

February 2019

Rolling Thru Time
Newsletter

The National Museum of Roller Skating



Visit our Website

Lincoln's Graduate Hotel Celebrates Skating Culture





Lincoln's Graduate Hotel has this wall display at Lincoln's Pinnacle Bank Arena. It reads: "Graduate Lincoln's hotel guest room lamps are mounted on vintage roller skate molds, a nod to the National Museum of Roller Skating in Lincoln, N.E." Also pictured is an example of the lamp with a skate as its base, which is used throughout the hotel. One was donated to the NMRS by the hotel.

Museum News

Kim Wall, NMRS president, recently sent a museum update to the board. Also, Eric Steele, USA Roller Sports executive director, sent a note. Here are some of the highlights:

- The new website should be up in a couple of months with Bill Hoefler's committee working on it with Trustworkz.
- On Wall's trip to the Elmhurst History Museum in Chicago, he purchased two electronic displays that the museum had created for its recent skating exhibit, which he hopes to take on the road to the RSA convention. The Elmhurst also donated some displays.
- Rhonda Cann has been working to attract groups outside the skating industry to the museum, and has been sprucing up the showcases.
- New improvements to the museum store have occurred. With the new website, the hope is for even better sales.
- A new program to track the museum's inventory will be purchased.
- The museum is switching to Quickbooks to do its accounting.

- With the help of Michael Jacques, a CD was purchased for some of the museum's funds.
- Wall gave great praise to the USA Roller Sports' staff, especially Eric Steele and Peggy Young. Steele "has been a great help and we could not make the progress we are making without him," said Wall.
- Steele has bought an iPad and chip card reader from Square for the museum. He also purchased a desktop scanner. He searched and was able to find a scanner with a large surface to better facilitate the museum's needs. Steele said "I think both are really solid investments for the museum and you will see the results in the sales of your now growing store, significantly better inventory management of product, direct deposits back into your accounts...you have two very nice mobile tools to assist in pictures, scanning, and social media. It's a good step for the museum for sure!"

Old Speed Skater's Scrapbook Found

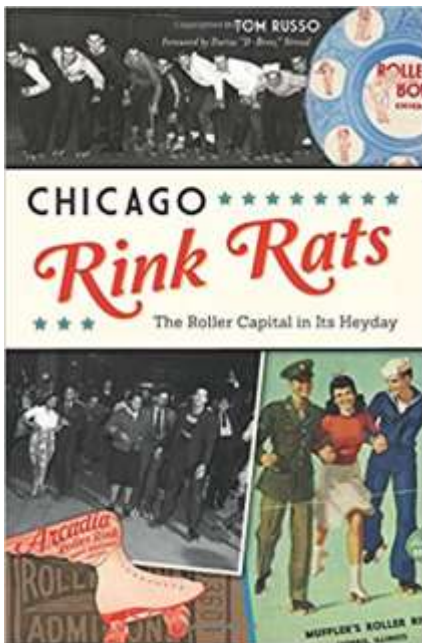


Fred Marshall's scrapbook was recently donated to the museum. Marshall was a speed skater in the San Francisco area between 1908-1914. This scrapbook was recently sent to the museum by Michael Cartmell of San Francisco. He discovered the book decades ago in a second-hand store. The scrapbook is fragile so it was opened for only one photo to be taken. How significant is this scrapbook, only more research will determine.

"Chicago Rink Rats" Wins Award



Chicago Rink Rats The Roller Capital in Its Heyday won First Place in the 2019 Feathered Quill Book Awards Program in the Historical category. The book by Tom Russo was published in 2017 by The History Press. It's about the Golden Age of Roller Skating in Chicago and around the country during the 1940s.



Some of the judges' comments about the book:

"I didn't expect to enjoy this book but I was amazed how pulled into the subject I was – kudos for that!"

"Editing – very clean, even photos are placed perfectly."

"Covers front/back get perfect scores – great historical photos that add to the time in history perfectly."

"The research for this book was well done. The author did his job perfectly and he should be applauded."

Bob Bollinger's Oral History

Right: photo of the NMRS founding trustees. Bob Bollinger is third from the right, next to James Turner, second from the right.



"Bob was a friend and colleague at the museum board meetings in the 1970s and 1980s. He was very supportive of the museum idea when George Pickard, Chester Fried, Dick Young and I were trying to get things started. He helped out the museum financially and donated the oak showcases, helped to obtain special artifacts for the museum, and sold raffle tickets at the RSA convention to support the museum. He felt that the museum was an important thing to do to help preserve the history of our sport. Bob's love of skating and support of the museum will be missed."

