

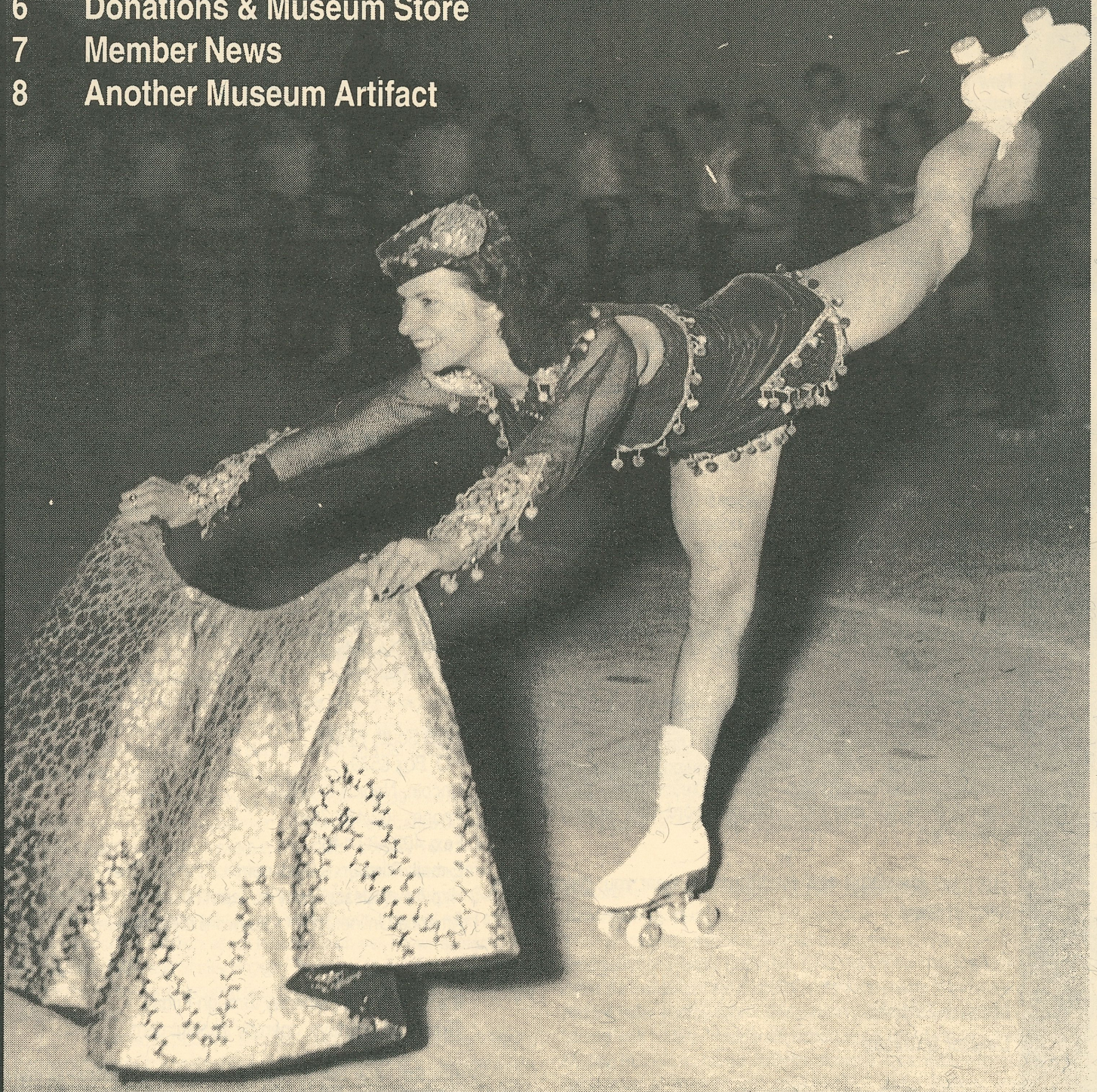
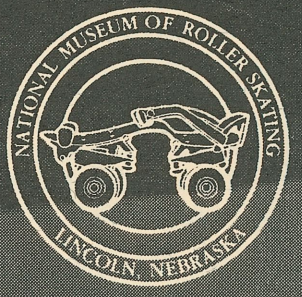
HISTORICAL ROLLER SKATING OVERVIEW

