

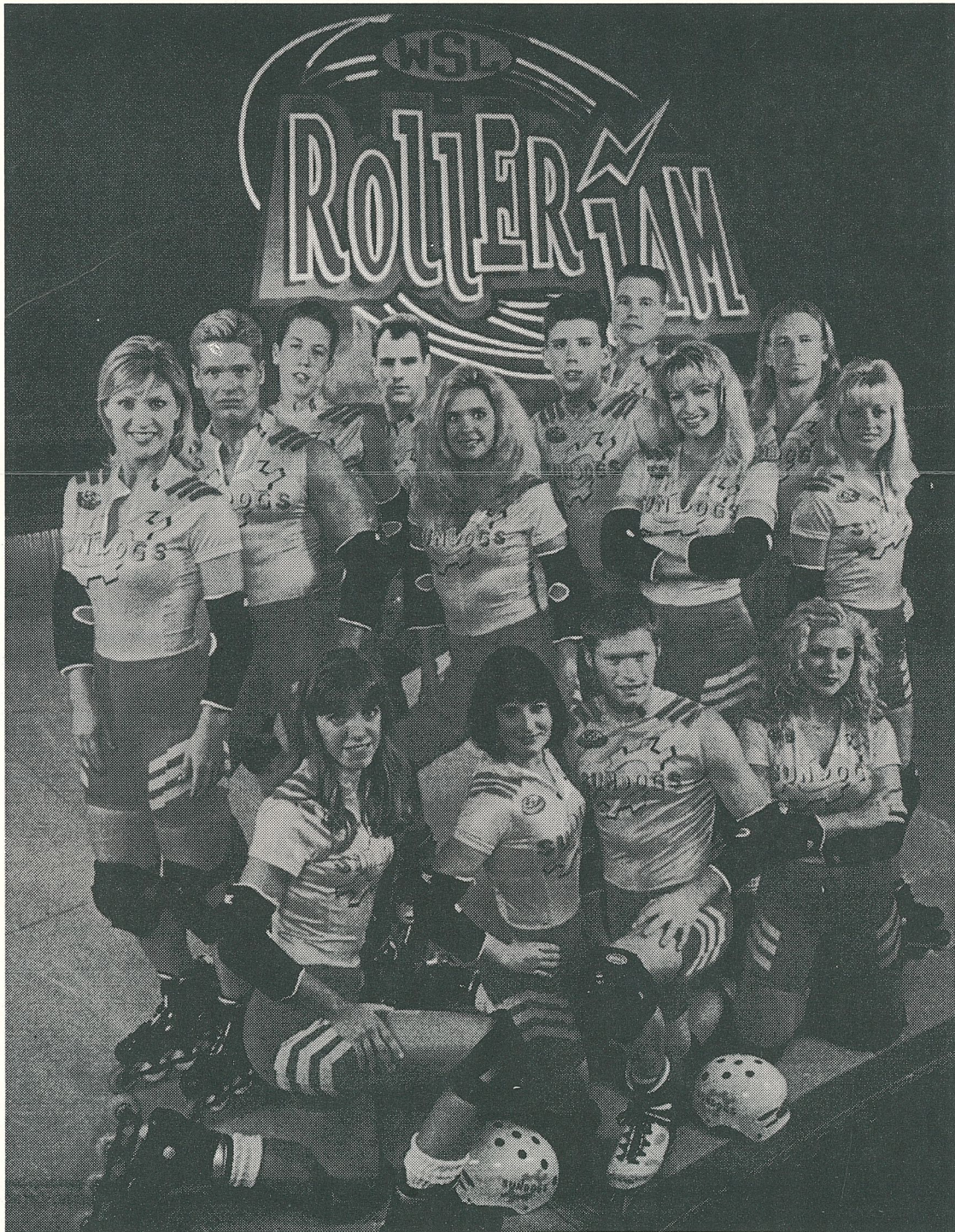
# National Museum of Roller Skating

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 1999 #71

*Historical Roller*



*Skating Overview*



*The Florida Sundogs from World Skating League's RollerJam as seen on cable channel TNN.  
Gift from Debbie Rice, standing on right (99.31.1)*



# Curator's Column

Dear Members,

The National Artistic & Speed Roller Skating Championships are taking place in Syracuse, New York while the National Roller Hockey Championships are finishing in Des Moines, Iowa and the National Hardball Championships are in Lubbock, Texas. The World Inline Roller Hockey Championships took place in Switzerland in June where the United States team did not win the gold for the first time in four years. The US team lost to the home team in the championship match 4-3.

