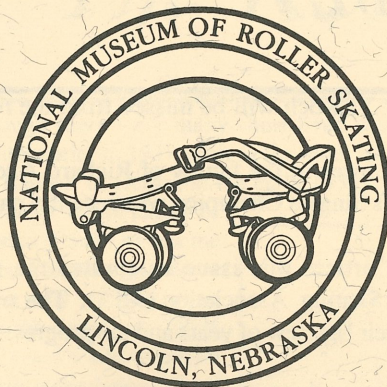

Historical Roller Skating Overview



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING
4730 South Street, P.O. Box 6579
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506
Phone: 402/483-7551 • Fax: 402/483-1465
E-mail: Rllrsktmus@aol.com
<http://www.usacrs.com/museum.htm>
Museum hours: 9-5, M-F

April/May 1997

A Publication of the National Museum of Roller Skating

Issue No. 57



The snack bar at the Arena Gardens roller rink in Detroit is now open!

From the Fred Martin Collection

Curator's Column

Dear Member,

Raffle tickets have been rolling in as well as memberships, and I hope that continues. Don't forget, this fund-raiser provides vital unrestricted operating support to the museum and will help increase awareness of roller skating.

To increase public awareness, the museum will be starting a new program called *First Fridays*. Beginning Friday, April 4, at 12:15 p.m., I will host a thirty minute tour of the museum highlighting various artifacts and exhibits. This program will take place on the first Friday of every month and remember, it is free and no reservations are required!

In June, USA Roller Skating will host the North Central Regional Championships. Another opportunity to increase awareness will take place during this time as the museum will be open extra hours. On Saturdays June 21 and 28, the museum will be open 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and on Sundays June 22 and 29, the museum will be open from noon to 4 p.m. Regular hours will take place during the week, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The museum has received many donations in the past few months and on page six is a listing of those donors. The museum is still looking for photographs of speed skating, roller disco, aggressive skating, and the interior & exterior of rinks. If you have any of the above items, please donate them to the museum to strengthen our collection.

If you have checked out the museum's web site or America On-Line site, you may have noticed the roller skating history quiz. For our members who do not have access to the world wide web, I present the same quiz to you. The first five members who correctly identify the answer will win a T-shirt from the museum. Please mail your entries to the museum and specify T-shirt size. The questions are: ¹⁾ When was roller skating introduced to the Pan Am Games? ²⁾ Who won the 1991 Women's Free Skating Championships at the Pan Am Games? Good luck!

Staying on the subject of the Pan Am Games, the Pan Am committee recently approved in-line roller hockey in the games starting in the year 1999. Previously, only quad roller hockey took place. Hopefully, the addition of in-line hockey in these games will enhance the United States' chances of winning gold. In 1991, USA placed third and that was their highest ranking since roller hockey was inaugurated into the games.

Congratulations are in order to Museum Board member Chester Fried who will be inducted into USA Roller Skating's Distinguished Service Hall of Fame this August at the 61st U.S. Artistic National Championships in Pensacola, Florida. For a complete listing of all inductees, please check page six.

A bit of sad news, Vi Koch, the first lady of the roller skating press, has died at the age of 86. From 1953 until the 1960's, she published the *Skating Reporter* magazine from her

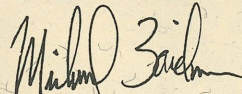
home in New Jersey. Vi Koch will be missed from the roller skating community.

More condolences to the family of Richard Ahearn, the 1953 Novice Men's Singles Champion who recently passed away in New York.

The feature article this issue celebrates the 60th anniversary of Roller Skating Association (RSA). The article takes a look back at their first few of years and the progress they have made.

This newsletter also takes a look back at competition twenty years ago. So much as happened in the sporting world, and it is important to remember who competed and how they helped advance the sport today.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and don't forget to spring forward on April 6!



Michael Zaidman
Director & Curator

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Historical Roller Skating Overview is published bimonthly for members of the National Museum of Roller Skating. It is available only through honorary membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$25.00. Send correspondence and change of address to: Museum Director, 4730 South Street, P.O. Box 6579, Lincoln, NE 68506.

The RSROA Celebrates 60!

Although there were many short-lived associations of roller rink operators prior to 1937, such as the roller hockey group organized by Bert Randall of Detroit in the early 1930's, the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association of America (RSROA) was the first permanent organization with a truly national scope since the demise of Julian Fitzgerald's old Western Skating Association, which in any case, only focused primarily on roller speed skating in the Great Lakes region.

