

Historical Roller Skating

# OVERVIEW

National Museum of Roller Skating  
4730 South Street  
P.O. Box 6579  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506-0579  
Phone 402-483-7551

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A Publication of the National Museum of Roller Skating

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**Norman Latin and Peggy Wallace**

# CURATOR'S CORNER

Welcome to the many new members who took advantage of our special offer by purchasing the new museum book, "The Evolution of the Roller Skate: 1820 - Present," and became members at the \$25 rate.

You, like the other members of the museum, are making an important contribution to the preservation of the history of roller skating! By being a member you are reserving a place for the documentation of skating as sport, industry, recreation, entertainment, etc., and insuring that the museum's collection receives the best care possible.

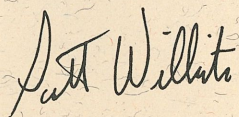
Speaking of "The Evolution of the Roller Skate," if you haven't ordered your copy yet, I have included an order form for the book as well as for the other items the museum offers such as mugs, patches, pins, and postcards.

The museum is going to be featured on Japanese TV! A television broadcasting company based out of Tokyo and New York, contacted the museum in early January and (by the time you are reading this) will have flown in and interviewed me. It seems the museum is going global.

Remember that the museum raffle tickets are now on sale. They are on sale at \$50 each. The grand prize is \$5,000 with a total of \$10,000 in prizes being awarded. The drawing will be at the 1995 RSA Convention. This year the winning tickets will be drawn during the President's Dinner! To get your ticket send check or money order to the museum. Please specify that the check is for the raffle.

This issue of the "Overview" continues with a feature on the history of the RSROA. Taken from the April 1962 issue of "Skate," Charles Cahill's article traces some of the developments in roller skating from 1951-62.

Happy Valentine's Day!



Scott Wilhite  
Director & Curator

## MEMBER QUIZ RESULTS

After several good guesses by members at the answer to December's Quiz (What was the original name of the "Skating Vanities"?), Sam Nieswizski came up with the correct answer: The Roller Follies.

Mr. Nieswizski received a copy of "The Evolution of the Roller Skate" for his correct answer.

### Here is the new Quiz:

What is the title of the Fred Astaire film from 1938 with a roller skating "tap dance" scene?

The first correct answer submitted to the museum by mail will win one of the new Limited Edition Museum Mugs. The answer, and the winner, will be announced in the next issue of the "Overview."

Good Luck!

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

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Historical Roller Skating Overview is the newsletter of the National Museum of Roller Skating. It is available only through honorary membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$15.00. All inquiries, comments should be sent to the Museum Director, 4730 South St., P.O. Box 6579, Lincoln, NE 68506.

# CAHILL TRACES RSROA PROGRESS SINCE 1951

by Charles E. Cahill

(Originally printed in the April 1962 issue of *Skate Magazine*)

When *Skate* editor, Dick Kelley, asked me to outline some thoughts for the 25th Anniversary issue commemorating the first quarter-century of the RSROA my memory was jogged back to the Summer of 1951, June to be exact.

At that time I was fresh out of college and engaged as the accountant for the Arena Gardens roller rink here in Detroit under the management of the late Fred A. Martin and Earl King. Fred was also the Secretary-Treasurer of the RSROA at that time and Bob Martin was Assistant Secretary. The headquarters of the Association was located in about 1500 square feet of office space in the Arena Gardens building with a small but efficient battery of stenographers and general office help.

One day Bob Martin, who was in charge of RSROA personnel, asked me about handling the accounting for the Association as well as the Arena Gardens rink. I discussed the matter with my employees, and with their approval, it was agreed that I could undertake the bookkeeping of the RSROA in my spare time and thus commenced my career with the Association.

It was an interesting time to begin work with the RSROA because the organization was pulsating with growth and change. For example, just a few months later, Fred Martin resigned his post as Secretary-Treasurer at the 1951 Semi-Annual Board of Control meetings here in Detroit and Bob Martin was appointed his successor. It was under Bob's leadership that I served most of my tenure with the organization, as accountant until 1953, and as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer from 1953 to 1958.