-James Turner, a NMRS founding trustee

The following are highlights of a 4-page written transcript of an oral interview with Bob Bollinger recorded on Feb. 17, 2001, by the Indiana University Oral History Research Center, conducted by Robin Henry. The original tape and final transcript are kept on file in the university's archives. These highlights are not necessarily presented in the order in which the information appeared in the interview.

Timeline of Life Events

His dad (Edward H. Bollinger) started working at Oaks Park in 1904. (He was an electrician who helped build the park. He eventually became park superintendent before buying the 44-acre park in 1943, with Bob's help.) Oaks Park opened in May, 1905. It has the oldest continuously operating roller skating rink in the United States.

He was born in 1909 in Portland, Oregon.

His dad was able to buy the operating company in 1925.

He became rink manager at Oaks Park in 1925 at age 16.

His dad passed away in 1949. He bought the park from his stepmom.

RSROA and Museum Involvement

He became involved in the RSROA through the invitation of Pop Brown and Weston Betts who were officers from the Seattle area.

He greatly valued the experience being part of the RSROA by being able to talk with others about roller skating.

He was a member of the first RSROA Skate Dance Committee.

He held several RSROA offices, including Chairman of the Finance Committee.

He was president of the RSROA (1968-69) when it moved from Detroit to Lincoln.

He was a NMRS founding trustee. He patterned the Oaks Park museum after the national museum.

Memories and Legacy

His greatest accomplishment was putting the Association (RSROA) in the black. His most significant contribution was providing a safe place for families to skate and educate them about the theatre pipe organ. "The process of educating the skater to dance music-mainly organ-seemed to be successful..." Also, he created a private, non-profit organization to perpetuate Oaks Park and to keep the rink open after his passing.

His favorite memory/experience was hosting Nationals in Portland in 1963, the first time it was held in the West. During the event, skates and costumes were stolen from some parked cars. He and The Oaks Club came to the rescue by replacing costumes, and he was able to replace equipment through the Northwest Chicago Skate Agency that was located at the park.

Role models in the industry

Asked to name the five individuals who had the most influence on the development of roller skating:

Vic Brown: "He was a little dinosaur and power house that pushed and enlarged the Association to cover the entire United States."

"Fred Bergin was a musician, and he made great strides toward arranging the music to work with the skaters so they could skate to it."

Fred Martin: "He was the work horse behind the Association."

Chuck Cahill: "He guided the Association into a group effort and helped it grow to about one thousand members."

James Plimpton: "He was the man who invented the modern-day quad skate. Without him, why, we wouldn't have anything."

Opinion on the sport

Asked about the most influential event that significantly affected the state of roller skating, he talked about the two roller skating organizations and how they came together in the 1970s.

Asked what is the greatest asset of roller skating, he said "giving families a place where they can enjoy a sport together." He added that he felt a duty to educate skaters by providing demonstrations to the general public by the more skilled skaters. "I catered to the session skater as they were the ones I could depend on to return year after year and bring their children and their children's children, etc."

Asked what future do you foresee for roller skating, he said "The sad loss of appreciation of organ music and the art of session skating."

(Bob Bollinger passed on Oct. 30, 2004, at the age of 94.)

"I can only say about Mr. Bollinger, what a wonderful human being. He was a quiet, understanding polite gentleman to all. His quality of being so giving of his time and effort to be a part of the organizing of the Museum. His foresight of the need of a National Roller Skating Museum, that he worked graciously with his peers to make this happen for the world of Roller Skating.

"So few remain today that remember Bob and his effort to sell those raffle tickets for the Museum. He would sit hours at a time at a table in front of the seminar rooms at the annual RSA Convention, greeting and selling the tickets to RSA members. He made it fun and interesting, and appreciated each person that purchased them.

One time, my friend, rink operator Dorothy McDonald, and I were working an Educational Conference for the RSA in Portland, Oregon, Bob's hometown of course. He insisted on taking us to the airport for our return to our homes, with an early flight leaving at 6 a.m. He was standing in our hotel lobby at 5 a.m. the next morning with a box of chocolates for each of us to drive us to the airport. What a gracious gentleman!!!

I am so glad that both my son, Harry and daughter, Nellie had the opportunity to know him."

-Annelle Anderson, NMRS museum trustee and past president



Left: Photo of Bob Bollinger drawing raffle winners at a RSA convention in the 1990s. On the far left is Mills Lynn next to Nellie Anderson Lillie. All three individuals have been top sellers of museum raffle tickets over the years.

