

May 2018

Rolling Thru Time
Newsletter

The National Museum of Roller Skating



Visit our Website



Rhonda Cann, new part-time museum employee, has been busy at the museum, with the help of a new volunteer, Bob Culver. Culver previously volunteered at the Telephone Museum in Lincoln. The USARS conference room has been decorated with memorabilia, and the former curator's office has been turned into a retail area. Retail sales have increased this year, partly a result of new t-shirt designs. In two days recently, over \$100 of items were sold. Cann's new desk is near the front door so she is able to quickly greet museum visitors.

Raffle: Win \$4,000 or more in Vegas!

Last year's 1st place museum raffle winner won \$4,000. A \$50 ticket gets you a shot at the big prize, 35% of the total sales. Second place receives 10%, and 3rd place 5%. Three winners will be drawn at random during the President's Dinner on Wednesday night, May

16, at the RSA annual convention. You don't have to be present to win. For the first time at the convention, you will be able to buy raffle tickets (and memberships) by credit card.

The success of the museum's annual raffle is essential to funding the museum. Last year the museum sold 244 tickets and netted after raffle prizes about \$6,000. Tickets can be purchased from any museum trustee, at the museum booth in the trade show, or at the President's Dinner. All RSA sectional directors also have tickets.

You can buy a raffle ticket from these museum trustees. They also appreciate your feedback about the museum. Please seek them out at the RSA convention to discuss your questions and suggestions.

President: Kim Wall
Vice President: Nellie Anderson Lillie
Treasurer: Alan Bacon,
Secretary: Peggy Young
Other Trustees: Annelle Anderson, Dianne Braun, Danny Brown, Dominic Cangelosi, Charlene Conway, Howard "Bud" Engle, Bill Hoefler, Ed Hughes, Michael Jacques, Judith Young Link, Jim Link, Linda Miner, and Randy Ray.

New Bowling Fundraiser/Social at RSA Convention

Come join new and old friends at the Bowling Center at Southpoint on Monday night, May 14th from 9:30 to 11:30pm. This is a new fundraiser for the museum. Cost is \$25 per person, limited of 40 bowlers. Please email Linda Miner to reserve your spot lminer21@comcast.net

Lincoln Community Foundation Fundraiser



May is also the time for this important fundraiser. The Lincoln Community Foundation is giving \$400,000 this year to over 300 city-wide charities. Each entity will receive a proportional share based on the amount of financial support each organization receives from its supporters.

You may give throughout the month of May, as long as it's received by the 31st. Go to their website www.lcf.org and follow the prompts and type in the National Museum of Roller Skating. You may also send a check to the museum at 4730 South Street, Lincoln, NE 68506. If you have any questions, call Rhonda at the museum 402-483-7551, Ex 203.

Last year the museum received a \$1482.11 contribution from the Lincoln Community Foundation based on over \$6,000 of donations from 20 people who gave to the museum in May.

Thank you Rob Nickolaus, Leslie Tien, Cory Nielson, Jeanne Kern, Janet Pavilionis, Jon Roux, Peggy Young, Nicki Korjenek, Elizabeth Korjenek, Dominic Cangelosi, Adrienne Van Houten, Jean Wietecha, Neil Land, William Hoelfler, Kim Wall, Michael Sheedy, Nellie, Rob and Genevieve Lillie, Keith Noll, Annelle Anderson, William T Spooner, Harry Walker and the RSA.

Thank You!

The museum would like to thank Dorothy McDonald for her contribution to the museum in celebration of Ed Hughes' birthday. Ed and Mary Ellen Hughes are the owners of Northland Rolladium in Liberty, Missouri.

Thanks to Section 7 who recently renewed their benefactor level membership at \$500. Sections 1 and 2, 5 and 8 are also museum members.

Also, thanks to Robyn Young and the South Central Chapter of USARS for their donation of funds for a scanner. The goal is for the museum to have its own scanner in order to facilitate the ability to put many more photographs on the museum's website.

Two Podcasts Feature the Museum and Roller Skating



One podcast is a 28-minute radio interview that Nellie Anderson Lillie, museum vice president, did for the BYU radio program *Special Collections – Radio Tours To All The Cool Places*. Lillie talked about the history of roller skating, including competitive skating. She also described the museum and the roller skating industry today.

<http://www.byuradio.org>

Another podcast featured museum trustee Dominic Cangelosi and the Moonlight Rollerway in Glendale, California. It was an interview with the Trinity Broadcast Network for the *Mike Huckabee TV Show*. They wanted to do a human interest story on people with interesting and unusual backgrounds. The podcast refers to Dominic as a "living national treasure."

