

The Racing Blade®

Volume XXXIII, Numbers 4 & 5

May & June, 2000



In This Issue

News from the ASU Convention 2000,

Master's International and Senior Games

North American and National Short Track Championships

**Centuries of Speed Skating Progress, Installments Three
and Four with comments from a skater**

National Ice Speed Skating News

Published by the Amateur Speedskating Union of the U. S.



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The Racing Blade®

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The Cover

Karen Lietz took this photograph of Amy Peterson skating in a 500 at the Goodwill Games last February in Lake Placid.

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Deadlines

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Dec. 4, 2000

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June 4, 2000

The Racing Blade®

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ASU President's Report

by Bill Anderson

This will be my last article for the Racing Blade as your President. While this is significant for me, it is a minor event in the history of a 72-year-old organization. Additionally, this will be Shirley Yates' last column as Secretary Treasurer, which is of greater significance given Shirley's tenure and influence on the Amateur Speedskating Union.

As I had reported earlier, the North American Short Track was a well attended event with 199 participants including nearly thirty Americans who took advantage of the travel subsidy arranged for by Ruth Moore and the North American Committee. The competition was a great success and offered a preview of how a meet like this can be run using an all points format. Before the event concluded, the North American Committee met to discuss potential changes to the Alliance (which governs the common way of running the event). The feedback regarding using the all points format in U.S. meets was mixed. I know the Wausau Club has a keen interest in doing so next year, however the time to run the meet appeared to be excessive, with late Friday racing required (8 PM) and a longer day on Sunday as well. I'm sure this will be reported on and discussed at the convention.

If you missed the National Short Track in Aston, PA, you missed the best National Short Track in years. The organizing committee and the Eastern States Speedskating Association did an outstanding job in running a quality meet. The amount of time that goes into a quality competition like this is substantial. The additional effort was apparent in every facet of the meet including the officials' lunch and the Saturday banquet. You can see a more thorough write up elsewhere in this issue.

Over the last four years we have had substantial discussions with USSpeedskating concerning creation of one speedskating organization. We have a proposed set of merger by-laws to discuss at the May convention.

We also see a new USSpeedskating organization, one that has its own membership, its own series of high level domestic competitions (the American Cups) and the establishment of a full time development position on staff.

We have also seen the most aggressive election in the recent history of our sport for the two Competing Athlete/Individual Member board positions on the USSpeedskating Board.

There has also been a fair amount of infighting concerning the election of our three ASU representatives to the USS Board. The ASU is considered an Affiliated Sports Organization of USSpeedskating, the official governing body of the sport of ice speedskating in this country. As such, we are entitled to be represented on the USS Board of Directors and were allocated three of the 15 positions. We elected Fred Benjamin, Brad Goskowicz and Lisa Sundstrom. To date USSpeedskating has not accepted how these ASU representatives were elected, and the discussions regarding this election are continuing with USS.

It is hard to foresee where the deliberations of the May convention will take us regarding a number of crucial issues including the merger discussions. However, it will be up to new leadership in the ASU to carry us forward after the convention ends. My concluding remarks on combining the two organizations will be brief.

From a business standpoint having two speedskating organizations as intertwined as we are does not make any sense. Many good people in both organizations have wasted countless hours duplicating work, running multiple elections coordinating schedules, balancing difficult budgets and so on. Is this how we want to continue?

Hopefully, as we move forward, we can find some harmony that will allow us to focus our efforts on the areas vital to our existence — recruitment and development of new skaters and programs, support of existing skaters and programs, and the conduct of quality competitions.

Thank you for letting me be your President.

Bill Anderson

Notes from the National Office

By Shirley Yates

A Secretary Signs Off!

This is it! My last column as Executive Secretary of the ASU. My columns for the last 16 years have reported on the news from the National Office. Information I was privy to that others were not like new clubs and other exciting projects Doc Savage was working on, new promotional items, inside info. on members and their contributions and bits and pieces of news that I thought would be of interest to our readers.

But because a column belongs to the person writing it, all columns sometimes reflect the personal lives and feelings of the columnists and mine was no different. This last one will be the same.

Trying to wrap up 16 years in one column is not possible, but I can highlight what stands out most in my mind. I loved my job as ASU Secretary for many reasons, but the most important reason is I guess I just love people. I'm a people person. I love communicating with them especially talking to them on the phone and meeting them in person and I had a wonderful opportunity to do that in my job.

E-mail is obviously where it's at for many people now but one-on-one, face-to-face, is for me. It's like acting on stage versus acting on TV or in the movies. I prefer playing to a live audience - a small one! But I guess I like writing for a big audience. What writer doesn't!

I submitted my name to run for this office in 1984. Then President Dave Roche said it only paid a small stipend and my predecessor, Larry Ralston, said it was a "Labor of Love." No one ran against me and the Board of Control elected me, a relative unknown to them. I had only been on the ASU scene four years - but our family goes back to 1969 in speedskating. So I knew the sport, I thought! When you sit in this office you soon learn how much there is to know! You are the hub, the central information bureau, the conveyor and interpreter of rules and in my case, often the Mother Hen and Mother Confessor! What a delicious position! But one I always respected, as I respected everyone who called me - whether they were nice to me or not!

I had special friends all over the country (and world) as a result of the job. What a thrill to finally meet someone in person whom you may have been talking to on the phone over a period of years. It has happened to me many times. Some of these friends are now deceased, but many others I know will always be my special friends.

After the people, what I did find most enjoyable about the job? Working with Bob Vehe on The Racing Blade. As many of you already know, I worked for several years as a newspaper reporter before moving to Illinois. Although being involved with The Racing Blade was not part of my job, I always tried to make time for it because I enjoyed it so much. Bob always said The Racing Blade had a staff of 1 1/2. I was the half! I mostly wrote for it, but I also did proofreading and went hunting for news. Bob often said he had "created a monster" and I know what he meant now. No "staff of 1 1/2" could ever do the job that he did. But still for him it was another "Labor of Love."

Next, I enjoyed "pioneering" with Doc Savage, Growth & Development Chairman. He and I started in our respective jobs the same year and I think we are both most proud of the fact that during our tenure, the ASU doubled its number of clubs, added two new associations and resurrected two old ones. We are now at the southern tip of Florida (Miami), way far north in Alaska (Fairbanks) and in Las Vegas!

Everyone who has called the National Office wanting to get a new club started or a program at a rink, has been turned over to Doc, as well as all those wanting to get involved in the sport who live in areas where we have no associations. Doc has made ASU growth and development his full time "job" since he retired from Briggs and Stratton in Milwaukee several years ago. His enthusiasm is boundless and he works hard at building the ASU. Unfortunately, he is hampered by the peculiarities of the sport. Most leads fall through, but he and I made a pact years ago - you have to follow up on everyone, regardless of how implausible they or their situation may sound. There were so many more people throughout the years who helped me, held my hand when it was needed, gave me a shoulder to cry on and let me "dump" my woes on them. Sometimes they just called at the right time to give me an ear when I needed it!

I have a problem with trying to name them. But I have to try. My thanks to Rich Simujak, Fred Benjamin, Doc Savage, Lisa Sundstrom, Carl Cepuran, Sam Hicks, Myra Vandersall, Elayne and Duane Riley, Larry Ralston, Rich Widmark, Lorraine Garbe, Ken Altuchoff, Susan Jarrett, Jim Chapin, Joan Clark, Mary Smith, Jerry Search, Robbie Hanni, Greta Hall, Joyce Leggatt, Pat Cunningham, Don Anderson, Tony Arena, Gene Casler, Don Kangas, the Moores (Ruth, Chuck and Carole) and those deceased: Bob Vehe, Bob Finkel, Dave Roche, Jerry Klasman.

These were people I always felt cared about me and the ASU. If I've left someone out, I'm truly sorry because everyone who helped me was very precious to me. There were so many people who touched my life because of my job. That's what made the job so good, so bearable during unbearable times, so exciting and rewarding during good times.

I won't talk about the sacrifices I made for the job, the heartaches, the sleepless nights, the breaking-down equipment (always at the most inopportune moment), the low wages, the stress, the long hours, the total commitment which eventually meant cutting out all friends and activities from the past. That was me, that's how I had to do it and how the job affected me. And never, for a moment, did I not think the joys of the job outweighed the grief. Would I do it again? Absolutely, if I were 16 years younger I'd apply for the job. But I think it takes a special kind of person to handle it emotionally and psychologically. You develop a thick skin, you roll with the punches and you learn how to block everything out of your mind at night!

What does an ASU Secretary do after retirement? You move to Michigan, of course. Larry Ralston moved to Southwest Michigan after a lifetime in the Chicago area. That's what Jim and I will be doing - after 38 years in Glen Ellyn. We'll be on Lake Michigan in Stevensville, right across the lake from Chicago, for seven months of the year, but from Memorial Day to the end of October the plan is to be at our place on Lake Superior on the Keweenaw Peninsula where I was born and lived until I was 12 - and where my heart has always been. We plan to do a lot of traveling, something we couldn't easily do with our jobs. I want to go to Australia, Jim wants to go to Machu Pichu and between those two spots there's all kinds of places in the world I want to see.

I will still be involved in ASU activities. It's been my life for many years and it's where my friends are. I will always attend National and North American Championships when it's possible and always the Convention. I will continue my work on ASU committees and I am looking forward to being involved in the Michigan Association.

And for those of you who keep asking, "What are you going to DO after you retire", I say, all of the above plus I have a long-time ambition, I want to try fiction writing! I think I have stored up more than enough material!

Successful Short Track Ends Season

Our congratulations and thanks to the Eastern States Speedskating Association. (formerly the Maryland Association) for so successfully staging its first Major event, the 2000 National Short Track Championship Meet, Director David Kennedy and his very capable staff, which included Hence Bollinger, Joan and Lloyd Clark, Chris Connery, Christine and Greg Greer, Jack Curtin, Harry Dingle, Cindy Scharf and Leslie Bader, put on a great show.

The facility seemed perfect - lots of room for all of the various activities that go on at a Championship meet. We had 180 of some of the best skaters in the country, we crowned some new National Champions and everyone came away feeling good. Two years in a row we've had new hosts for the National Short Track (Northern California last year). They've survived and we've thoroughly enjoyed the new venues and getting to know the members of those Associations.

Taiwan Follow Up

John Monroe e-mailed me the following in March:

"I noticed in the January issue of The Racing Blade that you have had inquiries from Taiwan. I just thought I would mention that my very first professional coaching was done there!

"In the summer of 1994, immediately following my retirement from elite skating, I got an offer to coach a team for a month in Taipei, the capital city. This club was making the transition from quad skates to inlines, and since I had a fair amount of experience, they asked me to help.

"I'm very curious, as there were two young skaters who were very interested in short track, and wanted to do it. My only experience on ice, while I was there (most of the summer was 95 degrees+ and 90% humidity), was one session on a rink in downtown Taipei - on a ninth floor of a major office building, where the rink may have measured 75 feet by 60 feet!

"It was certainly a lot of fun, and I will always have fond memories of the time I spent there."

Thanks, John, for an interesting bit of international news. The International Skating Union now has a member in Taiwan, the Chinese Taipei Skating Union, so I'll bet they have more than just a 75 x 60 foot rink now!

We Say Farewell to Another Old Friend

One of our dearest friends, Howard Gutgesell, died April 14 in Milwaukee. Mr. Gutgesell, 88, contributed to speedskating in many ways over the years but his most valuable contribution to the ASU was his donations to the Scholarship Fund. He was the largest benefactor of the Fund, having contributed more than \$12,000 during the last decade.

A retired teacher and advisor for the United States Department of Agriculture, Mr. Gutgesell served the sport of speedskating for many years on the local, Association and National level. He was appointed a National Chief Clerk of Course of the ASU in 1956, retiring from that position in 1992 and was first National Chief official to be named as Official Emeritus. He also served the United States International Speedskating Association. (now U.S. Speedskating) as an outstanding official, working as a Chief Timer for metric races, and as Treasurer of the organization. He was also USISA's Board of Control member to the ASU for a number of years. He was one of the early members and chairman of the ASU Hall of Fame Committee and was inducted into the Speedskating Hall of Fame in 1983. He was a long-time resident of Brookfield, WI. His wife, Myrtle, passed away in 1993. He is survived by a son and daughter.

A Note from Karen Kostal

I wanted to inform everyone of the new phone numbers/address/email/ for the ASU National office. I plan to be in the office Monday - Friday 8:00am - 5:00am. I usually do check the email and phone messages evenings and weekends as well. I guess I will see how things shake out and adjust office hours as required.

Thanks to everyone who has offered their good wishes and help as I try to do the job that Shirley has done so well for so long (notice I don't say replace Shirley, that is impossible!). My apologies in advance for any delays or phone problems you may have encountered. I'm still in a transition mode (and phone company errors haven't helped!).

My best to Shirley and Jim as they venture north.

Karen Kostal, Secretary/Treasurer

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Convention, 2000

What happened at the ASU Annual Meeting?

by Don Kangas

There were about 60 people from about 13 Associations, registered for the convention on May 19-21, 2000 in the Atrium Hotel at the Orange County Airport, California. I say about because a number of attendees were delayed because storms in the midwest caused a number of flight delays. This is a brief summary of events of that occurred at the ASU Convention for those who didn't get there. It's a way of sharing the ASU's decision making process. The official proceedings will be published in the 2000 Directory and Minutes of Annual Meeting. Karen Kostal, Executive Secretary/Treasurer send copies to Board of Control Representatives and Associations that have ordered extra copies. Copies of the 2000 Directory and Minutes of the Annual Meeting are available for \$15.00 each from Karen Kostal, OS 651 Forest, Winfield, IL 60190.

The meetings began on Thursday. This year the Safety and Hall of Fame committees met to consider some issues on the one occasion each year when most of their members are in the same place at the same time. A significant number of ASU members annually gather at the National Long and Short Track meets and the Convention. Some discussions occur at all of these times. However, the annual meeting is the one time with no distraction.

ASU General Membership Meeting

ASU Annual Meeting was officially convened at 9:00 AM on Friday, May 19, with introductions of the officers, roll call of Associations, approval of 1999 minutes and the agenda, and appointment of David Kennedy as Parliamentarian.