As mentioned, the world revolving around competitive roller skating is abundant. Next year at this time, the Artistic and Speed championships will be taking place in Lincoln for the 19th time. Every four years the championship is held in Lincoln because the National headquarters for competitive roller skating is also located here. Not only will there be more visitors at the museum during the championships, but the museum will be celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October of 2000. To prepare for the onslaught of visitors, the museum needs your help in preparing the museum gallery.

For the museum's anniversary, we will be producing a special newsletter featuring the highlights of the museum from the past twenty years. We would also like to acquire a new television/VCR set that will hang from the ceiling and a bench for viewers to witness past championships. We have the items picked out, but we need your additional support to purchase these items. If you would like to contribute, please contact the museum.

For the past three years, USA Roller Skating has graciously given the museum pages on their Website at [www.usarollerskating.com](http://www.usarollerskating.com). Beginning August 1, the museum will now have our own separate Website at [www.rollerskatingmuseum.com](http://www.rollerskatingmuseum.com). We have changed the format of our design and have given web surfers another useful site to view roller skating history. This site could not have been produced without the in-kind support received from Information Analytics and the dedicated research and continuous amount of work done by Assistant Curator, Susan Curtis.

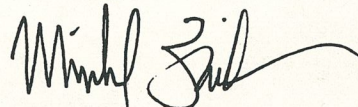
Over the past few months, we have received several important donations regarding the history of roller skating. All donations since January will be featured on page nine.

It is with regrets that I am writing this, my last newsletter for the National Museum of Roller Skating. I have resigned as Director & Curator to accept a position at a research recruitment firm in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. My successor will be Susan Curtis, Assistant Curator whom I am sure you will give your support to as you have to me.

I have been the Director & Curator of the museum since January 1996 and I have seen the museum accomplish many great things. The museum published three publications, *The History of Roller Skating, Awards & Honors of the Roller Skating Association International*, and *The Allure of the Rink, Roller Skating at the Arena Gardens, 1935-53*. The museum was awarded three grants, one from the Nebraska Humanities Council to build interactive exhibits, another from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences to evaluate our current practices and most recently from the Cooper Foundation to acquire a new storage system. The museum has redesigned the entire exhibit floor and we had a wonderful traveling exhibit at the San Francisco Airport. Furthermore, the collection of artifacts continues to grow and the museum has been interviewed by media from around the world.

I truly appreciate the support and the humor you have given me over the past few years. There are many I wish to thank for their personal support, but obviously there wouldn't be enough room to mention everyone. I look forward to seeing the museum evolve even more and I hope you continue to support yours and my favorite museum, the National Museum of Roller Skating, for generations yet to come.

Thanks again,



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## Museum Hours

9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday.  
Closed holidays and weekends.

*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 Internet: [www.rollerskatingmuseum.com](http://www.rollerskatingmuseum.com). E-mail: [rlrsktmus@aol.com](mailto:rlrsktmus@aol.com).



# Patent Perfection

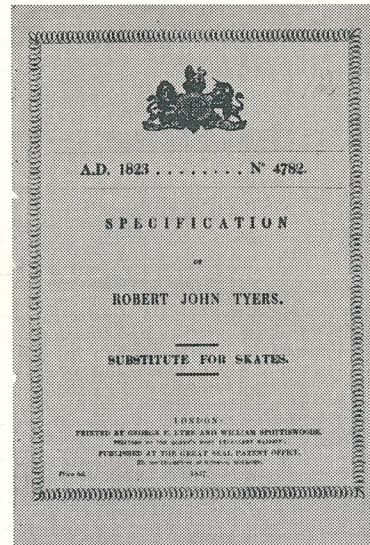
By Susan Curtis, Assistant Curator

In January 1999, the National Museum of Roller Skating purchased a rare collection of English roller skating patents from a private collector in London. The patents were issued by the Office of the Commissioner of Patents in London and range in date from 1823 to 1919. This exciting collection illustrates innovative designs for skates, wheels, clamps, brakes, rink improvements, and various skating apparatus.

