

Skating inside and out attractive as sport and recreation

By Diane Andersen

Far from hindering the roller rink business, the boom in outdoor roller skating may be attracting more skaters to Lincoln's indoor rinks.

"Lincoln's always been a good town for skating," said Dennis Runyan, manager of the Holiday Skating Center, 5601 N. 56th St., and the Arena Roller Skating Center, 300 N. 48th St.

"It (outdoor skating) hasn't hurt us any," Runyan said. "It might have helped."

More indoor skaters are expected during the winter, Runyan said, since the winter months are always the busiest season—and not just for recreational skaters.

"We have a competitive team in Lincoln," Runyan said.

The roller skating team has its first meet of the rink racing season two weeks from

now in Des Moines. The team has five or six meets a year, culminating in the North American Championships, which will be held in July in Springfield, Ill.

"Eight of the last 12 years, the (national) championships have been held in Lincoln," Runyan said.

This year the Lincoln rollers host the regional championships in June.

"We have a good team," Runyan said.

"We had kids practicing every day when we were hot and heavy last year."

The Lincoln team competes in various

age groups with different lengths of races for each group. The rankings include primary, juvenile and senior. The youngest kids race 110 yards around a rink, Runyan said, while the senior men may roll up five miles in a roller race, he added.

Runyan also said skating is a sport that takes dedication and practice. He said he leaves the amount of work a skater does up to each individual.

As for outdoor skating, Runyan said, "We'll have to wait until next year to find out whether it's just a fad."