August/September 1997

Issue No. 59

Inside:

- 2 Curator's Column
- 3 Feature Article
- 6 Donations & Museum Store
- 7 Member News
- 8 Another Museum Artifact



Betty Lyttle roller skating in her Spanish number costume during the 1944 RSROA Infantile Paralysis Foundation Benefit Exhibition at Madison Square Garden in New York City, NY (97.0.621).



Dear member,

The History of Roller Skating, the definitive source on the history of roller skating, is now available for purchase in the Museum Store. Other new items include two T-shirts designs, either a 1954 Roller Derby player or an image of the first patented in-line roller skate both available in a gray or white color shirt. Check out the designs located on page 6 or the museum web site for a full color display.

USA Roller Skating hosts the 61st National Artistic & Speed Championships in Pensacola, Florida, July 31-August 22. The museum will exhibit artifacts and museum store items for a limited time during the championships from August 3-7.

New Assistant Curator, Sarah Webber, who has been with the museum since March, recently finished a new exhibit, "Roller Skating for Health in the 1940s." She is shown at the right standing next to the exhibit she designed.

Sarah wrote the feature article this month entitled, "A Grand Show For An Even Greater Cause." The article takes a look at the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association fight against Infantile Paralysis in 1944. The RSROA, now RSA International, continues to fight against deadly diseases by raising money for needy causes through roller skating events.

The museum sends its condolences to the family of Milton H. Aranson, who recently passed away. Milton opened Johnny Jones, Jr., a skate distributor company in the 1930s. Johnny Jones Jr. represented the Chicago Skate Company and the Hyde Shoe Company while becoming the largest roller skating distributor in the country.

We also send our condolences to the family of Dorothy Tamaccio. Dorothy owned and operated the Southgate Roller Rink in Seattle, Washington, and was a long time member to the museum.

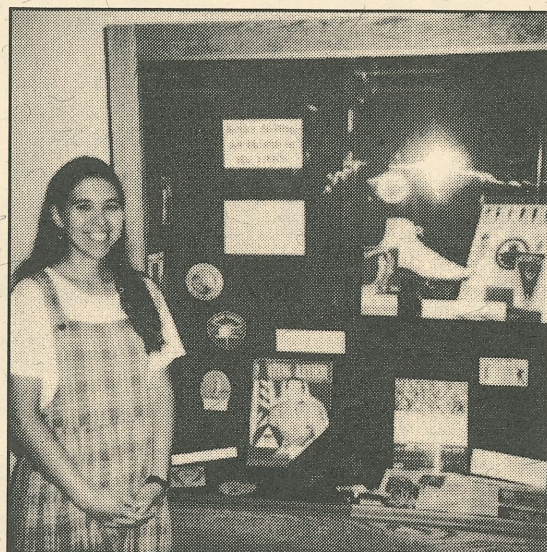
This newsletter also honors those who have donated artifacts to the museum since April. The list is long and some of the many great artifacts are featured on page 7.

The museum would also like to thank Jeanne Noxon, a.k.a. the SkateLady@aol.com, for her commitment to help educate America Online visitors through the museum's site. Jeanne developed the site and continues to offer educational programs to roller skating enthusiasts Online. You can reach these programs by logging on to AOL and then hitting keyword *roller skating* for more information.

Enjoy the newsletter and don't forget to wear your helmet while roller skating!

Michael Zaidman
Director & Curator

CORRECTION: In the last newsletter, No. 58, the cover photograph incorrectly listed the order of names. The photograph should have been, L-R, Bruce Towle, Julia Brunk (Pedersen), Ed Pedersen, Margaret Williams McMillen, Walter Stakosa, Louise Moore, and Alden Sibley.