These patents add a great deal to our understanding of the evolution of roller skating and the people involved in it. For example, we learn that roller skate inventors came from all walks of life and a variety of professions. Some patents were the logical result of the patent holder's profession, such as Charles Moseley, an India-rubber manufacturer from Manchester, England, who patented an improved rink floor in October 1875. Moseley proposed his rubber-coated floor as a way to cut down on the dust and excess noise created by skaters using conventional wood floors. While many patent holders were engineers, ironworkers, and merchants whose companies would profit from the new designs, others patent holders were people trying to cash in on roller skating's popularity. Patents were granted to plumbers, house agents, gun makers, photographers, barristers, and father and son teams such as James Cole, the elder, and James Cole, the younger. The Coles, of Coventry, England, patented two designs for skates and one design for a glass or enamel rink floor between January and May 1876. Several patent holders were from the upper class, including Princess Anne of Löwenstein Wertheim, a German princess living in London. In May 1911, Princess Anne patented a skate for either ice or roller skating in

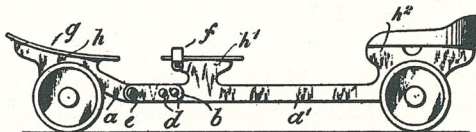
which only the center and the heel of the boot were secured to the skate.

Of the 455 patents the museum acquired, half are from 1876 during rink skating's first boom in popularity. Half of these were filed between January and March. All 16 patents in the collection that propose rink improvements are between 1875 and 1877. While patents for improvements to skates were granted between 1823 and 1919, the five patents for improvements to skate brakes are found only between 1909 and 1910. English roller skating patents were granted to inventors from England, Holland, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Australia, Switzerland, Hungary, France, and the United States.



*Robert John Tyers patent cover for the Volito skate, 1823 (99.0.1a).*

*Fig. 1.*



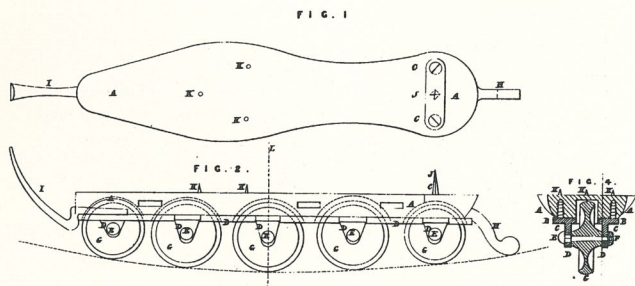
*Fig. 2.*



*Patent drawing from Anne of Lowenstein, a princess of the German Empire (99.0.426).*

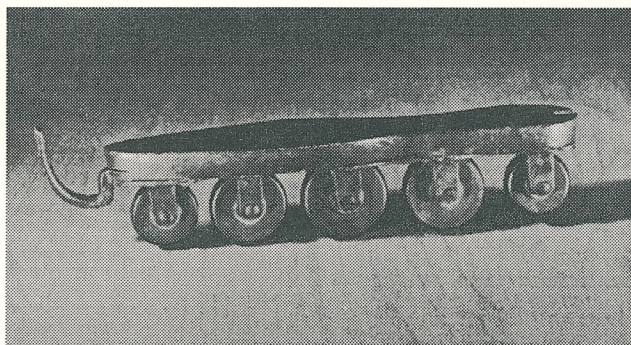
The oldest patent in this collection was granted to Robert John Tyers, a fruit wholesaler from Piccadilly, England, on April 22, 1823, for his invention, A MACHINE OR APPARATUS TO BE ATTACHED TO BOOTS, SHOES, OR OTHER COVERING FOR THE FEET, FOR THE PURPOSES OF TRAVELLING OR PLEASURE. Tyers named his skate the volito, a Latin word meaning "to fly back and forth, to hasten about." Tyers claimed that his invention was capable of being used in a "similar manner to scates (sic) upon the ice, to perform the various evolutions and movements peculiar to the art of scating (sic)." Tyers recommended the volito's stock be made of wood, the plate be made of iron, steel, or brass and the wheels be manufactured of brass, cast iron, or other suitable metal. By incorporating a single row of wheels in unequal sizes, turns could be executed by shifting the skater's weight. The metal stop, H, and





