



Historical Roller Skating

OVERVIEW

Issue No. 21

March 1987

Michael W. Brooslin,
Director & Curator

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The newsletter of the National Museum of Roller Skating is available only through membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$15. The newsletter is published 4 times a year to inform the museum's honorary members of happenings at the museum and about aspects of roller history. Although the museum cannot pay for articles, contributions by the readers are welcome. All articles, inquiries or comments should be sent to the Museum Curator.

CURATOR'S CORNER

Congratulations to the newest members of the USAC/RS Amateur Athletes Roller Skating Hall of Fame, elected by the USAC/RS Board of Directors in February: John LaBriola and Debra Coyne LaBriola, John Matejec, and Carolyn Sliger Porter. These outstanding skaters are profiled inside. The Hall of Fame induction ceremonies will be held on the evening of August 9, 1987, during the National Championships here in Lincoln. Thanks to all of you who took the time to send nomination letters and recommendations. Your input and suggestions were appreciated.

In response to the "Fours" article which appeared in the last newsletter, we received a call from Honorary Member Bob Cawley of Texas. Bob was a member, along with Paul Bauman, Merry Ann McSweeney and Gloria McCarthy, of the 1949 National Senior Fours Champion team. In addition to being quite innovative performers, this team is noteworthy for being the first to introduce "show" style music to National competition, when they used recordings from the Broadway musical "South Pacific" (the song "Bali Hi" to be specific). Thanks for the information Bob (it will make a wonderful trivia question). Your comments or suggestions on any of the articles which appear in the newsletter are most welcome. Just send them along to the museum at the address listed above.

Information Needed: We recently received a letter from member Les Dienier of New York asking about a jump called the "Nicholson." Les wrote it was a Waltz jump, and the skater clicked his heels together in the air before landing. There are no references to the "Nicholson" jump in our library collection, so if anyone has heard of it, or has further information, we would like to hear from you.

Continued on next page

CURATOR'S CORNER. (continued)

Roller Skating in the Soviet Union? Until now not much has been known about roller skating in Russia aside from rumors of an increasing interest in rink hockey. In response to a letter passed along to the museum by F.I.R.S. headquarters, the Olympic Glory Museum will soon be exhibiting roller skating materials. Several old skates from our museum collection will be traveling to Moscow for display, along with several modern Sure-Grip artistic and speed skates. The latter have been donated for this purpose by Harry Ball of the Sure-Grip Company. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Harry for making possible this cooperative venture to promote the history of roller skating.

We are also in the process of concluding an agreement with the Kansas Museum of History in Topeka. A pair of the museum's 1880s Winslow Company "Vineyard" wood plate skates is being loaned to that institution for display in one of their new exhibits. We currently have many Vineyard skates in our collections, however most are in constant use for our own activities. The Kansas Museum of History would like to acquire a pair of wood plate skates of their own, so if anyone can help them out with this, please write to me and I will put you in touch with their Curatorial staff.

In response to the roller skate shown in the last newsletter and identified as a "Zephyr" skate, we received a letter from member Joe Nemanich of Ohio. The skate is actually an "O'Brien" model, manufactured in Indiana.

In the past several months, we have received quite a few requests for videotapes of both World and National Championships. Unfortunately, the project of transferring our films to tape is a long, drawn-out process, and presently is on hold (due to mechanical problems). Currently, only those films originally taken by Charles Snyder on 16mm film are transferred and available on videotape. The following artistic events are contained in these films - RSROA Nationals: 1947 through 1954, 1956 through 1963, 1965 & 1966, 1968 through 1970, & 1972; ARSA Nationals: 1948, 1951, 1953, 1956 & 1968; Several RSROA & ARSA Regional & State championships; 1963 Las Vegas International Invitational meet; 1967 Gold Skate Classic; and a 1952 "Skating Vanities" show. The films have been compiled on twelve 2-hour tapes, priced at \$25 each. A complete list of the different Snyder Collection tapes is available upon request. Also just transferred is a film of the 1st U.S. Gold Medal Roller Skating tests (dance tests) held in 1946.

