

April / May 1999  
Issue No. 69



**We are  
bending over  
backwards  
for you!  
New Shelves!  
Ya-hoo!**

**National Museum of  
Roller Skating**

**Historical Roller  
Skating Overview**



Dear members,

The National Museum of Roller Skating installed a new shelving system last month and that is why this issue features the entire process of this new acquisition. The new shelves are easy to use and are a vast improvement on our old bowed wood shelves. I invite all of our members and guests to visit the museum and check out this wonderful addition to the museum.

The next two months are crucial fund-raising months for the museum. It is the time of year where your financial donation carries across the entire fiscal year. Each year in May, we host our annual raffle fundraiser where we give you the opportunity to win cash, while supporting your favorite museum. This year, the raffle will take place in sunny San Diego during the 1999 RSA Convention and Tradeshow, May 9-13, at the Town & Country Resort. The raffle will take place after the Presidential Dinner on Wednesday, May 12. Tickets are \$50 each and are available by filling out the form on page seven or by calling the museum. Remember, you need not be present to win.

Last year about this time, we were awarded a grant to evaluate our current practices, establish priorities to achieve professional museum standards, and plan how to best serve the community. Nine months ago, we began the evaluation process by working with community representatives to study our current practices. This April, two museum professionals will visit our museum to evaluate our situation and to assess how to improve the public's perception of the museum, earn community support, and improve the museum's marketing and public relations efforts.

If you plan to be in Lincoln in late May, the Hyland Hundred is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, May 29. Proceeds from the sixth annual non-competitive race will be split among three Lincoln trail projects. More than 500 in-line skaters and bicyclists of all ages are expected to participate in the ride and roll event. The event is co-sponsored by the museum again this year. To register, please call the museum.

Also in May, the museum plans to release our latest publication, *The Allure of the Rink, Roller Skating at the Arena Gardens, 1935-53* by former assistant curator Sarah Webber. With over fifty images from the museum's collection, this book illustrates one of America's most famous roller rinks: the Arena Gardens in Detroit, Michigan. Information for acquiring this book will be featured in our next newsletter.

In June, the museum will have extended hours to accommodate visitors who attend the North Central regional championships and for those patrons who want to visit. The museum will be open on Saturdays, June 19 and June 26, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., and on Sundays, June 20 and June 27, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Again, I would like to thank Bill Wolf, photographer for USARS for taking photographs of the new shelf system beginning on page three.

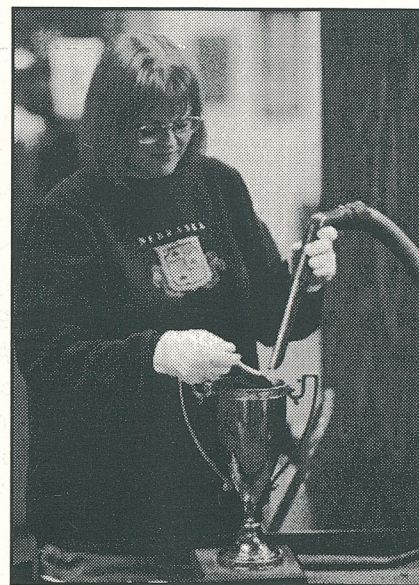
Thanks again for your continued support, and please mail in your completed raffle ticket from page seven.



Michael Zaidman  
Director & Curator

**On the cover: Skating through the archives is easy now with the museum's new shelving system.**

As a small specialized museum, it is our job to maintain a professional environment for our visitors to see and learn. Many of our responsibilities are not seen by the general public, such as maintaining a computer inventory of the collection, disseminate information to researchers for books, facilitate care and control of collections on site (as shown below by assistant curator Susan Curtis), oversee object movement for outgoing loans and internal exhibits, oversee integrated pest management programs, negotiate loan contracts, prepare grant reports, prepare documentation and shipping information for an upcoming traveling exhibition, maintain photography rights and reproduction services, develop and run volunteer programs, prepare and implement budgets, purchase equipment and supplies, and publish a great newsletter. These are just a few of the many reasons why it is important for you to help the museum this year by purchasing a raffle ticket.



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**Museum Hours**

9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.  
Closed holidays and weekends, except for Saturdays, June 19 & 26, from 12-4 pm, and Sundays, June 20 & 27, from 1-5 pm.