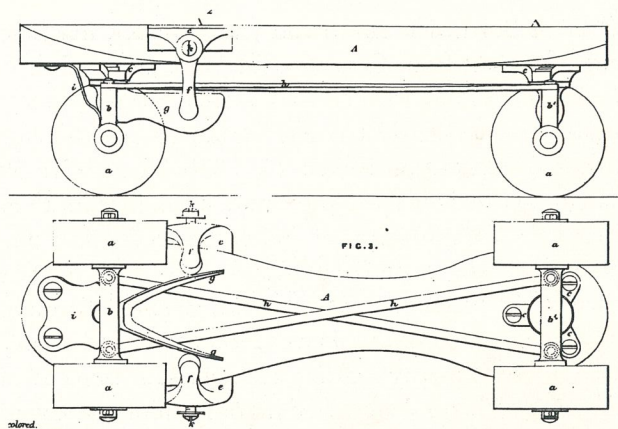
*Robert John Tyers' patent drawing of the Volito skate (99.0.1).*

hooked nose, I, located at either end of the volito could be formed as part of the plate or as separate attachments. The volito shown in Tyer's patent drawing was recommended for use on hard, smooth, and level stone or brick pavements or oak floors to execute artistic skating movements. However, when the skates were to be used for transportation on graveled footpaths, Tyers recommended that the wheels be made as broad as the frames would permit or even using wider frames to accommodate wider wheels. He also suggested that the wheels be grooved in the middle to aid the balance of beginning skaters.



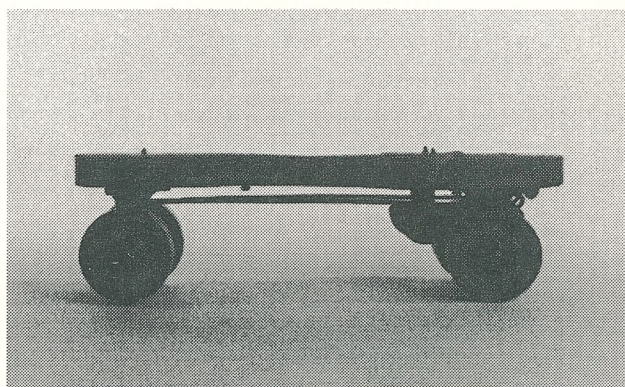
*Photograph of the Volito skate as seen in The Evolution of the Roller Skate: 1819 - Present.*

Several patents in the new collection are for skates already in the museum's collection, including the second of four roller skate patents granted to George Keel, a hatter, and John Cheshire, a corkscrew manufacturer, both from Birmingham, England. Keel and Cheshire's patent on November 13, 1875, for IMPROVEMENTS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROLLER SKATES had as its objective the ability to turn the axles of the rollers without tilting the



*George Keel's patent drawing from 1875 (99.0.46)*

foot plate of the skate. Keel and Cheshire argued that the previous construction of skates which required the frame to tilt to let the skater turn was a dangerous design because the constantly changing position of the skater's foot created instability in his or her balance. In their design, Keel and Cheshire suggested using a wooden plate in a convex shape. Two bearings which carried the axles of the rollers were attached to the underside of the stock. The front bearing was formed with projections that were only depressed when the skater wanted to turn. The front and rear bearings were connected by diagonal bars. Through a slight pressure of the skater's foot, either outwards or inwards, the guide plates pushed against the roller axles and caused both front and rear axles to turn in the same radius. This allowed the skater to turn without tilting his foot. Keel applied for three additional patents between 1875 and 1876, all of which had the goal of making roller skating safer for beginners.



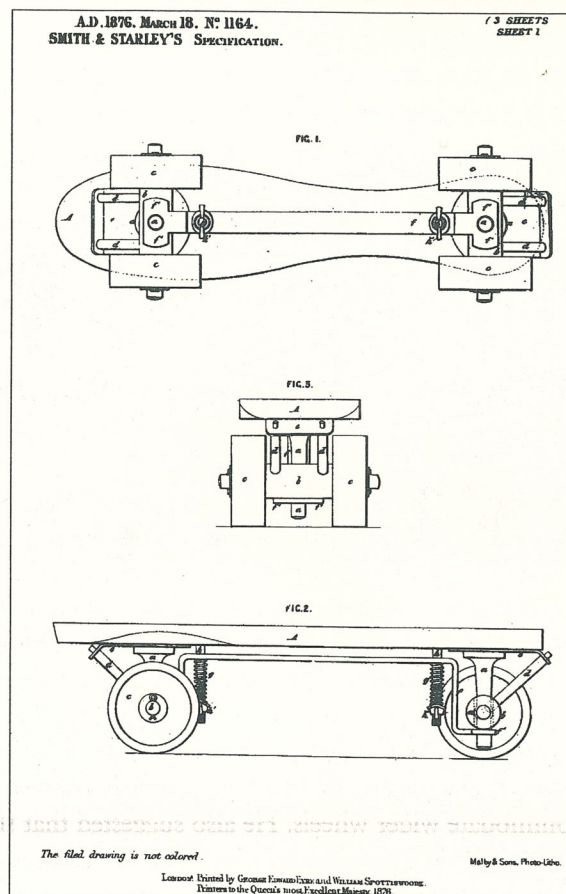
*A photograph of George Keel's roller skate as seen in The Evolution of the Roller Skate: 1819 - Present.*