The museum also has access to professional and semi-professional quality videotapes of more recent vintage. These include the following - USAC/RS Nationals: 1973, 1975; FIRS Worlds 1967, 1977, 1982; and quite a few other events (most of which contain only the top three World Class skaters), along with some speed and hockey footage.

The museum can supply 1/2" videotapes in both Beta and VHS. If you would like to obtain a tape, just drop us a letter stating what you are interested in, and we will let you know what is available.

Among the more recent acquisitions to the museum collections is a most interesting photograph, shown on the back cover of this newsletter, of the Carnival Court Casino Roller Rink of Buffalo, New York, taken in 1913 (87.11; Gift of Mr. Joseph Enthor).

THE 1987 USAC/RS AMATEUR ATHLETES HALL OF FAME SELECTIONS

In February, two outstanding individuals and one team were elected to the USAC/RS Amateur Athletes Roller Skating Hall of Fame. In the selection process, the USAC/RS Hall of Fame Committee considered many skaters whose accomplishments and contributions to the sport are deserving of this, the highest recognition that can be given to competitors.

Scheduled to be inducted into the Hall of Fame in ceremonies during the 1987 National Championships are the dance team of John LaBriola and Debra Coyne LaBriola, singles champion Carolyn Sliger Porter, and many-time champion in a variety of events, Johnny Matejec. Their selection brings to 42 the number of individuals and teams whose dedication both on and off the skating floor as amateurs have been recognized with induction into the Hall of Fame. Congratulations to the newset members of this elite group who have shaped the sport of roller skating in the United States.



John LaBriola and Debra Coyne dominated the American Dance event in the United States during the seventies, skating for the Fountain Valley (California) club. From 1972 through 1978, this team won National Dance titles, including the Senior Dance title for five consecutive years. When they won at the 1978 National Championships, John and Debra broke the family record of four straight Senior titles, set in the 1950's by John's father and aunt, Robert and Joan LaBriola, who were elected to the USAC/RS Hall of Fame in 1983. Coyne and LaBriola, during their reign as the King and Queen of American Dance, were known for the accuracy of their steps, and for the good pace and fluidity of motion throughout all of the dances. Debra and John also helped to promote the sport outside of competitive events, performing at many benefit functions, including an appearance on the 1975 MDA Labor Day Telethon show. John and Debra retired from amateur competition in 1978, married and became teachers themselves at Fountain Valley. Through their consistency and dedication to perfection, John LaBriola and Debra

Coyne LaBriola provided an example for their contemporaries to emulate, and continued the tradition of excellence in American Dance skating. National Titles: 1971 Freshman Dance (John only, with a different partner); 1972 Junior Dance; 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1977 Senior Dance.

One of the best skaters in the lower divisions during the fifties, Carolyn Sliger Porter won titles at Nationals in pairs and singles. After the 1955 National Championships, Carolyn was stricken with Polio, and was

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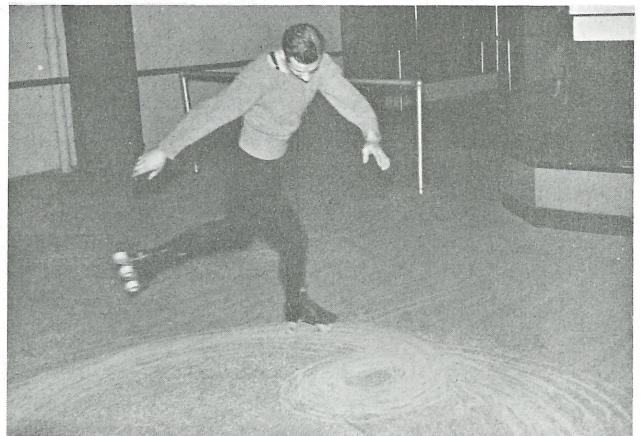
1939 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS COMPETITIVE REQUIREMENTS

The first U.S. amateur artistic championships were held in 1939: Dance at Mineola Skating Rink on Long Island, and the Figures/Free Style (a combined title at that time) and Pairs at Detroit's Arena Gardens. The results of these meets have appeared in a previous museum newsletter. In light of present day Nationals, it is interesting to look back at this meet and compare the differences in the requirements to see how far skating has come. The following excerpts are taken from a mimeographed booklet in the museum's archives, and the Dance requirements will appear in a future newsletter. Only the Senior division Individual and Pairs events were skated in 1939. The Individual Novice (now Sophomore) and Junior (now Freshman) divisions were added in 1940, with the Novice and Junior Pairs events being added in the following year.

