



Rolling Through Time

Official Newsletter of:

The National Museum of Roller Skating

4730 South Street, Lincoln, NE 68506

(402) 483-7551 ex. 16

 @rollersk8museum

Prepared by Peggy Young

Bi-Monthly

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The National Museum of Roller Skating is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in Lincoln, Nebraska. It is the only dedicated roller skating museum in the world. We are committed to the preservation of the history of roller skating. With over 50 display cases, the museum educates the public on all aspects of roller skating, which dates back to the first patented skate from 1819.

Museum Hours of Operation: Open 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday-Friday - closed Holidays. Group tours can be scheduled by calling 402) 483-7551, ext. 16

Roller Skating Rink Operators Association (RSROA) – In the

Beginning – RSROA founder and Secretary/Treasurer wrote “In 1937 roller skating in America was considered by a majority of the population as a disreputable sport and rinks were not well attended and few parents would allow their children to visit such places of amusement.” In our last few Museum newsletters we have provided the back-story on some of the founding fathers of the RSROA, formed in 1937 by 17 rink owners to promote roller skating business and sport in America.

We have found an early skating history on William H. Carpenter in a book authorized by the Western Skating Association in 1916, “Skaters History on Ice and Roller Skating”. With the information in print, it is an easy *assumption* that this is the same William H. Carpenter who helped to found the RSROA.

RSROA Founding Fathers

Frank Bacon, Philadelphia, PA
Victor 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 Riggie, Pontiac, MI
William F. Sefferino, Cincinnati, OH

William H. Carpenter

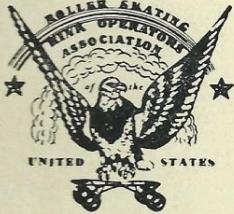
Known as “Billy” and Born in Lowell, Mass., 1891



Acknowledged by press and public the greatest exponent of fancy, figure and scientific skating. Billy learned to skate on ice as a mere youngster and became quite an expert at the age of 12. At this period roller skating became a craze and he turned to the rollers. His first position was as skate boy. His skating attracted the attention of Prof. H.T. Frenette, one of Canada’s greatest skaters, and under his instructions rapidly became the peer of the East. Fall of 1907 he toured the Eastern rinks with much success and was booked over the entire route the following season. Billy teamed with Jack Reilly of Providence in 1909 and they were known as Carpenter & Reilly, the “Yankee Clowns.” In 1910 they produced a new act, introducing acrobatic skating and played vaudeville. In 1911 Reilly quit and Billy took the management of Elm rink in New Bedford, Mass. January, 1912, he was again playing rinks until Fred Muree of the Select rink, Augusta, Maine, secured him to manage his rink. October of same year he took the management of Rollerway rink, Farmington Maine. He promoted and operated rinks with success until again taking up skating in 1915. November, 1915, he booked for 20 weeks with the Helen Carlos Trio. April, 1916, he took the management of the De Luxe summer rink at Riverside Park, Springfield, Mass. He is open to meet any skater who doubts his right to the title of Champion figure, fancy and scientific skater of the world.

Continuing on with the Impressive Rink Operations of the Arena Gardens, Detroit, Michigan. A few pages from the 1939-1940 yearbook of the Arena Garden's Roller Skating Club of Detroit, provides insight into its professional staff, skating clubs, building features, organist, and even its refreshment counter. I hope you find them enjoyable.

The Arena Gardens,
its management and
affiliated clubs,



are members of the
Roller Skating Rink
Operators Association
of the United States



The Arena Gardens quickly attained a legendary status after it opened in 1935. While admired for being one of the largest rinks in the country, the Arena Gardens also gained fame for its management, embodied by general manager **Fred Martin**, one of the vanguard rink operators who worked to clean up the image of roller rinks. From 1935 until it closed in 1953, the Arena Gardens captured the loyalty of both the people of Detroit and of the thousands of Americans who visited. This celebrated roller rink was completely designed and organized around providing roller skaters with a wholesome and enjoyable experience.



During the early 1930s, **Adam Weissmuller**, a former wrestler and sports enthusiast, invested heavily in an abandoned ice hockey rink. Following an accident that forced him to retire from wrestling, Weissmuller turned to sports promotion and acquired the abandoned ice hockey rink in the early 1930s to hold wrestling meets. Cluttered with old benches and refuse, Weissmuller cleaned and restored the building to turn it into a profitable wrestling center. His careful, imaginative promoting proved lucrative, and he quickly expanded the Arena Gardens to include other sports as well, renting the building to boxing promoters.