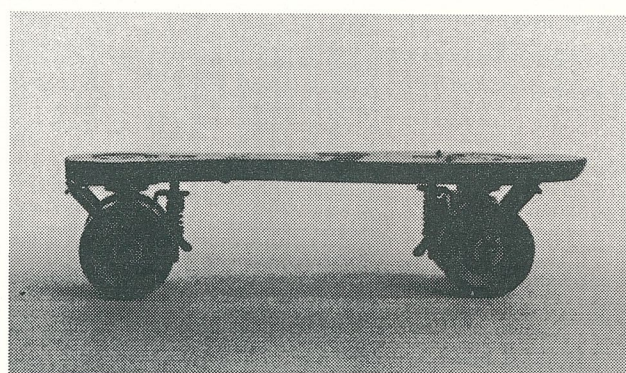
William Borthwick Smith and James Starley, machine manufacturers from Coventry, England, patented their IMPROVEMENTS IN ROLLER AND OTHER SKATES, WHICH IMPROVEMENTS ARE PARTLY APPLICABLE TO SLEDGES AND OTHER CARRIAGES on March 28, 1876. There were 50 patents granted for skate improvements in the month of March 1876. Smith and Starley felt their roller skate was unique because its combination and arrangement of parts allowed the skate's axle to turn in any required direction by a slight action of the skater's foot. Smith and Starley accomplished this by securing a metal rod at each end of the skate. When a skater tilted his or her foot one way or the other the rod would press against the axle and turn the wheels. A spring and nut was incorporated into the design so each skater could set the pressure that was required to make the turns. Smith and Starley patented their design primarily for use in roller skates but they also noted that this design would be useful for ice skates and carriages with either blades or wheels.

In May 1999, an exhibit was installed in the museum to showcase this new collection. Because of the fragile condition of the over 100-year-old papers, each patent will be displayed for a maximum of six weeks. However, this will allow us to exhibit a larger selection of this outstanding collection. Thank you to the following museum members and board members whose generous financial contributions made this acquisition possible:

Annelle Anderson  
 Mills Lynn  
 Frank Cernik  
 Budd Van Roekel  
 John Chrien  
 Charles Wahlig  
 Charlotte Groves  
 Ed Young  
 C.W. Lowe  
 USA Roller Skating



*Smith & Starley's roller skate patent drawings from 1876. (99.0.157)*



*A photograph of William Borthwick Smith & James Starley's roller skate as seen in The Evolution of the Roller Skate: 1819 - Present.*



# 1999 Raffle Highlights

The 1999 Museum Raffle took place May 12 in San Diego, California. The following are a few more pictures that were taken at the event. Each year the museum sells raffle tickets to raise crucial operating support. Next year, the raffle will take place at the Rio in Las Vegas, Nevada, May 10, 2000.



*RSA President Don Perkins hands museum board member Robert Bollinger his award for selling the most raffle tickets for the third year in a row!*



*Nellie Anderson reaches in for another raffle ticket as Mills Lynn watches over.*



*Nellie Anderson pulls out the next winning raffle ticket as museum board members Frank Cernik and Mills Lynn observe.*



*Museum director Michael Zaidman hands David Fleming his \$250 prize for his lucky raffle ticket.*



*Museum Board President Bert Anselmi stands next to back-to-back \$100 winner Susie Tanner and fellow board member Frank Cernik.*



# N S G A S p o r t S h o w

One of the main principles behind the museum's mission statement is to continue to collect and learn about new items that are available to the public. The National Sporting Goods Association has continually held one of the biggest sporting goods shows in the country the past few years in Chicago.

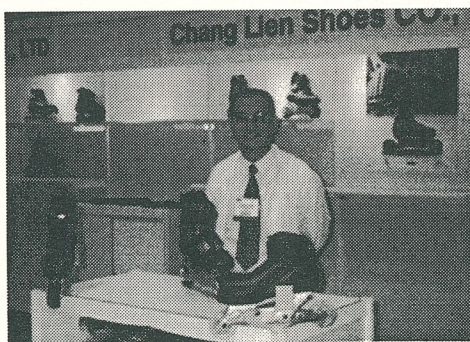
This past July, the museum staff attended the Sports Show to see and to talk about the latest items available from a variety of present and new companies.