Feature: Highlights of the History of the National Museum of Roller Skating

By: Alan Bacon

The museum is over 35 years old and many of the people involved in its early years are gone. It's important to tell the museum's story for the current and future generations of museum members.

The following are the highlights of James Vannurden's 73-page unpublished history of the museum that he completed in 2009 after a year of research. He was the museum's curator from 2008 until 2015. Today he is curator at the Old Cowntown Museum in Wichita, Kansas, his hometown. He returned to the museum in the spring of 2017 to create two new displays for the upcoming summer. He continues to be a valuable resource for the museum.

The following highlights are not necessarily in the order in which they were presented in the book, which was organized in chronological order. Much of the information has now been combined in a thematic approach.

Beginnings

In 1978 the RSROA decided at its annual meeting to create the museum; the first official meeting of the museum committee was in 1980; the museum opened in 1982. The first officers were Bert Anselmi, president; Richard Young, vice president; George Pickard, secretary. Other trustees were Chester Fried, Robert Bollinger, Marvin Facher, and James Turner. (Turner is the only surviving original trustee.)

Acquisitions

The most remarkable information Vannurden presented is the quality and quantity of material donations to the museum over the years by rink owners and skaters from their personal collections. He listed about 60 contributors who have donated items to the museum, but this probably just scratches the surface. This topic is best summed up by the first curator, Michael Brooslin, when he left in 1987 to become curator at the National Basketball Hall of Fame in his hometown of Springfield, Mass. Brooslin wrote:

"During my six years, your collections donations have been overwhelming. The museum now has over 10,000 objects (skates, costumes, and other artifacts,) 500 films and videotapes, 700 books, 4,000 skating programs, 2,400

magazines, 10,000 photographs, as well as the papers of many significant people and companies in the archives.”

Vannurden recorded the donations chronologically, not by the impossible task of order of importance. But certainly one highlight is the donation in 1991 by Elizabeth Plimpton of her grandfather's, James Plimpton, collection. Plimpton invented the first quad skate in 1863. Also important is the W.C. Ludascher's collection which included the oldest known roller skate and first patented roller skate (inline), the Petitled of 1819. Vannurden wrote: "A collector for many years, Ludascher accumulated quite a diverse collection. His skates were both rare and unique."



Plimpton Skate 1863:

This rocking action skate revolutionized roller skating and made it fun and accessible to the general public. Also Plimpton built and operated the first roller rinks, and created a lesson program. His decedents are still members of the museum.

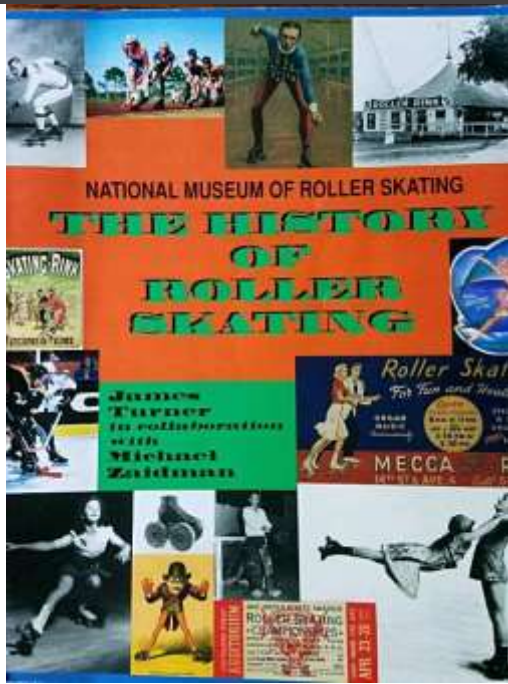


Petitled Skate 1819:

