

# BrooklinePatch

## SPORTS

### National Skating Magazine Started in Brookline Home 87 Years Ago

Editor Theresa Blanchard was first American woman to win Olympic gold medal in ice skating.

By **Kat Hasenauer Cornetta** August 15, 2010

While today's sports bloggers are known for publishing their brand of sports commentary out of their basements and onto the internet, the idea of homemade sports coverage did not start with the advent of Web 2.0. In fact, one of America's longest-running sports magazines found its start in a home in Brookline.

Skating magazine, the official publication of the United States Figure Skating Association, was founded in the home of Theresa Weld Blanchard in 1923. Blanchard began and edited the magazine as a volunteer from Brookline until 1963, and consulted until her death in 1978.

Blanchard, who was the first American woman to win an Olympic medal in figure skating, set forth to create the magazine in the fall of 1923. Her original intension was two-fold: to better communication between the individual skating clubs across the country and to promote the sport that she loved.

"I have been appointed chairman of a publication committee to publish a magazine or leaflet for the US Figure Skating Association," she wrote to the Chicago Figure Skating Club at the time. "It is to be the official means of spreading the USFSA rules, etc. and also (to) contact instructive and interesting articles."

Two of Blanchard's Brookline neighbors, Nathaniel Niles and Edith Rotch, along with New Yorker Paul Armitage, joined her in editing and assembling the magazine out of her home. The four put together the magazine on a purely volunteer basis, and sunk their own money into the project.

The team had lofty goals in a time where modern publishers' best friends – InDesign, spell check and email – didn't exist. They wrote all copy for the 36-page magazine, gathered photographs of skaters from Europe, collected advertising and sponsorship dollars and printed all 500 copies of the first run by hand press themselves.

While successful in the first three aims, Blanchard and her team ran into a giant problem: Their hand press failed them. They turned to a local commercial printer in Brookline to print the issues, finally outsourcing a portion of the project.

The first issue only had one advertisement, a full page ad for former Boston sporting goods store Wright & Ditson. A subscription card was included in the issue, with the hopes that funding could be secured for future issues.

The initial offering of Skating was a hit with skating clubs and their patrons. Niles and Blanchard, who had been pairs partners and US Champions, continued on to edit the magazine together until Niles' death in 1945. For the first four years, they managed to publish three times a year (December, February and April/May), and added a fourth issue in 1927. The magazine continued to be produced in Blanchard's Brookline home until 1936.

Blanchard didn't keep her writing exclusive to Skating. She was a correspondent for "The Sportswoman" magazine, the first American magazine devoted strictly to women in sports, founded in 1924. Blanchard's active pursuit of promoting the sport across the country definitely cleared the way for not just figure skating, but women sports journalists in general.

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