*Historical Roller Skating Overview* ISSN 0896-1379 ©1999 is published bimonthly for members of the National Museum of Roller Skating. It is available only through membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$25. Send correspondence and change of address to: National Museum of Roller Skating, 4730 South Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506 USA. Phone: 402/483-7551 x.16 Fax: 402/483-1465 E-mail: rlrsktmus@aol.com Internet: www.usacrs.com/museum.htm. For America Online: keyword roller skating, click Grandstand, scroll for site.

## The New Shelves in the Archives

by Susan Curtis, Bill Wolf, and Michael Zaidman

The archives room of the National Museum of Roller Skating recently received a new look, thanks in large part to the Cooper Foundation. The Cooper Foundation, located in Lincoln, Nebraska, awarded the National Museum of Roller Skating an \$8,686 grant to install a new SpaceSaver shelving system. This new storage system utilizes a "mechanical assist" mode of operation to maneuver the moveable inner two rows of shelves, making this system practical for everyday use.

The late Joseph H. Cooper, who operated Cooper movie theaters in Nebraska, Colorado, and Oklahoma, created the charitable foundation in 1934 to serve the Lincoln area and the state of Nebraska. In the final six months of 1998, the National Museum of Roller Skating was only one of two organizations, under the category of Arts and Humanities, to receive grant money from the foundation.

The original storage shelves in the archives were badly bowed and a huge amount of space in the middle of the room was virtually unusable as storage space, which was desperately needed by the museum. The archives storage area has 207 square feet of floor space. The previous shelving configuration had 329 flat square feet of storage and 288 cubic feet of storage. With the installation of the new storage system the museum gained 328 flat square feet of shelving and 456 cubic feet of storage space which amounts to an increase of 158 percent. In addition, the re-designed archives area will accommodate a work table and allow us to utilize the existing flat file.

Without the grant from the Cooper Foundation, there is no way the museum could have afforded to update the archives. Even replacing the bowed boards with new boards would only be a temporary solution. New boards would have sustained the museum a little bit longer, but since the collection was so overcrowded, accepting any more items would have been impossible. This temporary solution ran counter to our mission statement, which is to continue collecting, within reason, historical objects related to roller skating.

The Cooper Foundation grant also becomes the largest single grant ever received by the museum. The largest grant previously was a \$5,400 Museum Assessment Program (MAP) grant in 1986. The MAP is one of several programs offered by the American Association of Museums to help museums actively improve their programs and operations in order to achieve the highest standards of quality and professionalism. Most recently, the museum was awarded a \$2,750 MAP III grant, bringing the total of grant monies received in the past few months to \$11,436.

The next two pages reveal the process the museum undertook to prepare for and install the new shelving system. The entire process took almost four weeks. The first procedure involved removing every box, book, and artifact by director Michael Zaidman and assistant curator Susan Curtis the last week of February. The only available spaces to store the entire collection were USA Roller Skatings' conference room and work room. Placing boxes on carts and carefully transferring the items to their temporary homes took three days. Once the room was emptied of objects, the room itself needed to be cleared. Zaidman and Curtis used a cordless screwdriver to remove the old wood shelves from the archives room. The museum staff needed a full day and a half to remove the numerous shelves. Instead of paying to dispose of the shelves, museum volunteers offered to recycle the shelves for their own use.

Before we began the process of applying for the grant, painting the

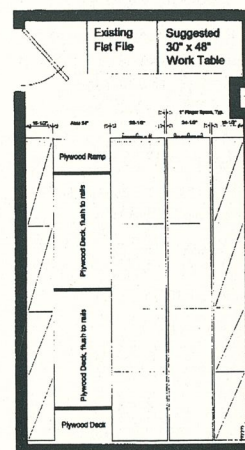
room was not even considered, but after viewing the room free of shelving and artifacts, it was evident that a fresh coat of paint was needed. After choosing a color to match the new shelves, the walls of the archives room quickly soaked up two gallons of paint. With the assistance of museum volunteers, the room was painted in one day. Thanks go to volunteers Gigi Boyd, Christine Nienaber, Jeanette Tupe, Sondra Wendell, and museum board member George Pickard for their painting assistance. Thanks also to Bill Wolf who spent several days photographing the various activities.

