

ROLLING

along

By Chester Fried

Long-time roller skating enthusiast Chester Fried is the vice president and a founder of the The National Museum of Roller Skating. We count on him at the Rinksideer to help keep readers current.

RSA Convention & Trade Show: Seventy-four years strong

Wow! The 74th annual Roller Skating Association International Convention and Trade Show was the largest in years. One hundred and ten exhibitors were on hand to show their latest items. This was the place to be to know what's hot in our sport. The overall feeling of rink operators and skate suppliers is that another boom is just around the corner.

At the entrance to the trade show, Celebration Foods offered samples of their ice-cream cakes. One of the new items was Kevin Bonner's Clean Skates machine that washes clean your roller skate wheels. It's the best wheel washer I've ever seen. It has a spinning brush disc on top that delivers his Clean Skates cleaner. Just place the skates upright on the top disc and turn it on. The wheels are cleaned in a quick and safe manner. Loretta Meegan Curran, owner of Skate Reflections rink in Kissimmee, Fla., purchased it right away for her rental skate wheels and club skaters.

Be it risk management, legal or insurance, the best minds were in attendance. The latest boots, skates, wheels and accessories like never before were laid out for inspection and sale. Roller Skating's treasure Bill Carlson of U-Profit Business Success delivered an up-beat talk. He informed us of new skating rinks opening all over the world. He should know! Many of the investors building rinks contact him for advice.

Here's a sample of a few of the international rinks being built or opening soon. One new rink in Brazil, seven new rinks in England, one new rink in Ghana, one in Bulgaria, six rinks in Malasia - some of them are in malls. Also, 15 new rinks in China - most of them in its capitol, Beijing - one in Dearborne, South Africa, and one in Bombay, India. They also have hundreds of outside skating sport clubs, as they call them in India.

Rinks in the U.S.A are re-opening as well: One in Temple, Texas, one in Pennsylvania, another in Georgia, and two in Fairfield, California and Long Beach, plus one new rink in Metuchen, N.J. It's for Roller Hockey. That's good news!

Roller Deby is growing by leaps and bounds. I especially liked Riedell's catalog with over 46 wheels just for the derby skaters. The art deco artwork of skaters was top notch.

The event ended with the President's

Dinner and Museum Raffle drawing. This year's winner was Bob Anderson, husband of Annelle. They own Hurst Skateland in Texas. Bob won the grand prize of \$5,000.

Next year will be the 75th. "Diamond" Anniversary Convention. It will be held in my favorite Las Vegas Hotel, The Rio. It's right behind Caesars Palace.

A big Thank You goes to the RSA crew who worked at the check-in counter. They were always there to help in any way possible. Thanks girls!

RSA History Lesson

Seventeen rink operators formed the R.S.R.O.A. at the Arena Gardens rink in Detroit, Mich., in 1937. They were running the first National Speed Skating Contest at Fred Martin's rink. After the contest the operators met at the Casa Loma Restaurant. Fred Martin was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Newark N.J. rink owner Vic Brown was elected President.

The group each donated \$1. A single drawer in Fred Martin's desk became the first R.S.R.O.A. Office. They intended to promote roller skating business and to act as a governing body for the artistic session skaters. They believed that to have a successful sport it must be a successful business.

Museum releases new roller skating book

The National Museum of Roller Skating has a new copy of a reprinted book from 1916.

Its title is "Skaters History on Ice and Roller Skating." The pictures, showing skaters from the early 20th Century, are very good. You will see 133 roller skaters and rinks, 27 early skate advertisements, 164 ice pictures, plus much more. The book is \$15 plus a dollar or two for postage.

Contact the National Museum of Roller Skating in Lincoln, Nebraska at 402-483-7551.

Millie Wilkins leaves behind a roller skating legacy

Millie Wilkins, my first pro, has passed on at the age of 97. Millie and her husband Clifford "Satch" Wilkins were inducted into the Hall of Fame at the 1991 Nationals held in Philadelphia, Pa. Satch died in 1960.

They both started skating and then teaching at the famed Mineola Roller Rink in New York. Satch put on his skates in 1933 when the rink opened. He soon met Millie

Hall. They both became first rate skaters. Satch and Millie were both floor guards - a very important job at that time. Soon they began to teach lessons at Mineola in 1936. They also gave exhibitions and organized large scale dance classes.