The President's Report

ASU President, Bill Anderson presented his final report. Anderson started by saying that being President of The ASU was a rewarding, learning experience. He recalled some highlights from last season. ASU participation in North American Meets was improved, thanks to hard work by Ruth Moore and a contribution from an anonymous elite athlete to partially cover skater's travel expenses to the Short Track meet in Regina. The National Short Track was the best ever, thanks to David Kennedy's leadership of the many good people that helped make it a great meet. The National Long Track Meet was the first ever that was completely staffed with local National Officials.

Merger discussions with U.S.Speedskating consumed much time before a joint meeting was agreed upon. Then, trust was lost. In part, because there was no written document to use as a basis for negotiation. So, the joint meeting was canceled. Chuck Moore has a document with a proposed structure for a merged speed skating organization that will be discussed at this meeting. One organization is best for the sport of speed skating.

There was a change in U. S. Speedskating's By-Laws that established new Board members. So, this one time only, ASU members voted for U. S. Speedskating Board Members. Every ASU member had a vote for two of the U. S. Speedskating Board positions. This kind of democratic, every member for every member, process doesn't happen in the ASU now and will not happen again, if there is not a merger to form one speed skating organization.

He concluded with the reminder, that the ASU must continue to run grass roots speed skating programs, and by thanking Shirley Yates for her extensive years of service to the ASU and good wishes on her retirement.

The Executive Secretary's Report

ASU Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Shirley Yates, also presented a final report. She recalled starting 16 years ago with her own typewriter and desk. Larry Ralston passed on a stack of files and a worn out copy machine. Tim Quinn donated a copy machine to get her started. Shirley will pass on a laser printer, fax machine and computer along with a larger stack of files.

Shirley commented on what has happened during her tenure. Bont skates became available at a reasonable cost. Cost of prime time ice creates problems for clubs. She said, it always comes down to money. Providing busses and travel expense money helped increase ASU participation in North American Meets. Generous donations increased the ASU scholarship fund. Howard Gutgesell periodically sent generous donations. The fund also benefited from the sale of Olympic shirts. Shirley closed her report with a "Shirleyism", "With 73 years of history, we must have done something right."

ASU's Speed Skating Canada Representative's Report

ASU's representative to Speed Skating Canada, Bill Anderson, commented on the professional atmosphere at the Canadian meeting. It was much more formal than a typical ASU or U. S. Speedskating meeting. He cited as examples that their Safety Committee had data to work with and they set specific goals for the season. Also that Awards were presented for "Personal Bests" and for successful recruitment.

Speed Skating Canada's ASU Representative's Report

Speed Skating Canada's representative to the ASU Convention, Joyce Leggatt, said there were 83 Canadians and 73 Americans, that includes 39 Master skaters at the North American Long Track in Lake Placid. The only significant problems were that the skaters were too far from the track and had to descend stairs to get there. This contributed to slow distribution of results and who had qualified for finals.

The North American Short Track was attended by 32 Americans and 170 Canadians, that includes 30 Master skaters. The skaters appreciated the all points format, that gave every skater an equal number of races. Friday was a long 12 hour day. However, that need not happen as the clerking programs are debugged. Next year the North American Long Track will be in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the Short track will be in Wausau, Wisconsin.

Memorials

Memorials were presented for:

1. Jerome J. Klassman, by Shirley Yates, ASU
2. Rollie Thometz, by Joan Peterson, Minnesota
3. John Nelson, by Karen Street, Illinois
4. George Wilson, by Jerry Search, Southern California
5. Barbara Smith, by Jerry Search, Southern California
6. William H. Hinkel Sr., Lorraine Garbe, Wisconsin
7. Howard Gutgesell, Lorraine Garbe, Wisconsin
8. Merrill "Bud" Doyle, Jim Chapin, Missouri
9. Sylvia A. McCabe, Jim Chapin, Missouri
10. Louis S. Rhubrect, Jim Chapin, Missouri
11. Rachel Ann Owen, Jim Chapin, Missouri

Bids for ASU National Events

Bidding was opened for ASU national events and nominations accepted for ASU elected positions. The events were awarded and the election for ASU positions held on Sunday at the ASU Board of Control Meeting.

One bid was accepted for the 2002 National Short Track Championship from Western New York Association.

One bid was accepted for the 2001 National Marathon Championship from the Northeast Association.

Two bids was accepted for the 2002 ASU Convention from Missouri and Illinois

Nominating Committee Report

Dennis Marquard, Chairman of the Nominating Committee accepted nominations for ASU elected Positions.

The following nominations were accepted.

Commissioner of Officials: Tony Arena, Wisconsin and Joan Peterson, Minnesota

Executive Secretary /Treasurer: Karen Kostal, Illinois

The Racing Blade Editor: no nominations

The Racing Blade Publisher: Bruce Houghton, Missouri

Vice President Promotion: Al Menghi, Connecticut

Vice President Racing: Bob Payne, Northern California

Vice President Operation: Carl Cepuran, Illinois

President: Duane Riley, Wisconsin

Hall of Fame Committee Report

Larry Ralston, Chairman of the Hall Committee, announced the nominees for the Speedskating Hall of Fame. The skaters nominated were J. Fred Gohl and Tom Plant. The contributors to the sport nominated were Shirley Yates, and M. D. "Doc" Savage.

Other Committee Reports

ASU Committee Reports distributed with convention packets at registration included reports from the ASU/ U.S. Speedskating Committee, Growth and Development, Novice Coordinator, and The Racing Blade. The reports are printed in the ASU Minutes of the Annual Meeting book which will be available later.

David Kennedy, Chairman of Coaching and Camp Committees, said he did not have enough copies of his reports to include in the convention packets.

For the Coaching Committee, he reported that John Monroe, U. S. Speedskating's Development Coordinator was conducting Coaching Certification seminars. He conducted a Level 1 seminar in Oakland, California on May 11-13. A Level 2 seminar is scheduled in St. Louis, Missouri on June 8-11 and a Level 1 seminars in Bay City, Michigan on June 16-18.

For the Camp Committee, he reported there are two camps scheduled in conjunction with U. S. Speedskating in Lake Placid, New York and at Northern Michigan in Marquette, Michigan. Dates, times, and applications available later. An ASU Open Camp in Allentown, Pennsylvania will be conducted by Leslie Bader. Dates, times and applications will be available later.

Promotion, Publicity, Growth, and Development

This session was to be conducted by Carl Cepuran and Doc Savage. Carl was one of those delayed by a flight cancellation. "Doc" took over in his inimitable way and presented the status of new clubs for the ASU.

The Racing Blade and other Communications

The second session to discuss The Racing Blade and other ASU communications was also to be conducted by Carl Cepuran with Jerry Search. Jerry Search discussed the use of the ASU Web Page and what role it plays in ASU Communications. I announced my resignation as The Racing Blade editor and offered written description of the many jobs involved in gathering items, ads, editing, composing and publishing The Racing Blade. No one stepped forward to accept the editor's job or any of the other responsibilities. A communications committee was asked to examine ASU's publications and methods of communication.

Friday Evening Hospitality

The Meet Scheduling Meeting was scheduled for this time. However, some people with essential information were not available because of the storm delayed flights. So, that wrapped up formal business for Friday.

Informal discussion continued at the evening hospitality in the hotel court yard next to the swimming pool. I didn't see anyone fall, jump, or get thrown into the pool.

Committee Meetings

The convention reconvened at 9:00 AM on Saturday. Convention attendees met as a committee of the whole to consider the proposals for changes to the ASU Constitution, By-Laws, Racing Rules and this year the revised Articles of Alliance between the Amateur Speedskating Union of the United States and Speed Skating Canada and an ASU and USS Merger proposal will also be considered. After discussion of each proposal, Convention attendees vote to recommend the Delegates or the Board of Control accept the proposal as written, accept it as amended or refer it to committee for further study. The Board of Control is not absolutely bound by the Convention's recommendations. However, The expressed opinion of the majority of convention attendees is rarely reversed.

Legislative Proposals

There were 11 Legislative proposals dealing with the ASU Constitution and By-Laws.

1. USS Board representation, Revise Articles II and III of the ASU By-Laws.

The proposed revisions are needed to realign the procedures and number of elected ASU representatives to U. S. Speedskating's Board to comply with their new By-laws.

The Convention voted to recommend approval with the addition of a sentence: The USS Board Members Committee will be accountable to the ASU Executive Committee.

2. Conflict of Interest, Add a paragraph to Article X of the Constitution to limit officers and USS Board members from holding multiple positions, such as combining the offices of ASU Executive Secretary and ASU Treasurer.

The Convention voted to recommend rejection, because some offices function better if combined and there is already difficulty finding candidates willing to serve.

3. Association Name Change, Amend Article V, paragraph 3 to delete replace Maryland with Eastern States.

The Convention voted to recommend approval. However, concern was expressed because there is an Annual meet named the Eastern States that could cause confusion.

4. President on Committees, Amend Article III, paragraph 3 of the By-Laws to add U. S. board Members Committee to the list of committees that the ASU president cannot be an ex-officio member.

The Convention voted to recommend approval without much discussion.

5. Reorder Committee List, Amend Article III, paragraph 7 of the By-Laws to put the committee names in alphabetical order. Bill Houghton, Handbook Editor, explained this would make it easier to find committees and their responsibilities.

The Convention voted to recommend approval without further discussion.

6. Revise Dues Structure, Amend Article IX, paragraph 7 of the By-Laws to lower the entry level dues and the family cap.

The Convention voted to recommend rejection after long discussion and many recommendations for alternate dues schedules that would make entry level dues lower without drastic reduction of ASU income.

7. Revise The Racing Blade format, no reference. Neither the ASU constitution or by-laws make reference to The Racing Blade. It is however, of concern to the membership as a major budget item and a means of communication.

The convention recommended rejection after some discussion and referring the matter to a Communications Committee

8. Revise the Handbook Format, no reference for the same reason as noted for item 7.

The Convention voted to recommend rejection and referral of the matter to a Communications Committee.

9. Operating Expenses, amend Article XX, paragraph 1. to direct the ASU president to appoint a committee to review expenses paid by the ASU.

This proposal was withdrawn before it was discussed by the convention.

10. USS Representation at Meetings, Article VIII, paragraph 1 and 2, to allow USS to have representation by three delegates at every meeting of the ASU.

The Convention voted to recommend approval with further study of proper implementation.

11. U. S. Speedskating and ASU Merger, Replace ASU Constitution and By-Laws with new Constitution and By-Laws for a merged speed skating organization.

The Convention: considered this issue as the proposed Constitution and By-Laws for a merged speed skating organization. After extended discussion of amendments to the proposal presented for consideration the Convention voted to recommend approval.

Articles of Alliance

The North American Committee presented a revised version of the Alliance between the Amateur Speedskating Union of the United States and Speed Skating Canada, Patinage de Vitesse Canada. The revision is necessitated by the Canadian organization's name change, numerous skating class additions and changes in race distances.

The Convention voted to recommend approval of the revised Articles of Alliance, after some amendments were suggested. The amended Articles will now be presented to Speed Skating Canada for their approval.

Board of Control Luncheon

The ASU Board of Control Representatives and the ASU Officers have a closed luncheon meeting to discuss the National and North American meets, consider the recommendations of the Commissioner of Officials and any protests that may have been presented to the National Office. I was there as the Michigan's Board of Control Representative. However, because this is a closed meeting, I cannot report the discussion in The Racing Blade. However, if you have specific questions or concerns, your Board of Control representative, the ASU officers and the Skater's Representative were all there. They can answer your questions.

Racing Proposals

There were 12 proposals for revision of the ASU Racing Rules.

1. Pre qualification for National Competition, amend Article IX, paragraph 3 of ASU Racing Rules, to add a qualifying time of 1.25 times the national record for the class.

The Convention voted to recommend approval with an amendment that made the qualifying time a guideline, that Associations are encouraged to use, rather than a requirement for entry.

2. Junior, Intermediate & Senior Classifications, revise Article VII, paragraph 1, subparagraph a of ASU Racing Rules, to add Intermediate - 18 years of age or younger, and change Junior - 15 years or younger and Senior 19 to 29 years of age.

The Convention voted to recommend approval, without adding the intermediate class, but adjusting the ages to Juvenile 15 and under, Junior 17 and under, senior 18 and over.

3. Entry Fees to Host Association, amend Article IV, paragraph 1, sub paragraph a of ASU Racing Rules, to delete the sentence that says the ASU retains all fees and add a new sentence says the host association retains the entry fees.

The Convention voted to recommended rejection.

4. Clerking Procedure, National & North American Short Track, pages 83 & 89 of ASU Racing Rules, to remove the asterisked footnotes A, B and C, so National and North American Clerking procedures correspond. The footnote applies to 85 foot rinks, which are no longer used for either Nationals or North Americans.

The Convention voted to recommend rejection.

5. Number of Judges for Short Track, Amend article II, paragraph 1, sub-paragraph d of ASU Racing Rules, to delete, "at least three judges for each of the first five positions plus eight reserve judges," and replace it with, "such number of judges as are required in the determination of the Chief Judge."

The Convention voted to recommend rejection, after discussion of the difficulty fitting that many judges at the finish line. Veteran Chief Judges cited the need for three judges to use predominance of judging.

6. Use of Video for Judging National and North American Championships, Revise Article III, paragraph 6, sub-paragraph c of ASU Racing Rules to require video so the finish of races are judged properly. The use of video at the Masters International resulted in reversal of some of the finish places picked by the judges.

This proposal was withdrawn.

7. Starter's Ammunition, Revise Article III, paragraph 6, sub-paragraph c of ASU Racing Rules, so 0.32 caliber ammunition would no longer be required for Long Track starts. It turns out that the larger caliber blanks actually interfere with the electronic timing device and black powder 0.22 caliber blanks provide an adequate smoke puff for manual timers.

The Convention voted to recommend approval with a revision to make the 0.22 caliber blanks optional.

8. Stopping a Race for a Fallen Skater, add to Article IV, paragraph 6 of ASU Racing Rules, a sub paragraph f, that clarifies why and how a referee may disqualify a fallen skater that causes a race stoppage.

The Convention voted to recommend approval.