By the first week of March, we were ready for the new shelves to be installed. However, due to a shipping error at the factory, the installation was pushed back a week. In the long run, the delay was okay since we were able to use the extra days to make sure the paint was completely dry and the damaging effects on artifacts of offgassing from drying paint were lessened.

Installation finally began Thursday, March 11 and continued until Tuesday, March 16. The installation process went very smoothly. The two shelving system installers worked very efficiently and were considerate of museum visitors. The first step involved removing a section of the carpet to provide a level area for the base of the system. After the carpet was removed, three metal tracks for the moveable center sections were screwed to the concrete floor and leveled. Plywood was laid between the tracks and finished with vinyl tile. The next step was assembling the shelf system. What we thought would be a long process, was actually done quickly and easily. The shelf system was assembled using only a rubber hammer to seat the shelves into their proper slots on the supports. Assistant curator Susan Curtis measured the museum's archival storage boxes to make sure that they would fit on standard shelf spacing. To accommodate a few tall boxes and to maximize the amount of space available, two sections of shelves were given extra room between the shelves.

Once installation was complete, the museum staff and volunteers were thrilled to see how easy it was to access the shelves. Everyone who stopped to see the finished shelves took a turn operating the single-spoke rotating handle, admiring its smooth, easy operation as the center slowly glided left and right. The SpaceSaver mobile storage system with heavy-duty storage shelving and shelf supports used in the archives allows the staff to easily and confidently use the system. The weight of one carriage can weigh as much 9,800 pounds fully loaded with paper artifacts. The SpaceSaver system drives all three wheels on one side of the carriage in complete unison which produces easy and parallel carriage movement. Smooth movement is essential to protect fragile museum collections, which can easily be damaged by jarring motions. The floor plan, seen right, shows how the system has been laid out in the archives room.

After the shelving installation was finished and the room cleaned of construction debris, the collection was carefully retrieved from storage and placed on the new shelves. It was exciting to see the museum's collection returned to an organized, efficient, and accessible room. And just as exciting, when all the books, costumes, and archival information were placed on shelves, there were still empty shelves ready to accept new donations and support the museum's future growth.



Photograph descriptions top to bottom:  
 Director Michael Zaidman and assistant curator Susan Curtis inspect the archive room before the new shelving system will be installed. Not only were many of the shelves badly bowed, but much needed space was going to waste in the center of the room.

The archives room with only the badly bowed shelves remaining.

Zaidman and Curtis removing all the wood shelves.

Zaidman and Curtis begin painting the archives room.

Painting volunteers (top to bottom) include museum board member George Pickard, Jeanette Tupe, Christine Nienaber, Sondra Wendell, and Gigi Boyd.

A section of the carpet was removed first and then Midwest Storage Solutions' representative Dave Baumeister inserted the last of three metal tracks into the cement.

Plywood was then laid down.

Baumeister and Marc Hjermstad then finished the floor with vinyl tiles.



Baumeister and Hjermstad next assembled the shelf system by installing the outer permanent shelves first and moved inward using only a rubber hammer to seat the shelves into the proper slots on the supports.

Zaidman, Art Thompson, president of the Cooper Foundation, and Pickard gladly smile for the camera since the new shelf storage system is complete.

Curtis and Zaidman smile too, as they have finished moving all the archival boxes, books, and paper artifacts back to the archive room. It is important to note that there is room available to keep collecting artifacts, however, we urge you to contact us first before sending in any items.



About a year ago, the museum was offered a collection of original roller skating patents. These patents were used by the Commissioners of Patent Office in London. The National Museum of Roller Skating wishes to thank these individuals who have made a major financial contribution to the museum over the past year allowing the museum to purchase this unique collection.

- Annelle & Bob Anderson
- Phyllis & Frank Cernik
- John Chrien
- Charlotte Groves
- Mills Lynn
- USA Roller Skating
- Gordon & Maurice Van Roekel
- Charles & Connie Wahlig
- Ed & Winnie Young