Not content with spectator sports and wanting to keep the building open throughout the week as well as tap into the popularity of roller skating, Weissmuller visualized using the large Arena Gardens as a roller rink.

Weissmuller called upon the general manager of Chicago's popular **White City Rink, Fred Martin**, for advice on establishing his building as a roller rink. Martin recalled meeting with Weissmuller at Trafton's Restaurant in Detroit, and "over a good bowl of pea soup," they negotiated a transaction that, according to Martin, resulted in "one of the foremost, finest, largest and most modern rinks in the United States." The letter that follows refers to the meeting between Fred Martin and Adam Weissmuller.

OUR \$50,000 BOWL OF SOUP

by *Fred A Martin*

ONE early fall day in the year 1935 while sitting at my office desk at White City, Chicago, I received a phone call from a very good friend of mine, Dick Axman, who at that time was writing stories for various newspapers and as a sideline doing publicity work for Jack Dempsey. Dick told me that he had with him a Mr. Adam Weissmuller from Detroit who had the Arena Gardens there and wanted to know what could be done with it to keep it open every night in the week instead of just Mondays as had been the custom, for the late Mr. Weissmuller, being interested in wrestling enterprises, used only Monday nights. For some years the only successful enterprise to be operated continuously was wrestling.



Anyway, Dick asked me to come downtown and meet Mr. Weissmuller and, like most men in the business world, we discussed our work while eating. As I remember clearly, I met the gentleman at Trafton's. I must say that there was something about him that impressed me very

much at our first meeting. He did not appear to be the type to go into great detail or paint great pictures of promise. He simply stated that he had the Arena Gardens and wanted to know if I thought that roller skating might "go." Before deciding anything we went to Thompson's Restaurant and over a good bowl of "pea soup" we finished negotiating a transaction which resulted in one of the foremost, finest, largest and most modern rinks in the United States.

In doing this, Dear Skater, don't think for a moment that it was all a bed of ROSES, for many of you may still recall the difficulties and hardships of the first season in an endeavor to establish a clean-cut method of operation, policy of management so that parents as well as the skaters would approve of the entertainment provided by the Arena Gardens, to which end some \$50,000 worth of improvements were made.

In looking back the few years since we started skating at the Arena, we sometimes wonder how so much has been accomplished in such a short while, for at this particular time the ARENA GARDENS ROLLER SKATING CLUB OF DETROIT is known all over the world as one of the finest.

In closing, I want to thank every one of you who started with me in 1935 and who, like myself, had visions of a much better place to enjoy life as a skater, and thanks to a man who, not knowing what this was all about, was not afraid to take a chance—the late ADAM WEISSMULLER.

Arena Gardens Weekly Program

Monday
WRESTLING THE YEAR ROUND.

Tuesday
REGULAR SKATING, 8:00 P. M.

Wednesday
SKATING. 8 till 11:30 p. m. Full Musical Program. Dance Class 7 to 8 p. m., no extra charges. 1 till 6 p. m. Club Practice.

Thursday
SKATING. Matinee 2 till 4:30—Excellent time for beginners. Evening

8 till 11:30. Full Musical Program. Dance Class 7 till 8, no extra charges. 6 till 7 D.F.S. Club Practice.

Friday
SKATING. Matinee 2 till 4:30—Excellent time for beginners. Evening 8 till 11:30. Full Musical Program. 6 till 7:45 D.F.S. Club Session. Figure and Dance.

Saturday
SKATING. Morning 10:30 till 12. Juvenile Advanced Skating School. Miss Marjorie Martin, Bronze Medalist,

teacher. Matinee 2 till 4:30, Children's Special Session, with Full Musical Program of entertainment. 5:30 till 7:30 D.F.S. Club Practice. Evening 8 till Midnite. Full Musical Program.

Sunday
SKATING. 10 till 12 a. m. D.F.S. Club Session, Figures and Dancing. Semi-Private Skate Dancing Class, 1 till 2 p. m., small fee additional to matinee skating price. Matinee 2 till 4:30, Full Musical Program. Evening 8 till 11:30, Full Musical Program.

Matinees

Guests	30c
Club Members	25c
Children	20c
Saturday Matinee—Children	15c
Saturday Matinee—Children's Club	10c

Price Schedule

Evenings

Club Members ALWAYS	40c
Guests	50c

Special Events (Masquerades, Etc.)

Guests	60c
Guests—New Year's Eve	75c

The Professionals and Instruction



R. D. Martin, Miss Marjorie Martin, Miss Madeline Eastland, Miss Mildred Brown, Miss Luella Uhley, Robert Burton, Vlady Regentik, George Brett, Joseph Parchem, Earl (Mickey) Dunn, Jesse Bell.