9. Helmet Use, revise Article IV, paragraph 2, sub-paragraph p of ASU Racing Rules, to read: The safety type helmet shall comply with ASTM standard for Short Track Speed Skating.

The Convention voted to recommend approval, by a split vote, of an amended version that allows any hard shelled safety helmet. The ASU Safety Committee discussed the helmet rule at a meeting on Thursday evening and recommended a return to the previous rule until it is known if a recommended helmet is functional and is widely available at reasonable cost. The rule would be just as it was before the ASTM standard was imposed last year.

10. Combining Classes, revise and rearrange Article IV, paragraph 2, sub-paragraph s of ASU Racing Rules as recommended by the Handbook Editor. A second part of this asked for permission for the Handbook Editor to make this type of housekeeping corrections without waiting for ASU Convention approval. The Convention voted to recommend approval.

11. Combining Classes, Add to Article IV, paragraph 2, sub-paragraph s of ASU Racing Rules, the sentence: Classes shall not be combined if it will necessitate heats in the combined group.

The Convention voted to recommend rejection.

12. Apparel Parameters, Article XIII, paragraph 7 of ASU Racing Rules, move this paragraph to Article IV, paragraph 2, and re-letter as needed.

The Convention voted to recommend approval with minor revisions.

Meet Scheduling Meeting

Lisa Sundstrom, Meet Scheduling Chair for ASU and U.S. Speedskating presented the list of all meets sent to her before the convention. Any meets not included were added and conflicts were negotiated. Many scheduling problems were worked out in this session. However, changes continue to be made, so you have to check before departing to a specific meet. Lisa continues to revise the schedule throughout the season. The following schedule was written on June 16, 2000.

6/16/00 DRAFT 2000-2001 MEET SCHEDULE

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COMPETITION</u>	<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
SEP	US Speedskating Board Meeting		
OCT 7-8	Pettit Time Trials Begin	LT (Metric)	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
OCT 14-15	ST American Cup I*	ST	New Hampshire Center
OCT 20-22	World Cup Short Track	ST	Calgary, Canada
OCT 21	Gopher Open	ST (SN)^	St. Paul, MN
OCT 22	Kick-Off Classic	ST (SN)^	Illinois
OCT 27-29	World Cup Short Track	ST	Salt Lake City, UT
OCT 28	Chicago Silver Skates	ST (SN)^	Glen Ellyn, IL
OCT 29	Badger Open	ST	Madison, WI
NOV 3-5	LT Fall World Cup Qualifier	LT (Metric)	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
NOV 4-5	Great Lakes Short Track Championships	ST (SN)^	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
NOV 11	Silver Derby Classic	ST	Ogden, UT
NOV 11-12	Central Wisconsin Short Track Open	ST (SN)^	Wausau, WI
	Eastern States/ST American Cup II/ ST Fall World Cup Qualifier	ST	Saratoga Springs, NY
NOV 18	Bay State	ST	Walpole, MA
	Illinois State Short Track (Closed)	ST (SN)^	Park Ridge, IL
NOV 18-19	World Cup Long Track (1500,3000/5000)	LT (Metric)	Berlin, Germany
NOV 19	Polar Ice Short Track	ST	Cedar Rapids, IA
NOV 24-26	World Cup Short Track	ST	Chang Chun, China
NOV 25-26	World Cup Long Track (1500,5000/10000)	LT (Metric)	Heerenveen, Holland
	LT American Cup I / Can Am	LT (Metric)	Butte, MT
NOV 26	Gold Cup	LT (Pack) (SN)^	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
DEC 1-3	World Cup Short Track	ST	Nobeyama, Japan
	Can Am	LT (Metric)	Calgary, Canada
DEC 2-3	Icebreaker Special*	ST/LT (Pack/Metric)	Salt Lake City, UT
	Ohio Invitational /ST American Cup III	ST (SN)^	Cleveland, OH
DEC 3	I-94 Sprints	LT (Pack) (SN)^	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
DEC 9	Journal Star Speedskating Classic	ST	Peoria, IL
DEC 9-10	World Cup Long Track (Sprint)	LT (Metric)	Seoul, Korea
	John Rose Open	LT (Pack)	Roseville, MN
DEC 16-17	World Cup Long Track (Sprint)	LT (Metric)	Nagano, Japan
	U.S. Junior Short Track Championships	ST	TBA
DEC 17	Christmas Classic	LT (Pack) (SN)^	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
DEC 29-31	U.S. Allround Championships	LT (Metric)	SLC or Butte
JAN 6	Franklin Park Special Needs	ST (SN)^	Franklin Park, IL
JAN 6-7	World Junior Short Track Championships	ST	Opole, Poland
	U.S. Sprint/Jr. Sprint Championships	LT (Metric)	SLC or Pettit
	Eastern States Championships	LT (Pack)	Saratoga Springs, NY
	Western International	LT (Pack/Metric)	Butte, MT
JAN 7	IL & WI State Meets (Closed)	LT (Pack) (SN)^	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
JAN 12-14	N. America/Oceania Regional Qualifier	LT (Metric)	SLC or Pettit
JAN 13	Gohl Waupaca Classic	LT (Pack)	Waupaca, WI
JAN 13-14	National Marathon Championships	LT (Pack)	New Hampshire
	U.S. Junior Regional Championships	LT (Metric)	East - Lake Placid Midwest - Milwaukee West - Roseville
JAN 14	Central Wisconsin Long Track Open	LT (Pack)	Wausau, WI

SN^=Special Needs class included

*Tentative

Meet Schedule 6.16.00

6/16/00 DRAFT 2000-2001 MEET SCHEDULE (cont.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>COMPETITION</u>	<u>DISCIPLINE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
JAN 20-21	World Sprint Championships	LT (Metric)	Inzell, Germany
	Great Lakes Long Track Championships	LT (Pack)	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
	Montana Outdoor (Closed)	LT (Pack)	Butte, MT
JAN 26-28	World Cup Short Track	ST	Europe
JAN 27-28	National Long Track Championships	LT (Pack)	Salt Lake City, UT
	World Cup Long Track (Sprint)	LT (Metric)	Helsinki, Finland
JAN 28	Skate-on-State	ST (SN)^	Chicago, IL
FEB 2-4	World Cup Long Track (All distances)	LT (Metric)	Heerenveen, Holland
	World Cup Short Track	ST	Europe
FEB 3-4	North American Long Track Championships	LT (Pack)	Winnipeg, MB
	U.S. Junior Championships	LT (Metric)	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
FEB 9-11	World Allround Championships	LT (Metric)	Budapest, Hungary
FEB 10	Syracuse All Points	ST	Syracuse, NY
FEB 10-11	Masters International	LT (Pack)	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
FEB 13-16	World University Games	ST	Zakopane, Poland
FEB 17-18	World Cup Long Track (1500,3000/5000)	LT (Metric)	Hamar, Norway
	Junior Country Match	LT (Metric)	Berlin, Germany
	LT American Cup II	LT (Metric)	Roseville, MN
	Land of Lincoln/ST American Cup Final	ST (Pack)	Champaign, IL
FEB 23-25	World Junior Championships	LT (Metric)	Heerenveen, Holland
FEB 24	Pittsfield Short Track	ST	N. Adams, MA
	Lac Beauport Marathon	LT	Lac Beauport, Quebec
FEB 24-25	Northbrook Open	ST (SN)^	Northbrook, IL
MAR 2-4	World Cup Long Track (All distances)	LT (Metric)	Calgary, Canada
	U.S. Short Track Championships/ Jr. Elite Trials*	ST	TBA
MAR 3	Wisconsin State Short Track (Closed)	ST (SN)^	Wausau, WI
MAR 3-4	St. Louis Silver Skates	ST	St. Louis, MO
	Susquehanna Challenge	ST	PA or MD
	LT American Cup Final	LT (Metric)	Pettit, Milwaukee, WI
	Masters World Metric	LT (Metric)	Ste. Foy, Quebec
MAR 4-11	2001 Special Olympic World Winter Games	ST (SN)^	Anchorage, AK
MAR 9-11	World Single Distance Championships	LT (Metric)	Salt Lake City, UT
MAR 10	Bob Finkel/New York State Short Track	ST	Newburgh, NY
MAR 10-11	Evanston Northshore Open	ST (SN)^	Evanston, IL
MAR 14-18	Olympic Oval Finale	LT (Metric)	Calgary, Canada
MAR 16-18	National Short Track Championships	ST	Bay City, MI
MAR 23-25	North American Short Track Championships	ST	Wausau, WI
MAR 25	World Short Track Team Championships	ST	Nobeyama, Japan
MAR 30-APR 1	World Short Track Championships	ST	Seoul, Korea
APR	US Speedskating Board Meeting		
MAY 18-20	ASU Convention		Albany, New York

SN^=Special Needs class included

*Tentative

Saturday Night Banquet and Awards

The social event of the convention was the Banquet, held in the same room as the meetings decorated and set up for dining and award presentations. After a cocktail and socializing time, dinner was served

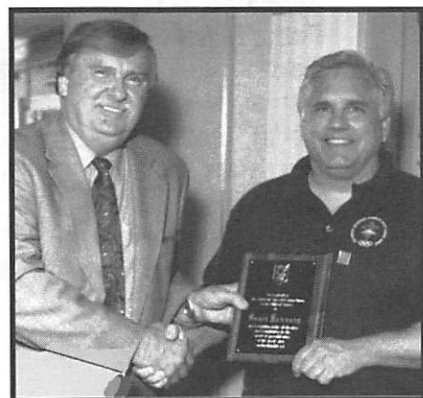
Awards presentations began with distribution of the Associations Certificates of Appreciation.

ASU President Bill Anderson then recognized those who have made significant contributions to the ASU and sport of speed skating with President Award Plaques.

The first went to Ruth Moore, in recognition of long service to the ASU and the sport of speed skating, lately for serving on the North American Committee and spear heading the successful drive to increase U. S. skater participation in North American Championships.



Bill Anderson and Ruth Moore



Bill Anderson and David Kennedy

The other one was presented to David Kennedy in recognition of accomplishments as chairman of the ASU's Camp and Coaching Committees.

Then, as The Racing Blade Editor, I presented The Racing Blade Award to Lawrence Ralston. Larry has faithfully contributed a column to The Racing Blade for fifteen years.

More importantly, he provided moral support and guidance for me, as my mentor and friend, and I suspect for many years for his friend Bob Vehe, who initiated The Racing Blade Award.



Don Kangas and Larry Ralston

Hall of Fame Awards



Lorraine Garbe and Jerry Steele

The Hall of Fame Award for Tom Plant was presented by Lorraine Garbe and accepted by Jerry Steele. Tom Plant was not able to attend the Convention.

The posthumous Hall of Fame Award for John Fred Gohl was presented by Larry Ralston and accepted by Mike Affholter.



Mike Affholter and Larry Ralston

All awards photos by Bill Houghton



Mike Affholter and "Doc" Savage

Mike Affholter presented M. D. "Doc" Savage with his Speedskating Hall of Fame plaque. Mike mentioned Doc's untiring, successful efforts in support of new speed skating clubs around the country. He could cite these efforts from personal experience. They worked together to get the Central Wisconsin club off to a successful start.

Larry Ralston presented Shirley Ann Yates with her Speedskating Hall of Fame plaque. Larry preceded Shirley as ASU Executive Secretary/Treasurer. So he, too, understood the magnitude of Shirley's contributions to the sport of speed skating.



Larry Ralston and Shirley Yates

This presentation capped an entertaining and enjoyable evening. The convention attendees retired for the night to rest for the concluding session on Sunday morning

All awards photos by Bill Houghton

ASU General Membership Meeting

Finally the last day! The discussions are over. It is time to make everything official.

The Annual General Membership Meeting of ASU Association delegates was convened on Sunday morning to vote on Legislative Committee proposals dealing with changes in the ASU Constitution and By-Laws and to elect ASU Officers for two year terms.

Only Association delegates are allowed to vote at the General membership meeting. Each Association present has one vote and one spokesperson. They may have up to three delegates, who can split their vote if they want. The delegates all take seats at tables arranged in a U. ASU Officers at the front and delegates on the sides of the U. Other attendees of the convention are seated in the audience.

After the role of Associations was called to verify a quorum present, they considered the Convention's recommendations for the legislative proposals. All proposals were approved or rejected as recommended by the convention with some additional amendments and revisions, such as:

Proposal 1. U. S. Speedskating will be represented at the General membership meeting as well as the Board of Control meeting, as it is now.

Proposal 3. Maryland Association's new name is Maryland and Eastern Pennsylvania Speedskating Association.

The revised Alliance Between the Amateur Speedskating Union of the United States and Speed Skating Canada was approved.

The ASU and U. S. Speedskating merger By-Laws were endorsed. So the efforts to merge will continue.

The Delegates then elected the following slate of Officers presented by the Nominating Committee.

President: Duane Riley

Vice President Operations: Carl Cepuran

Vice President Racing: Al Menghi

Vice President Promotion: Bob Payne

The General Membership Meeting was adjourned. The delegates return to their seats with the audience and Board of Control Representatives take their seats at the front of the room at the tables arranged in a U.

ASU Board of Control Meeting

The ASU Annual Board of Control meeting was convened and the roll called of each Association Representative, the Skaters Representative, the U. S. Speedskating Representative, and the past Presidents, who have one vote collectively, to verify a quorum present.

Susan Jarrett presented the Record Committee's report to be approved by the Board of Control.

Tony Arena, Commissioner of Officials presented his report and recommendations for people to be approved as National Chief Officials.

The Board of Control elected these people to their respective positions:

Tony Arena, Commissioner of Officials

Bill Houghton, Editor of The Racing Blade and the ASU Speed Skating Handbook

Bruce Houghton, Publisher of The Racing Blade and the ASU Speed Skating Handbook

Karen Kostal, ASU Executive Secretary/Treasurer

The Board of Control then considered the Convention's recommendations for the racing rules proposals. All proposals were approved or rejected as recommended by the Convention, with some amendments and revisions, such as:

Proposal 1. A time standard was approved as a recommendation to use as a guideline for participation in National Championships.

Proposal 2. The Intermediate class was approved and defined as 17 years and younger.

