call at least three weeks ahead of time to arrange a visit.

Thanks again for your support and please send in your opinion regarding your expectations of the museum in the next century. Enjoy the newsletter!

Michael Zaidman
Director & Curator



No roller skating at two Lincoln, Nebraska locations. Hopefully with the city's assistance, a new skate park will be built.

On the cover: Lois Marie Goeller and Walter Bickmeyer, Jr. carrying the U.S. flag at the opening ceremonies of the United States Dance Championships, Mineola Skating Rink, Mineola, Long Island, New York, 1939. Gift of Myrtle H. Keyes (82.17.2)

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Museum Hours

9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.
Closed holidays and weekends, open by appointment.

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Mineola Skating Rink, The Home of Dance Skating
By Assistant Curator, Susan Curtis



Earl Van Horn and Inez in 1933. Gift of Chester Fried (94.7.26)

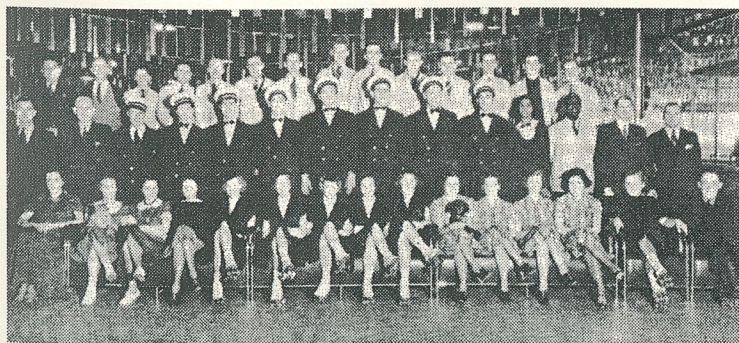
In 1918, sixteen-year-old Inez Sibley began roller skating at the Oaks Roller Rink in Portland, Oregon. The manager of the rink was a twenty-one-year old professional skater named Earl Van Horn. Within a year, the young couple was married and embarking on a successful career in vaudeville, artistic, and dance skating. They toured Canada, England, France, Germany, Spain, and Sweden where they often performed for royalty. "Van Horn and Inez" as they were known professionally performed in New York City's Palace Theater twenty-two times, a record for roller skating acts. The couple was known for their intricate techniques, including spinning on an eight-foot wide, four-foot high table and the swivel-neck spin that Inez perfected. In 1932, skater Betty Lytle joined their act.

The popularity of the "talkies" forced most vaudeville houses to close and in 1934

Earl and Inez retired from show business. That same year, with business partner Harry Bickmeyer, they opened the Mineola Skating Rink on the fairgrounds in Mineola, Long Island, New York. At that time there were only three reputable roller skating rinks in the Greater New York area: Al Flath's rink in Brooklyn, Fordham in the Bronx, and Vic Brown's rink in Jersey. The former cow exhibition barn had been used as a roller rink for six months before the Van Horns and Bickmeyer opened the Mineola Skating Rink on July 2, 1934. Three rink staff and less than fifty skaters were present that first evening, skating around the potbellied stoves used to heat the rink. By 1937, the rink employed a staff of forty-four and attracted 2,000 skaters to the season opening program. The rink served 90,000 skaters in 1948 and sold an average of 3,000 soft drinks at the lunch counter every Saturday.



Mineola Skating Rink sticker. Gift of Evelyn Sheldon Brennesholtz (87.48)



The Mineola Skating Rink staff, including "Doc" the rink cat and "Mr. Lutz" the rink dog as shown in the Souvenir program for the 1937 Christmas Party.

From the beginning, the owners wanted the Mineola Skating Rink to be a family-oriented rink. They wanted to dispel the common image of roller skating rinks as rough places that attracted crowds of young thugs. Either Earl or Inez, and often both of them, were in the rink every day. They enforced a strict dress code for skaters. In twenty-six years of rink operation, short skirts and pants were never allowed for women and collarless shirts and jeans were not allowed for men. Rink dress rules included the following guidelines for men: gentlemen must wear jackets or sweaters while skating. Sweaters must have sleeves, no vests are allowed. Collar and tie must be worn, unless the skater is wearing a neat sport shirt, subject to the approval of the management. Polo shirts are not considered sport shirts and are not allowed. T-shirts are never allowed. Dress rules for women included: Ladies' skating dresses must be no shorter than two inches above the knees. Under no circumstances will ladies be permitted to skate in slacks, beach pajamas, or trousers of any kind. The short, flared skirts worn by competitive skaters were only allowed during private practices. Skaters at the Mineola Skating Rink supported the dress code. According to the rink managers, of the 600 skaters that attended an average skating session, not more than three or four had to be told their clothing was inappropriate.



