

Continuum

Newsletter of the
 Boulder History Museum

Fall 2005

An Enthusiasm for Athleticism

by Julie Schumaker and John Carr

*“People don’t come here for the great art galleries or museums.
 People come here to go outside and play.
 The real reason people move here is to be with other athletes,
 to be part of the community synergy.”*

A quote by Buzz Burrell who has been running in Boulder since 1968.

(Trail Runner Magazine, Metzler, 2003)

There are many who would consider Boulder the most sports-conscious community in America. In Boulder it seems to be not how you work, but how you play that defines a person. Boulder is unique – no argument there. Just the surrounding environment makes you want to go outside and do SOMETHING. Whether it’s the climate, the culture, or the varied terrain of Boulder County, this much we know; Boulder is called home by numerous world-renowned elite athletes along with a multitude of sports enthusiasts from all walks of life.

Boulder did not become a sports ‘mecca’ overnight. When the Civil War ended in 1865, sports and fitness muscled their way into American culture like never before. Early residents of the Boulder area identified with the unique opportunity the region provided for various recreational activities. As a result, they ran, jumped, threw and raced as feverishly as the rest of the nation. It was

also during this time that the great American past-time of baseball emerged as the predominant sporting event. Nearly every prairie town and mining camp had a baseball team. Although Boulder County would follow the baseball trend of popularity at the time, the region did not make its mark as a sports ‘mecca’ by promoting ‘traditional’ team sports. Instead, Boulder’s reputation would become cemented in sports history due to hard driven individuals, world renowned regional races, excellent environmental conditions and the manufacturing industries established in the area as a result of the multitude of outdoor activities - both competitive and recreational.

One of the earliest outdoor recreational organizations in the area was the Rocky Mountain Climbers Club, which began in 1898 and has been headquartered in Chautauqua’s Community House since 1918. The Club initially organized informal hikes into the nearby foothills of Boulder, but soon expanded to more serious mountaineering including



Chautauqua Ski Hill in the 1950’s

summitting Longs Peak, Grays and Torreys Peaks and Arapahoe Glacier. This was no easy feat in those early years, particularly for women wearing long skirts and heeled boots! In addition, many early Club members began rock climbing. The first known ascent of the Third Flatiron was in 1906 by Floyd and Earl Millard.

An Enthusiasm for Athleticism cont...

Bicycling and skiing seemed to have been as popular with early Boulderites as they are today, and "sharing the road" is not just a present-day concern. In the 1890s, newspapers scolded "scorchers" (speed-crazed cyclists) for tearing down University Hill, terrorizing horses and pedestrians. 'Norwegian snowshoes' (10 foot boards that today we would consider skis) were used by miners to carry mail and provisions to marooned mountain towns in the 1860s. The recreational urge proved irresistible and ski clubs began racing and jumping during the 1880s mining boom. In the 1950s, to curb the appetites of the Boulder's skiing enthusiasts, a ski hill, complete with tow-rope, was built at Chautauqua Park. Unfortunately, the lack of permanent snow in the winter cut this local skiing hub short. Skiing in Boulder County was not to be stifled, however, and in 1962 the Lake Eldora Ski area (today the Eldora Mountain Resort) opened just 21 miles from Boulder. Today Eldora has over 680 acres of skiable terrain.

With the dawn of the 1950s, Boulder began to take shape as the sporting community it is known for today. Rock climbing began to pick up momentum as improved equipment allowed for ascents of Boulder County's spectacular rock faces. In the 1960s we find roots of a rich rock climbing culture in which climbing became a way of life. Individuals like Layton Kor and Bob Culp led the way of first ascents in Eldorado Canyon, Boulder Canyon and Longs Peak. Boulder's ambitious climbing community of those early years made a significant impact that is still acknowledged among today's climbers.