Fred Bergin was the RSROA President at the first Board of Control meeting that I had the privilege to attend in the Fall of 1951; the meeting was conducted at the Park Shelton Hotel, Detroit. I vividly recall that series of meetings; I was impressed by what I saw and heard. Here was the Board of Control that I had heard so much about, eleven men, rink operators themselves, who had come many miles from across the United States to spend their days and nights in a hotel room dedicatedly working, debating, evaluating and deciding the issues confronting the sport of roller skating. And all this without any kind of financial

assistance from the Association and more likely than not, without an expression of gratitude from those they served.

It was a momentous occasion indeed, especially when I was called upon to submit a financial report and to answer some questions. I was uneasy, probably a little nervous, but the Board members were kind and the presentation went well. However, I was grateful when President Bergin thanked me for the report and I was permitted to withdraw from active participation in the meeting to a place of insignificance to witness the continuance of the Board's considerations on other matters.

In 1954 the scene of activity shifted to Mammoth Gardens roller rink in Denver, Colorado, for the American Championships. This was another first for me; the rink brightly lit and attractively decorated; the throngs of people. The skating was most impressive and the titles hotly contested by the efforts and abilities of the contestants. Bob Gould was the President at this time and what an entertaining President he was! He could spellbind the assemblies of rink operators with his humor and ingenuity. And that was the year that the honorable Judge Gilliam addressed the President's Banquet; a speech that has been referred to many times by those who heard it. As a matter of fact we have an original copy of that speech on tape here at the National Office and have been re-entertained and inspired by it on several occasions since. Who will ever forget Judge Gilliam's story about the priest who was watching a golden gloves boxing match one evening in Denver. A youngster who was preparing to commence to battle in the ring blessed himself and a fellow sitting behind the priest leaned over and tapped the priest on the shoulder asking, "Father, will that help that kid"?, to which the priest replied, "it will if he can fight." The Judge brought down the house.

The following year, 1955, the American Championships site returned to the Great Lakes Region and close to home; Toledo, Ohio, Logan's Rollerade. This was an unusually hot July in Toledo but despite the heat the meet proved to be a great one.

For several years the American Championships had

alternated between Ohio and Colorado but in 1956 the meet site was awarded to Richmond, Virginia. The Richmond Arena was the scene of many new exciting speed records as the huge track invited the best efforts of the speedsters. As the flags of the speed officials waved down the finish of the various races, the records tumbled.



As contrasted against the leisurely, casual pace of the environment of Virginia, the 1957 site shifted to dynamic, aggressive Oakland, California. This was kind of a homecoming for the RSROA since the meet had been held there in 1947, exactly one decade before the return. Spirits were high, the weather cool, the crowds good, and the skating terrific.

Then came 1958, a year of departure and certainly of historic significance to the RSROA. The meet was conducted at the Cleveland Rollercade, Cleveland, Ohio. It was here that Fred Martin, the loved and respected first Secretary-Treasurer of the organization, was to make his final appearance at an American Championships. It represented the last American Meet conducted under the supervision of Bob Martin, then Secretary-Treasurer since his resignation from that post was submitted a month after the meet. Bob's resignation shocked the skating world and everyone deeply regretted his departure from his post of leadership in the RSROA. Finally, Cleveland 1958 represented the final year that the American Championships was to be conducted in a roller rink.

During this period the RSROA was growing, attendance at the American Championships was on the increase, a new approach had to be taken to accommodate the crowds. Boston, Massachusetts, was selected as the first step by the Board of Control toward public arenas and auditoriums for the American Championships on a consistent basis.