Inez and Earl Van Horn skating at their Mineola Skating Rink, circa 1940. Gift of Julie Kellman (96.71.13)

Speed skating and races were not allowed at the Mineola Skating Rink. From the rink's opening in 1934, dance skating classes were taught every night by the Van Horns and their first rink professional, Betty Lytle. In the second year of business, the Mineola Skating Rink presented the first dance skate special number on its daily program. At first, the number of skaters that could participate in this special number was small but rose steadily every year. The Mineola Skating Rink sponsored the first United States Dance Skating contest in 1939. In 1943, the Mineola Skating Rink became the first to put on a formal show on roller skates. Because of his tireless efforts, Earl Van Horn became known as the father of skate dancing.

The success of the owners' goal to be a family rink was evident in the loyalty shown by their skaters and the importance the rink played in the lives of many of its patrons. The 1942 season Opening Night show boasted an attendance of over 1,500 skaters, in spite of the decrease in membership due to the war and gas rationing. Many skaters met their spouses at the Mineola Skating Rink and their children became the next generation of loyal skaters. Children joined



Program from the First Official United States Roller Skating Dance Championships, April 27-29, 1939. Gift of Millie and Jim Ferris (80.5.10)

the same skate clubs that their parents had supported. The Mineola Skating Rink was also known as a safe place for young skaters. In 1951, for example, an average of 800 children would skate at the rink on Saturday mornings, with less than forty parents staying to supervise.

The Mineola Skating Rink sponsored sixty skating clubs throughout its history, including the Sundial Rollers Skating Club, Mineola's first and largest social club, the Silver Streaks Skating Club, the Zephyrs, the Collegiateers, the Rollin' Rascals, the Rainbow Rollers, and the Atomic Rollers. These clubs hosted social events and fundraisers and members could be identified by their distinctive club jackets and shirts.

The Earl Van Horn Dance and Figure Skating Club was re-organized and made

independent of the rink in November 1941 in response to the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) requirement that amateur competitors be controlled by amateur committees, not by professionals or individual rinks. This club turned out more champion skaters than any other club in the country, producing USARSA national

dance champions every year between 1942 to 1955. Champion skaters from Mineola included World Dance Champions Barbara Killip Gallagher and Fred Ludwig; National Champions Jean White, Walter Bickmeyer Jr., George and Gladys Werner, June Henrich, Edward O'Donnell, Charles Irwin, and Donald Mounce; and amateur Gold Dance Medalists Wilhemina Stuchel and Charles Lowe. Mineola Skating Rink member Lois Marie Goeller went on to become a featured skater in *Holiday on Ice*, Dolly Durkin joined the *Skating Vanities*, and Gordon Finigan and Walter Hughes became a professional comedy skating duo. Inez and Earl Van Horn were inducted into the USA Roller Skating Coaches Hall of Fame in 1994 in recognition of their outstanding contributions.



A bronze medal from Mineola for Senior Dance in 1950.

The Van Horns and Harry Bickmeyer continually worked to improve the rink. Over the two-year period between 1937 and 1938, they spent \$80,000 on improvements designed to increase skaters' comfort, convenience, and enhance the rink's prestige. One much-publicized

addition was the silver ceiling installed over the main skating floor. Visitors were impressed by the shimmering iridescence created during the moonlight skating numbers, when the main floor illumination was dimmed and the colored lighting system was faded in. Season opening programs were held to highlight the rink's improvements and showcase exhibition skaters. The Van Horns and Betty Lytle performed in 1937, Joan and Jimmy Lidstone, British national roller skating champions performed in 1938, and Ernie Arno, trick skater, performed in 1939 and 1940. As the local skaters perfected their skills, they began to perform the exhibition programs at the Mineola Skating Rink and also to perform in exhibitions at other rinks.

In order to lower the noise level created by the skates and allow the organ music to be more prominent, acoustical blanketing was installed on the walls and covered with blue silk. Ventilation problems in the rink caused by dust was improved by the installation of a ventilation system which could completely replace all the air in the rink with fresh air in only twelve minutes. This system also helped cool the rink in the summer.



1947 World Dance Champions Barbara Killip Gallagher and Fred Ludwig. (97.0.201)

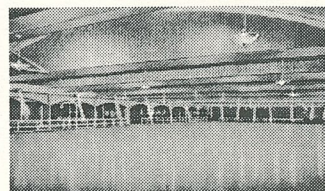
The Mineola Skating Rink was the first rink to install a Hammond Electric Organ in the 1930s, which became universally used by rinks all over the United States. In addition, it was the first rink to provide a separate beginner's rink. *Rinksider* magazine lauded the Mineola Skating Rink management and described the rink as a model for sound business practices.