The decade of the 1970s brought a new trend of sport popularity to Boulder—running. Frank Shorter had trained part-time in Boulder and first drew attention to the town after winning his 1972 Olympic Gold Medal in the marathon. His victory and subsequent silver medal in the '76 games were a primary catalyst for the first national running boom, and Boulder, where Shorter has lived full-time since 1975, has been a center for endurance sports ever since. The BoulderBOULDER, a 10K running race, began on Memorial Day in 1979 and has become one of the largest road races in the country with nearly 50,000

participants. Rich Castro also assisted in putting Boulder on the running map when in 1978 he formed the Boulder Road Runners Club in an effort to support running within the Boulder community. In addition to competing as a team at national events, the Club supports many of the local running events throughout Boulder. The Boulder Road Runners are perhaps best known locally for their Sunday Morning Group Run. Currently, the Boulder Road Runners boasts over 800 members!

Along with the running community, Boulder, Colorado has also been one of the most influential places to expand cycling this side of the Atlantic. Among the reasons for its influence – besides it being the home of the long-departed Red Zinger, later known as the Coors Classic – are the great cyclists and terrain in this relatively small town of 100,000. The 1980s introduced local legends to the rest of the world when Connie Carpenter became the first American female cyclist to win an Olympic Gold in 1984 and her husband Davis Phinney became the first American to take a road stage in the Tour de France. Just as it is with the running community, the sheer multitude of pro and world road cycling champions that live and train in Boulder is astounding.

The natural progression from running and cycling culminated with the creation of triathlons, which added swimming to the mix. Once more Boulder is also proud to be home of world-renowned triathletes such as Dave Scott, a six-time Ironman Champion, and the first inductee into the Ironman Hall of Fame.

There is no question that Boulder has made its mark in the sporting world. Even the more recent team phenomenon of Ultimate Frisbee is carving a name for itself in Boulder. The sport has thrived nationally since its invention in 1968 by a couple of high school students in New Jersey. Locally, Grass Roots Ultimate, organized in 1990, administers leagues and



"Crank!" the cycling section featured in 'ready, set... BOULDER! Colorado's Sports Mecca'

tournaments in Boulder while fostering community involvement in the sport. Ultimate's national governing body, the Ultimate Players Association, is also located right here in Boulder, Colorado. The "spirit of the game" or underlying tenet of sportsmanship that places the responsibility for fair play on each player is one of the primary elements that not only facilitates the social aspect of the game, but defines it as well. Boulder proudly boasts numerous national and world club championship teams of Ultimate Frisbee.

There are many other popular sports in Boulder that have not been touched on here; but no matter what your 'sport du jour', Boulder has proven time and time again to be dynamic enough to fulfill anyone's enthusiasm of athleticism! As Bill Wright, a self-proclaimed 'average Joe' runner states,

'The difference in Boulder isn't just the quantity of outdoor athletes, which is huge, but the quality is outrageous. I've learned to just assume that anyone I meet can out-run me, out-bike me, and out-climb me and maybe by huge margins. My favorite expression is: Move to Boulder and be humble!' (Trail Runner Magazine, Metzler, 2003).

Don't miss the Boulder History Museum's new exhibit, 'ready, set... BOULDER! Colorado's Sports Mecca' on display now through June 11, 2006.

Letter from the President

Interesting things continue to occur at the Boulder History Museum. One of the most exciting is the purchase of four warehouse condominium units. As you may know, we have over 33,000 historic artifacts in our collection, and it is growing. Our current warehouse, where most of those items are stored, is literally full to the rafters. Furthermore, the space is not air conditioned and it does not give us adequate room to catalog, repair or properly house our artifacts.

After careful analysis, the Board of Trustees concluded that the cost of purchasing and renovating our own collection storage facility would be approximately equal to the continued cost of renting space. On June 29, therefore, with the substantial professional assistance of Jim Swaebly, the Museum concluded the purchase of four separate, adjoining storage units. We have begun the conversion and remodeling, and the next 10 months will consume many hours of staff time in preparing for and moving from the current warehouse to our own facility. We have enough space so that we will be able to rent out two of the units for a short period. Eventually, the short term leases will expire and we will expand into the last two spaces.