The ASU Board of Control meeting was adjourned and the ASU Convention 2000 closed with short remarks from outgoing President Bill Anderson and incoming President Duane Riley.

This brief unofficial summary of the ASU Convention 2000 is meant to present an idea of what happens at an ASU Convention and Annual meeting for the many members who can't be there. The official proceedings will be published in the 2000 Directory and Minutes of Annual Meeting. Karen Kostal, Executive Secretary/Treasurer sends copies to Board of Control Representatives and Associations that have ordered extra copies. Copies of the 2000 Directory and Minutes of the Annual Meeting are available for \$15.00 each from Karen Kostal, OS 651 Forest, Winfield, IL 60190.

News from the 2000 Convention in California **by Beth Bedford, Skater Rep.**

As skater rep, I want to inform you about a few changes that will effect you as skaters. I'm not going into detail about all of the "housekeeping" changes, but will outline the few that will effect you the most.

- 1. The helmet rule.** This has been a hot topic over the past year, and it was decided that further research will need to be done. For this coming skating season, the new LAS helmets are recommended, but the old "hard shell" helmets will be allowed. This does not allow skaters to skate in any helmet they wish. What it means is if the new LAS helmet does not work well for an individual, then the individual can wear a helmet that meets the prior helmet rule of being a "hard shell."
- 2. Intermediate Class.** It's back! Two years ago the ASU got rid of the Intermediate class, and this year they are bringing it back. We will now be running the same classes as the Canadians and the same classes run at the North Americans. The divisions that are impacted now read like this: Junior 15 and under, Intermediate 17 and under, Senior 18 and older.
- 3. Canadian Treaty.** A new document was signed between the US and Canada, which is a good thing. However, I want everyone to be aware of a new paragraph that was added. When the North Americans are held in Canada, no North American title or medallion will be given out in a division that has less than 3 skaters. I want to let the skaters and parents know this in advance before they spend a lot of money to travel to this competition, and the North American Championship that you thought you were going to skate turns into an exhibition race. The cost of the Medallion was listed as the reason why this paragraph was included.
- 4. National Qualifying Standards.** The quotas for each Association have been lifted, but a new standard has been recommended for skaters participating in the nationals. The new standard states that a

skater should be able to skate within 25% of the National record in that particular division for the shortest race. Remember this is a recommendation, and some common sense by each Association should be used. As an example, if the 500 meter record is 50 seconds, then a skater should be able to skate 125% of that number which is 62.5. Safety is a key issue behind this recommendation without limiting anyone's national experience.

5. A couple of other items of note. The medallion fund is in need of some sponsors for awards in divisions that are currently not funded. You can contact Larry Ralston for the divisions. I know people have contacts, be it a corporation, foundation and/or family members, so please try to locate a sponsor for this fund. Registered officials are also in high demand. So please, if you are a parent or other interested adult, register as an official and learn what it takes to do each job. The current National officials will not be around forever, and we need new blood into the system to keep the meets going. Contact the national office with any questions.

Heads Up for Masters Skaters!

By Carole Moore, Vice President of Racing Middle Atlantic Speedskating Association Flushing Speedskating Club

Masters racing has been enhanced in the last several years by some important changes approved at past national ASU conventions. The added age categories of Masters classes has made competitive racing possible at an expanded age range, enhancing a growing segment of the speed skating population. Some eligible Masters have taken advantage of these racing opportunities; others have not. There lies one part of the problem. Unless there is continued interest and participation, these classes may go under review for their need to be continued. It was evident at this years convention that not all associations are supportive of Masters classes.

If you're interested in seeing these added Masters age categories continue, you can do something about it:

1.) **VOICE YOUR OPINION - SPEAK UP:** Continue to work with your association so your skating and racing needs are known: Talk to your association's Board of Directors. Email your Skater's Representative, Beth Bedford about any concerns or ideas you feel may enhance participation. You can also contact me at: caroleskater@aol.com or call me at 718 / ICE-0351. Keep the ideas, enthusiasm and communication going. We need them all.

2.) **VENTURE OUT - RACE:** Skaters must participate in the classes that are in place. If participation drops, so may the classes. Don't let the "use it or loose it" slogan become a reality. Last season's National and North American championships had low attendance in some classes. It's difficult to request races for categories when skaters are not participating. So jump in: Skate, race, participate!

3.) **VOLUNTEER:** The ASU is a small association with a common interest. But, in order to see our sport continue and thrive at all levels, we all need to be involved in some way. Not sure what you can do? Just ask!

Encouraging growth of speedskating at all ages and levels is important. The added Masters age categories are no exception: Masters skaters contribute much to our sport. So let's keep the Masters classes coming — starting by coming to the Masters classes. Then, remember all three V's:

1.) Voice your opinion 2.) Venture out, race / skate /participate 3.) Volunteer for the cause.
You'll be glad you did!

OVERHEARD IN THE HEAT BOX

by: Larry Ralston

After 15 years of writing this column I have decided to retire it. When one retires from his "real job," life seems to take on a very different meaning as the lifestyle changes. Now, I find myself traveling more and to places that don't even know that speedskating exists. It becomes increasingly difficult to gather material for this type of column when you are no longer in the mainstream. For this reason I have decided to close the door on the "Heat Box." That doesn't mean I'm retiring from speedskating. I'll still submit timely articles that are pertinent to the sport and stay active with other committee work and special projects. To my many readers over the past 15 years I say "Thanks for permitting me to be a part of the speedskating experience."

Association and Club News

Team Alaska Short Trackers at the Arctic Winter Games Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada, March 5-11, 2000 By Patricia Bowden

Every two years the Arctic Winter Games are staged in a northern, Arctic location with participants coming from as far away as Greenland and Russia. The 2000 Arctic Winter Games were staged in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory in Canada. Nineteen different sports are held at the Arctic Winter Games ranging from biathlon to dog mushing and short track speed skating. A component of the games also includes the games of Eskimo heritage as well as that of other indigenous cultures of the Arctic.

In previous participation at the past two Arctic Winter Games, Team Alaska speed skaters were only able to wrestle away one individual medal at each of the 1996 and 1998 games. This year under the direction of new coaching strategies brought to the club by Short Track Coach Chris Bowden, Team Alaska skaters fared much better. Chris spent time with the skating community in Australia and in further coaching clinics in Calgary, Canada. Bringing short track coaching knowledge back to Alaska has made a great difference in the competitiveness of the Alaskan team due to the lack of local short track expertise and our distance and isolation from the mainstream speed skating community. Team Alaska provided a significantly higher level of competition for the dominant team from the Northwest Territories. Team Alaska was able to capture eight individual medals as well as medals in three of the four relays. Individuals earning individual speed skating medals from Alaska included Sylvia Armitstead, Kirsten Arnett, Riley Bowden and Greg Morris. Sylvia and Kirsten proved to be dominant competitors in each of their respective divisions. Since all of our individual medalists reside in Eagle River, Alaska, we are hopeful of being able to maintain our short track speedskating program in Eagle River where it originated.

Team Alaska entered the games short handed without a complete contingent of skaters. We further lost skaters to a broken leg, sickness and other injuries limiting participation in some events. Overall most other teams were surprised at the improvement of the Alaskan skaters since the last games in 1998. The regions sending speed skating teams to the Arctic Winter Games this year included Alaska, Northern Alberta, Northwest Territory, Nunavut Territory and Yukon Territory. Team Alaska was the sole non-Canadian speed skating team. In overall competition among the nineteen sports being contested, Team Alaska dominated all other teams.

Anchorage-Eagle River Skaters Compete in Fairbanks

April 1, 2000

By Patricia Bowden

Through the undaunted efforts of Jerry Becker, a new speed skating club has been in the initial stages of development this year in Fairbanks, Alaska. For members of the Anchorage-Eagle River Club, this is great news. Fairbanks is a mere 350 miles away which is considerably closer than any other clubs currently are.

On April 1, 2000 a small group of skaters from Eagle River traveled north to Fairbanks to conduct a clinic and to participate in the Fairbanks club's first competition. This may have been the first time a speed skating competition has been held this far north in the United States. Short track coach Chris Bowden, accompanied by his son Riley Bowden and fellow skater Clay Moody comprised the small group.

The weather in Central Alaska was beautiful and sunny but still quite chilly, which is normal for this time of year. During the clinic, the Eagle River skaters were able to assist Fairbanks skaters with technique and safety tips as well as various drills and demonstrations. Following the clinic Fairbanks skaters participated in their first competition. A good time was had by all and skaters really seemed to enjoy the experience.

The Fairbanks Speedskating Club is to be commended on their hospitality and camaraderie. Our hosts, the Becker family keeps a dog team. Riley and Clay found time to hit the trails with Vicky Becker and dog mushing was a highlight of the trip for them.

The Fairbanks club is composed of skaters of many ability and age groups and has great potential for developing into a long term club of excellent skaters. All found the experience to be fun and positive and that's what it is all about. Keep up the great work Fairbank's skaters!

Middle Atlantic Skating Association by Stan Zompakos

Carlos Soto has announced that he will not run for president of the Middle Atlantic Skating Association at this year's annual meeting. Membership hopes that he will re-consider, as the association has benefited greatly during the several years that he has served in this capacity. His support of the association has been essential in filling the gap left by the untimely death of Bob Finkel.

The MASA fell a little short of fundraising goals for the Juan Williams National Medallion. Anyone interested in contributing to this fund, or the Bob Finkel Memorial fund, should contact Carole at (718) 423-0351.

Congratulations to Abigail Hammer on her performance at the National Short Track Speedskating Championships. Abigail finished first in the 500 and 444 meter finals, fifth in the 222 final, and fourth in the 333 final, in the Pony Women's division.

The Flushing Meadow Speedskating Club sponsored and ran a very successful New York State Speedskating Championships in March. However, the Tuesday and Thursday workouts at the Flushing Meadow rink have depleted the club treasury by approximately \$2,500 during the course of the 1999/2000 season. Fundraising has only partly made up for this loss so far. The club may start the workouts in November instead of October next season, as the heaviest losses are sustained during the month of October.

Middle Atlantic Skating Association by Janet FitzGerald

The MASA mourns the loss of Angelos Zompakos, father of Stan Zompakos. Angelos helped make molds for skaters for Bont skates in the 1980s, when the availability of short track skates was in very short supply. Mr. Zompakos was apparently a victim of the rush, rush, cost cutting policies of the current medical care/insurance system. After simple knee surgery on April 26th, he was quickly moved through post-operative care, until a family member was the first to notice he was having extreme difficulty breathing. He was subsequently treated for Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome for 5 weeks but passed away on Thursday, June 1st

Southern California by Sue Perles

LA Kings Exhibition Races - Its ShowTime!

Fourteen skaters from the Southern California Speed Skating Association and the newly formed HealthSouth Speed Skating Club thrilled a near capacity crowd at the Staples Center. As the first period of the LA KINGS Hockey game came to an end, the safety pads were whisked out, fourteen short track speed skaters stepped onto the ice, blocks were put in place and the gun sounded. 20,000 screaming hockey fans were treated to three fun, fast and exciting short track races!

The first race was a real crowd pleaser. The fans hushed as four young speed skaters responded to the start commands. On the line were Zoe Borde (age 4), James Lewis (6), Sarah Schenker (7) and Isaac Sermenio (5). The next race was a thriller with crashes, passes and lots of short track excitement. This race included; Katy Bakwanski (10), Aran Kim (10), Anna Kim (9), Jonathan Sermenio (8), Walter Rusk (10) and Kyle Yuihara (10). The final exhibition race of the evening showed the crowd the speed and skill of our skaters. The competitors on the start line were; Maria Garcia (14), Ian Hawkins (16), Alice Kim (12), and Jade Wheeler (14).

Everyone had lots of fun. The KINGS gave all of our skaters team ball caps and awarded the HealthSouth Speed Skating Club the game puck! It was a great opportunity to introduce our sport to thousands of fans and to invite them to learn to speed skate. The HealthSouth Speed Skating Club practices on Sunday mornings at the new LA KINGS training center in El Segundo, California. Stop by when you visit the West Coast.

Missouri Senior Olympics by Fran Whelan

Read in the Racing Blade that we were unable to get into the Senior Olympics in New York. We did manage in St. Louis to do so. The Metros ran the event at Webster Groves on Sunday, 28 May 2000. Four seniors entered. Four races; 500, 777, 1000, 1500 meters. Participants were Rick Barcheck(50-54yrs), Ed Buhs(55-60yrs), Robert Samuals and Francis Whelan (60-64). Hope to do it again next year also.

Meet Results

Masters' International Open Mass Start, February 12 & 13, 2000 Pettit National Ice Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

30 - 34 Men

1. Dave Paul
2. Joe Franz
3. John Bleck
4. Marcel Sales
5. Erik Sales
5. Devin Winton

30 - 34 Women

1. Julie Brillif
2. Jennifer Davis

35 - 39 Men

1. Howard Clausing
2. Matt Trimble
3. Sam Renshaw
3. John Koppi
5. Jim Royce

35 - 39 Women

1. Suzy Osman

40 - 44 Men

1. Greg Oly
2. Al Forsyth
3. Bruce Conner
4. Jim Gildelamadrid
5. Jeff Brand

40 - 44 Women

1. Amy Fulleman
2. Susan Hassdenteufel
3. Jan Zurcher
4. Jane Kenyon

45 - 49 Men

1. Steve Desotell
2. Billy Peterson
3. Dan Green
4. Steve Miller
5. Paul Van Patten

45 - 49 Women

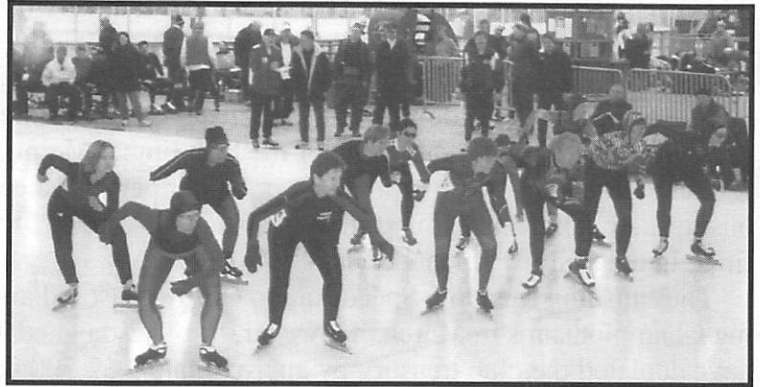
1. Suzie LaBelle

50 - 54 Men

1. Chris Hawkins
2. Vince Gagliano
3. Dave Manfredi
4. Dave Montgomery
5. Harry Dingle

50 - 54 Women

1. Carole Moore
2. Elizabeth Passman



Master Women at the start of the 3000

55 - 59 Men

1. Ron Scholefield
2. Steve Gunther
3. Bill Steffel
4. Ed Connolly
5. Jim White

55 - 59 Women

1. Mary Lou Dinicola
2. Michell Hanne

60 - 64 Men

1. Rich Widmark
2. Tony Marchese
3. Bruce Trimble
4. Ed Basinski
5. Fran Whelan

65 - 69 Men

1. Vern Kappes
2. John Sorce
3. Lauren Brooks

65 - 69 Women

1. Mary Vimella

70 - 74 Men

1. Howard Ganong
2. Loschel Pierringer

75 - 79 Men

1. Joe McDonald

80 - 84 Men

1. Joseph Flax

Senior International Games, Metric

Berlin, Germany

by Mary O'Donnell

On February 25-27, 2000 the 9th Seniors' International Speed Skating Games were held in Berlin, Germany. Nearly 200 skaters from over one dozen countries participated at the ice hall Berlin-Hohenschonhausen, a place known for fast ice and training spot for Germany's up and coming skaters. The United States was proudly represented by six master skaters including Howard Clausing, Howard Ganong, Vern Kappes, Joe McDonald, Mary O'Donnell and Rich Widmark.