Earl Van Horn's support of roller skating extended beyond the Mineola Skating Rink. He was involved in organizing both the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association (RSROA) and the United Rink Operators (URO).

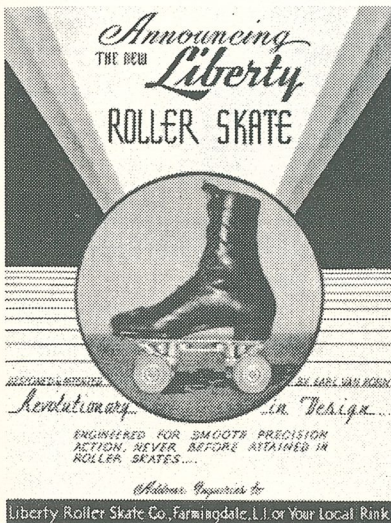


Inez Van Horn Wepy, with her husband Paul, holding her USA Roller Skating Hall of Fame plaque, 1994. Gift of Chester Fried (94.7.24)

In 1941, Earl resigned from the Board of Control of the RSROA in a disagreement over amateur competition control. He formed and supported the rival organization, URO, until he re-joined the RSROA in 1957. In 1941, Earl was appointed Chairman of the



Postcard showing interior of Mineola Skating Rink. Gift of Chester Fried (81.6.41)



Liberty Skate, designed and patented by Earl Van Horn in 1946.

Earl developed several improvements for roller skates. His patented Liberty Roller Skates were manufactured in 1946 by the Liberty Roller Skate Company and sold in the Mineola Skating Rink skate shop for \$38.50. He also created the "Earl Van Horn" toe stop and bracket and the "Earl Van Horn" model roller dance skate, both manufactured by the Chicago Roller Skate Company in the 1940s.



Skating partners Jean White and Walter Hughes, circa 1930s. Gift of Julie Kellman (96.71.14)

professional. Jean continued to be active in the rink after her marriage, teaching and choreographing the skating programs, until health problems forced her to remain at home. Earl began having health problems and was diagnosed with cancer that forced the removal of one lung in 1958.

Tragedy struck the Mineola Skating Rink on October 20, 1959, when Jean shot and killed Earl after an argument. Inez and Harry Bickmeyer continued to manage the rink until it was torn down on August 17, 1960 to make room for a

National Sports Committee for The National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (polio), Inc. for the promotion of President Roosevelt's Birthday Celebration. He asked every roller skating rink in the U.S. to hold a special skating night on Friday, January 10, 1942, the President's birthday, with a portion of the receipts to be donated to the President's Committee to support their infantile paralysis work. In addition, each rink was asked to follow the Mineola Skating Rink's lead and install a "Wishing Well," a familiar fundraising promotion of the President's Committee.

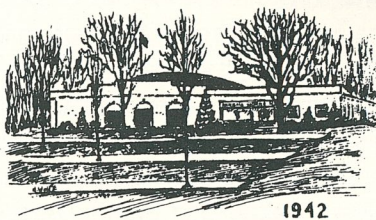
After Earl and Inez divorced in 1945, they remained on friendly terms and Inez continued to manage the rink. Inez's management was a cornerstone of the Mineola Skating Rink. She taught numerous skaters, developed dance routines like the *Collegiate*, and was called the "balance wheel" of the rink. Earl later married skater Jean White and they had two daughters, Gretchen and Lisa, and a son, Earl, Jr.

Jean (White) Van Horn began her skating career at the Mineola Skating Rink when, as a teenager, she took up skating to strengthen her legs after contracting polio. After she won the National Ladies Championship in 1943, she ended her amateur career and became a Mineola Skating Rink

parking lot for the new County Office Building. Inez later married Paul Wepy and lived in New York until her death in 1995.

In 1951, the Mineola Skating Rink hosted the first of its Old Timers Jubilees to reunite former skaters and rink employees. In addition to the chance to socialize with old friends, skaters could compete in dance skating contests. These Jubilees were originally planned to be held every two years, but the response was so enthusiastic, the reunions were held annually. Mineola Skating Rink skaters continued to hold the Old Timers Jubilees even after the rink closed. Local rinks, like the Levittown Rink, hosted the reunions for Inez, her former employees, and skaters. At one of these Jubilees, a tribute song for Inez was performed, a personalized version of *Thanks for the Memories*.