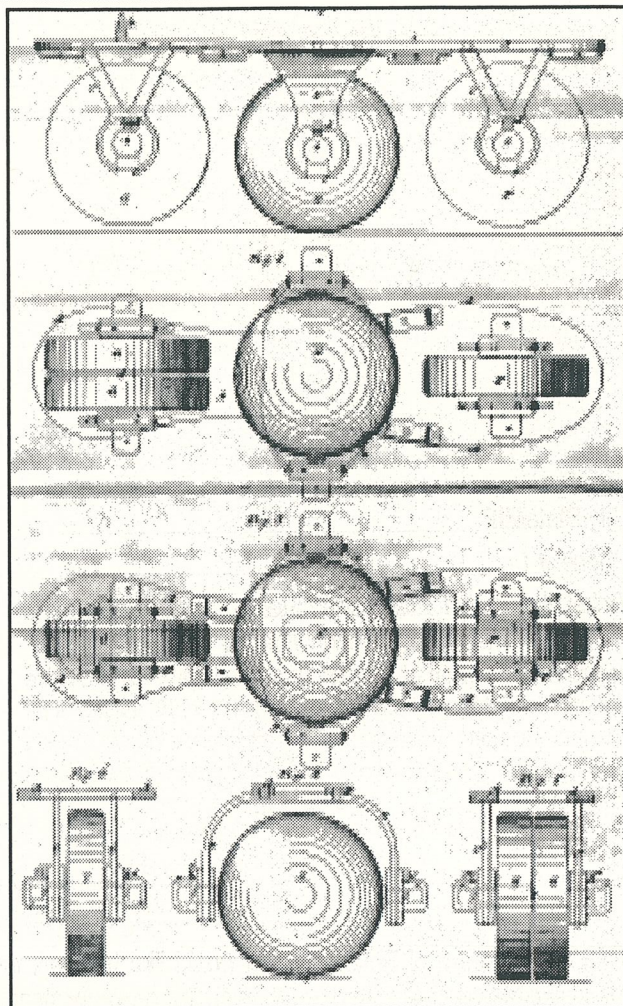
The following is the text used describing the patent shown to the right. Provisional specification as said by Nathaniel Hobson Hughes, of Ash Grove House, Kilwinning, West Kilbride, Ayrshire, N.B., at the Office of the Commissioners of Patents on the 19th April 1876 for the invention of Improvements in Roller or Rink Skates. This invention is clearly set forth in the following description and the drawings of which Figure 1 (top) is a side view showing wooden foot plate with holes for straps, heel screw for fastening into boot. Steel under plate (which may be made in skeleton) to which bearings are attached, being the side bearings for the wheels being at this part. The central curved bearing (middle) to carry a revolving ball; the side wheels front and rear are fixed on their spindles, which revolve in their bearings, the spindles being slipped into position through slots cut in the bearings, and are held in position by the brass bushes. The ball is fixed on its spindle which revolves in the curved bearings, also kept in position by brass bushes.

This skate, which can be made in three sizes, with a 3-inch ball and wheels for gentlemen's use and great speed, 2-inch ball and wheels for ordinary skating, ladies and gentlemen, and 1½-inch ball and wheels for ladies and children, avoids all vibrations.

The ball combining the action of the pivot of wheels of various diameters and of the universal joint working on the surface over which it rolls produces in unison with the movements of the body a gently undulating motion. The ball contains in itself the vital principles of wheels of all sizes and of the pivot and universal joint working on the floor over which it rolls, and thus acting by a side movement of the skater's body as a pivot on which to turn.

The wheels in Figure 2 (second from the top) being fixed on their spindles, merely revolving in the brass bushes, reduces all friction to a minimum. These wheels are intended as points around which the ball in turning may describe arcs of circles, and to give a catch in the side stroke, they being so arranged as to clear the ground when the foot is fairly balanced on the ball.

The true skating point is the revolving ball (center wheel),



Hughes Roller Skate Patent (99.0.200)

containing as it does in itself the vital principle of wheels of all sizes. By a side movement of the body communicated from the brain of the skater direct to the ball (without any break in the continuity of thought and action such as would be caused by an artificial joint or tilting apparatus) turns of any desired radius can be executed with no further risk of injuring the ankle than is incurred in ice skating. It is the more to avoid any chance of break in this continuity of thought and action that the inventor has used the simple screw *b* (screw sticking up in Figure 1), the heel screw for fastening the boot, with sockets for straps as in an ordinary skate in place of more complicated fastening gear.

Instead of the screw *b* being used I sometimes fit the heel portion of the foot plate with a strap for buckling over the instep, and when necessary I arrange the two rollers at the toe instead of at the heel; or single rollers may be at the toe and heel as seen in Figure 3 (third from top).