General - Any boni-fide amateur sportsman man qualify providing: (A) That they are affiliated, either as an individual member or a club member, with any association which is a member of the Amateur Skating Union of the United States, and (B) that they have passed the Number 2 Figure Test in roller skating (RSROA) or ice skating (USFSA), or (C) placed First, Second or Third in an open figure skating contest (rollers or ice), sanctioned by the RSROA or USFSA. No entry fee will be required to enter this meet.

Figures - All school figures must be started from rest. An extra step on the start will not be penalized as "not skated." A grade of at least 4.0 on a majority of the compulsory figures and on each half of the free style program, must be obtained from a majority of the judges. Contestants must provide sheet music (for pipe organ) for their free style program. School figures will be skated on tracings of 3, 4, 5 and 6 metres in diameter. Circles of 2 and 3 metres diameter will be used for the Loop figures.

Requirements for the Senior Ladies Event:			
ISU No.	Figure & Start	Factor	Grade
3	Circle Eight - ROB	1	6
6a	Serpentine - ROIB	2	12
6b	Serpentine - LOIB	2	12
14	Loops - ROF	2	12
18a	Brackets - ROF	3	18
18b	Brackets - LOF	3	18
20a	Rockers - ROF	4	24
22b	Counters - LOF	3	18
27a	Change Three - RIOF	3	18
29b	Change Dbl 3 - LIOF	3	18
			<u>156</u>
4 Min. Free Program	8 2/3		<u>104</u>
			<u>260</u>



The Mens figures differed only in the substitution of ISU figure numbers 20b (LOF) for 20a, 22a (ROF) for 22b, 26a Change Three (ROIF) for 27a, and 29a (RIOF) for 29b, and the free style program was 5 minutes long. Two marks will be given by the judges for each school figure skated: one for Accuracy, including tracing and triple repetition, and one for Execution, including form, position and sureness.

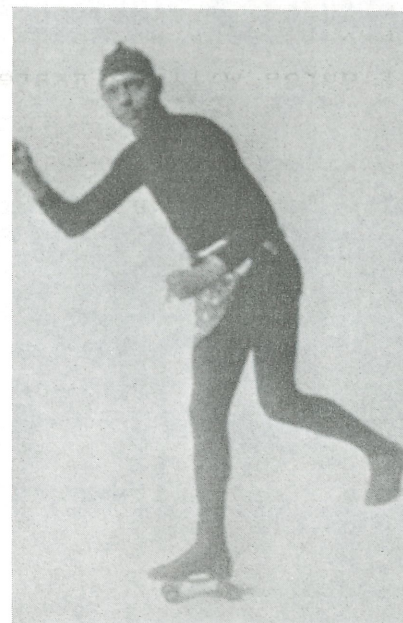
Above: Walter Stokosa, the 1939 & 1940 Senior Mens Champion, practicing figures (81.33.296; F. Martin Collection, Gift of Mr & Mrs R. McLaughlen).

Pairs - The entries shall skate their five-minute program twice, once to allow the judges to grade for Program Content, and again to permit marking for Manner of Performance. Scoring was for Content, 6.0; for Performance, 6.0; Total of 12.0. To prevent pairs from creating an overly acrobatic program, the following shall be observed: The program may contain not more than two simultaneously executed jumps (couple not joined during jump), two lift springs, and two couples spins. No spins may be included in which one of the pair shall lift the other member and increase speed of girations (in other words, a "theatrical" spin). As many jumps as wished may be included as long as the pair remain attached during its execution. The pair may include as many of the "pure" skating movements (threes, brackets, mohawks, etc.) as they wish in any combinations. Excessive breaking apart by any pair will be penalized severely by the judges (viz.: Major Fault).