This annual traditional metric skating event, now entering its 10th year, is designated for master age skaters only. The meet has grown into a popular competition especially among the European skaters. Particular outstanding performances were seen with the Dutch, German and Norwegian skaters. Many are former champions from their respective countries and have continued the age less activity of skating and certainly do the masters proud. The best part was the thrilling atmosphere of people coming together for the love of speed skating.

A little background about this event. The International Seniors Speed Skating Committee is the organizing body overseeing representation from all involved countries. The meet has been in many countries including



Top Row: Rich Widmark and Mary O'Donnell

Howard Clausing, Vern Kappas, Joe McDonald, Howard Ganong

Holland, Italy, Finland, Canada and Germany. The hope is that there will be a rotating site. At this point the International Speed Skating Union (ISU) recognizes and accepts the competition of the Seniors, but thinks it's too early for a Seniors' Commission in the ISU.

This year's event at the ice hall in Hohenschonhausen was organized by the Berliner TSC e.V., Berlin Speed Skating Club. There were available ice times twice a day from Tuesday through Thursday. The races started Friday evening. Pairings selection was held Thursday evening followed by a reception at the host hotel.

This was a great opportunity to meet with the different skaters and officials. The host hotel, although was a bit less formal than the last stay in Berlin when the games were held there in '97, certainly had a great staff and bountiful breakfast buffets served every morning of the meet. It was a comfortable 15 minute walk to the ice hall. A warm welcome by some young speed skaters was part of the opening ceremonies Friday afternoon. Each country was represented by a member of the local club carrying a flag.

The opening races of the women's 500m sure were a bang, with outstanding skaters, such as Rita Lutten and Ria Slikker from the Netherlands. They started early Saturday morning and continued into the evening. Numerous records both ISSSC and personal bests did occur. Not enough can be said about the professional and dedicated performance of the participating officials. From the lapcounters, to the chief referee, clerks and starters, all were excellent.

The U. S. skaters did our country proud. Howard Clausing did a personal best in his 500. He placed second overall. He and most of the other men were in categories 15-20 skaters deep. Joe McDonald, the oldest skater at 79, not only won his age group, but he broke the ISSSC records for both the 1000 and 300 distances.

After skating was over Sunday afternoon, everyone threw their skins in for a little fancier attire to attend the celebration dinner. Skaters in each category were honored with medals, flowers and certificates of attendance. The food was outstanding featuring German specialities along with refreshing beer.

Next year's event will be held in Quebec City, Canada. Three French Canadians skated in Berlin and gave a big welcome for attendees to visit their country next year. The dates are March 2 - 4, 2001. The hope is to have a 100 km marathon the weekend before the races. Please consider this memorable event.

For questions and more information contact Mary O'Donnell, 3032 12th Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55407,
E-mail O'Donnell@usa.redcross.org

North American Short Track Championships Regina, Saskatchewan March 24, 25 & 26, 2000 Age Class Champions

Midget Girls	Mellisa Tremblay, Quebec
Midget Boys	Mathieu Richer, Quebec
Juvenile Girls	Maria Garcia, S. California
Juvenile Boys	Zack Goldberg, Maryland
Junior Women	Emilie Nadeau-Benoit, Quebec
Junior Men	Oliver Jean, Quebec
Intermediate Women	Annik Plamondon, Quebec
Intermediate Men	Andrew Lahey, Ontario
Senior Women	Andrea Searles, New Brunswick
Senior Men	Jeff Sholten, New Brunswick
Master Women	Jan Zucher, Washington
Master Men	Sam Renshaw, Michigan

National Short Track Speedskating Championships

Philadelphia, PA, March 31 - April 2, 2000

National Champions

Women



Aran Kim, S. CA.



Tippy Jordon, MN



Maria Garcia, S. CA



Kira Fling, IL



Amy Peterson, MN



Kate Stewart, N. NY



Liz Marcease, N. NY



Carole Moore, NY



Ed Basinski, N. NY

Pony

Brad Soble, MN
Edwardo Alvarez, FL

Midget

Arron Kopp N. NY

Juvenile

Zack Goldberg, MD

Junior

Shani Davis, IL

Senior

Chris Weaver, MI

Master 30-39

Sam Renshaw, MI

Master 40-49

Robert Darrow, IL

Master 50-59

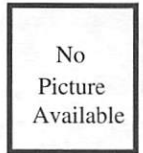
John Dimont, N. CA

Master 70+

Men

Master 60-69

Howard Ganong, N. NY



Obituaries

By Lorraine Garbe of the Wisconsin Skating Association Howard Gutgesell Sr., March 28, 1912 - April 14, 2000



The ASU, WSA and U.S. Speedskating lost one of its oldest and most dedicated members of this sport when Howard Gutgesell Sr. died on April 14, 2000 from a heart attack at the West Allis Memorial Hospital. He was 88 years old and had been in poor health for about 4 years.

Howard was always a very active member of speedskating starting in 1951 when he got involved with his two children, Vicki and Howard Jr., in pack style skating while living in Wausau, Wisconsin. They were members of the Wausau Skate Club and he did serve as its president. He immediately became active as a judge, timer and heat box clerk, volunteering at every competition.

When his job transferred to Milwaukee in 1960 the family settled in Brookfield. He had married Myrtle in 1937 whom he met while teaching general science in Kaukauna, Wisconsin. He had a masters degree in agriculture at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1930.

Their daughter, Vickie, continued to skate joining the West Allis Skate Club. Howard took some time off from skating but did resume skating with the Madison Skate Club while he was attending the University of Wisconsin Madison.

When both children retired from skating, Howard continued to volunteer. He had been appointed a national ASU clerk of course in 1956 continuing through 1992. He had served as president of the Wisconsin Skating Association. When Howard officially retired from the Veterans Association in 1975 the speedskating officiating became a full time job as a volunteer. That was his main interest. No matter how low the temperature went, Howard was always outdoors timing or judging, never missing a weekend at the old Olympic outdoor Ice Rink at the State Fair Park in West Allis, except to volunteer at the ASU National Long Track at Lake Como in St. Paul, Minnesota. Howard was appointed treasurer of USISA and held that position for many years. He was USISA's Board of Control member to the ASU for many years. Howard was the first national chief official to be named as Official Emeritus. He was a Lifetime member of the U.S. Speedskating. He was an official at many sprint and all around world championships. Howard accepted the offer to be a timer at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid in 1980.

Howard was a 10 year member of the ASU Hall of Fame committee and also served as its' chairman for the 1981-82 season. His devotion to Speedskating at all levels qualified him to be inducted into the ASU Hall of Fame in 1983 in St. Louis, Missouri at the Annual Convention.

His knowledge and information from the years of membership in the Wausau Skate Club helped the Central Wisconsin Skate Club to find former officials and timers. This helped to get that club started again, a few years ago. His wife, Myrtle, died in 1992.

Howard was an avid supporter of the ASU Scholarship Fund for many years with generous monetary contributions.

William H. (Bill) Heinkel

William H. (Bill) Heinkel Sr., a former coach of the West Allis Speedskating Club and an official of both ASU and USISA died very suddenly of a heart attack on April 12, 2000 at the age of 77 years. Bill's wife, Audrey, whom he married in 1947 in Milwaukee survives him as well as their five children, Bill Jr., Bob, Nancy, Debby and Don, 20 grandchildren and other relatives.

Bill Sr. and Audrey were residents of Racine, Wisconsin for the last 46 years. He was an instructor at Gateway Technical College for over 35 years. He was a youth football coach in Racine and an avid bowler. He and Audrey were active members of Epiphany Lutheran church.

All five of their children were speed skaters at some time having joined the West Allis Speedskating Club in 1957. Bill Sr. became a coach of this club shortly after joining, traveling forty-five minutes to the West Allis, Milwaukee area several times a week for coaching and training. On the weekends of Pack style competitions, Bill Sr. always chaperoned a car full of skaters from the West Allis Club to many cities in the USA. Bill Jr. was the most serious skater and continued to skate when his siblings pursued other interests. Bill Sr. coached him to five national championships in Long Track and Short Track. He also coached several other club skaters to become national champs as well as world and Olympic Team members.

Bill Sr. was an ASU national judge and timer for pack style as well as metric time trials at the former Olympic Outdoor Oval at the state Fair Park in West Allis. Bill and Audrey were honored by the West Allis Speedskating Club in 1976 with the Family of the Year Award. He was invited to serve as a Timer at the 1980 Olympic Games in Lake Placid. Bill Sr. was a Life Time member of U.S. Speedskating.

Centuries of Speed Skating Progress

by Terge. B. Hansen

Edited by Stan Zompakos

Third Installment

Actually an article about this period should include women's world records (WRs) too. This was the time when women really reached professional levels. However the women were accomplished skaters since the beginning of skating many hundreds of years ago. A discussion of the evolution of women's records would require a separate article and research. In Norway, many fans follow skating much the way baseball is followed in the US. The author is one such fan, and the materials he has readily available emphasize men's skating.

The most remarkable world record venue in speed skating history, the great moments in Davos and Calgary notwithstanding, is the Medeo oval. Around 1970 the original Medeo rink, which by then had lost its No. 1 position to Inzell, was destroyed by a landslide. Soviet speed skating and the Socialist Republic of Kazakhstan joined forces to re-build the oval, as a modern, refrigerated rink. The location, at the bottom of a narrow valley, with stands and a gigantic scoreboard, not only protected the track from the winds, but actually created tail winds along the track. The refrigeration machinery was the most powerful in the world, sufficient to keep the ice frozen through mild spring days. Thus air temperature and draft, both reduced the air resistance, which was already modest at an altitude of 5,100 feet.

Before the new rink opened in the fall of 1972, the great Ard Schenk had brought the WRs down to 1:58.7, 4:08.3, 7:09.3, 14:55.9. No other skaters had ever reached Schenk's level. The sprinters Linkovesi (Finland), Borjes (Sweden) and Keller (W. Germany) all reached the 38.0 mark in '72, and in January '73, in Davos, the Norwegian veteran Efskind shocked the skating world by not only equaling this, but also achieving an unheard of 1:17.6 in the double distance.

At the Medeo, during the 1973 season, only two of these WRs were improved, and none of them in ISU approved meets. Nineteen year old Nikolay Kuzmenko achieved 1:58.0 and 4 year senior Aleksandr Tsygankov beat Schenk's records with 1:58.6 and 4:08.2. The next season former Junior World Champion, Kondakov set another unofficial 3,000 m WR: 4:03.67; a 3k in 1,500 m speed. Vladimir Kashchey's 38.02 was the best electronically timed 500 m ever; equaling 37.8 with the manual watches still used at the famous 'Record Meets' in Davos. Aleksandr Safronov set the first official WR at the new Medeo, with a 1:17.34 1,000 m.

Next year the Soviets re-entered the Championship podiums. Ivanov and Kondakov medaled in the World Championship, while Safronov, Muratov and Kulikov won a triple in the World Sprints (Kashchey won the first 500, but fell and missed a top 4 spot overall). The WR rush started with the country match USSR vs. Norway, in March.

First Yevgeny Kulikov broke the 38.0 limit - 37.99 was followed by 37.97. Some days later Muratov improved this, followed by Kulikov completing his achievement with 37.20 and 37.00. The 500 m WR had been improved by a full second in one season! The observation that the new record was exactly equal to the normal temperature of a human body, did not make Kulikov's record any less legendary. The other 1975 WRs were less impressive: Muratov 1:16.92, Kondakov 7:08.92, Varlamov 14:52.73. Nevertheless: Schenk was wiped out of the record lists (even though he still held the official 1,500 and 3,000 m WRs).

In the spring of 1975 the Norwegian Skating Federation planned a new revolution. Like the one 13 years earlier, it was a combination of new training principles, improved technique, and new equipment. The Man behind it all was Johs Tenman. Like Sten Johnson in '63, his background wasn't from speed skating, but he'd been a skating coach for several years - supervising the Norwegian National team in '72, and later on the pros of ISSL and WISO. Tenman's goals were simple: to beat Ard Schenk. He succeeded! In early test races unknown skaters threatened the Norwegian records (which at that time had to be set in Norway, and were considerably weaker than the real Norwegian best times). In the country matches prior to the European Championship, the Norwegians wiped out the Dutch and Soviet teams. Schenk's lowland best marks were all beaten. In the EC, at Bislett Stadium, in Oslo, Norway's quartet took the first 4 spots, both overall and in the 5k. Sten Stensen beat both Varlamov and his 10k WR: 14:50.31. But soon the rest of Europe caught up. Dutchman Hans van Helden set the season's first WR with 7:07.82 in Davos. Later on Piet Kleine improved it two times; ending in 7:02.38. The most impressive achievement of these Dutch Inzell sessions, however was Heiden's 1:55.61. This season, the Medeo couldn't match these times. The Medeo's country match USSR vs the Netherlands and Norway, suffered badly from influenza. Two WRs were set though: Sten Stensen's 14:38.08 (in a thrilling duel with WR holder Kleine), and Kulikov's 1:15.70. The latter a great improvement of Muratov's WR, though expected after Malikov's 1:15.76 three months earlier. Later that season Safronov set an unofficial mark of 1:15.01.