The Boston Championships was highlighted by a relaxing, entertaining boat trip sponsored by the Hyde Shoe Company. The boat ride on the famous "Boston Belle" replaced the traditional Victory Ball and

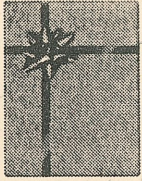
turned out to be a huge success, thoroughly enjoyed by the skaters, parents, rink operators, teachers, and guests. It was at Boston that the RSROA film "Wings On Their Feet" was made highlighting the 1959 Championships. The movie, thirty minutes long in sound and color, has now been shown innumerable times through-out the United States in

schools, churches, clubs, rinks, and fraternities.

From Boston which paid special tribute at the meet to the late Fred A. Martin who had passed away in January, 1959, the site changed to much publicized Little Rock, Arkansas. The city of Little Rock went all out to be good hosts and the meet was a resounding success. Comments were consistently heard from skaters and parents noting their approval of the 1960 Championships. Certainly one of the facts which played a substantial role in the success of this meet was the new, air conditioned, T. H. Barton Coliseum with plenty of parking. Only one thing went wrong, will anyone forget the cloud burst on opening night? It seemed that everyone was drenched before reaching their cars no matter how close the transportation was to the building. What a night! But the show was great and the Coliseum packed.

Texas hosted the 1961 Championships and the brightly decorated Will Rogers Coliseum witnessed what surely must go down in the records as one of the finest American Championships in RSROA annals. No doubt the significant highlight of the '61 meet was the CBS television cameras deftly moving up and down the aisles around the skating floor smoothly capturing the excitement and skill for presentation on the CBS Sports Spectacular Show coast-to-coast a week after the meet. "This is Bud Palmer speaking to you from the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum in Ft. Worth, Texas, where we will be bringing to you the highlights for the 1961 American Amateur Roller Skating Championships" came over TV sets from Florida to Oregon, from New York to California. And there it was, through the magic of television, the thrills of the 1961 competition and the entertaining highlights of the opening night show.

# Give the Gift That Keeps on Giving



With this special membership offer to the  
National Museum of Roller Skating.



For only \$25 you can give some lucky individual:

- ❖ **One copy of "The Evolution of the Roller Skate: 1820 - Present"**  
Featuring chapters covering: The Early Roller Skates, The Plimpton Era, The History of In-line Skates, The First Manufacturers, International Skates, The 20th Century, and more. The book is 150 pages with photos taken by professional photographer, Randall Harbuck.
- ❖ **PLUS: One-year membership to the museum**  
Includes a subscription to the "Historical Roller Skating Overview" (something to look forward to all year round!) and an official honorary member I.D. card.



## Other special items available from the National Museum of Roller Skating:

- ❖ A lithograph from the 1870's created by Jules Cheret, the "father of poster art." Cheret was commissioned to produce "Funciones de Patines" (Skating Parties) for a Paris rink. This 19th century depiction of roller skating is a must for roller skating enthusiasts of all ages.
- ❖ The NEW National Museum of Roller Skating Mugs! The mugs are Cobalt Blue with the museum logo emblazoned in Gold.
- ❖ Museum Pins and Patches! Great gifts for aspiring and inspiring skaters.
- ❖ Photographer William Wegman's famous "Roller Rover" on a postcard.
- ❖ Museum Postcard sets! The perfect gift for those of us with many penpals.

## Order Form

Qty		Total Price
_____	Special gift membership @ \$25 each (be sure to specify address for "Overview" delivery plus address for book recipient)	_____
_____	"The Evolution of the Roller Skate" @ \$10 each	_____
_____	Cheret Lithograph @ \$17 each	_____
_____	NEW Museum Mugs @ \$6 each	_____
_____	Museum Patches @ \$5 each	_____
_____	Museum Pins @ \$5 each	_____
_____	NEW William Wegman "Roller Rover" postcard sets - 10 card pack @ \$7.50 each	_____
_____	Museum Postcard sets 20 card pack @ \$5 each	_____
Grand Total of Order		\$ _____

Please print.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

(No P.O. Boxes)

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Please detach this form and send with check or money order to:

National Museum of Roller Skating

P.O. Box 6579

Lincoln, NE 68506

Credit Card Orders (VISA or MasterCard—circle which one)