SINCE the issuance of the last Year Book (November 1939) a most notable improvement has taken place within the Professional Staff at the Arena Gardens. While they were all interested in figure skating and skate dancing previously the professionals had not taken sufficient time for the personal practice so very necessary to obtain high proficiency.

Yes, they have gone ahead, and so well that they are at present making another very good name for our club and rink.

Ladies and gentlemen, it requires more than just common personality and conduct to work at being a "Pro." The individual must have sufficient patience and practice, and exert that same patience in the direction of private instruction lessons where a given amount of time is devoted to the improvement of a skater (usually a beginner or undeveloped) and on some occasions are most difficult to instruct. Very few skaters cannot learn or improve their skating, but almost all have quite a bit of difficulty in learning correct methods of skating.

The Professional must strive to produce good skaters in fast order. He cannot hold back or expect a skater to learn faster than he can readily absorb the material being passed along to him.

It is another very important trait to be cheerful. When working with large or small groups we have found that

they will learn more readily when kept in a pleasant frame of mind.

The classes here at the Arena are becoming larger and larger right along, which makes our problem more difficult as we develop. The skater primarily attends the rink for amusement. While obtaining this amusement they are also pleasantly given a reasonably thorough instruction in advanced and modern skating.

Getting back to the private lessons, I again must remind everyone that they have not been priced excessively high here. Most of the advanced skaters can see the advisability of taking an occasional lesson for there is no skater so good or efficient that he can see and correct every one of his own faults. We do not mean by this, that you should rush out, select the nearest professional and take a string of lessons. We do mean that a half hour lesson once monthly skated with a professional suited to your advancement will bring you greater success and incidentally more pleasure in your skating.

You will find these "Profs" pretty well willing to give you a pointer here and there when you ask them during classes, and for that matter, even during session. They enjoy skating, like to dance, and are even beginning to get the feel of skating figures. Remember that they skate many hours every day, because they have selected the sport that they love so well as their "Profession."

The Staff That Serves You at Arena Gardens



(Back row, left to right) Eddy Martin, Arthur O'Neil, Vlady Regentik, Miss Madeline Eastland, Joseph Parchem, Miss Mildred Brown, Earl (Mickey) Dunn, Wm. S. Wilson, Miss Luella Uhley, Robert Burton, Miss Marjorie Martin, George Brett, Robert Reid, Milton Hibbs.
(Front row, left to right) James Lee, Cornell Gordon, D. M. Gray, Bryce Hauke, Jesse Bell, Miss Helen Wolds, R. D. Martin, Fred A. Martin, Mrs. Vera Wilson, Russell Bice, Clarence Gerity, Mrs. Elizabeth La Rose, Earl King, Herman Thompson.
(Not photographed) Mrs. Eleanor King, M. J. (Mac) Wingate.

The 1939 National Figure Skating Meet



(Reading in the usual manner) William Best, Eldora Andrews, William Opatrny, Dorothy Kolb, Lloyd Young, Virginia Mount, Walter Stokosa, Lois Goeller, Jane Holcombe, Lillian Schroeder, Hugo Laine, Eloise Burrows, Margo Aldred, Fred Martin.

THE ancient proverb about "he who works" has been brought home to the Detroit skaters in particular this year. With many undertakings all either in practice or study the Detroit Figure Skating Club was able to win all National Blue Ribbons during 1939. Walter Stokosa winning the Senior Men's Championship by a clear majority skated very well. Jane Holcombe relying on the strength of her figures received the highest

marks in excellence. The Pair Champions, Eldora Andrews and William Best, gave a very lovely program of confidence and thrilling action.

This being the first R.S.R.O.A. recognized and sanctioned National Figure Championship Meet, it gave all skaters a clearer picture of the progress that can be attained under such sponsorship. We are now looking forward to 1940.

The Skate Room

ALMOST everyone attending the Arena Gardens Rink passes the window where these three employees are standing. The skate room must cater to those who do and those who do not own their own skates. The supply of "house skates" require constant attention to keep them in good rolling order while the skate owners request all sorts of services ranging from the oiling of wheels to riveting new skates to boots. Shown in this illustration are EARL KING, MILTON HIBBS and EDDY MARTIN.





KLUB

K A R N I V A L

THAT word has been on the mind of every skater that patronizes the Arena. So popular has this presentation been in the past, everyone looks forward to the next presentation—WHEN WILL THE NEXT CARNIVAL TAKE PLACE? Three Karnivals have been presented so far: two in '38, one in '39 and the Club is

now preparing for its next grand Show to take place in the Spring of 1940. These presentations give the parents and friends an opportunity of seeing the remarkable improvement and advancement of the skater and assists the Detroit Figure Skating Club in its progress and achievements.