The 'revolution' continued in '77, and now the Soviet skaters and the Medeo were in the lead. The Norwegians

dominated the EC, but Vladimir Lobanov shocked us all with his 1:53.8 on Christmas Day. 1,500 meters of pure sprint!

The time was never recognized as a WR, but as a world's best mark it was unchallenged for 7 years. Sergey Marchuk's 3:56.65 was just as unbelievable, and it lasted even longer. With 15 years as the world's best time, it is one of the longest lasting records ever. Martsjuk also skated the first 5k below 7 minutes, in the USSR vs Norway country match in March. But here, the Norwegian 1,500 m specialist Stenshjemmet beat Marchuk's time. Stenshjemmet's 6:56.9 is another landmark in speed skating history. For 4 years it was the world's best 5k time; as an official WR it lasted yet another year.

The great name of the late 70s was of course Eric Heiden. There are several reasons why he didn't have the same impact on the WR lists as in the championships. One is possibly his technique, which might not have been as suited for fast ice, as for heavier conditions on lowland rinks. Probably of more importance, is the fact that he only visited the Medeo once. That was in March '77, in the Soviet Cup; the same meet when Marchuk set his fabulous 3k record. Heiden didn't acclimate to the high altitude well. A bad 5k, a fair enough 1,500 m, and a great 1,000 m was the result of his visit. Paired with Marchuk (following close behind) Heiden achieved 1:14.47. No ISU approval; the WR by the end of the season was still Kulikov's at 1:15.33.

Heiden improved his 1,000 (beaten by 1 hundredth by Medennikov in '78) at the then uncovered lowland rink in West Allis at the beginning of the 1980 season. 1:14.37 at a lowland rink! That equals a low 1:12 at the Medeo. Still Heiden's best time was 1:13.60, from Davos, in January 1980. A brilliant result, though improved by Gaetan Boucher just one year later.

In the 1980s, like Ard Schenk 10 years earlier, Eric Heiden was the standard to which all speed skating was compared. That is, his lowland achievements - 38.05, 1:14.37, 1:56.05, 4:20.4, 6:59.15 and 14:43.11 were his best marks. They were beaten in '81 (Ronning), '85 (Zhelezovsky), '92 (Koss), '91 (Koss) and '82.

The last is worth mentioning. At the European Championship at Bislett in 1982, Tomas Gustafson, of Sweden, smashed Heiden's rink record, and even beat Ogloblin's Medeo WR. 14:23.59; the last WR set on an outdoor lowland rink.

A great leap to Igor Malkov's 13:54.81, at the Medeo, December 1983. More than 22 seconds better than the former world's best mark; and Gustafson's 14:23 was still the official WR. The Olympic season of 1983-84 was also the season that ended Lobanov's reign in the 1,500 m. Andrey Bobrov made a best mark of 1:53.22, while Oleg Bozhev's official WR was 0.002 seconds behind. Viktor Sjasjerin set an official WR of 6:49.15 in the 5k; like Malkov's 13:54 the best outdoor result before the klap skate.

After the great '84 season, the Medeo achievements in '85 and '86 were disappointing. 1987 was the year of the indoor tracks, which are covered in the next issue. But '87 was also the year when the Medeo showed itself at it's best, and proved that it could compete with, and supersede, the indoor rinks in the short distances.

During the Soviet Cup, with American skaters participating outside competition, Nick Thometz achieved 36.23 and 1:12.05; the former lasting for 4 years as the world's best; the latter surviving all indoor attacks for 9 full years. Once again it took klap skates to kill them as 'outdoor WRs'. Bobrov's 1:52.46 didn't last that long though.

The Medeo kept its position as the world's fastest outdoor rink into the 90s. The fall of the Soviet Empire alas, meant the end of the Medeo. The Independent Republic of Kazakhstan lacked the resources needed to maintain the rink. So the Commonwealth of Independent State's National Championships and Olympic trials of the 1991/92 season was the end of the Medeo as a world class ice rink.

The Medeo's rink records are, and will perhaps always be - 36.23, 1:12.05, 1:52.29, 3:56.65, 6:49.15, and 13:54.81. Viktor Shasherin's 1,500 m ('90) being the only one that never was the world's best time.

Fourth Installment

1987 was the year of the last great Medeo WRs. But the 86/87 season also introduced the new development of indoor 400 m tracks.

In the sport eventually known as short track skating, indoor rinks were used throughout the 20th century, and even in the late 19th century. In long track speed skating, indoor rinks were unheard of for most of the 20th century. In Northern Europe 400m rinks were used for athletics and soccer in the long, sunlit days of the summer season. Other rinks were simply frozen lakes or sea bays. When artificially frozen ovals were developed around 1960, conflicts between summer sports, and a longer speed skating season led to specialized rinks for ice only, and the idea of indoor long track rinks became more realistic. Still there were technical problems connected with building self supporting roofs big enough to cover a 400 m oval and stands.

The first indoor long track oval was a 333 m rink in Leningrad, USSR. From the early 80s it was used mainly for summer training. Test race results were amazing - so amazing that most statisticians left them out of their lowland best lists. The roof was part of the reason for that omission as well as the fact that 333 m tracks were never fully recognized by long track purists.

In the autumn of 1986 two full 400 m indoor rinks were opened in Europe: The Sports forum in Berlin, East Germany,

and the Thialf in Heerenveen, the Netherlands. Both were former outdoor rinks, with rather primitive coverings, especially the East German one. Both venues hosted World Cup events that Autumn, and already in Heerenveen, Eric Heiden's 5,000m "lowland WR" was beaten. Personal, and even National bests were set. The statisticians soon realized that indoor tracks had to be compared with high altitude rinks, rather than with lowland ones.

There are several reasons for the superiority of indoor rinks. The first thing mentioned by the media, was ice quality. The roof and walls protected the ice from pollution and moisture. No more dust or raindrops roughened the surface. The experiences during the 87 season also suggested that heating and air conditioning was a big part of it. A higher air temperature meant less air resistance, as well as better working conditions for the human body. The distributed heat of an indoor rink does not make the ice soft, as does the sun heating an outdoor rink receives on a spring day. Proper air conditioning keeps the humidity at an ideal level. An unintended, though very positive side effect, is that the covering makes it possible to profit from the low air pressure during a storm, without the wind and rain ruining the skating conditions.

The 1987 World Championship was the first big indoor event. The first ever indoor World Record was 6:47.01 by Leo Visser, NED, beating the last Medeo WR on the 5,000 m. Nikolay Gulyaev's 1:52.70 was also better than the Medeo best mark, while 14:03.92, by Geir Karlstad, NOR, was 9 seconds behind Malkov's Medeo rink record. Other Heerenveen WRs that first season were Nick Thometz's 1:36.55 and Visser's 3:59.27. All these WRs, officially, survived the season, though only Visser's 5,000 m time as the real World's best. The Medeo kept its no. 1 position.

The Olympic Oval in Calgary was not finished in time for the 87 season. When it opened one year later, the expectations were sky high. At an altitude of more than 3,000 ft, the Oval should profit both from the now well known indoor advantages and the good old high altitude benefits.

The first World Cup meet in Calgary, December 1987, didn't show the shocking results speed skating fans expected. We soon settled with the thought that the advantages of indoor rinks simply evened out the altitude differences. A decade later it looked more like the Calgary staff hadn't quite mastered the art of ice preparation back then. During the 90s they gained the necessary experience, and by the turn of the century the Calgary Oval was considered by far, the fastest ice rink in the world.

Still the Oval was ready for WRs from day one. In the December 87 WC, Karlstad finally set a "real" 10k WR with 13:48.51, after improving his one week old 5k WR to 6:43.59, a WR that survived for more than 3 years. The 10k record was beaten in February, by Tomas Gustafson, SWE, winning his 3rd Olympic Championship in 13:48.20. The other Olympic achievement worth mentioning, was Andre Hoffmann, of GDR, winning the 1,500 m in 1:52.06 a WR to last for 6 years.

After 1988 there was a drop in speed skating performance. The World Cup, Single Distance Championships, and new rules for the all round championships encouraged single distance specialization, which doesn't seem like a good idea in a sport where most distances fits into the "middle distance concept" anyway. The collapse of the Soviet Union with its thousands of speed skaters massively supported by the Government, was a contributing reason for the "bad times".

One man virtually saved the all round WR level. Johann Olav Koss was never an unbeatable superman like Schenk or Heiden. He didn't master the short distances, and he was an unsteady performer, but still seldom lower than 3rd on the Championships rankings. At his best he was the world's best 1,500 m skater, and in a class of his own on the longer distances. 1991 was his big season. The only WC 5k he didn't win was the one in Calgary, when he was determined to be the first man below 6:40. Winning 3 distances and threatening Hoffmann's 1,500 m WR, he stopped at 6:41.73 in the Heerenveen Worlds. 13:43.54 was his 10k WR on that occasion. Two years later, in the European Championship at the same rink, he finally made it: 6:38.77. He improved the WR to 6:36.57 in the World Cup Final at the same venue later that year.

Koss's big moment, or moments, was at the 1994 Olympics in Hamar, Norway. This rink, called "The Viking Ship" because of its boat shaped roof, was built to be the world's fastest ice rink. Hamar's secret weapon rather than Calgary's altitude, was ice quality. A scientific project ensured water quality and temperature should be the best possible, though rumor has it that the crew made the Olympic ice out of ordinary tap water. Later on Hamar failed to maintain its position. Anyway, it was Koss's outstanding performance, rather than the ice conditions that caused the sensation. Koss won 3 gold medals and set 3 WRs, of which one became a legend in speed skating history. 13:30.55 -13 seconds better than the old WR - almost 20 seconds better than the silver medalist. The more modest WR of 6:34.96 was nearly 8 seconds ahead of no. 2. 1:51.29 was human; still a comfortable win.

The other big name of the '94 season was Dan Jansen. In the spring of '93 he finally beat Thometz's unofficial World's best and brought the 500 m WR down to 36.02. At the Hamar World Cup in December he saw the 35 figure for the first time: 35.92. In Calgary, at the 1994 World Sprint Championship, he improved to 35.76. After missing his deserved 500 m gold because of a slip, Jansen also set a 1,000 m WR of 1:12.43 in the Hamar Olympics. He lost that record during the season; still the Medeo 1,000 meters of the late 80s were unsurpassed.

Two years later the World Cup in Calgary brought that to an end. The Calgary crew had definitely learned the art of ice making. By the end of the season, the short distance WRs were all Calgary and all Japanese: 35.39 by Hiroyoshi Shimizu, 1:11.67 by Manabu Horii, and 1:50.61 by Hiroyuki Noake. The latter followed closely by Neal Marshall, after Aadne

Soendraal being the first one to break the 1:51 (3 x 37.0) limit. The young Dutchman Bob de Jong's 3:53.09, from the Junior Worlds, completed Calgary's dominance of the WR lists. Koss's two long distance WRs were still out of reach. Thus ended the era of the "Norwegian skates", invented by Axel Paulsen more than a century before.

The idea of a skate with a hinged blade dates back to the days of the great Axel. Several such models were constructed, but the only one that ever caught on, was the Swedish tour skate, using a cross country ski binding to attach the low blade to the boot. Thus the skater could remove the blades quickly to cross tongues of land between lakes.

When some Dutch scientists started working with a hinged skate in the 1980s, they didn't think of the possible benefit of a longer stroke. Their goal was to design a skate that made less strain on the calves of inexperienced skater. Competitive skaters saw the new skate, but no-one thought of it as a serious challenge to the Paulsen model. Still, during the early 90s some skaters belonging to Dutch regional youth teams started to use the new skate, and soon these skaters dominated Dutch youth skating.

At the start of the '97 season the Dutch women started to use the skate, followed by some male skaters connected with the marathon circuit. The Dutch girls beat the unbeatable Germans, and Russian marathoners. Krivosheyev won a World Cup 10,000 m. At the Worlds All-round in Nagano, veterans Veldkamp and Dittrich achieved long distance results unheard of since the days of Koss. At the World Single Distance Championship several of the medallists, including double champion Ritsma, used klap skates, the Dutch name adapted all over the world - after some less successful attempts to translate the term. "Klap" means something like "add"; pointing to the added length and strength of the stroke with a double meaning connected to the sound of the blade "klapping" back against the boot when the skate leaves the ice.

The effect caused by the longer stroke and the use of new muscles are not the only advantage of the klap skate. More natural movements also seems to make the skater able to keep up the pace after the point when fatigue "normally" would slow him down. Anyway, the ability to keep up the speed even when totally exhausted, seems to be the dominant quality of the most remarkable skater of the klap skate era: Gianni Romme, of the Netherlands.

The first parts of the klap skate World Record lists, after Boutiette and Marshall set the first klap skate WRs in Calgary in the spring of '97, seems like pure anarchy. Any capable skater entering the Calgary ice with a pair of klaps, was likely to set a WR. Feared "time limits" like 36.0, 1:12.0, 1:51.0, 6:40.0 were no longer worth mentioning. Wennemars reached 1:49 already in the summer; Bos achieved 1:48 long before Xmas. By then Koss 6:34 was history too, beaten by both de Jong and Romme; the latter approaching the 6:30 mark 10 x 39.0. By then Overland and Wotherspoon was close to 1:10 - 2 x 35.0. With no big Calgary events until March, the skating world could hardly wait for the Nagano Olympics.