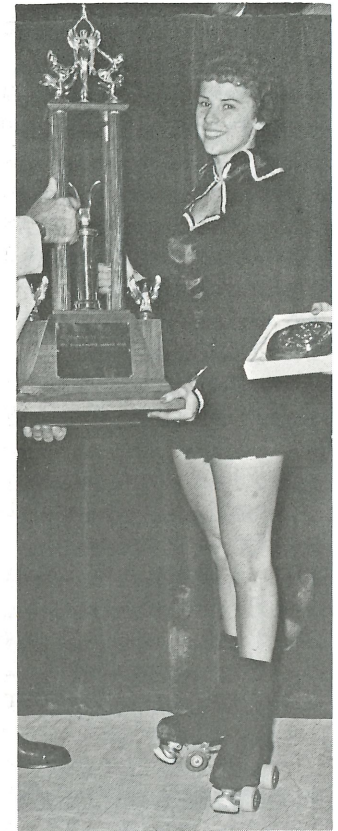
Scoring - The grading system is as follows: 0 = Not Skated; 1 = Very Poorly Skated; 2 = Faulty; 3 = Satisfactory; 4 = Good; 5 = Very Good; and 6 = Perfect. Tenths will be used to further indicate accurate grade. Only the ten highest scoring skaters in compulsory figures (individuals) or Content grading (pairs) will advance to skate Free Skating (individuals) or Performance judging (pairs). Should a skater or a pair fail to appear upon call during the contest, they shall be declared absent after one-minute, declared disqualified, and the contest will continue.

PROFESSIONAL SKATERS, From the Scrapbook of Fred A. Martin

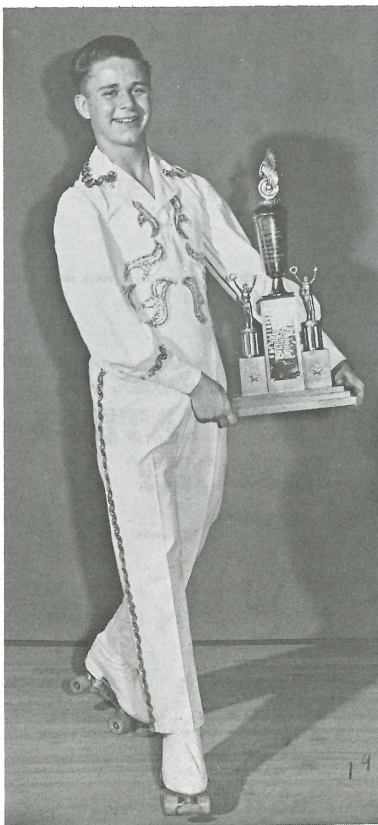
At right is Walter W. Osmun, one of the more famous but little known men who graced the professional roller racing circuit at the turn of the century. Osmun began skating as an endurance racer, setting several records in 1885 which lasted for over 30 years: In a 10 hour race in Fond Du Lac, Wisconsin, he traveled 136 1/2, miles, and established a record of 780 miles for a 72 hour marathon (only 12 hours skating per day) held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The picture shows Osmun in about 1914, when he was known for his one-foot racing, at the Palais Gardens in Detroit (located at Riverview Park on Jefferson Avenue). What was unusual was he did not use his free foot to push himself along to gain momentum. Osmun established many speed records using only one foot, skating against a two-foot "pace setter". He retired from active "competition" and became involved with the Western Skating Association (one of the major U.S. roller skating governing bodies 1900-1920) managing and promoting rink hockey and racing teams in Michigan. Instrumental in gaining newspaper recognition for the sport, Osmun refereed or judged every championship event held in Detroit from 1912 to 1918. Osmun passed away in the 1930s. Walter Osmun's One Foot Roller Skating Records - 3 miles: 16 minutes, 7 seconds (1885), 1 mile: 3:18 (1886), 3/4 mile: 4:42 (1885), 1/2 mile: 2:10 (1910), 440 yards: 59 sec. (1911), 220 yards: 28.2 sec. [flying start] and 30.8 sec. [standing start] (both March 1914), and 100 yards: 14 sec. [flying start] and 22 sec. [standing start] (both April 1912).