Unfortunately, this will be the last year this Sports extravaganza is held since the show's rights have been sold. The new skating show has not been decided yet, but expect a show sometime in 2000 possibly in Las Vegas.



*Doug Kalvelage, the inventor of the BrakeBrush, MO.*

New this year for beginning skaters to learn how to stop. This is a safety mechanism that will give skaters confidence from falling. It is like carrying a hockey stick, except, the skater keeps the fall from ever happening by negotiating control. It has a structural core and is light weight with nylon threads. As a salesman of commercial brooms, Doug Kalvelage had one custom made with extra strong nylon threads. If you can convince yourself you are not going to clean your city with the BrakeBrush, it is a great tool.



**Thomas Chang, inventor of Eureka skates, Bard Wyers Sports.**

New spring skates with an aluminum shell, it is

a full-cushion suspension system. There are several versions and they are still making improvements such as color, cosmetics, rear torque and a braking system. The suspension system allows the skater to flex one's foot so your ankle doesn't hurt.



*Fred Clementi and Lyle Koszone, DeLynn Enterprises, Inc., Warrenton, VA.*

The newest looking skate to conquer both the inline and sneaker market is the new foldaway platform skate from DeLynn. "The kids love it!" says Clementi who researched these skates with kids from Virginia who were interested in skating and the latest shoe craze, the platform. You can use the skate or hide the wheels by clicking a locking system located inside the sole of the shoe. There are currently six styles, but they are working on four more.



*Chris Mitchell (editor of BOX) and Jeff Erdmann, (Editor of Inline Retailer News).*

Chris Mitchell started *BOX* (aggressive skating magazine) while a student at UCLA about seven years ago because he and his friends loved to skate and they want to promote and write about a sport they loved. Sports & Fitness publishing purchased his idea and he



# NSGA Sport Show

continued to put down what they were doing.



*Peter Dykes, Jo Culley,  
Wes Culley, JWC  
Skinz, Australia.*

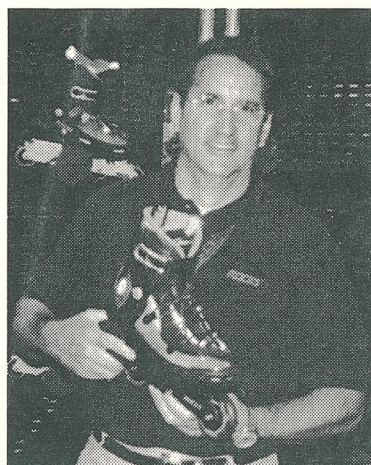
While on a bus in Australia Jo Culley noticed skaters who painted a design on their boots and thought why can't I do that? So, she did. Created from a Lycra material, Jo Culley designed a skate cover that would be interesting to look at and protect skaters from spilling when their laces would come undone. This invention is for the recreational and speed skater. The cover is very easy to put on and is removed in seconds when ready.



*Sean LaLevee, Sales  
Manager, Salomon  
Skates, a division of  
Adidas, OR.*

Sean grew up with Scott Olson, the inventor of the modern Rollerblade in Minnesota. Salomon continues its successful approach with the inline market by researching their market and then developing the product that the skaters want. Their markets consist of the recreational, aggressive, and speed skaters. Salomon bases their skates on the "pure power perfect fit" idea to please the skater. For example, their aggressive skate was designed and used by aggressive skaters. Nick Adams, the recent X-Games champion uses these skates. These skates will be ready to go early next year.

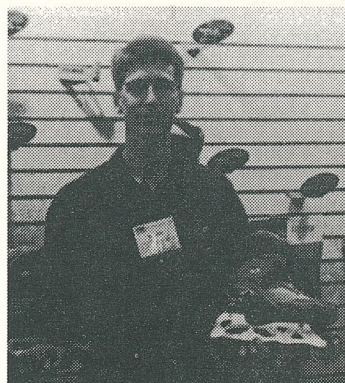
Founded in 1953, Roces began making inline boots for Rollerblade in the 1970s. A Roces representative was at a tradeshow in Las Vegas and came across a booth Scott Olson was sitting at and asked about his skate. As



*Keith D'Entremont,  
Roces.*

it turned out, Scott wasn't happy with the boot he had and Roces worked on the boot design and sold the boots to him for his skates that turned out to be Rollerblade. Then in 1990, Roces began to market their own brand of inline skates.