The opening Olympic distance was the 5,000 m. Here the Belgian veteran Veldkamp became the first man to finish the 5,000 m in less than 6 minutes: 6:28.31. Ritsma soon beat that record, and then Romme beat him with 6.04 seconds: 6:22.20. A WR improvement of 9 seconds during the Olympic event. Koss's record, unbeatable only a year earlier, was beaten by more than 12 seconds, and by a whole bunch of skaters. While the sprint WRs survived the Olympics, Aadne Soendraal won the 1,500 m in 1:47.87 (a 500 m average of 35 seconds), before Romme once again wiped Koss off the record list. After the great 5k, the big question was how close to the 13:00 mark Romme would finish. In that expectation, 13:15.33 was a disappointment. Still it's one of the largest single WR improvements in speed skating history: A full quarter of a minute!

The Single Distance World Championship in Calgary completed the season. New World Records on all distances, with the sprint WRs brought "up to date": 34.82 by Shimizu; 1:09.60 by Sylvain Bouchard; 1:46.43 by Soendraal; 6:21.49 and 13:08.71 by Romme. In one season the WRs were improved by 0.57, 2.07, 3.62 (4.14 compared with the last non-klap WR), 13.47 and 21.84 seconds. In points (average time per 500 m) the improvements are: 0.570, 1.035, 1.206 (1.380), 1.347 and 1.092. The 3,000 m WR was, in the Oval Finale, improved to 3:48.91 (Veldkamp) though the best time on that distance was Ritsma's split time from his WSD 5 k: 3:46.78.

No doubt the klap skate had revolutionized speed skating. And the revolution went on. In the 1999 and 2000 seasons, the rivaling between Wotherspoon and Bos brought the 1,000 m best mark down to 1:08.34 (the official WR 0.01 sec. behind). The predictions about the klap skate being unsuitable for sprints were contradicted by new improvements of the 500 m WR: 34.63 at the end of the 00 season. The 3 k WR is once again identical to the world's best 3:43.76 (Steven Elm).

The great Romme didn't succeed in '99, but was back in 00, improving his 5 k to 6:18.72, 10 500 meters at an average time of 37.87! So far he's the only skater to match the relative level of Johann Koss in the long distances. The most spectacular WR this year, however, was the Dutch sprinter Jakko Jan Leeuwangh's 1:45.56.

Even with outstanding performances of Wotherspoon, Leeuwangh and Romme, noone knows if the potential of the klap skate is fully exploited. Anyway, after 3 1/2 season of klap skating, there's no doubt the introduction of the hinged skate is the most important event in speed skating history, since the introduction of the Axel Paulsen model more than 100 years before. Training methods, improved technique, clothing, high altitude rinks, freezing technology, in-door rinks all important factors, though none of them with an affect on the level of performance like that of the the klap skate.

A Letter to Terge Bard Hansen

from George A. Wallace

Dear Mr. Hansen,

Several days ago I received a copy of the American Skating Union's magazine, *The Racing Blade*, and I very much enjoyed reading the first of your series of four articles entitled "Centuries of Speed Skating Progress". And I fully agree with you regarding the sport during the late thirties and forties being "The Golden Age of Speed Skating" And especially since this article ends with descriptions of events just as they were when as I went to Norway to train for the U. S. Winter Olympic Trials to be held in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin the following year.

I was born and grew up in San Francisco, and was fifteen years old (1930) before I saw my first pair of ice skates and I quickly became interested in speed skating even though there were very few ice skating rinks in California, and the nearest was twenty miles away - and the nearest natural ice was in Yosemite and about 200 miles away. However, four years later, I went to Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, where there was plenty of ice and snow, and I was able to compete in local speed skating competition that year and major competitions throughout New England and New York the following year. The following year I went to Minneapolis, Minnesota for the speed skating, and did fairly well there. And that brings us up to mid-October when I arrived in Oslo, and contacted officials of the Oslo Skating Club and told them I had come to Europe to improve my speed skating and would like to train and be allowed to compete in Norway during the coming year. But there were two problems.

A long term problem was that in California where I learned my speed skating, there were no nationally or inter-nationally recognized speed skating organizations, and at Dartmouth, the college athletic department took care of any paper work that had to be done, and in Minnesota, I just joined a local speed skating club for the winter season. But in Norway I had none of that — and before I could be permitted to compete in the international competitions, the rules required that I be sanctioned by some recognized amateur organization. And the immediate problem was that I had arrived in late October, and it would be some time before there would be ice in Norway.

I tried contacting the ASUUS (Amateur Skating Union Of The United States) and rectifying this condition, and so did officers of the Oslo Speed Skating Club, but the required sanction never was granted despite continuing belief that it would be. And meanwhile, I bought a touring bicycle at a shop on Karl Johann and set out on a bicycle tour of Norway, over gravel roads most of the way, to Aalesund via Honefoss, Hallingal, Geiranger and Hemsedal and with the last ten days or so in continuous rain — and returned by train to Oslo. Still no ice or prospects of any soon —so I took the night boat to Copenhagen, crossed over to Sweden, bicycled down the west coast of Sweden to Milo, ferried over to Stetting and bicycled from there to Berlin to Cologne.

At Cologne there was an excellent skating arena with artificial ice, and I stayed there several weeks, while waiting for cold weather to come to Norway. Two weeks before leaving, Harry Haraldsen, one of the very good Norwegian skaters came to train there as well, and we got along very well. He evidently sent some good reports back to the Norwegian papers, because when we did return to Oslo, I was received very well. I do not know what official Norwegian body was responsible, but I shall always be grateful for their decision to permit me to compete "unofficially" in the major competitions there and against Norway's best.

Among my fondest skating memories is of the first time I skated at Frogner. This was a large and friendly stadium not far from the center of Oslo with a well-kept Olympic-size oval skating track, and general skating within the oval. It was a clear, cold evening and a file of eight or so speed skaters were going at a pretty good pace around the track. I decided to drop in behind them to warm up, before getting down to a more strenuous workout, and did. But they kept going and going, and it seemed that the pace kept getting faster and faster, and by the time they stopped I knew I had had most of my "strenuous workout". The thing that really troubled me though was the way that my muscles had felt during that workout — and there was often a 50-year old man leading the pack. I could not help wondering what Norway's best skaters would do to me when the competitions began.

The following evening I went back to Frogner. It was an enjoyable place, and again there was a file of skaters — some I had seen the preceding night, others not — and the old man was there as well — clear eyes, ruddy cheeks and a broad smile. It was, of course, Oscar Mathiesen. We became good friends, and I was very glad to see the bronze statue of him in front of Frogner when Inger and I returned to visit her sister and family (still living at Holmenkollen) several years ago.

In late January, 1939, I competed in the Olympic Trials in Wisconsin and believed that I had won the 500m, 1500m and 5000m events, but the judges awarded me first place only in the 1500 meter event and second place, I believe, in the 500 meter and 5000 meter events. Three days later, a representative of the ASUUS told me that they had received a message from Avery Brundage, then President of the American Amateur Union and Chairman of the U. S. Olympic Committee, stating that unless they provided him with a letter from me stating that I accepted the judges decisions, he was going to cancel the entire trials. Having made the team with my 1500 meter performance, and not wanting to penalize the other skaters who had won their places on it, I gave the ASUUS the letter and returned to California, stopping en route in Chicago to thank Mr. Brundage for his interest and intervention.

Several weeks after that, because of the probability of war in Europe, the Winter Olympics, scheduled to be held in Norway, were canceled — and shortly after that I received an invitation from the Norwegian Skating Club to come to Norway as their guest, to compete in whatever competitions might be arranged — and the ASUUS again refuse to sanction my acceptance — but I went anyway.

This time, however, there apparently was not a problem with international policies since the canceling of the Winter Olympic and all other official international championship contests. For whatever the reason, the Norwegians decided to let me compete with or without the sanctions, and the Swedes and the Latvians did the same - But it was the Norwegians who left one of their own alternate skaters behind, to make room for me on the private charter flight which was the only open route to and from Riga, Latvia. This I will never forget.

Riga itself was a revelation, with snow covered streets and horse-drawn sleighs for popular transportation — not too far removed from scenes from Dr. Zhivago. And here, my times improved, with a first place for 500 meters and third in 1500 meters, and even the 3000m and 5000m events showed quite a bit of improvement — as can be seen in the skating record attached to this document. But the thing that I remember best was the cold. The day we skated the 1500 meter event, horse racing had been canceled as too cold for the horses.

After that, according to records from the Oslo Skating Club's year books for 1938 and 1940. which Ole Jacob Jorsett, sports caster with the Norwegian National Radio and TV, kindly sent me several months ago, I won the next five 500 meter races in Sweden and Norway, and it was over.

The only disappointment, and it was a big one, was at Hamar. For three years I had known that my best distance and that if I were ever to set a new world record, that would be it - and the 1000 meter race at Hamar was scheduled late enough in the season so that I should be in the best shape, and the track would be well prepared, and the ice could be fast. When my time came to skate the 1000 meter event, all went as planned until the last 50 or 60 meters when, for the very first time in any race, I fell.

With that fall, I knew that I had come to the end of my skating. Germany had long since overrun France and Holland and Belgium, and was getting ready for the Drang nach Osten. And the skaters that I had been competing against would all soon be in different branches of their country's military services and for them, too, the racing days were over. A few days later, I said good-bye to Oscar Mathiesen, and to skating friends and to my hosts, and to a beautiful Norwegian girl whom I had met on the tram from Mayorstuen to Vokesnlia where I was staying, but that's another story.

I left Oslo several days later, intending to go by train to Genoa, Italy, via Copenhagen, Berlin, Prague and Vienna - and I was in Vienna on April 9th, (my birthday) when the Germans invaded Norway. So I went to Italy, and sent the American Consul in Vienna a post card to let him know that I was on my way home, as ordered — and then went back into Germany, but that's also another story.

This all happened sixty years ago and I only skated casually a few times after returning home but many memories of "The Golden Age of Speed Skating" still linger. And although the fall at Hamar was a great disappointment, all trophies and records pale in comparison with what I brought back from Europe and the seven children (6 daughters and one son) and twenty-odd grandchildren that Inger and I now enjoy.

George A. Wallace, U. S. Olympic Speed Skating Team 1940

Note: There may be some minor errors in details in this tale, but none that I am aware of, and I believe you will find the story interesting because it does tell a little of what it was like to be both as a guest of the Oslo Skating Club and as a competitor against Norway's best in the last days of "The Golden Age Of Skating." — and perhaps something of the nature of the last days of the romantic era in which this all occurred

George Wallace's Times as reported by Ole Jacob Jorsett, Norway

These are the events I can find your name in Norway the years before WWII – all from OSK year books.

I'm impressed. I didn't realize that you were the coming Olympic sprint champion in 1940. How you must have felt about the war !!

1939					1940 (continued)				
Jan 5	Gjovik				3-4/2	Oslo, Unofficial World Championships			
	1500m	2:27				500m	43.9	5000m	8:50.8
	Marvin Peterson and Maddy Horn were there too.					1500m	2:20.4		
Jan 12-13	Oslo, European Championships				10-11/12	Riga, Latvia			
	500m	43.7	3000m	5:03.1		500m	44.0	3000m	5:13.3
	1500m	2:43.8	5000m	9:22.6		1500m	2:25.1	5000m	9:07.3
Jan 19-20	Oslo, Frogner				11/2	Brunnsviken, Sweden			
	500m	43.3	3000m	5:12.		500m	44.4	3000m	5:21.0
	1500m	2:25.1	5000m	8:44.6	22/2	Uppsala, Sweden			
Feb 16	Drammen					500m	45.6	3000m	5:1.1
	500m	43..8	5000m	8:31.9	28/2	Sandesfjord, Norway			
Feb 23	Kongsberg					500m	45.4	3000m	5:27.5
	500m	43.7	3000m	5:03.4	29/2	Larvik, Norway			
Feb 24	Skie					500m	45.0		
	500m	46.3	3000m	5:23.9	2/3	Hamar, Norway			
1940						500m	43.6	1000m	fall
U.S. Olympic Team expected but the war came and Wallace!									
20-21/1	Oslo, National against Norway, Latvia, Netherlands, USA, Sweden								
	500m	44.0	5000m	8:58.3					
	1500m	2:21.3	10000m	19:18.0					

Lidwina of Schiedam

Patron Saint of Skating

by Max Dohle
An Introduction

Near the Dutch harbor city of Rotterdam, is a small town called Schiedam. Schiedam is famous for a girl who became one of the few Dutch female saints, Liedewij (or Lidwina), virgin of Schiedam (her name is spelled in twelve different ways). Lidwina was born in March 1380 and died April 14, 1433. After a skating accident she spent 38 years of her lifetime in her sickbed. Many miracles were attributed to Lidwina during and after her life. She became famous while she was still alive, and many stories were told after her death. Her biography was written by a member of her family, shortly after her death in 1440. One of her later biographers, Thomas a Kempis, is the well known. He added many miracles to the original story. He knew all the ingredients of a good hagiography. The life story of Lidwina is a so called miracle story, a popular kind of literature at the end of the Middle ages. Lidwina became patroness of the sick, and her name-day is celebrated on the 14th of April.



Lidwina takes a spill.

The Story

Holland 1395. At Candlemas a sickly girl is skating on the ice of the little town of Schiedam when a friend accidentally pushes her over. Liedewij falls on a floe and breaks a rib.

At first sight an insignificant accident written down in the margin of the Middle Dutch miracle story: The life of Liedewij, virgin of Schiedam. Liedewij's biography is written in the best traditions of the classic hagiographies. But the story also has Dutch elements, not only the skating accident, but more importantly the uplifting of the ordinary to the sublime. Lidewij an insignificant girl becomes Gods own bookkeeper on earth, through her suffering sins can be bought off, and Liedewij is very good at suffering! For 38 years she's in bed suffering pain.

In Holland, this story has always been considered the oldest skating story in our literature, maybe even in world literature. But is it really a skating story, and is it literature? In my opinion the answer to both questions is no! The skating accident itself is described in only two badly written sentences. The first tells us that the fifteen year old Liedewij is skating with some (maiden) girlfriends at Candlemass. The second tells us that a friend accidentally pushes Liedewij over and she breaks a short rib on her right side. The biographer puts it very formally, like an office clerk describing the facts of an event.