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# New and Renewing Members of the National Museum of Roller Skating

(for December 1, to February 13)

Regina Adams  
Aggie's Skate Connection  
Kimberly Akers  
Thomas Andrew  
Bert & Lynn Anselmi  
Dereyk Anthony Jones  
Judith Bacak  
Janina Bacich  
Phyllis Baker  
Valerie Ball  
Harry Ball  
Neva Belle Banion  
Doug Baughton  
Brian Bechter  
Sonya Beckstrom  
Mark Beech  
Darwin & Patty Behnke  
Luther Bernstein  
June Bickmeyer  
Jeff Bogart  
Marcia Bolton  
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Bolton  
Carrie Bontempo  
David Booth  
Nellie Boucher  
Wayne Bowles  
Lee Boyd  
Melonie Britton  
Margaret Brooks  
Robert Buchanan  
Mary Burghardt  
Jack & Honey Burton  
Coca Cola c/o Lisa Ciulik  
Kevin Cain  
Joe Caliri  
Peter Cappiello  
Cindy Carew  
Michelle & Milton Carter  
Joseph Caruso  
Robert Cayton  
Melina Chan  
Jeannie Clark  
Kim Cole  
Sissie Combs  
Jewel Compton  
Chris Conner  
Billy Cook  
Hyper Corporation  
Daniel Crawford  
Betty Crouther  
Greg Crow  
Jerry Damschroder  
Opal Davis  
Valeria Davis  
Terry Dean

Sr. Catherine Deubel, RSHM  
Anthony Di Pietro  
Deborah Dicho  
Jim & Ruth DiGiacobbe  
Bob & Marianne Dill  
John Dobler  
Andrea Doetzel  
Kathy Dooling  
Diane Duke  
Kris Dye  
Marjorie Dykeman  
Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Facher  
Brian Falcon  
Lauren Feingold  
A.E. Ferreira  
Judy Findlay  
Jeffrey Frederick  
John Fulton  
Charles Gahn  
James Gantz  
Ray Geesin  
Marion & Michael Giles  
Gilroy Skate Arena  
Emily Gleason  
Larry Goldsmith  
R. Arvin Grabill  
Holly Graves  
Judy Graves  
Betty Gray  
Amy Grayson  
Charlotte Groves  
Faye Grubbs  
James Haehl  
Karla Hammond  
Charles Harrison  
Keith Hill  
Sandra Hisaw  
Helen Hodges  
Diana Howard  
Dennis Huckaby  
Ernie Ingles  
Jason James  
Bruce Jason Balsinde  
Rebecca Jean Allen  
Deborah Johnson  
Ursula B. Jones  
James Juillerat  
Joni K. Salmon, MD  
Diana Keller  
Gail Kemp  
Ronald King  
Gailmarie Kumfert  
Charlene Ladd  
Curtis Ladd  
Leo LaMay

Stephen Lansom  
Jessica Lehman  
Adela Lewis  
Lee-Etta Lightle  
Michelle Livesey  
Bill Ludascher  
Patricia Lyle  
Frank Magrino  
Kevin Majeski  
Ralph Marinelli  
John Matejec  
Diane McChesney  
Didi McConnell  
Kym McElwee  
Bruno Meade  
Dana Meyer  
Kenneth Michael Carlsen  
Caroline Mirelli  
Tim Mitchell  
Tom Moeller  
Moon-Glo Roller Rink  
Donald Myers  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Nazzaro  
NE Skate Supply Inc.  
Marsha Neary  
Sam Nieswizski  
Shirley Noyes  
Marje Obrist  
Virginia Oetjen-Gerdes  
Skate City of L.C. Inc.  
Pamela Onges  
Krystal Ostrowski  
David Owen  
Ron Parker  
C. Peele  
Albert Percich  
Ann Perdue  
Phyllis Peterson  
Gary & Janie Phillips  
George Pickard  
Elizabeth Plimpton  
Nadine Pokorny-Meis  
Thomas Queret  
Tony Ranalli  
Joan Ratliff  
R.C. Sports, Inc.  
Diane Reinenger  
Lenore Remley  
Joe & Laurie Richardson  
Roll-A-Round Rink  
Roller Express  
Nichole Root  
Tom Rosak  
William Rosowitz  
Roswell Roller Rink