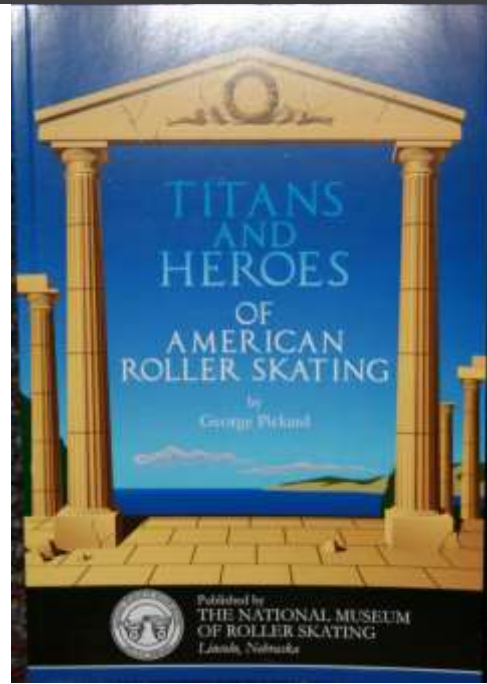
Though an important contribution to the history of roller skating, it was too difficult to use for the general public to enjoy

Publications

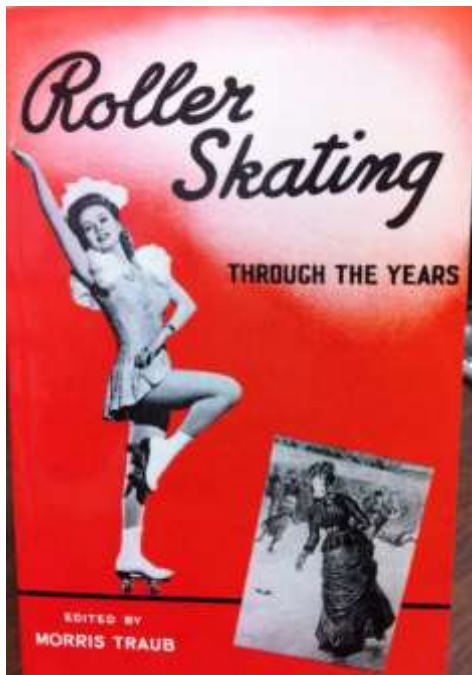
Six books have been published by the museum, written by former curators and one by a former trustee, James Turner. The museum also financed reprints of two significant out-of-print books to now make these books readily accessible to the skating community, and copies can be purchased at the museum. Museum personnel have provided information to authors for other skating history books. Also, the museum personnel have provided countless information to skating publications and interviews for radio and TV.



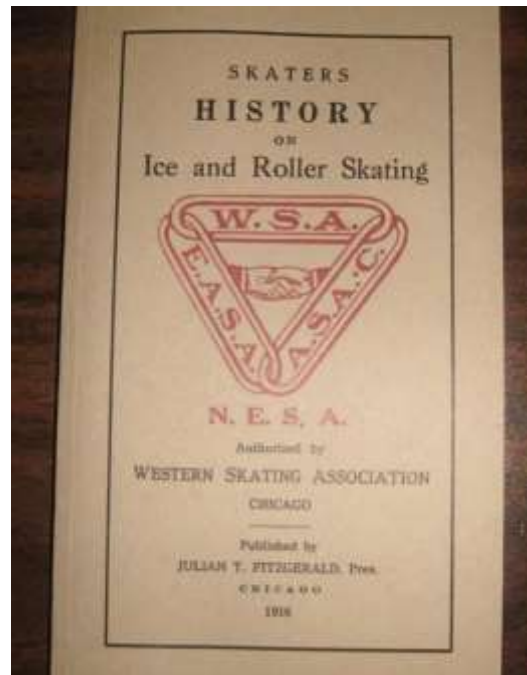
Above: This book cover is James Turner's, only surviving original museum trustee, 1997 book. The book begins with general roller skating history, and then covers the history of every discipline of competitive skating.



Above: George Pickard's 2010 book covers the important post WWII people in roller skating.



Above: The museum did a reprint of Morris Traub's, a Brooklyn rink operator, 1944 book on the early years of roller skating.



The museum did a reprint of this 1916 book which highlights early speed and vaudeville roller skaters, along with prominent ice skaters. This is an era when one skating organization represented both roller and ice skaters.

Also, the museum sent items out to locations such as the San Francisco International Airport in 1997 and the Seattle Experience Music Project in 2002. It's estimated that 10 million viewers saw the 275-item exhibit in San Francisco. The airport asked for another display the following year. Brooslin added: "The museum has been recognized as a quality institution, with collections and information being shared with other museums such as the Chicago Historical Society, Smithsonian Institution, and the Michigan Museum of History."

Finances

If material acquisitions and publications have been the resounding successes of the museum, the financial situation has been much more of a struggle. Vannurden cited many financial donations by the RSROA, especially in the early years. The largest was in 1982: \$52,851.84. Other early RSROA financial donations were between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Other financial highlights included:

1982: The RSROA reduced rent from \$12,000 a year to \$1. (This \$1 fee is still maintained by USARS)

1985: Museum trustees were required to fund all their own expenses for museum meetings.