"Gosh, I don't even know where to begin with Mr. Bollinger. Even before becoming a Trustee, Mr Bollinger basically challenged me to selling raffle tickets. Now I knew I could never beat him but I sure loved the challenge. Thinking of

people like Mr. Bollinger quickly reminds me of the massive shoes we have to fill to honor our history while looking toward the future. That group of trustees I was first

exposed to....Mr. Bollinger, Mills Lynn, Burt Anselmi and Ed Young were some of the most encouraging and brilliant people I have ever come across. I consider myself very lucky!"

-Nellie Anderson Lillie, NMRS vice president



Editor's Note - Alan Bacon

As I drove through the entrance of Oaks Park on a beautiful Sunday last fall, I first passed a roller coaster. I recalled the free packet of tickets I was given to explore the amusement park when my father was buying skates at the Chicago skate distributorship located at the park in the '60s.

As I was walking up to the Oaks Park Skating Rink's entrance, nostalgic sounds emanated from the rink. This is the only roller skating rink left in the Pacific Northwest where one can skate to live organ music, a Wurlitzer theater pipe organ at that.

Oaks Park

Oaks Park is one of 11 trolley parks still in operation in the United States. They were built in the early 1900s by transportation companies to enhance ridership on weekends. The rink, part of the amusement park, has the only Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ in use today in a roller skating rink. This one instrument is an orchestra in itself, with enhanced sounds made for silent movie theaters, different from a church pipe organ.



The rink's Wurlitzer organ has 1500 pipes. There are only two other organs like it. It was built in 1926 and was originally used at Portland's Broadway Theatre. It was installed at Oaks Park in 1955. It's had some improvements, but is essentially the original organ. But this wasn't the rink's first theatre pipe organ. In 1922, the rink installed a William Wood theatre pipe organ, perhaps the first roller skating rink in the United States with such an organ.

Many regional theatre organ societies exist in the U.S. One is called the Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society (PSTOS) www.pstos.org. Under the "Northwest Theatre Organ History" tab, there is a tab labeled "Skating Rinks." You can go there and explore the history of theatre pipe organs in 17 roller skating rinks in Washington and Oregon.



When talkie movies came about in the late 1920s, many theatre pipe organs were sold cheaply, and there existed many skilled unemployed organists. Roller skating rinks certainly benefited from this historical phenomenon.



The Oaks has a 100' by 200' rotunda floor.



One of the many pictures displayed at The Oaks highlighting their past annual skating shows.





The Oaks has the following caption to this photo displayed in the rink.

An Evening at The Oaks

Skating crowd on main floor with Floor Guards left Mr. Robert Bollinger on the right Mr. Edward H. Bollinger. You can recognize them by their "White Hats" circa 1928. Notice the "Lattice Ceiling."



Located next to the Willamette River, Oaks Park has been flooded three times. After the first time in 1948, pictured here, the new skating floor was constructed with iron barrels, which allowed the floor to be cut loose and saved it in the floods of 1964 and 1996.



In a showcase by the front door are some of the skating artifacts that Bob Bollinger collected over the years.

STAY CONNECTED

The National Museum of Roller Skating | (402) 483-7551 extension 16 |
directorcurator@rollerskatingmuseum.com
www.rollerskatingmuseum.com



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 displays cases, the museum educates the public on all aspects of roller skating, which dates back to the first patented skate from 1819.

Copyright: *Rolling Thru Time* is published throughout the year by the National Museum of Roller Skating. Copyright 2018 by the NMRS. Written permission from the museum is required for reproduction of any part of this publication. *Rolling Thru Time* welcomes stories, art and photo contributions. These works selected for publication may be edited to conform to size and other requirements. Opinions expressed by the authors are not necessarily those of the museum. Correspondence concerning articles is welcomed.
Statement of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone.

Officers and Trustees:

President: Kim Wall; Vice President: Nellie Anderson Lillie; Treasurer: Alan Bacon; Secretary: Peggy Young
Other Trustees: Annelle Anderson, past president; Dianne Braun, Danny Brown, Dominic Cangelosi, Charlene Conway, Howard "Bud" Engle, Bill Hoefler, Ed Hughes, Michael Jacques, Judith Young Link, Jim Link, Linda Miner, and Randy Ray.
Writer/Editor: Alan Bacon; Copy Editor: Joy Bacon; Graphic Designer: Kelsey Bacon

National Museum Rollerskating | 4730 South St, Lincoln, NE 68506 www.rollerskatingmuseum.com

[Unsubscribe pyoung@usarollersports.org](mailto:pyoung@usarollersports.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by alan.r.bacon@gmail.com in collaboration with