Board of Trustees

Bert Anselmi, President
Chester Fried, Vice-President
George Pickard, Sec.-Treasurer
Robert Bollinger
Frank Cernik
Marvin Facher
Charlotte Groves
Mills Lynn
Katherine McDonell
Gordon Van Roekel
Charles Wahlig
Edmund Young

Director & Curator

Michael Zaidman
Assistant Curator
Sarah Webber

Trustee Emeritii

Michael Brooslin
James Turner
Scott Addison

Honorary Trustees

Irwin Rosee
RSA Chapter Chairmen:
Gary Englund
William Johnson
Roger Cobb
Rick Carson
Bobby Braun
Dan Brown
Art Snowden
Joe Champa
Rick Juillerat
Jim Smith
Jim Lind
Mike Tharp
L.B. "Rock" Allman

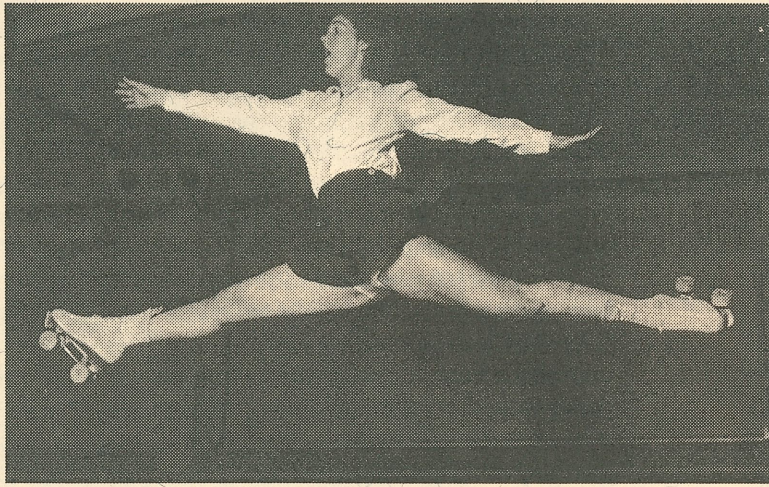
4730 South Street
P.O. Box 6579
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506
Phone: 402/483-7551
Fax: 402/483-1465
E-mail: Rllrsktmus@aol.com
Http://www.usacrs.com/museum.htm
America Online: hit <K> keyword roller skating

Museum Hours

9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
Closed on holidays, open by appointment

Historical Roller Skating Overview 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 \$25.00. Send correspondence and change of address to: Museum Director, 4730 South Street, P.O. Box 6579, Lincoln, Nebraska 68506, USA.

**"A GRAND SHOW FOR AN EVEN GRANDER CAUSE":
The 1944 Roller Skating Rink Operators Association Benefit
Exhibition
for the Infantile Paralysis Foundation**



Photograph of the jump that earned 16-year-old Detroit figure skating club member, Dorothy Law, a place in the benefit exhibition in 1944. Gift of Richard McLauchlen (81.33.390)

Over the 1996 Labor Day weekend, the Roller Skating Association, formerly the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association, once again participated in Jerry Lewis's telethon to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association through holding a MegaSkate! skate-a-thon. The RSROA began supporting the MDA in 1971, and two years later 214 member rinks contributed nearly a third of a million dollars to support the association's research, education, and family support programs. By 1980, the amount contributed grew to \$2.5 million; in 1985, the RSROA reported contributing \$22 million over the fourteen year period since its member rinks across the country began holding fund-raisers. Many roller skaters, wrote George Pickard, RSROA Executive Director in 1981, found participating in the skate-a-thon events a "meaningful and personally rewarding endeavor." The RSROA encouraged its member rinks to participate in the annual fund-raiser "to help our kids" since the roller skating business dealt primarily with children and, as a 1974 fund raising campaign letter stated, "we have an obligation to our customers and our community to combat this insidiouscrippler of young bodies."