The Roller Skating Rink Operators Association was founded by 17 men representing 23 rink operators from only six states. These men gathered on April 2, 1937 in Detroit, Michigan, at the Arena Gardens Rink for the first ever National Speed Roller Skating Championships. The meet was quite successful, with strong competition and fairly good attendance. Lloyd "Whitey" Christopher, from the Palladium Rink, St. Louis, MO, won the overall point title. While speed skating was well established as an amateur sport, the other branches, artistic and rink hockey, were neither recognized nor organized as competitive disciplines. The roller skating business as a whole had also been neglected for many years, being known primarily for its poorly run facilities and shabby characters.

After the final heat, the operators and managers present walked down Woodward Avenue to the Casa Loma restaurant for a late lunch. There they were the guests of Fred A. Martin, who as host manager of the meet, wished to gather the men together for a few words concerning their common problems before they returned to their home cities. Some of the problems then facing roller skating were: the dependence on ice skating for rules, the effect the poorly run rinks had on roller sports and recreational skating, and the overall negative image roller skating then projected to the public. It was generally felt that a business as large as the roller skating industry needed some sort of cooperative venture whereby the problems could be resolved, and both the business and roller sports would benefit.

After the discussions were in progress for a while, Harold Jennison and Jack Shuman put forward the idea for a businessman's organization. Al Kish then rose, and along with Vic Brown, and stated that those present

should form an organization to promote roller skating, much as other groups of businesses had already done. An organization to reorganize roller skating under a practical, businesslike system which would not only give the rink operators a chance to exchange ideas with their colleagues, but would also provide for a national governing body to regulate and protect roller skating competitions, placing the amateur skaters on an even basis with other athletes.

It seems that this idea was what those assembled had been hoping for. With all present agreed to the formation of such an organization, temporary officers were elected and the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association came into being. The group set up a treasury from their own pockets to cover bills on the table. Putting their heads together, the founders of the

Association proceeded to write the first statement of purpose: A cooperative association protecting and governing all roller skating events (professional and amateur). Never to dictate or pry into another man's business, but always to stand ready to help, protect and advise as asked to do so.

Secretary/Treasurer Fred A. Martin then took the meager funds back to his office at the Arena Gardens and began to work. A single drawer in Martin's desk represented the first RSROA national office. On October 28, 1937, the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association of America was incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan as a non-profit organization to serve all of roller skating. Membership dues for operators, managers, and clubs were established, and the procedures to sanction amateur competitions were set up. Martin and others continued to solicit interested people, and the officers and committees began the work of framing a constitution.

Although there were not many spectacular achievements during the first year, three rather important tasks were accomplished. First, a code of acceptable level of operation for the roller rinks was established, to "clean them up," thereby enhancing the image and popularity of roller skating. To regulate the various branches of the sport, the opinions of the finest minds were solicited and a nationally standardized set of rule provided. The first RSROA publication, a

The 17 Founders of the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association

Frank Bacon, Philadelphia, PA
Victor J. Brown, Newark, NJ
William H. Carpenter, Providence, RI
Alfred M. Dexter, Niagara Falls, NY
Robert Fisher, Traverse City, MI
Donald Groesser, Traverse City, MI
Harold F. Jennison, Bay City, MI
Alfred W. Kish, Toledo, OH
Charles McCormack, Chicago, IL
Jules Mahl, Chicago, IL
Fred A. Martin, Detroit, MI
Rodney R. Peters, St. Louis, MO
Jonathon Riggle, Pontiac, MI
William F. Sefferino, Cincinnati, OH
Jack Shuman, Huron, OH
Earl Van Horn, Mineola, NY
Earl J. Von Hagen, Columbus, OH

ROLLER SKATING RINK OPERATORS ASSOCIATION of the UNITED STATES



National Offices
ARENA GARDENS
5795 Woodward Avenue
DETROIT · MICHIGAN



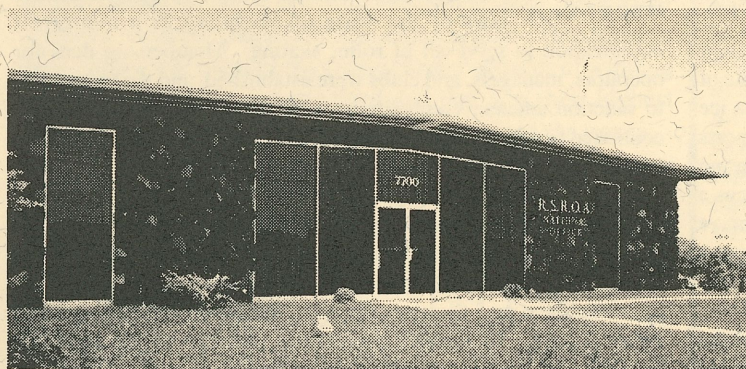
Victor Brown and Fred Martin at an RSROA convention, circa 1940's. (81.33.34) Gift of Richard McLaughlen.