1987: The raffle started which brought in initially a net of around \$15,000.

Vannurden included a chart of projected revenues and expenses for 1988/89:

A full time curator cost was \$21,430 in 1988, 73% of all annual expenses.

(Note \$1 in 1988 is worth \$2.14 today. That same salary to total expense ratio seems to have been roughly consistent over the years.)

The success of the raffle with curator expenses of only 21,000 in the '80s helped a lot, but the museum continued to struggle for revenue.

Other Important Events/Facts

1983: The museum began transferring its collection of RSROA film to VHS (Today, thanks to a donation from the USARS' foundation, those VHS tapes are now being converted to DVD.)

1990: The museum moved across town from RSROA headquarters to USARS headquarters. This increased exhibit and storage space from about 1,500 to 2,400 sq. ft. and from 24 display cabinets to 40. These cabinets were built specifically for roller skating equipment. The new location was in an historic, 1938 colonial revival style landmark building that formerly housed a telephone substation.



The left show case displays roller derby beginning in the 1930s. The right show case displays roller derby today. These 40 wood-grain display cases, custom built for the museum, acquired over many years, gives the museum a professional decor and efficiently displays the artifacts.

1993: The Hall of Fame was established. Before, the USARS Hall of Fame existed only on paper. It includes plaques for distinguish coaches, athletes, and service.



The Hall of Fame is in a corridor between the front half of the building and the entrance to the main part of the museum.

1999: The museum received its largest grant for \$8,686 for the Space Saver System for archives storage. The modern movable shelving increased storage space by 158%. Vannurden listed a total of \$26,761 in grants over the years.



The Space Saver System affords an efficient and safe means to store archival material in a state-of-the-art professional manner.

2002: The museum's website won an award from the International Association of Sports Museums and Hall of Fame for museums of operating budgets under \$250,000. In 2005, for the first three months of the year, the website averaged 44,000 hits per month.

The museum has had 11 curators, not counting assistant curators and various amounts of volunteers.

(The University of Nebraska ended its museum studies program in the early 2000s, which was a source of talent for the museum.)

The amount of visitors to the museum has fluctuated between 1,000 and 2,000 people per year, depending on whether Nationals occurred in Lincoln, and different levels of promotion by the museum and the local Lincoln community.

One dream that was talked about in 1991 and 1993, but has never been realized, is a film on the history of roller skating. The cost was estimated to be between \$15,000 and \$32,000.

Museum Philosophy

Brooslin, the first museum curator, worked with Lincoln Museum Curator Wendal Frantz in 1981 on strategies for opening a new museum. Frantz recommended:

- That the museum needed a strong purpose statement. "That without a clear statement the museum would be at risk of becoming a meaningless jumble of old items. A museum needed to define stories and not just show scattered objects. "
- That selecting content needed to fulfill two purposes: to educate and to entertain
- That the importance of the physical environment was crucial. A museum needed to maintain the correct humidity, and make sure items were safe and secure. The purpose statement was formulated.

"To obtain items of lasting interest or value relating to roller skating; to care for and display these items in an institution open to the general public; to sponsor and carry on activities that foster better understanding of the history and development of roller skating and the people associated with it; to receive, invest, reinvest, manage, and distribute, in whole or in part, restricted or

unrestricted gifts, grants, and bequests for any or all of the foregoing purposes.”

Four main categories for acquisition were decided on by the Board of Directors in 1981: artifacts, archival items, audio/video materials, and published material.

Vannurden wrote: “George Pickard wanted a museum not to show off the collection but to preserve its history. . . Pickard wanted to spread the knowledge among skaters so they could have a lasting respect for the sport they love.”

According to Vannurden, Brooslin said that “the RSROA started the museum because many rink owners seemed afraid that the memorabilia and collections from earlier times would be lost.”

STAY CONNECTED

The National Museum of Roller Skating | (402) 483-7551 extension 16 |
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www.rollerskatingmuseum.com



The National Museum of Roller Skating is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in Lincoln, Nebraska. It is the only dedicated roller skating museum in the world. We are committed to the preservation of the history of roller skating. With over 50 displays cases, the museum educates the public on all aspects of roller skating, which dates back to the first patented skate from 1819.

National Museum Rollerskating | 4730 South St, Lincoln, NE 68506 www.rollerskatingmuseum.com

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