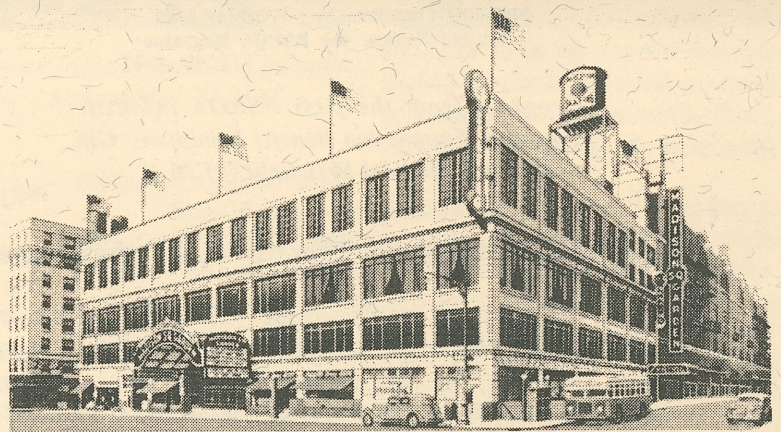
The RSROA began trying to meet this obligation and work towards irradiating diseases maiming children three decades before any rink organized an MDA skate-a-thon. On February 16, 1944, the RSROA held their first charity event, six years following the organization's formation. Held in New York City at Madison Square Gardens, the RSROA benefit show assembled the largest number of roller skaters ever for a benefit exhibition, which included such well-known skaters of the time as Betty Lyttle and Shirley Snyder. Proceeds from the evening went to support the foundation combating arguably the most feared infectious disease of the era: polio.

Founded in 1937, the birth of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis came on the heels of one of the most prominent citizens acquiring the disease. During a family vacation off the coast of Canada in 1921, Franklin D. Roosevelt developed the early symptoms of polio, and lost movement of his legs. The future president's personal misfortune changed American's perception of the disease. Prior to the 1920s, most Americans

associated polio with dirt, poor hygiene, immigrants, and urban slums. But during the 1920s and 1930s, with increasingly severe epidemics striking the middle class, Americans came to understand that polio in fact favored cleanliness, and occurred chiefly among children and young adults who had been protected in early infancy from polio infection. Scientists seeking to further understand the disease concluded that clean, protected middle-class children tended to have lower immunity levels against polio than poor children, who often contracted the disease during infancy and thus acquired natural immunity. This knowledge, combined with President Roosevelt's activism, further eroded the misconceptions and stigma surrounding the debilitating disease.

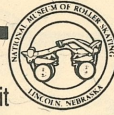
Prior to his election as president in 1932, Roosevelt became active in combating polio. Soon after his election, the New York Infantile Paralysis Commission held a President's Birthday Ball to raise money for polio patients across the country. The annual Presidential Birthday Balls became quite popular across the United States, with Americans coming together to raise money for infantile paralysis research, dancing so that others could walk, as promotions of the events proclaimed. By 1937, the increasingly national effort prompted Roosevelt, along with his former law partner Basil O'Connor, to form the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis to more effectively raise money for patients and research across the country against the disease which affected nearly every community in the nation.

Like numerous Americans, board members and others active in the RSROA in the early 1940s saw the Infantile Paralysis Foundation as their "personal charity," as Fred Martin stated in 1944. Its very visible effects made polio an easily observed disease, and since it largely struck children and young adults, a highly emotional disease. Victor J. Brown, the RSROA's first president, and Fred Martin, the organization's secretary and



Postcard of Madison Square Garden in the late 1930s.

treasurer in the early 1940s, played instrumental roles in putting their association's support behind the foundation. In 1943, the RSROA became officially involved with the foundation, forming a branch of the National Association of Infantile Paralysis. Chairman of the new branch Fred Martin called the foundation "the personal and private charity of everyone connected with the roller skating sport." Since roller skating was an activity which built "strong well bodies," Martin continued in an appeal in the January 1944 *Skating Review*, no cause could be closer to roller skaters hearts "than the reclamation of strength and good health." Roller skaters, wrote Martin, "worshipping if you will, the grace of strength, greater is ours the measure of charity we feel for those who have it not." Martin urged "every man and woman associated with the roller sport" to support the foundation's battle



against polio.