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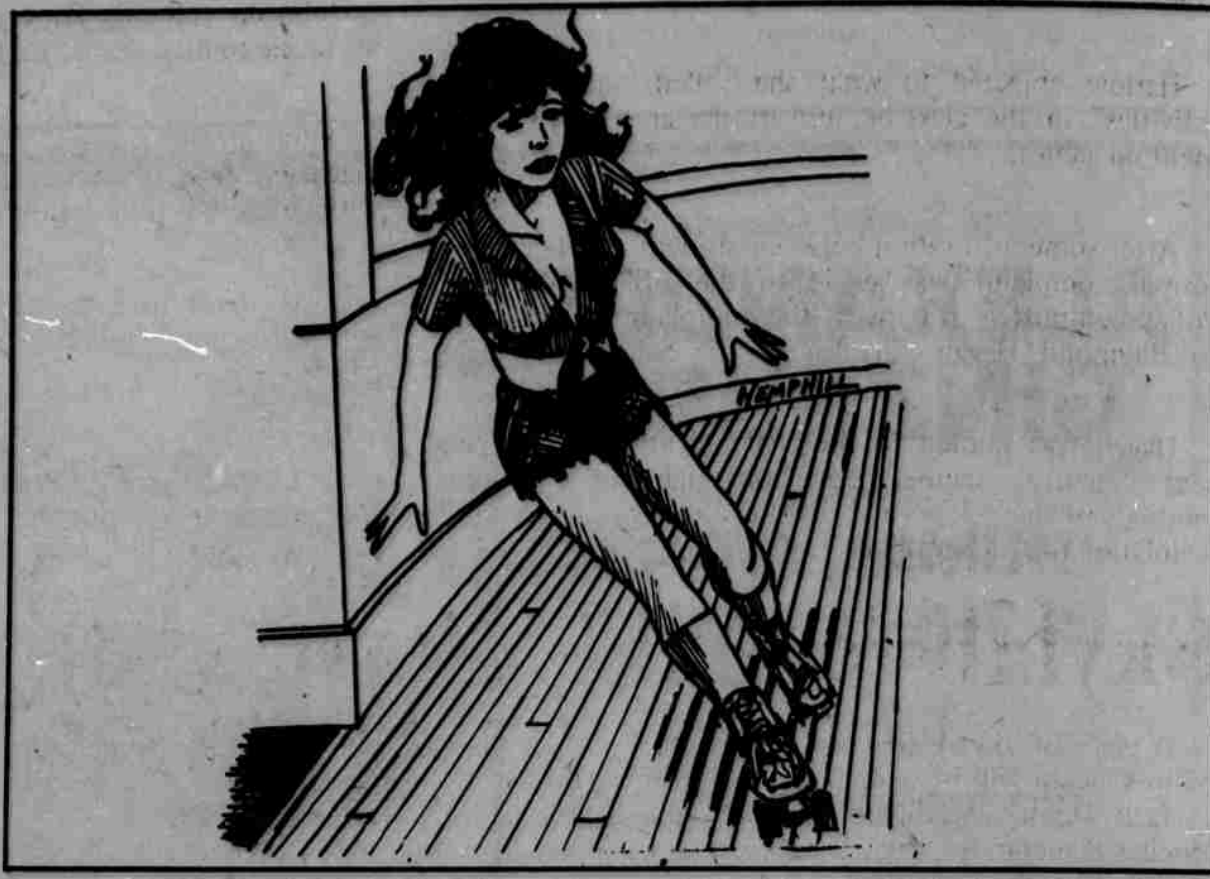
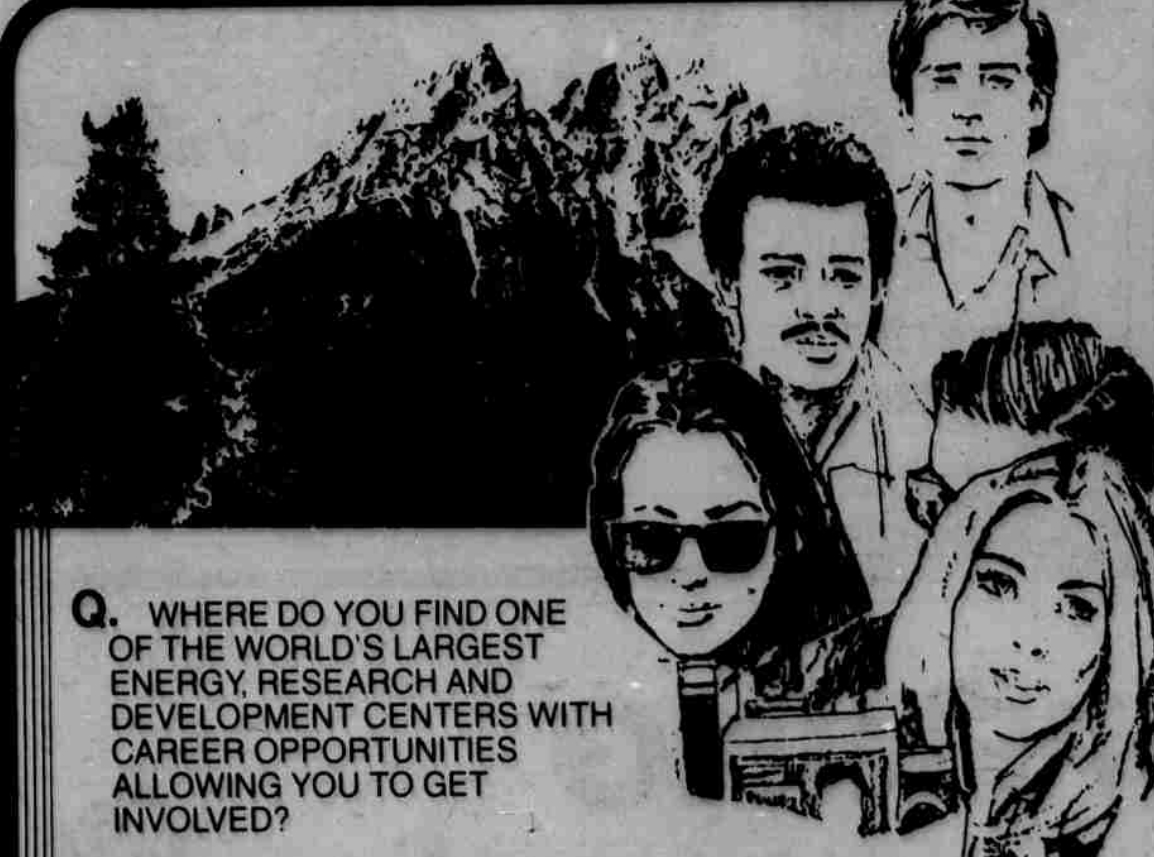
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