Check Room Service

ORDINARILY when anyone mentions the word Check Room, it does not signify anything outside of regular routine service. That might be correct in places such as rinks where they do not pay much attention to the way patrons dress or what they do, but to the patron Club Members of the Arena it means a great deal, BECAUSE, a skater, before going on the floor, must pass a thorough dress observation by the attendant.

Now this may sound a bit stringent to anyone not accustomed to such, however, the regulations of dress are in reality not bad. The coat may be removed providing the man is attired in unobtrusively colored shirt and tie. Suspenders, sweaters, jackets and uniforms of any kind are not permissible on the floor. Ladies are permitted to skate in choice of dress providing the skirt reaches to the knees. Slacks, riding breeches, beach pajamas, etc., are not permissible.

Such service requires attendants especially trained so that they may explain rules to you without offense and show you how much nicer it is when everyone dresses neatly. That is one of the main reasons for Arena's popularity.



Robert Reid, Bryce Hauke, Clarence Gerity, Arthur O'Neil



Refreshments?

Yes, indeed. The Arena can boast another good service. The confections served are the best that can be purchased at any price, and what is more, you receive heaping good measure for your money.

Our patronage is our business barometer. It has steadily climbed throughout our pleasant contact with you and you. May we serve you for your every want during your intermission rests?

Pause here and refresh yourself!

Musician's CORNER

YES, Music is one of the most important items in rink management, and yet the most neglected in many rinks. It so happens that just a few years ago when the Arena Gardens first opened for skating, everyone was so busy getting things done and in tip-top shape for the opening that the matter of an organist had not been given consideration. Opening night came along, and there was nothing else to do but to call the office of the American Federation of Musicians and ask them if they knew any organist that might do for skating. Well, to make a short story long, and not having given consideration to the fact that the theatres had let go most all organists due to sound having been installed, we were almost swamped, so we started trying one at a time, and when we look back at those days we almost shiver and truly sympathize with the skater who had to put up with such, for we fully do not blame the men who tried to play for skating and did their very best, but we must also face the fact that not every one is adapted to skating music and therefore the first two weeks were terrific, until one day came a quiet sort of fellow who asked to try the organ, saying that he had been sent over by the A. F. of M.

Well, we hardly paid attention to him but told him to go ahead and try it. Just a few minutes passed on before we found that all of us were swinging along to a perfect rhythm and before ten minutes had gone by we knew that we had found THE ORGANIST to fit, and were happy to present to our skaters RUSSELL BICE.

There is no need of telling you who Russell is, for he is well-known by everyone for his very genial disposition and willingness to please every one at all times. Popular? Well I should say, the skaters are thrilled by his music, and after all, why shouldn't they be, he plays music that has made Detroit skaters National Champions?

The Editor asked Russell where he played before coming to the Arena. The answer was, RKO Downtown Theatre five years, and just before the Arena, he was



RUSSELL BICE

master of the keys at the Ramona Theatre. Asking him which he likes best, he says, "DON'T EVER MENTION THEATRE TO ME, I get the chills." Why, Russell? "The Arena atmosphere, the people I come in contact with, the pep of the skaters, in fact, everything makes me hope that I can remain at the Arena forever." And that goes for us, too, Russell. FOREVER!

"CQ" Calling W8LSF -- Gone, But Not Forgotten!

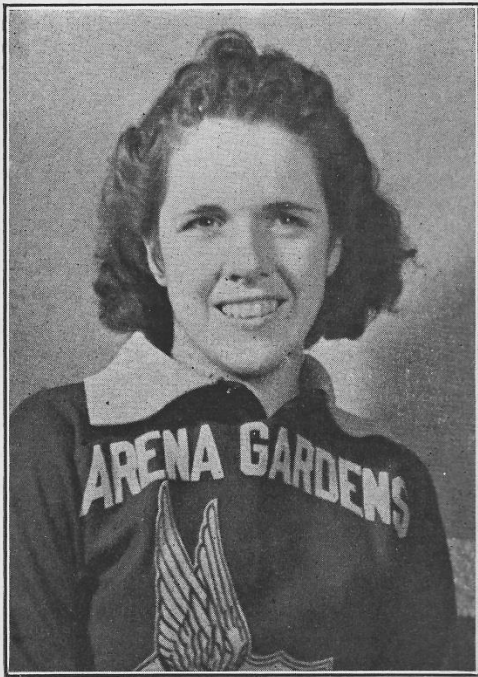
SINCE the beginning of our annual publications we have been entertained by and about our Roller Skating Hams through a column familiar to all of us as "Calling CQ." "CQ" in Ham language pertains to anyone listening in. Now all of us listening in are calling Bobby Kolb, the author of that column. (Funny what love can do.)