RSROA, roller skating rose from 37th (1937) on the list of all sports practiced in the U.S. to 7th (1938) as determined by a national sports writer poll. The highlight of 1939 was the holding of the first ever United States National Amateur Artistic Championships - the figure/free skating competition at the Arena Gardens in Detroit, and the dance competitions at the Mineola Skating Rink in Mineola, New York. Rodney R. Peters was elected as the second RSROA President, replacing Victor J. Brown. Mr. Brown resumed the office in the next year. 1940 also saw the speed and artistic competitions combined into one national event. With the growing popularity of the sport, rinks were no longer capable of hosting the event which was held at the Public Auditorium in Cleveland, Ohio. The RSROA instituted the first program for testing and commissioning roller skating judges, and *Skating Review*, a national magazine, was published by a

Chicago firm in cooperation with the Association. Another important happening that year was a three week skating teachers school conducted at the Arena Gardens. Over 70 professionals attended the conference, which was the genesis for the future RSROA Teachers college (now the Society of Roller Skating Teachers of America, or SRSTA).



Judges holding scores in front of the officials' stand, Sectional Championships, Arena Gardens, 1945. (81.13.10) Gift of Elsbeth Muller.



RSROA national office in Lincoln, Nebraska, 1968-1991 (10.414).

general set of competitive rules, was only 36 pages long. A third important event was the visit of an amateur sportsman affiliated with the RSROA to England. Perry B. Rawson was authorized by the Association to investigate (at his own expense) the status of roller skating on the other side of the Atlantic. His trip resulted in the beginnings of organized skate dancing in America.

The growth of skate dancing, in part spurred on by the U.S. tour of the British Champions, James & Joan Lidstone in 1938 was extremely beneficial to the skating industry, increasing rink patronage by a substantial degree in the few years. It should also be noted that the RSROA, by bringing the Lidstones to America, introduced precision bearings to the U.S.

Also during 1938, many conferences were held to spread the gospel of standardized rules, and the RSROA started the popular proficiency test program. The Association became a member of the Amateur Skating Union, and affiliated with the Federation Internationale de Patinage a Roulettes (now the Federation Internationale de Roller Skating, or FIRS). The second national speed skating championships were held at the Sefferino Rollerdom in Cincinnati, Ohio. Due to all these activities undertaken by the

For the next 57 years, the RSROA moved several times and currently resides in Indianapolis, Indiana. The RSROA changed its name in 1973 to the Roller Skating Association. The RSA is considered a trade association that serves skating center owner/operators and those involved in various facets of the family entertainment industry such as teachers, coaches, manufacturers and distributors. The RSA seeks three main ideals: to inform, educate, and foster the professional development of its members; create opportunities for networking, and third, to promote roller skating as a lifetime sport and safe recreational activity.

The National Museum of Roller Skating salutes the RSA in celebrating its 60th Anniversary and hopes it continues developing as the pride of the roller skating industry!

1977 Flashback

Taken from Skate Magazine, Fall 1977 issue

ARTISTIC SKATING

Many of us go to the National Artistic championships secretly hoping for a moment of magic when the clock stops and the audience becomes one with a skater. Although we hope for this, we seldom expect it to happen. This year such a moment was given to us by JoAnne Young, a 17 year-old skater from Virginia Beach, Virginia. From the moment she skated onto the floor, the first of the finalists in the Senior Ladies International division, the audience was captivated. Her powerful jumps and graceful arm movements mesmerized onlookers from all parts of the country. Seldom, if ever, have triple jumps been performed with such authority by a female skater than was seen that evening. More amazing yet was the seeming ease with which she glided through her demanding routine. As attested to by a standing ovation, it was a moment that will long be remembered in skating history.

SPEED SKATING

The finale of the Roller Speed Skating contest saw several new faces on the winners platform. Versatility and strength proved to be the winning factors in many of the competitions. Although the plastic floor surface used for the first time caused some need for innovations in types of wheels used, most skaters felt that the conditions were equal for all skaters. Despite some controversy, many excellent races were held. For the first year in U.S. speed roller history, distances were measured in meters rather than feet in accordance with the European Metric System.