Nicholas Rozzi  
Melinda Russell  
Lois Saetes  
William Sahly  
Lori Ann Schade  
Chet Schieber  
Victor Schmidt  
William Schneider  
Einar & Doris Schonning  
Amanda Schultz  
Billie Scott  
Leon Shapiro  
Jackie Shepherd  
Ann Sheridan  
James & Faye Shoemake  
Frank Silveri  
All American Skate, Inc.  
Roller Dome Skating Rink  
The Skate  
David Slaughter  
Ryan Smith  
Catharine Smith  
Jean Snyder  
Clifford Songer  
SpeedSkating Times  
Dale Sprague  
Brenda St. Cyr  
Ernest St. Germain  
Andy Starr  
Dorothy Stillwagon  
Elaine Sudarth  
Pierre Surun  
Philip Sutherland  
Marsha Swanton-Plummer  
Dorothy Tamaccio  
Joseph Tarvis  
Robert Teregan  
Marsha Thompson  
Wayne Thompson  
Frederick Tortola  
Jenner & Dolores Vincent  
John Vitcosky  
Kay Voss Stockdell  
Charles & Connie Wahlig  
Pam Warner  
Linda Wattman  
Scott White  
H.D. White  
Norma Willison  
Jane & Wayne Wojnarowsky  
Marion Wood  
Elizabeth Woods  
Richard Young  
Steve Yurick

## MEMORIALS

Caroline Mirelli, Robert Bollinger, and Bert & Lynn Anselmi made a donation to the museum in memory of Carole E. Graybill of Coral Springs, Florida.

Rose Martin made a donation in memory of Ella Diotte who passed away recently.

Jewel T. Compton made a donation in memory of Allison M. Young of Lafayette, Indiana.

Frank DeJohn of Brooklyn, New York, passed away a few months ago as did Bob Fitzgerald. Both were long-time professionals and coaches.

Leon Shapiro made a contribution to celebrate the recent discharge of Doris Fenn from the hospital and in appreciation of Mr. Paul Weiss for his support during Mr. Shapiro's recovery from heart surgery.

## PATRON MEMORIAL PLAQUE

Remember that the Patron Memorial Plaque still has spaces available for individuals who have made contributions to our roller skating heritage. This could include everyone from rink owners to athletes. A one-time fee of \$250 will place a person's name on the memorial which is permanently on display at the National Museum of Roller Skating. For details contact the Director.

**WISH LIST:** As mentioned in the last issue of the "Overview," we are putting together a display on the RSROA. One item the museum does not have is a Revolving Mirror Ball. Does anyone have one that they would be willing to donate? Call the museum 402-483-7551.

Our October request for a 16mm Projector was answered. Thank you, Jack Walker!

Our December request for a new VCR was also answered. Unfortunately, no name was sent with it and we don't know who to acknowledge. The box was sent from Tennessee, but there was no return address on it. Please contact the museum if you are responsible for this wonderful donation.

## Be a Part of History

The history of roller skating is fragile. Once it is lost, it may never be regained. Help the National Museum of Roller Skating preserve the rich history of our sport by joining one of our special membership categories listed below. Future roller skaters will thank you.

Contributors of \$15 or more become Honorary Members of the Museum and receive a Museum membership pin, official identification card, the newsletter, and free admission whenever they visit the Museum.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check or money order enclosed payable to the National Museum of Roller Skating. | <input type="checkbox"/> PIN                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid by VISA.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$15          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paid by MasterCard.   | <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$15              |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor - \$50               |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Patron - \$100   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron - \$250             |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor - \$500 or more |

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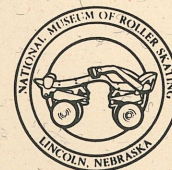
Please charge my card for 12 monthly payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ each (min. of \$10 per month).