hospitalized for many months. After her release from the hospital, Sliger used her roller skating talents in her recovery, helping to beat the disease by developing her muscles through competitive skating. Carolyn returned to Nationals in 1956, and finished as runner up in the Senior Ladies Singles event. Carolyn went on to capture three Senior Ladies Singles titles at Nationals. As a competitor in the RSROA-USFARS program, Sliger did not participate in any F.I.R.S. world meets, however she did represent the United States in international competition, in 1959 capturing the Ladies Singles title at the World Roller Skating Congress Championships. As roller skating had contributed greatly to her own health, Sliger also used roller skating to help others, participating in many "benefit" shows around the country, including the 1960 RSROA New England Chapter exhibition staged for the Jimmy Fund. Carolyn skated with a club in Oklahoma City during her career, retiring as an amateur in 1960 after winning her third Senior title. Carolyn is now married and lives in Bakersfield, California. SKATE magazine recognized Sliger as a roller sports all-star in 1981. More than any other skater of her era, Carolyn Sliger Porter served as an example to both her roller skating colleagues and to the general public. The story of her courage and determination



demonstrated to all the benefits of roller skating upon society, and has provided a lasting influence upon the sport. National Titles: 1954 Freshman Pairs; 1955 Junior Girls Singles; 1957, 1958 and 1960 Senior Ladies Singles. World Congress Placements: 1959 Ladies Singles Champion.



A solid free skating performer, Johnny Matejec was a force to be reckoned with in all areas of competitive artistic skating during the 1950's. Well versed in the fundamentals, Johnny was a complete skater, capturing National titles in both figures and singles. Along with his own individual accomplishments, Matejec demonstrated a great degree of versatility, winning additional titles in pairs and in fours. During his career, John skated out of Detroit's Arena Gardens and Pontiac's Rolladium, with partners and club members including fellow Hall of Fame members Nancy Kromis, Gail Locke and Bill Pate. In 1956, he represented the United States as a World Team member, and placed second in the combined Mens Figures with Free Skating event at the World Congress Championships. As an amateur skater, Johnny also gave generously of his time to promote the sport through many publicity tours and "guest appearances" in shows held by rinks throughout the Great Lakes region from 1952 to 1956. Johnny

retired from amateur competition in 1957, and soon became involved with the business side of roller skating. Matejec continues to promote the sport today as an equipment manufacturer and distributor, and as a rink operator in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Johnny was selected as a SKATE magazine roller sports all-star in 1981. Through his dedication to the sport, both on the floor and off and through his consistantly high level of performance, John Matejec had a lasting impact and helped advance the sport of roller skating in the United States. National Titles: 1948 Juvenile Boys Combined Figures with Free Style; 1952 Freshman Boys Singles, Junior Pairs and Senior Fours; 1953 Junior Mens Figures, Junior Mens Singles and Senior Fours; 1955 Senior Mens Figures. World Congress Placements: 1956 Mens Singles, second place.

Photos: Debra Coyne and John LaBriola, taken during competition at the 1977 National Championships (photo courtesy John J. Monohan, Jr., SKATER magazine); Carolyn Sliger with the Hinchliffe Brothers Challenge Trophy as the 1960 Senior Ladies Singles Champion (81.38; RSROA Collection); John Matejec, holding his trophy as the 1952 Junior (now the Freshman division) Boys Singles Champion (82.46.119; Fred A. Martin Collection, Gift of Rose Martin).

Only three individuals or teams may be selected for induction into the Hall of Fame each year, and the USAC/RS Hall of Fame Committee always has a difficult time selecting from the many outstanding skaters who are eligible. In 1988, three additional individuals or teams may be elected. A notice requesting nominations and suggestions, along with the Hall of Fame requirements for 1988 will appear in the museum newsletter, in SKATE magazine, and in other USAC/RS publications next Fall.

It was with deep regret we recently learned of the death of one of the giants in the roller skating industry, Mr. Paul F. Riedell. Mr. Riedell was the founder of the shoe company that bears his name, and a member of the Roller Skating Industry Hall of Fame. Our condolences go out to Mr. Riedell's family. We plan to spotlight the history of the Riedell Shoe Company in a future issue of this newsletter.

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