Roces continues to market a variety of lines including the aggressive, off-road, kids, and recreational models. The newest skate is the New York model which focuses on the foot and ankle axis. This model which will be available next year has a flex motion or transfer of power which allows the lower and upper part of the skate to flex better resulting in a better fitting skate.



*Bob Harr, designer at  
Tecnica.*

Tecnica continues to focus on the women skaters with a very good line of skates that are responding to the demand. Tecnica focuses on comfort and fit to please their customers. Bob Harr works on the design of their skates and Andrea Gapiella works on the inventions in Italy. This company was listening to the consumers when at first plastic boots were in, but took command with the new soft-boot technology.

Global Sports is the new distributor for Fila and





*Corrie Grilfiths, Michael Malkin and Eden Frieberg, Global Sports Distributor for Fila and Hypno, Canada.*

Hypno skates. Hypno skates which were introduced two years ago focuses on the recreational skater with the quick release system. Hypno continues to focus on women skaters for the outdoor and casual users. The Fila skates are aimed for the purely recreational skater and speed skater. Fila aims for performance and skaters using these skates have recently set world speed records. These skates will be released to the public in spring 2000.



*Robert Carrier, inventor (second from right) and J.P. Lavigne, salesman (right) Meka Skates, Canada.*

The new Meka skate has the flex system which is a system of mobile wheels based on the tandem-roller principle. This principle allows the skater's wheels to stay in contact with the surface longer.

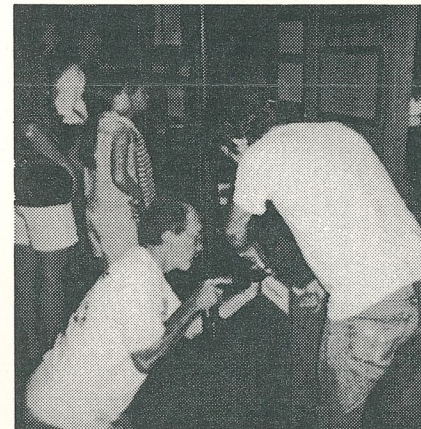


*Also on display were these new motorized skates attached to inline skates.*

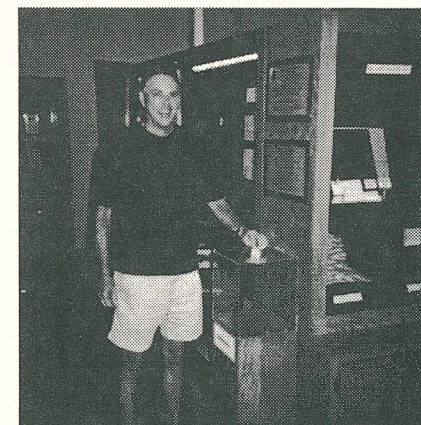
The entrance fee to the museum is free, but that doesn't mean we won't accept a donation. At the entrance to the museum is a donation box. Since the museum opened at our current location we have had a fairly large donation box opening to slide money in and several fingers. To deter fingers from taking donations, a new box was installed this past month.



*Bryce Darling shows one reason why a new donation box was needed.*



*Bryce Darling and Dell Darling install the new donation box that is now attached to the wall.*



*Steve Ryan stands next to the new donation box and contributes the first dollar.*



# Donations

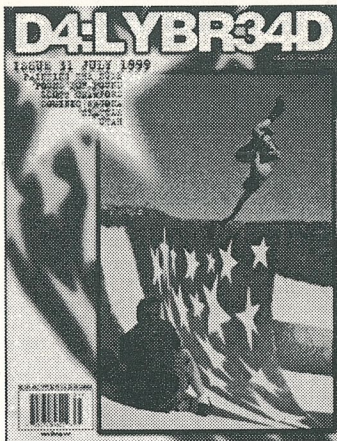
The museum exists to acquire, preserve, research, and interpret the history of roller skating through its collection of artifacts, photographs, archival materials, and other skating memorabilia. If you have an artifact you are interested in donating, please contact the museum. The following donors have contributed since January: Nellie Boucher, Everett Bryan, Gary Castro, Marty Dumic, Bud Engle, George & Tilly Fay, David Fleming, Chester Fried, Mark Greenwald & Patrick Seltsam, Rod Helton, JWC Skinz, Doug Kalvelage - *BrakeBrush*, Ted Kirk, Dr. Scott Kleiman, John Kontra, Mills Lynn, Gloria Manning, Rose Martin, Caroline Mirelli, Shirley Newman, Sam Nieswizski, George Pickard, James Pollard, Dorie Priest, Harold Ratzburg, P.E., Peter Reifschneider, Debbie Rice, Robbins Sports Surface, John Savickas, Cindy Schrader, Emil Singlar, Duane Trembath, V-Formation, Inc., Anjie Walton - *DailyBread*, Elizabeth Woods, and Michael Yohnicki.