The many happy memories of Mineola Skating Rink skaters are illustrated in the following poem that appeared in the September 17, 1942 issue of the rink's newsletter, *Bumps and Falls*.



Season's Greetings from Inez and Earl Van Horn

Cover of Mineola Skating Rink's Christmas card, 1942. Gift of Evelyn Sheldon Brennessoltz (87.48)

Mineola Rink

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>I
Doors open at eight
Your friends will be skating
Now please don't be late
And don't keep them waiting.</p> <p>II
Buz! Buz! its "All Skate"
And around you will go
'Til it's "Couple Only"
Then you look for your beau.</p> <p>III
When "Special" time comes
You go thru your paces
A visitor remarks—
There go two aces.</p> <p>IV
No. 8— "Ladies Only" —
A wonderful sight
See the girls all skating
In their red, blue, and white.</p> <p>V
You look at the sign—
"Trio" will shine
Now three in a row
Will be mighty fine.</p> | <p>VI
The "Fourteen Step" special
You sit out and watch
You are not quite ready
To skate to a march.</p> <p>VII
Thru the steps of the "Circle Waltz"
Slowly you glide
And smile at your partner
Close at your side.</p> <p>VIII
Soon our evening is ended
While at attention we stand
Do honor to the Flag
The pride of our land.</p> <p>IX
To our homes we all go
Each our happy way
And hope to be back
Another day.</p> <p>X
For pleasure and pastime
Good skating is an art
For this we thank Mineola
Down deep in our hearts.</p> |
|--|--|

E.N.S.—42

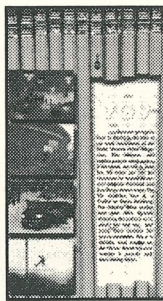
"The Slim Skating Nurse from Nassau"



The National Museum of Roller Skating's collection has grown each year because of donors such as the following 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 you donate. Thank you for your continued support! The following donors have contributed since August:

Gordon Adams (Video Groove Productions); Pauline Ambrosini; Carolyn Baker; Dan Bantin; Rose Lee Evans; Chester Fried; Lois Gondek (in memory of Joseph Gondeck); George Husted; Allen Johnson; Miles Johnson; Cecelia Kelley; John Love; Jhon Marshall; Caroline Mirelli; George Pickard; Amy Pieh; Jim Pollard; Ted & Sue Rendfrey; Rollerblade, Inc.; Claire Swan; Duane Trenbath; and Jeanette Tupe (USA Roller Skating).

Gordon Adams of Video Groove Productions donated three video tapes, VideoGroove Volume 1 Issue 1, Dare to Air, and Back To Basics VG9 (98.42).



Allen Johnson donated his 1959 California State and Southwest Pacific Regional RSROA Championship program. Allen competed on the Men's Relay team along with Ken Knecht, Ronald Hook, and Jim Craig of the Sacramento Rainbow Speed Club (98.40).



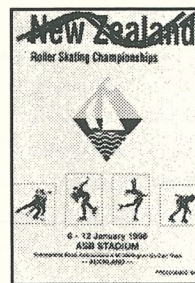
Amy Pieh of Pacific Product Group, Inc., donated a Rough Rider, the official puck of Major League Roller Hockey (98.37).



John Chrien donated this photograph of him and his wife Ruth who were both co-founders of the Judges Panel No. 1 and original judges in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1942 (98.36)



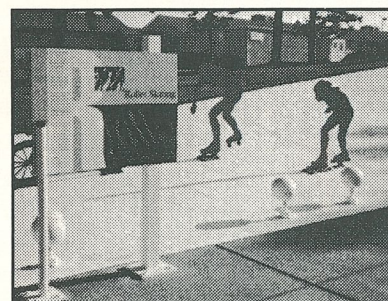
Carolyn Baker donated this photograph holiday card that featured the 1982 USA World Team in Bremerhaven, Germany (98.51).



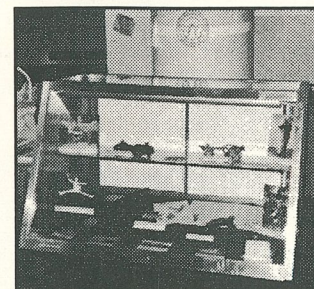
Duane Trenbath donated this New Zealand Roller Skating Championship program from 1996 (98.52).



Ted & Sue Rendfrey donated this 1998 Spring Invitational program that was held at the Holiday Skating Center in Cherry Hill, New Jersey (98.53).



This photograph features two metal roller skating sculptures on a bank track. The image was taken at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Roller sports were elevated to Class A status by the US Olympic Committee with Congressional passage of the Amateur Sports Act of 1978.