Having now described the nature of my said Invention, and in what manner the same is to be performed, I declare that I claim the construction and employment of a skate with a central spherical roller and with toe and heel rollers arranged as set forth and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

**Your 1999 Raffle Ticket is here!**

Cash prizes will consist of:

- 15 winners of \$100 each = \$1500
- 4 winners of \$250 each = \$1000
- 3 winners of \$500 each = \$1500
- 1 winner of \$1000
- 1 Grand Prize winner of \$5000
- Total Cash Prizes = \$10,000



**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING  
1999 Raffle**

Please print or type

Purchaser \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Ticket Seller Historical Roller Skating Overview

PRESERVING OUR PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Donation \$50. Total of \$10,000 in cash prizes. Grand prize \$5,000! Drawing to take place, May 12, 1999, 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.

cut or photocopy and mail with payment to the museum

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 will be recognized in the newsletter.

*In Memory of Tom Gregory*

Bert & Lynn Anselmi

Bud & Laurene Patton

Michigan Chapter of USARS and SRSTA

In Memory of       In Honor of       On Occasion of  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Event of Occasion \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one:

\$25    \$50    \$100    \$250 (plaque)    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Make check payable to: NMRS. All donations are tax-deductible.  
Mail this form and payment to the museum.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**MEMBERSHIP QUIZ RESULTS**

In 1913, the Riverview Skating Palace hosted the first individual 24-hour endurance championship race held in the U.S., which racer was the first to retire?

Answer: *George Schwartz*

Winners: *Betty Crouthers and Florence Schuneman*

**Do You Know?**

**NEXT MEMBERSHIP QUIZ**

In what city was the Arena Gardens Roller Rink located? If you have answered the questions correctly in the past two newsletters, you are not eligible.

The first two correct answers will win two items from the museum store. Please mail your answers to the museum.

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

**Benefactor (\$500)**      John Matejec

**Associate Patron (\$100)**  
Frank & Phyllis Cernik      John Chrien  
Robert & Joan Labriola      Marguerite Levenson  
Ruth Marquis

**Donor (\$50)**  
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John & Ramona Muse      Virginia Turnbull

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Dianne & Robert Bollinger      Edward & Rosemary Morton  
Peggy Wallace Boucher      Tony & Cassandra Muse  
Lou Brooks      Rose Ann Myers  
Rosellen Bunyan      Christine Panetta  
Frances Mary Cooley      Chuck Redman  
Joseph DiOrio      Edie Plimpton Reynolds  
Blanche Doorn      Arlene Rowland  
Norden Gilbert      Charles Schroer  
Robert Gormley      Charles J. Stiles  
David Greenberg      Marianne Vezerian  
Charles & Marsha Harrison      Nick Viscuso  
Jim Henze      Sammy Watson  
Cecilia Ann Kelley

**Join Here!**

New       Renew

Check one:

Benefactor      \$500

Patron      \$250

Associate Patron      \$100

Donor      \$50

Individual/Family      \$35

Additional Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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signature \_\_\_\_\_

*Member Form*

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Thank you for joining!  
*Gift Membership Form*

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Memberships make great gifts!

Benefits extend one year from join date. Please allow 3 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. All donations are tax-deductible up to the amount permitted by law.

Please clip and return to: **Nat'l Mus. of Roller Skating, PO Box 6579, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506**

**ANOTHER ARTIFACT**

In the early twentieth century, the largest roller rink in Milwaukee offered fifty dollars cash to any couple who married on roller skates. A local furniture dealer sweetened the deal by offering to contribute a bedroom suite valued at fifty dollars. Haddie Baldwin and W. McGrath took the rink and the furniture dealer up on the offer, and exchanged vows in the Milwaukee rink, becoming the first couple recorded to marry on roller skates.

Around the turn of the century, many rink owners used a variety of promotions to keep roller skating in the public eye. One of the most popular of these promotional efforts was the opportunity to marry on roller skates. Rink managers in the early twentieth century arranged the weddings, with the entire wedding group on roller skates. Though originally a promotional idea developed by rink owners, many Americans embraced the concept as an opportunity for a unique wedding.

This photograph of a wedding on roller skates takes place at the White City Roller Rink in Chicago, Illinois in 1927. Gift from Rose Martin, 82.46.40.



BUY YOUR RAFFLE TICKET ON PAGE SEVEN.

George Pickard  
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