Roller skaters across the country held fund-raisers and benefit shows to battle polio. The Queens Roller Rink on Long Island, for example, held a President's Birthday Skating Party on January 28, 1943. Skaters were encouraged to come and "help someone else and at the same time enjoy an evening of skating." A portion of the evening's revenues benefitted the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. The newsletter distributed by the roller rink quoted Grantland Rice, Chairman of the Sports Council for the foundation, who implored people to roll up their "sleeves and pitch in and help destroy the destroyer." He asked roller skaters to "lead the March of

feeling."

While the RSROA sponsored the event and paid for the costumes, a group of New York area professional roller skaters and rink operators produced and organized the details of the enormous charity show. Victor Brown, operator of the New Dreamland Arena in Newark, served as the chairman for the event, with many other roller skaters in the area such as Margaret and Roland Cioni, Betty Lyttle, and Millie and Clifford Wilkins working on committees to ensure all went smoothly on the evening of the event. The local professional roller skaters prepared the skating numbers and selected the cast from amateur and professional skaters from around the United States. Fred Freeman, President of the RSROA in 1944, could not "estimate the value of the vast unseen and unsung contribution of those responsible for producing the show," and thanked the New York area skaters and rink operators for "the time and energy" they "so unselfishly donated."

Over 500 roller skaters also donated their time and talents to the fund-raiser's success. The RSROA brought the 1943 National Champions to New York to skate in starring roles, but some skaters, like Dorothy Law, who came in fourth in figures the year before, still won a starring role in the charity because of an incredible splits jump captured on film. Billy Martin, a roller skater in the armed forces, arranged for a furlough in order to skate in the charity with Margaret Williams. Rinks from as far away as Cleveland sent an entire drill team, paying for all of their troupe's expenses. Skaters scheduled to perform in the show spent many an evening rehearsing, with Betty Lyttle often drilling girls in the acts she produced until well after midnight. The roller skaters put in numerous hours individually rehearsing, but performers only

RSROA
 (Roller Skating Rink Operators' Association)

**INFANTILE PARALYSIS
 FOUNDATION**

1944 BENEFIT EXHIBITION

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK

FEBRUARY 16

PROGRAM 25 CENTS

Including Complimentary February Issue of
 Skating Review the RSROA Magazine

Program from the first RSROA Infantile Paralysis Foundation Benefit Exhibition. Gift of Rita and Michael Mascitelli (81.26.2)

Sports against this crippler and thereby help the youngster around the corner."

That same year, members of the RSROA began planning the largest benefit the roller skating community had yet to witness. The date was set for February 16, 1944, the date set by the Infantile Paralysis Foundation to celebrate his birthday by holding fund-raisers to combat polio. The "grandest and most magnificent of all roller skating shows" was dedicated by RSROA president Fred Freeman to "those afflicted and stricken with infantile paralysis," and also to president Roosevelt.

Announcing the RSROA Grand Roller Skating Charity Show, Martin implored roller skaters across the country to support the event, either by buying tickets to the New York City show or by holding smaller, local benefit affairs. Those unable to show their support by physically attending the New York event were still asked to show their monetary support by purchasing a ticket, with the knowledge that it would be given to the United Service Organization for a soldier on leave. The RSROA hoped to sell all 20,000 of the seats in Madison Square Gardens, with ticket prices ranging from fifty cents to two dollars. Through the combined efforts of the grand skating event in Madison Square Gardens and the smaller events Martin asked roller skaters to hold across the country, Martin expressed the hope that "the total of our sympathy will be expressed in a sum comparable to our



Shirley Snyder backstage, waiting to perform at the benefit exhibition. Gift of Richard McLaughlen (81.33.95)



A sailor on crutches surrounded by the roller skaters about to perform in the 1946 RSROA Infantile Paralysis Benefit Show at Madison Square Garden. Gift of Richard McLaughlen (81.33.471)

had one full dress rehearsal before the event, held the afternoon prior to the big evening.