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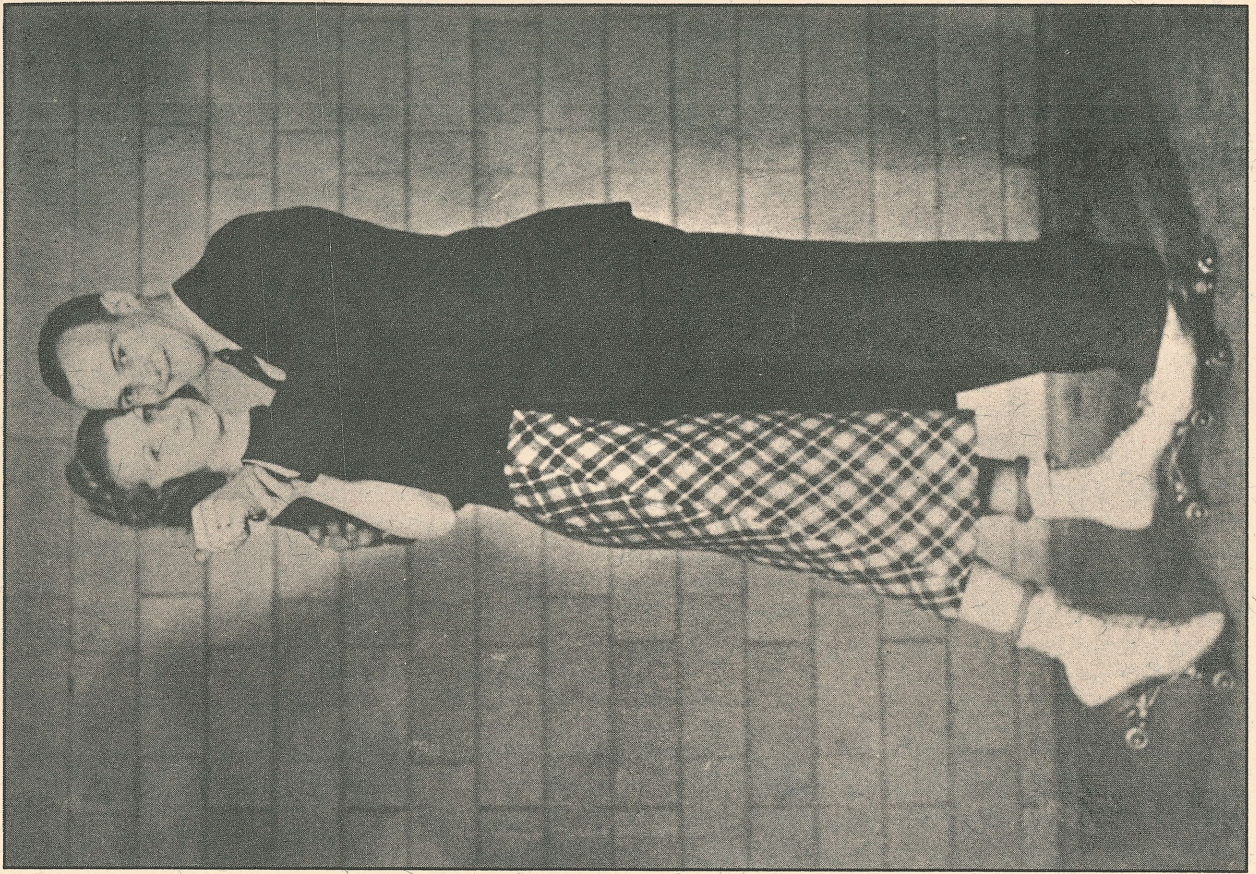


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**Contributions are tax-deductible up to the amount permitted by law.**

**Happy Valentine's Day!**



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