The other exciting bit of news is the Museum's Endowment Fund. The challenge grant was completed, successfully, on July 29 and we now have an endowment of \$420,000. We want to continue to add to this Endowment Fund and your contributions or bequests are very welcomed.

Other articles in this newsletter report on the successful opening of our new exhibit and the programs which are planned for the fall and winter. We encourage your participation.

Karl

Karl Anuta
President, Board of Trustees



LAURA MARTIN joins the staff as new CURATOR OF EDUCATION

Laura recently received her Masters degree in Museum Studies from the University of Colorado where she focused on Museum Education. She grew up in Colorado Springs, and has been in the Boulder area for nine years exploring her interest in archaeology and education. During the past two years as an intern at the Boulder History Museum,

Laura initiated the popular Girl Scout programs as well as served as a school program guide and worked on several small exhibits. Laura spent this past summer immersed in the history of Golden, Colorado as the lead teacher for the Clear Creek History Park's summer children's camp, *Hands On History*. Other museum credits include an education internship at the Museum of Northern Arizona, a natural history and art institution located in Flagstaff, Arizona. She also completed an internship at the Denver Museum of Science assisting on a Colorado Digitization Project grant to create a web-based exhibit of Western-themed objects. Laura is looking forward to serving as Curator of Education at the Boulder History Museum, and actively working with the schools and Boulder community to grow the Museum's educational role in the area.



Laura Martin and a group of Brownies working on a Girl Scout badge.

Exhibit and Program Notes



Olympic and World Class Athletes make the October 9th Exhibit Grand Opening a wonderful event!



Dale Stetina, Christian Griffith and John Ruger converse at the exhibit opening.



Boulder Olympic and World Class Athletes attending *ready, set...BOULDER!* Colorado's Sports Mecca exhibit opening on October 9th.



Climber Jim Erickson signs autographs



Sarah Brenne talks to Connie Carpenter and Arturo and Dagny Barrios during the exhibit opening.



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CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR MONTHLY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS
www.boulderhistorymuseum.org

New to the Collection

By Laura Lee, Curator of Collections

Recent acquisitions to our permanent collection include some neat, Boulder specific World War II material from Laurence Paddock. There are a number of hand painted posters that advertise different social events to raise money for the war effort. Several of them charged a certain amount per inch of the attendee's waist line! Equally exciting is a large, two foot by four foot poster which announces a dance in front of the courthouse to celebrate the end of the war.



A sad turn of events brought the Museum another wonderful piece of Boulder history. The Penny Lane Coffee House closed its doors to customers this past July. The Museum was fortunate enough to acquire one of the signs that graced the front of the building on the northwest corner of 18th and Pearl. Owner Isadore Million's blue eyes sparkled as he shared a few personal stories with the staff when we picked up the sign in late July.

The upcoming renovation and move into the new Collection Storage Facility is a very exciting and busy time for the collections department. Over the next year while we pack, move and settle in, there will be a moratorium on new acquisitions. Potential donors are asked to please hold on to their gifts until after October 2006 when our normal collection policy practices will resume. We appreciate your patience and support through this transition time!



'Burgundy Beauty' Annual Quilt Drawing Saturday, December 10th at 3:30 during the Holiday Open House

2005 marks the Museum's tenth anniversary and final year of being the honored recipient of an annual quilt handmade by the Museum Piecers volunteers. We would like to thank each and every one of the quilters for their time and dedication to the Museum over the years. We greatly appreciate their efforts and the beautiful quilts they have donated to our annual quilt raffle fundraiser and wish them all the best in their future endeavors. *Thank you MUSEUM PIECERS!*

Remember to buy your tickets before December 10th - \$1 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$5. **PLEASE NOTE: Tickets will not be mailed to members this year, so please contact the Museum to purchase yours today!**