Tim Small, defending Senior Men's Champ and E. Forrest Allmond, longtime Senior Men's finalist, were disqualified from the meet during the Two-Man Relay Heat. This opened up the question as to who would gain the title of Senior Men's Champ. There was a close competition between the five top placements; with each distance bringing a different lineup across the finish line. Winning both the 3,000 meter and the 5,000 however, it was the 1974 Senior Men's Champion, Chris Snyder, of Irving, Texas, who proved the most consistent. The 1,000 meter was wheel-to-wheel race between Pete Skias of Pennsylvania and Craig McNeil of North Carolina. In the 1,500 it was Ken Hutter of California narrowly trailing Gregg Marshall of Florida. A tabulation of resulting points found it: Snyder first, Hutter, second, and a three-way tie between Skias, McNeil, and Marshall for third.

Marcia Yager, of Loveland, Ohio, won her fifth National title, successfully defending her Senior Ladies title for the second year. Skating the fastest times in three out of four events, the 21-year-old P.E. major ran away in each event she competed. Closest competitors to the Ohio skater were two California former champions, Robin Wilcock and Karen Johnson.

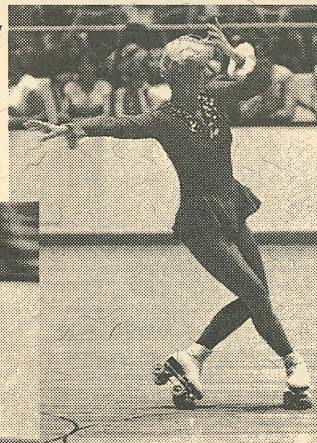
ROLLER HOCKEY

The National Puck Hockey Championships, held in Houston, Texas, was a landmark event both in terms of size and publicity. Involving 33 teams and 98 games, the championships, were covered by 14 newspapers and teams played to large daytime crowds and a full house every night.

One of the most exciting games of the competition, was the opening game between the gold division victors, the Tornados, from Olympia, Washington, and Roadrunners from Louisiana. The game was played as skillfully as any pro game. The Roadrunners scored first, in which it developed into a clean, fast controlled game played with an abundance of strategy. With the Tornados scoring, it was a tied game. The Roadrunners with only one substitute started to show signs of fatigue late in the game, but managed to stay right in there when the Tornados turned it on, and the game ended in a one-one tie. During the rest of the championships, the Tornados won all the remainder of their games, scoring for themselves a first place in the Senior Gold Division.

For the first time, National Competition included a Women's Hockey Division. It surprised a lot of fans to see how well the female hockey skaters played. The women had a lot of close games and moved the puck well. All teams reportedly had a good time and can't wait to get back next year.

JoAnne Young



Chris Snyder

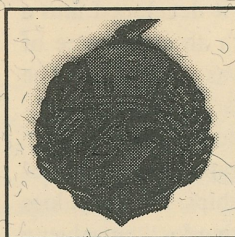


*Olympia, Washington
Tornados (right) vs.
St. Charles, Missouri,
Hikowees (two left)*



Donations

If you have an artifact that you would like to donate, please call the museum. Thank you to all who have helped strengthen the collection. The following is a list of donors who have contributed since the beginning of the year: **Brenda Artz** (*LaRose's Skating Rink*); **Janina Bacich**; **Adam Casineau**; **Sarah H. Davis**; **Wynne de Rosa**; **Harold Derkacz**; **Tony DiPietro**; **Chester Fried**; **Jon Glesing** (*MastersPress*); **Gail Hallas**; **Bettie Jennings**; **David Lewis**; **C. W. Lowe, Jr.**; **Rose & Ed Morton**; **Don Mounce**; **Don Perkins** (*RSA*); **George Pickard**; **Steve & Gloria Poulsen**; **Eddie O'Donnell**; **Al & Karen Thompson**; **William Van Wagner**; **Joe Weinmeier**; **Paul Weiss**; and **Marcia Yager**.



Eddie O'Donnell donated many medals including this one from the 1955 World Championships in Barcelona, Spain where Eddie finished in third place in Senior Dance (97.18.8).



Judy Jerue donated Larry McGrew & Tina Jerue's winning outfit from the 1991 National Artistic Championships in World Class Pairs. Larry & Tina went on to win the World Artistic Championships that year (97.25).



Don Touhy, Pat Carroll, Jeanne Kuester, and William Van Wagner were the 1946 National Fours Champion as seen in this photograph donated by **Van Wagner** (97.22.6).

Dr. Scott Kleiman and the 1996 Junior & Senior World Artistic Teams donated this poster from the World Championships with their autographs. It is now on exhibit in the museum's "Recent Donations" case (97.3.2).



Raffle

Here is your last chance to purchase a \$50 raffle ticket to help provide vital unrestricted operating support to the museum. It ensures the fiscal vitality of the National Museum of Roller Skating, thereby increasing roller skating's visibility, legitimacy, and recognition for the benefit of all involved in the roller skating industry and roller sports.