Huge billboards all over New York and New Jersey announced the single night charity event, and nearly twenty thousand roller skating fans attended on the Big Show's big night. The RSROA issued a special invitation to President Roosevelt, who thanked the association for the "cordial invitation," but declined to attend. However, Grantland Rice, chairman of the Sports Council for the National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis, sat with the RSROA board members. Though the president was unable to attend, many others filled Madison Square Garden to show their support for the RSROA and the Infantile Paralysis Foundation.

Fred Freeman, president of the RSROA, opened the evening with a "forcefully delivered dedication." Arthur Wagner of the New Dreamland in Newark served as the Master of Ceremonies, and announced the first performance which featured Audrey Baker skating while doing acrobats to "The Desert Song," a performance the crowd loved. Spectators observed nine other routines before an intermission, including a Spanish number, a naval salute, and a six team chariot race in the "Roman Times" routine. During the second half, the Russian number with over two hundred roller skaters awed the crowd. The entire show ran smoothly, with no delays between routines.

Following the show, Basil O'Connor, President of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, congratulated and thanked the RSROA.

O'Connor "expressed admiration" for the quality of the performances and costumes, and enthusiastically praised both the performers and the producers of the charity event. The RSROA raised over \$10,000 for the foundation. O'Connor personally, as well as for the "thousands of infantile paralysis victims who the March of Dimes will aid," extended his thanks for the RSROA's "splendid cooperation in this vital work."

Immediately recognizing the show as a success, the RSROA announced within weeks their intention of holding a benefit show once a year. Planning got underway by the fall of that year for the second benefit show to be held on February 27, again at Madison Square Gardens. Many of those who helped direct and implement the first show, such as Betty Lyttle, Roland Cioni, and Millie Wilkins, participated in producing the second benefit show. Rehearsing for two months prior to the event, over 900 skaters from across the country participated in the "extravaganza" which promised to "highlight any and all roller skating productions in the history of the sport." The second RSROA Infantile Paralysis Foundation Benefit Show attracted over 15,000 spectators, who "applauded with enthusiasm as the two-hour-and-45-minute skating spectacle" unfolded, revealing performances with themes from the Orient, Russia of yesteryear, an underwater

fantasy, and a Mexican fiesta.

Basil O'Connor again sent his thanks to the RSROA. In a letter to Victor Brown of the New Dreamland Arena, O'Connor called the now annual benefit to aid his organization in the fight against polio "more than a tangible expression of good will." To those stricken with polio, he continued, "the annual benefit is a vehicle of hope as well as charity. . . bringing promise of health in the future and renewing their courage and faith today." The annual benefit show for the National Infantile Paralysis Foundation, which continued for several more years, began the RSROA's activism toward irradiating disabling diseases. After the vaccine for polio became widely distributed, the RSROA sought out and supported other organizations, such as the Muscular Dystrophy Association, in their battle against disability, activism which continues to the present.

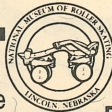
Contributions

A donation has been made by Nazzaro Enterprises, Inc., California & Texas, in memory of:

Milton H. Aranson

Robert Bollinger made a donation in memory of:

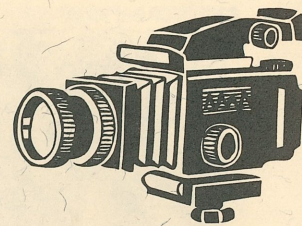
Dorothy Tamaccio



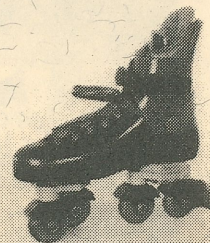
The National Museum of Roller Skating's collection has grown each year because of donors such as these who have contributed to the growth of the museum. If you have an artifact that you would like to donate, please contact the museum before donating. The following donors have contributed since April:

