

# outdoors

# into the 80s

## Roller skating editor: Craze started long ago

By Betsy Miller

Roller disco, outdoor skate rentals and movies featuring roller skaters have helped spark a new nationwide craze about roller skating.

This phenomenon seemed to reach a high point just last year, but according to one skating expert, the activity's momentum started "rolling" some time ago.

"Roller skating seems like an overnight sensation, but it's been building for five or six years," Susie Theis, senior editor of Roller Skating Business, a Lincoln-based trade magazine said.

Theis attributed roller skating's popular development to several reasons.

She said she feels "Skate-a-Thons" for Muscular Dystrophy started some interest in the pastime and also noted that during the last five years roller skating promoters have been working with ad agencies and movie producers to gain exposure.

Theis said another important factor in roller skating's new appeal is the connection of the activity with celebrities.

### Roller disco

"Cher wore roller skates on her show, and then Linda Ronstadt had them on one of her album covers," Theis said.

After this came roller disco which started in California and spread throughout the nation, Theis said.

The fad of outdoor skating hit the Lincoln area recently and now there are two outdoor rental firms that provide skates to patrons who want to skate outdoors.

"Roller skating always does well during periods of depression and repression," said Theis.

This theory accounts for the large number of people who go to roller skating rinks and outdoor skating rental places, Theis said.

According to Theis, skating is cheap and allows a person one form of transportation that doesn't use gas.

Dennis Runyan, the manager of Holiday Skateworld North and Holiday Skateworld South, agrees with Theis's estimate of roller skating's appeal.

"Here in Lincoln, roller skating has always been good," Runyan said.

Runyan also said he feels the publicity skating has received lately has alerted the public to the fun of roller skating.

"All the commercials you see are bound to help," he

said.

### Changes made

The current roller skating rage has prompted Runyan to update his rink facilities, he said.

According to Runyan, he has installed a complex lighting system and a sound system he feels is one of the best in Lincoln.

Runyan's rink also sells a full line of skating accessories. He says the new skating scene has really changed tastes in styles of roller skates.

"We sell very few white skates to girls anymore," he said.

Theis noted that a big favorite for skating fans is the jogging shoe mounted on roller skates.

The shoe is manufactured in just two places, California and Kansas City, Mo., and both factories have three and a half months worth of back orders, Theis said.

According to Theis, the next new style of roller skate will be a cowboy boot with skate attached. The book will lace up the front.

### Other sales up

"The way it looks attracts young adults," Theis explained.

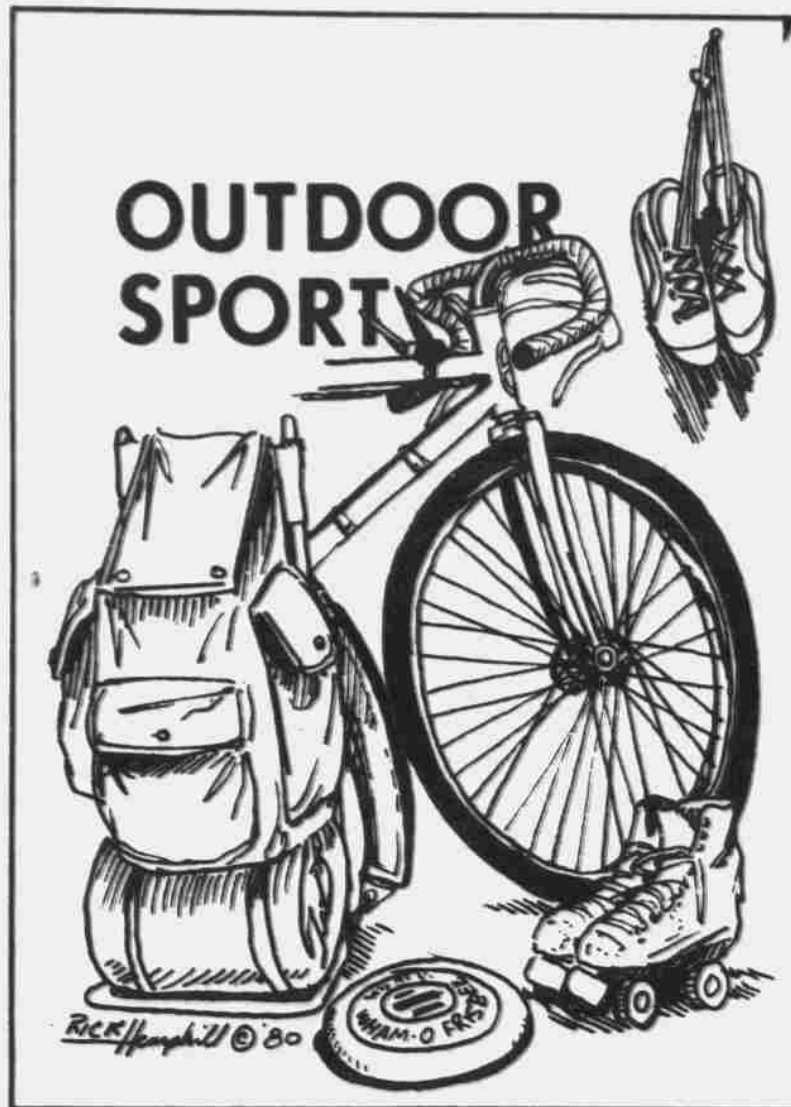
Theis also noted that companies which sell elbow pads, knee pads and other protective equipment used by roller skaters are getting increased sales.

What will be the next step for skaters in Lincoln?

Runyan said his skating rinks may try to make a deal with some Lincoln dance studios. The studio instructors would come to the rinks and give lessons in disco and other dances to those who want to learn, he said.

Runyan said he is expecting "another banner year" and Theis claims to be even more optimistic about the future of roller skating.

"If the same thing happens as last year, there aren't any limits to what we see happening. This is not a fad. It's got too much going for it," she said.



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