Bobby is a "Spark" Ham, his sense of humor was a "Bang" to anyone crazy enough to read his column (none

of us ever missed it). His enthusiasm for skating was equal to his enthusiasm for his radio work—for perfect examples, read his articles in the publications of yesteryear.

Yes, Bobby IS a "Spark" Ham, but now that spark has a red-headed YL (will it be XYL?) on the receiving end, and we regret to announce that we seldom see him skating anymore. We wish him lots of luck but insist we all miss his articles signed by that familiar

73 (so long) 88 (love and kisses).



MISS VERNA PICTON

This Racing Bug

By VERNA PICTON

Editor's Note: Miss Picton started skating at Arena Gardens September 5, 1936, her first time on skates. She was City, County and State Speed Champion, 1937; holds Michigan State Speed Championship, 1938; Third Place National, 1938.

THERE definitely is such a thing as a "Racing Bug," and if it bites you it is as much in your blood as any ailment could be.

My first interest in racing was aroused by the Roller Derby held at Arena Gardens way back in 1936, and at that time I decided to take up racing seriously. We worked out on Sunday mornings at first, under the coaching of Bob Martin. Later with Jess Bell in charge we were paced by Amos Bell and Charlie McNeil, both old-time racers who have each held the Michigan State Championship. Today Amos is considered one of the best starting officials in 25 years.

The first National Championship was held at Arena Gardens in April of 1937. The boys in Detroit were certain they had the races cinched, but failed to realize that others had been training, too. Lloyd Christopher of St. Louis took National honors in speed, with our showing being Eddie Theiner, second, Norm McGinnis who tied for third with Vasselli of Newark, N. J., and Chudy of Chicago.

Racing is really coming into its own now. An active racing club entirely separate from other units is working out every Tuesday and every other Thursday night. This club, known as the Detroit Speed Skating Club, is under the supervision of Jess Bell, and is supported by about thirty speed skaters representing several rinks as well as Arena.

The matter of speed tests with bronze and silver medals for profi-

ciency has created much interest, but to those who would like to take these tests, let me set forth a bit of discouragement.

It is a recognized fact that you cannot simply decide to take your bronze speed test, go out there and skate a mile (twelve laps at the Arena), receive your bronze medal, and say that's that! Indeed not. Racing as well as other branches of the sport must be studied (and practiced). You must be physically fit. Training rules correspond with any of those set up for any strenuous sport. You must learn to make quick get-aways. Skaters at the start of a race act just like horses at the barrier, usually highly nervous and exciteable. It is a real trick to try to be first out without "jumping the gun!" Once the race is started, passing must be done on the straight-away. No passing on the corners which are taken wide at first and sprinted around the last part. This is the place where speed is picked up!

Those corners are the danger points. Spills happen quickly and experience will soon teach you to take a spill rather than run into the side rails which would discourage all but the "faithful." "Fight for dear old Glory, but don't hit the rail"—or the other fellow. Any contact with another skater is considered a foul and disqualifies you in that race. Blocking is also considered a foul in racing.

Now, if any of you skaters still think that you would like to take those speed tests, or come out for racing, and still believe you can take these after-session workouts just because a "Bug" bit you, too, I'll be seeing you personally. I'm looking forward to those races for National Speed Championship of 1940. S'long till then.



Detroit Speed Skating Club takes a fast corner in workout. Leading is one of the Club Pro's, Curley Farmer, followed by Harry Lindberg, Chester Hatcher, Bob Thomas, Gene Ganz and Alfred Walkley.

**Featured Sport Photo
East Market Street Gardens
Amateur & Professional Skaters
Akron, Ohio - February 4, 1920**



As Members of the National Museum of Roller Skating, your Support is Essential. Thank you for enabling the preservation of the rich history of the sport, business and recreation of roller skating.

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Thank you to the following:

- **New and Renewing Members:** Robert & Dianne Braun, Everett Skate Deck, Edwina & Roger Hansen, Bill & Tanya Hoefler, Dustin Roux
- **Memorial Tributes**-From Judith Link, Young's Skating Center, in memory of Glenn Ramsey, Sr.
- **Donations** - Roseanne Carter, Harry Walker

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			Jerry & Barbara Shores	St. Joseph	MO
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