Ann Ammen, Nellie Anderson, Bert Anselmi, Ron Baldwin, Bob Bollinger, Gigi Boyd, Doug Breniser, Jimmy Cochimin, Harry Corson, George & Tilly Fay, Edward Fior, Jim Greene, Charlotte Groves, Larry & Mary Hayes, Karl Kish, Tony Kissing, Del Kuehnel, Marguerite Levenson, C. W. Lowe, Pam Mager, Rose Martin, Elizabeth Neel (ABC-CLIO), Joe & Nancy Nemanich, Don Perkins, Antonio Pirrello, Don Ritchie, RC Shanks, Loretta Simmons, Andy Starr, Subway Sandwiches of Lincoln, Sure-Grip International, Jeanette Tupe, Ronald Ruebush, Dolores & Jenner Vincent, Ron Waiton, Jack Walker, Jeff Walker, Sondra Wendell, and Tom Winter.

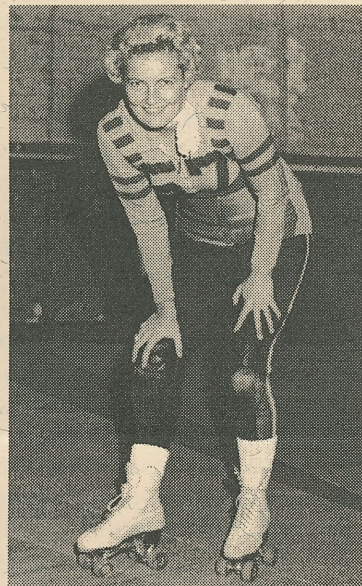
Don Ritchie, Charlotte Groves, and Sure-Grip International all donated various amounts of video and reel-to-reel films of past roller skating events.



Jimmy Cochimin donated photographs and patents of his new invention, Convertibleskate. This skate can be a quad skate or an in-line roller skate.



Karl Kish donated his father's badge from the 2nd annual RSROA convention held in Mineola, NY, 1939.



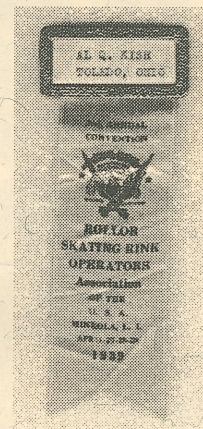
Jim Greene donated this photograph of Joan Weston, the roller derby star who died recently.

Jeff Walker, Director of Coaching Services for USA Roller Skating donated these three pins.

Advanced Certified Coach

Certified Coach

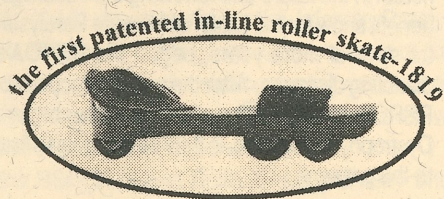
Registered Coach



New T-Shirts Available

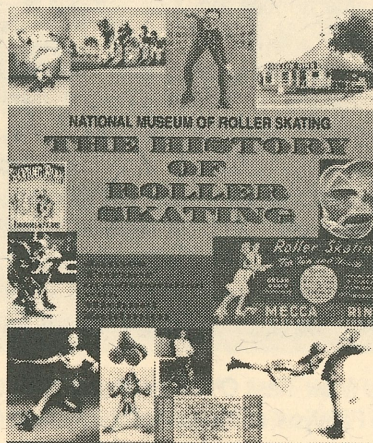
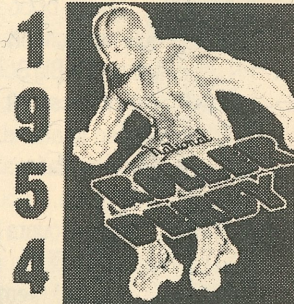
Both T-shirts are available in a light gray or white. Sizes available are Medium, Large, and X-Large. Order yours today!

A. First Patented In-Line Roller Skate, \$15



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING

B. 1954 Roller Derby Cover, \$15



C. The History of Roller Skating, \$15 for members or \$20 for non-members.

Name _____ clip & mail to museum

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Mark quantity of each next to letter: A _____ B _____ x \$15 each= _____

Mark quantity next to letter: C _____ x member (\$15)/ non (\$20)= _____

Please specify size and color. Make checks payable to National Museum of Roller Skating. Questions, or to order by phone call, (402) 483-7551.