They were married in 1939. Soon after, the Queens Roller Rink opened in Elmhurst, Queens. They built the Queens club up as one of the best in the country. Satch was the Dean of the Society of Skating Teachers of America.

Millie and Satch wrote a dance in the 1940s. It was named The Queens Bolero, after their home rink. It was featured at the two skating shows in Madison Square Garden, N.Y., in the 1940s. It's a hard dance to skate, but back then everybody tried the harder dances.

At Queens they developed skating stars such as Norman Latin, Pat Carroll, Billy Van Wagner, Charlie Wahlig, and many other National Champions. I could fill an entire page with all the top skaters they developed over the years: Betty Klein, Henry Abrami, Lorraine Coney Kennedy, Carol Smola, Evelyn Bidderman, Jeanne Keuster - to name just a few.

They specialized in Singles, Paris and Fours skating. Under the Wilkins' instruction, Kenny Trotter and Ruth Heeseman captured the Senior Paris Title at Nationals in 1957 and '58, and Worlds in 1959 in New Zealand. They also won Senior Fours in 1959 with partners Ed Kline and Lillian Manzo.

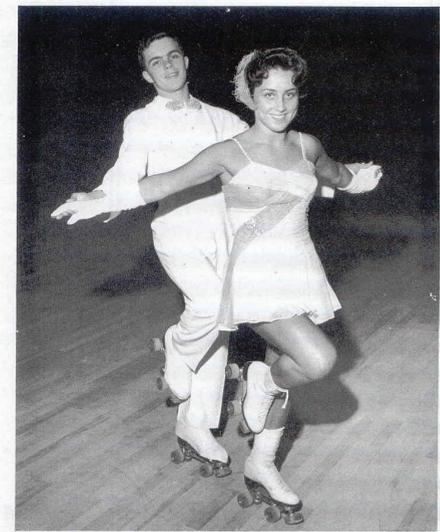
Satch and Millie always worked as a team. When the Queens rink closed in 1953, Satch and Millie went to the Wal-Cliff Rink in Elmont, N.Y., plus taught for one year at the Empire Rink in Brooklyn, N.Y. Then it was back to Mineola again until it closed in 1960.

As the rinks were closing in New York they decided to move to California. Their old friend Tommy Lane was instrumental in having them go west. Satch died the following year, a great loss to Millie, her son Clifford "Butch," and our roller sport. Millie kept on teaching in California for many years.

Millie passed her Gold Medal in Dance Skating at the famed Arena Gardens in Detroit, Mich. This was the first R.S.R.O.A. Gold Medal test center and was open only to professionals. Besides Millie, Irene and Jack

Boyer, Rose Martin, Betty Lytle, and Dick McLauchlen passed the test. The National Museum of Roller Skating in Lincoln, Neb., has a video of this test center.

Millie and Satch taught skating during its Golden Age. Millie was "The Boss." There was never any doubt about that. She



Rob Wollard and Carol Stout of Long Beach, Calif., successfully defended their Senior Pairs title during the Championships. Rob also added the Senior Men's Singles Championship to his many skating laurels.

1960
Rob Wollard and Carol Stout circa 1960

was tough as nails, but everyone respected her honest and straight-forward approach. Satch and Millie were very good to me. You always look up to your first pro. They were tops in their field of teaching. May you rest in peace, Millie. We will always remember.

Golden Era 'star' Rob Wollard passes away

Rob Wollard of Ventura, Calif., another star of roller skating's Golden Era, has passed on at the age of 71. Rob skated out of Long Beach Skate Land during the 1950s. Together with his pair's partner, Carol Stout, they won the 1956 National Novice Pairs title, with Rob also taking Intermediate Men's Singles. In 1957, Rob and Carol won Intermediate Pairs and Intermediate Fours. Then, in 1959 and 1960 Carol and Rob won Seniors Pairs. All titles were won at the United States National Roller Skating Championships.

Rob won Men's Singles at the World Meet in Christ Church, New Zealand in 1959, and along with Carol took second in pairs. Rob won Senior Men's Singles in 1960. Rob and Carol were taught by Ray Hough. They were a very dynamic and inventive team, introducing the pairs move called the "Dropped Impossible Spin."