Tickets are \$50 each and \$10,000 in cash prizes will be given out. 15 winners of \$100 each (\$1500); 4 winners of \$250 each (\$1000); 3 winners of \$500 each (\$1500); one winner of \$1000; and a Grand Prize winner of \$5000! The drawing will take place on May 14, 1997, at the RSA convention in Las Vegas. **Ticket holders need not be present to win.** Mail in your ticket by May 7!

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING
1997 Raffle Ticket



Purchaser _____

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Mail in this copy/photocopy along with \$50
(check or VISA/MC with card # and exp. date) to:
Museum, P. O. Box 6579, Lincoln, NE 68506.

1997 USA Roller Skating's Halls of Fame Inductees

USA Roller Skating's Halls of Fame were instituted in 1983 to honor those individuals and teams who have made outstanding contributions to the sport of roller skating. The following will be inducted during the 1997 National Artistic Championships in Pensacola, Florida this August.

Athletes: ¹Greg Goody and Jodee Viola ²Larry McGrew and Tina Jerue ³Scott Cohen ⁴Fred Ludwig.

Coaches: ¹Georgene Ringeisen ²Betty Ann Danna ³Karen and Al Thompson.

Distinguished Service: ¹Billy Chew ²Chester Fried ³Dale Pritchard.



First Friday tours are at 12:15 p.m., April 4, May 2, June 6, August 1, September 5, October 3, November 7, and December 5. These tours are free & no reservation is required, so roll on by the museum to learn some roller skating history!

Members

The National Museum of Roller Skating would like to thank these members who have recently contributed to the ongoing success of the museum through their continued support.

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 Diane Fearn
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 Chester Fried
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 Sheri Hack (Skatelsland, NE)
 Richard Hawkins
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 Lincoln, Nebraska 68506

Questions, or to order by phone, call **(402) 483-7551**.

Benefits extend one year from join date. Allow 2 weeks for processing.

Membership includes a subscription to the museum's newsletter, *Historical Roller Skating OVERVIEW*, 10% off in the Museum Store, and a museum membership card.

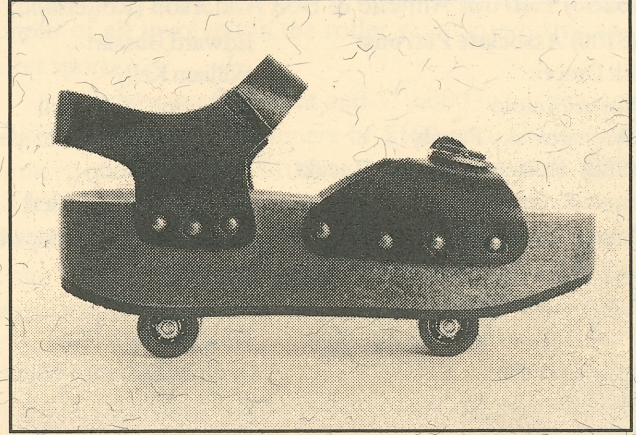
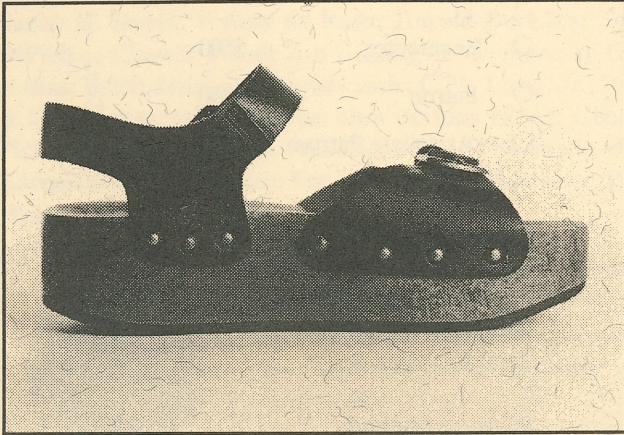
Museum Media Sightings

Hockey Player Magazine, May issue; *Rinkside*, May/June issue; *RIM News*, May/June issue; *Roller Skating Business (RSA)* May/June issue; *Speed Skating Times*, March/April issue; *US Roller Skating*, April issue.

Another Museum Artifact

The "Omniac" convertible sandal and skate made in Italy in the 1970s. By pulling out the lever (not shown) on the side of the shoe, the trucks will either drop down or go up into a hallowed-out portion of the sole. In this way, you could both roller skate and walk in this pair of clogs, without having to change your shoes or remove your roller skates (82.18.80).

A gift from the Chicago Roller Skate Company



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