Become a Member

Members' News



The NMRS would like to thank these members who have recently joined or renewed their membership.

- (\$500) BENEFACTORS**
 Dennis & Carole King
- (\$250) PATRONS**
 Southeastern Skate Supply
- (\$100) ASSOCIATE PATRONS**
 Douglas Breniser
 Elaine Minch
 John & Linda Miner
 Clifford Nazzaro
 Robert Travarca
- (\$50) DONORS**
 Mrs. Barbara Gallagher
 Sam Nieswizski
 Dolores Pillow
- (\$25-35) INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY**
 Richard Day
 Irene Ballard
 Neva Belle Banion
 Judy Breslau
 Mr. & Mrs. James Giardini
 James Haehl
 Sandra Hisaw
 Neolia Johnson
 Tony & Sandy Kissing
 Dorothy & Brad Leff

- Gwen & Paul McClintic
 Evelyn V. Mann
 Tim Mitchell
 Amnon & Jodi Morady
 Jeanne Noxon
 Rolf Schade
 Dale Sprague
 William Steigner
 Patrice Stewart
 Tulsa Skating Center

- Beverly & Bill Wann
 Virginia Wadleigh



MEMBERSHIP QUIZ RESULTS

¹When was roller skating introduced to the Pan Am Games?
Answer: 1979

²Who won the 1991 Men's & Women's Free Skating Championships at the Pan Am Games?
Answers: Men-Scott Cohen, Women-April Dayney

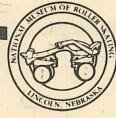


Winners: Sam Nieswizski & Cynthia Gates

NEXT MEMBERSHIP QUIZ

When was roller hockey a demonstration sport in the Olympics?
 The first three correct answers will win a new museum T-shirt, please specify size. Please mail your answer to the museum.

<p><input type="radio"/> New <input type="radio"/> Renew</p> <p>Check one:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Benefactor \$500</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Patron \$250</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Associate Patron \$100</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Donor \$50</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Individual/Family \$35</p> <p>Additional Contribution \$ _____</p> <p>Gift membership \$ _____</p> <p>Total Enclosed \$ _____</p> <p>Payment Method:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Check payable to National Museum of Roller Skating</p> <p><input type="radio"/> VISA <input type="radio"/> MasterCard</p> <p>_____</p> <p>card number expiration</p> <p>_____</p> <p>signature</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Member Form</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City, State, Zip _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gift Membership Form</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City, State, Zip _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you for joining!</p>
<p>Please clip and return to:</p> <p>National Museum of Roller Skating 4730 South Street P.O. Box 6579 Lincoln, Nebraska 68506 USA</p>	<p>The National Museum of Roller Skating is pleased to recognize contributors for their interest and philanthropy. The museum is recognized as a charitable institution. All donations are tax-deductible up to the amount permitted by law.</p>
<p>Questions, or to order by phone, call (402)483-7551. Benefits extend one year from join date. Please allow 4 weeks for processing. Membership includes a subscription to the member's newsletter, Historical Roller Skating Overview, 10% off Museum Store items, a membership card, and a copy of The History of Roller Skating.</p>	



A four wheel stilt skate from the 1950s. This skate was built by Lloyd Rich and used for many years in the Oaks Skating Rink in Portland, Oregon during skating performances.

Mission Statement

The National Museum of Roller Skating is the primary institution with responsibility to collect, preserve, research, and interpret artifacts, documents, and published materials relating to roller skating's heritage. Collection, preservation, research, and interpretation are interdependent functions and together they define the mission of the museum.



IS THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ROLLER SKATING IN YOUR WILL?

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

National Museum of Roller Skating
4730 South Street
PO Box 6579
Lincoln, Nebraska 68506-0579

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LINCOLN, NE
Permit No. 545