This image features the National Museum of Roller Skating exhibit case at the 1998 USA Roller Skating Speed & Artistic National Championships that were held in Fresno, California, at Selland Arena this past August.



The National Museum of Roller Skating would like to thank these members who have either joined or renewed with the museum since our last issue. Your support is appreciated!

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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.

*In Memory of Bruce Pearson
Bert & Lynn Anselmi*

In Memory of In Honor of On Occasion of
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Please check one:
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This contribution was made by:
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Make check payable to: NMRS. All gifts to this fund are tax-deductible. Mail this form and payment to the museum.

DID YOU KNOW?

MEMBERSHIP QUIZ RESULTS

The 14th World Rink Hockey Championships were held in Spain. What European country won?
Answer: Portugal won. The US did not compete until the 17th World Championships in 1966 in Sao Palo, Brazil.

Winners: Michael U. Justice & Sam Nieswizski

Do You Know?

NEXT MEMBERSHIP QUIZ

At the Mineola Rink, the owners had two pets. The cat was named Doc and the other pet was named Mr. Lutz. What kind of pet was Mr. Lutz?

The first two correct answers will win a 1995 championship pin (seen to the left). Please mail your answers to the museum.

Do You Know? prize below, the 1995 USA Roller Skating Pan American Team pin.



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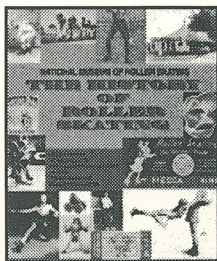
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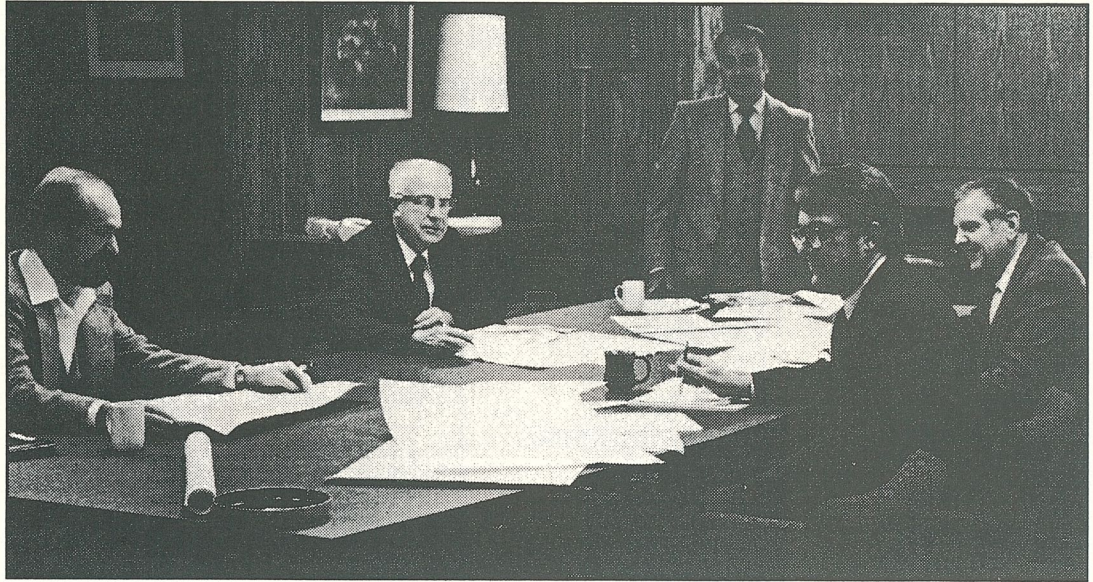
Benefits extend one year from join date. Please allow three weeks for processing. Membership includes a subscription to the member's newsletter, *Historical Roller Skating Overview*, 10% off museum store items, a membership card, and a copy of *The History of Roller Skating*, ©1997 ISBN 0-9658192-0-5. The National Museum of Roller Skating is pleased to recognize contributors for their interest and philanthropy. The museum is recognized as a charitable institution. All donations are tax-deductible up to the amount permitted by law. Names of donors are listed in all publications unless otherwise notified. First Friday Tours are the first Friday of each month at 12:15 pm.

Membership Matters

Another Artifact



The National Museum of Roller Skating was founded October 27, 1980 by Dick Young, Robert Bollinger, Bert Anselmi, George Pickard, and Marvin Facher (seen left to right); not pictured are Chester Fried and James Turner. This photograph was taken in the old RSROA office on "A" Street in Lincoln, Nebraska. Gift of the RSROA (97.0.435)



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