Rod Helton from the American Roller Derby League donated several postcards, programs and posters.



Sam Nieswizski donated this advertisement about the Roller Derby in France called Roller Catch.



Anjie Walton, editor of *DailyBread* magazine, an aggressive skating magazine donated past issues and added the museum to its mailing list.



Cindy Schrader donated two copies of the 1999 USA Roller Skating Southeast Regional Championships in West Greensboro, North Carolina.



V-Formation, Inc., donated a pair of these TST-2000 Professional Hockey Skates.

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 are recognized in the newsletter.

In memory of Irma Libke  
 Bert & Lynn Anselmi  
 Rose Martin

On Occasion of  
 Loretta Ruehle Horvath's  
 49th Wedding Anniversary  
 Ralph Horvath

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

Please check one:  
 \$25    \$50    \$100    \$250 (plaque)    Other \$

This contribution was made by:  
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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form and payment (NMRS) to the museum.  
 All donations are tax-deductible.



# Membership Matters

By becoming a member you are making a commitment to the museum and its mission to enriching people's lives by increasing their understanding and enjoyment of roller skating's past for the benefit of generations to come. Below is a listing of those members who have joined or renewed since the last issue.

## BENEFACTOR (\$500+)

Anonymous Bill & Gladys Kelly

## PATRON (\$250-\$499)

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 Bud & Shirley Engle George Pickard  
 Southeastern Skate Supply

## ASSOCIATE PATRON (\$100-\$249)

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Leo J. LaMay	Joseph Leanza
Claire Leonard	Debbie Lewis
Linda Lester & Dave Moody	David Mathews
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Pamela Onges	Anne Pals
Elizabeth Plimpton	Pat Prozzillo
Thomas Queret	Roller Dome
Bently & Jeanne Robison	Joni K. Salmon
Rolf Schade	Florence Schuneman
Ms. Frances E. Scott	Andy Starr
William & Patricia Van Wagner	Vern Tappen
Wal-Lex Recreational Center, Inc.	Lori Westcott
	Elizabeth Woods

## DID YOU KNOW?

### MEMBERSHIP QUIZ RESULTS

In what city was the Arena Gardens Roller Rink located?  
*Answer:* Detroit *Winners:* Frances Mary Cooley & Grant Leff

## DO YOU KNOW?

### NEXT MEMBERSHIP QUIZ

Who is the editor of *BOX* magazine?  
 The first two correct answers mailed to the museum will win two items from the museum store. Good luck!

*Membership support is greatly appreciated.*

### Join Here!

- New  Renew

#### Check one:

- Benefactor \$500  
 Patron \$250  
 Associate Patron \$100  
 Donor \$50  
 Individual/Family \$35

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

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

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

#### Payment Method

- Check Payable to National Museum of Roller Skating  
 VISA  MasterCard

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signature \_\_\_\_\_

### Member Form

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for joining!*

Gift Membership Form (*Makes a Great Gift!*)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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 your choice of publications (please check one):

*The History of Roller Skating* ©1997 ISBN 0-9658192-0-5

*The Allure of the Rink* ©1999 ISBN 0-9658192-1-3

All donations are tax-deductible up to the amount permitted by law. Please clip/return to: National Museum of Roller Skating, PO Box 6579, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506.



# *A n o t h e r A r t i f a c t*

New postcards now available from the Museum Store. Artist Lynn DiNino said that she and another adventurous friend had taken up roller skating. "A mutual friend said we'd break bones at our age" (the upper side of 35). The flame haired DiNino responded with panache. She hired photographer Bev Sparks to take pictures showing the skaters outfitted with in-line skates, protective gear, bed pillows and walkers.

A collection of six postcards are available at .80¢ each or get the entire collection for \$4.50. Call the museum to order.



Change Service Requested



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