More About Lidwina

At first sight, the skating accident is the beginning of Liedwij's suffering. After the accidents her wounds won't heal and her condition gets worse and worse. But if we go a little bit back in time we learn that before the accident, the beautiful Liedewij would rather be sick than to marry. At the age of twelve she prays to God to strike her with a disease that would make all men averse to her. God answers her prayer and Liedewij gets sick. A terrible disease of course, and no men would consider touching her. After the skating accident Liedewij adds a little extra: she radically stops eating. For 38 years she just eats a part of an apple, and of course the sacred hosts. We now have a name for this behavior: anorexia-nervosa. More than a saint, she probably is the patron of anorexia-patients. By the way Liedewij was never sanctified, in 1890 the pope approved the worshipping of Liedewij.

The story of Liedwij's suffering is a bizarre story with lots of staggering details, and spiced with all sorts of facts to make it sound true. She visits heaven and hell frequently. She watches as the dignitaries of Schiedam burn in hell. Soldiers molest Liedewij on her sickbed. But on Christmas Eve her breasts spontaneously fill with milk, it becomes clear to everyone that Liedewij is Mary's replacement on earth. In the end she dies, and just moments after her death she becomes a beautiful women again. This and everything else in the story makes clear that in the end, it is a story about a girl, afraid of her awakening sexuality, seeking refuge in disease. The accident on the ice, the territory of the devil, is indeed only an insignificant detail in the biography of Lidwina. With a lot of humor the place where Lidwina fell is now called cripple street (Kreupelstraat)!

The Wood Carving

Interesting though is the woodcarving made 103 years after the accident. In the background we see a man, skating without poles on iron skates. Iron skates, as we know from the court literature of Holland, were used in the waning of the Middle Ages. But at the beginning, the skaters still used poles as one did on bone skates. At the time of Liedewij's accident iron skates were used in Holland. However, it is most unlikely that Liedewij skated on iron because she was just a simple poor girl in a village in Holland.

THE ATHLETE'S KITCHEN for May

by Nancy Clark, MS, RD

ENERGY BARS

Better than a banana?

Once upon a time, candy bars were the most popular energy bars. But in 1987, PowerBars entered the sports scene and started the onslaught of designer sports foods that are fighting for today's food dollar. Questions arise: Are energy bars better than, let's say, bananas? The following article answers the questions athletes commonly ask about energy bars.

Question: "My workouts have improved since I started eating an energy bar within the hour before I train. Would a banana or some other natural food do the same job, or does this "designer food" have magic ingredients?"

Answer: Energy bars are not magic, nor are they preferable to—or better than—natural foods such as fig cookies, dried apricots, bananas, and other popular pre-exercise carbohydrates. The testimonials in magazine ads often proclaim "I'm a champion now that I eat SuperBar before I work out..."—but the ads fail to mention the athlete used to eat nothing pre-exercise. Clearly, any fuel is better than no fuel. In fact, eating even a candy bar five minutes pre-exercise improves performance when compared to having eaten nothing. The "magic" about energy bars is they are convenient, prewrapped, portable, and durable. They are ready-and-waiting, hassle free. Some energy bars claim to be "easily digested," but digestibility varies greatly from person to person. You'll have to judge that for yourself—be it digestibility of energy bars or bananas, for that matter.

Question: I get overwhelmed by the numerous kinds of energy bars. Are some better than others?

Answer: Some energy bars, like Clif Bars and Boulder Bars, are made from whole foods; they are filled with fruits, fiber, and wholesome goodness and quality nutrition. They are preferable to the energy bars that taste like candy and are little more than sugar-coated vitamins, minerals, and protein. With names like Fudge Brownie and Devil's Food Cake, do you really think these snacks offer better nutrition than found in an orange, banana, or peanut butter sandwich? And why are no berries listed in the ingredients for the Ironman Yogurt Berry Bar? Who's getting fooled here?

Question: "I eat energy bars for breakfast on the run, lunch at the office, and snacks before I exercise. Is there a health danger to eating too many energy bars?"

Answer: In the long term, eating too many designer energy bars could potentially lead to health problems. Here's how:

1. In theory, if you eat lots of engineered foods, you can displace too many natural foods from the diet. That is, instead of grabbing a pre-exercise fruit, you choose a Chocolate Brownie Boom Bar. Because fresh fruits and vegetables are among the most health protective foods (and are already underconsumed in the typical athlete's diet), you'll likely end up with an even lower intake of the fiber, carotenoids, and other health-protective phytochemicals found in fruits, veggies, and whole grains. The solution: for each energy bar, be sure to eat a banana, some dried apricots, raisin bran, orange juice, yogurt, or other powerhouse snack food.

2. Eating too many highly fortified energy bars could potentially contribute to an overdose of minerals. An Ironman Bar, for example, provides 50% of the RDA for zinc. When you eat several highly fortified energy bars per day, plus take a multivitamin and mineral supplement and eat highly fortified breakfast cereals such as Total or Smart Start, you're consuming megadoses of vitamins and minerals. Whereas you will most likely excrete the excess vitamins in your urine, your body may develop health problems related to mineral imbalances. That is, minerals compete with each other in the body, and too much chromium, for example, can interfere with zinc absorption. This could potentially weaken your immune system. Too much zinc has been shown to elevate cholesterol levels. Good nutrition relies on the proper balance of nutrients; this balance may be difficult to achieve with excessive supplementation.

3. A diet rich in energy bars is often poor in variety. Athletes commonly consume only 10 to 15 different foods per week. If the bulk of your limited diet is energy bars, think again. You may be missing out on important nutrients obtained from a variety of foods. Food variety adds spice to your nutritional life. Your goal is to consume at least 20 to 30 different kinds of foods per week. So either eat a variety of natural-food energy bars, or better yet, how about replacing the bars with whole grain bagels, nuts, peanut butter, apples, carrots, oatmeal cookies, and other assorted snacks?

Question: I'm trying hard to dump my plump. I do well when I eat packaged foods like a Balance Bar or 40-30-30 bar as a fundamental part of my diet plan. Is this a safe way to lose weight?

Answer: Dieters tend to like energy bars because they offer a defined amount of calories, carbohydrates, protein, and fat, and this nutrition information on the label makes it easy for the dieter to calculate his or her food intake. But energy bars have no secret ingredients that promote weight loss. Their small portion assists calorie control by simply having a defined start and finish. That is, when you eat an energy bar, it's gone. But when you grab a handful of pretzels, what's left in the bag can tempt you to eat more. Some dieters eat energy bars to the exclusion of whole foods. Bad idea. The best way to not only lose weight but also keep it off is to learn how to eat appropriate portions of your favorite foods. That means learning how to navigate cookies, birthday parties, and fast foods—and not just avoid these foods while you live on energy bars.

The Bottom Line: Eating energy bars is preferable to eating candy bars and Twinkies. But the better bet is to eat a variety of wholesome foods that offer nature's bounty of health-protective compounds. You'll simultaneously save yourself lots of money. Energy bars easily cost \$0.70 per 100 calories. In comparison, raisins are only \$0.18/100 cal.; banana, \$0.20; granola bar, \$0.28. When used in sports situations, energy bars can be handy, but for day to day snacking, choose real food.

THE ATHLETE'S KITCHEN for June

PROTEIN SHAKES:

"Do they add power to your sports diet?"

"Which brand of protein shake is best to gain weight?"

"How many protein shakes should I drink in a day?"

"Is designer protein better than, let's say, chicken.???"

Active people have lots of questions about protein, protein shakes, and their role in an exercise program. Do these engineered foods provide superior sports nutrition? By looking around the health food store, the abundance of protein shakes suggests they are a popular item. They are promoted as a simple way to eat well without cooking. Ads also suggest these "designer foods" are better than, let's say, chicken and tuna.

If you are wondering about the role of protein shakes in your sports diet, keep reading. The following information can help you evaluate the best ways to optimize your protein intake—as well as spend your food budget wisely.


Question: "I want to bulk up and gain weight. I've started drinking three protein shakes per day as between meal snacks.

(This is what the manufacturer recommends.) Is this enough or too much?

Answer: To determine how many protein shakes you need, you first should determine how much protein your body actually can use. While adequate protein is important to enhance muscle growth, more may not be better. Excess protein will not convert Joe Wimp into Mr. Muscle. To bulk up, you need extra calories, adequate protein, and hard training—plus good genetics. Most exercise scientists agree 1 gram of protein/pound of body weight is a very generous protein allowance for athletes building muscle mass. (More likely, 0.5 to 0.75 gms protein/ pound will do the job just fine, but let's be generous.) This means a novice 180 pound body builder gets more than enough protein with 180 grams of protein/day. He can easily consume that much in one quart of skim milk, two cans of tuna, and 8 ounces (two small breasts) of chicken. Because you can get more than enough protein from your diet, you have no need to consume shakes on top of this. You simply need more wholesome calories—easily consumed by drinking extra juice and lowfat milk.

Question: Is the protein in designer shakes more effective than the egg whites, tuna, and chicken I eat with my meals?"

Answer: With names like Lean Mass, N-large, Pure Protein, Lean Protein, and Protein Revolution, the scientifically engineered products can leave you wondering if mundane chicken, tuna, and eggs are an equal match. Plus, ads that rave "extremely bioavailable whey protein isolate", "no cheap protein blends" and "highest quality protein" also leave the impression that tuna doesn't quite make the grade. Doubtful, the protein from natural foods works perfectly fine, despite having no labels that claim "premium protein," "hydrolyzed protein," or "ion-exchanged whey." Any animal protein is "high quality" and contains all the essential amino acids you need to build muscles. Eating balanced meals and then drinking protein shakes for "high quality protein" is an outrageous concept—and expensive. Don't bother!



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Question: I get confused when I read the ads in muscle magazines. They are filled with terms like "protein digestibility" and "bioavailability." Does this make them better?

Answer: In an overall well balanced diet, engineered protein offers no advantages over standard protein-rich foods. As long as you are healthy and have a functioning digestive tract (as opposed to patients in the hospital with intestinal disease), you need not worry about your ability to digest or utilize protein.

Digestibility and bioavailability are an issue in third-world countries where protein and calorie intakes are inadequate and every amino acid counts—but not in America where protein and calorie excesses are more common than deficiencies. (Adequate calories are needed to spare protein from being burned for fuel.)

Question: I'm lazy and have started to drink a protein shake for breakfast instead of eat cereal. Is that OK?

Answer: As an athlete, your body needs a foundation of carbohydrates at each meal to fuel your muscles. Some protein is important to build, protect, and maintain muscles, but too much protein displaces carbs. That is, by having a protein shake instead of cereal, you may consume only 20 to 30 grams of carbs as compared to 100+ grams with your cereal, milk and banana. Athletes should target 3 to 5 grams of carbohydrate per pound of body weight. That's at least 450 grams for the 150 pound athlete. Protein shakes fail to help you reach your carb quota—and can leave you feeling easily fatigued. Cereals also offer more fiber and other health protective nutrients than do engineered foods. Hence, I recommend you be responsible instead of lazy. You have taken on the responsibility to train; you can also take on the responsibility to eat whole foods that fuel well. No engineered food can match the complex balance of nutrients designed by Nature. Sure you can save the protein shake for "emergency food" on hectic days, but keep the cereal as part of your standard daily diet.

Question: I eat very little protein at the college dining hall. I think I should supplement my diet with protein powder, but I don't have much money to spend on protein shakes. How can I make my own?

Answer: Packaged protein shakes are indeed expensive. You can either spend \$2.30 for a packet of MetRx (\$0.06/gram of protein) or you easily make your own version for less than \$0.03/gm protein. Here's my favorite: In a blender, mix 1 cup milk, 1/3 cup milk powder, 2 tablespoons instant pudding mix (any flavor; this thickens the shake to a pleasant consistency) and 4 ice cubes. Blend for a minute or two, until the ice is gone. Optional: add banana, berries, and/or sweetener as desired. This shake offers 16 grams of protein. Also eat some canned tuna and cottage cheese, and you've succeeded at boosting your protein easily—without cooking and within a reasonable budget.

Nancy Clark, MS, RD is nutrition counselor at Boston-area's SportsMedicine Brookline. She is author of the best selling Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook, Second Edition. It is available by sending \$20 to Sports Nutrition Services, 830 Boylston St., #205, Brookline MA 02467 or via www.nancyclarkrd.com

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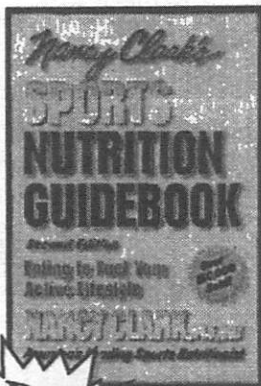
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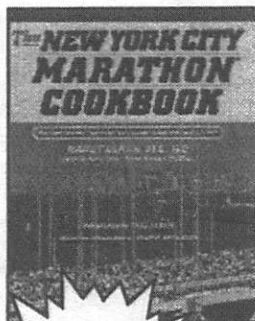
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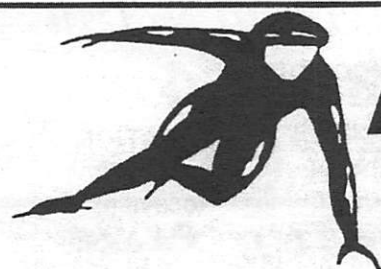
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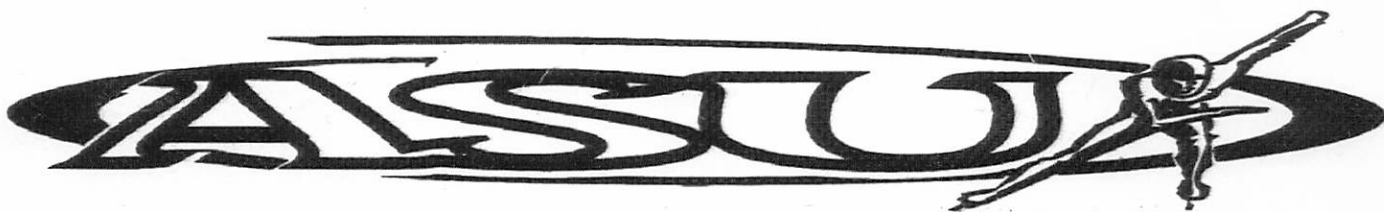
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