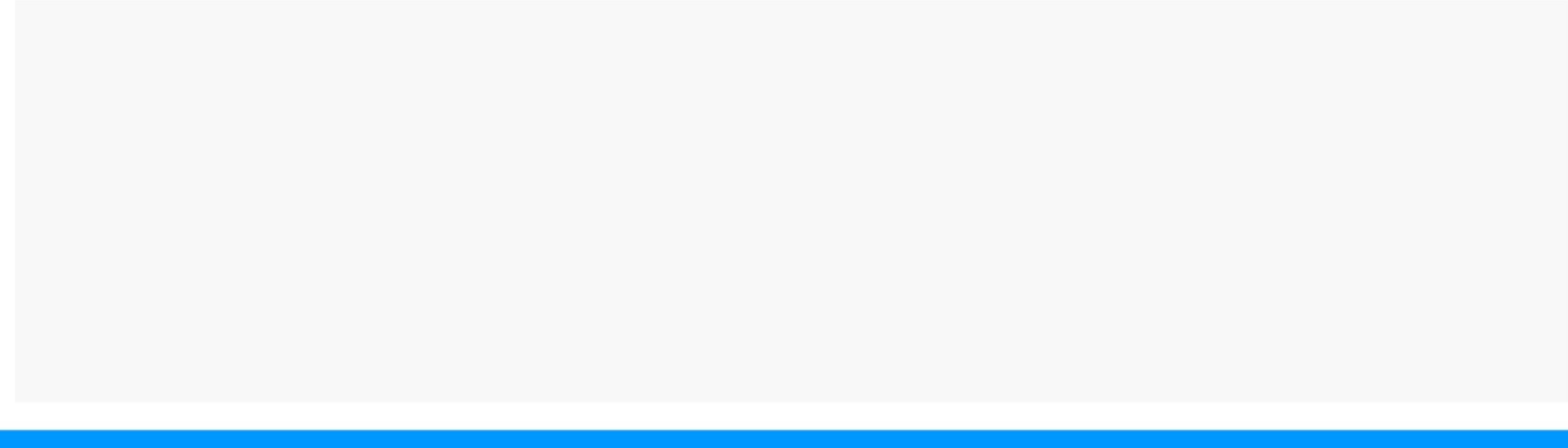


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REMEMBER WHEN

Scrapbook opened door to Fairfield Roller Rink

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Today, AHA! Children’s Museum is located at 315 S. Broad St. in a building that formerly housed the Hannan Rollarena. Kelly R. Hannan constructed his first Rollarena at 1810 N. Memorial Drive in 1953 (see article in Eagle-Gazette on July 23, 2012).

Three years later, he thought the rink was too far from downtown, so he closed and reopened on South Broad Street where an earlier rink had been located. Recently, a scrapbook was shared with this writer that helps illustrate the history of the first rink on this site, the Fairfield Roller Rink, and what followed. Older readers might remember them both.



The Fairfield Roller Rink opened formally July 4, 1940, and closed in 1951. It stood at 309-315 S. Broad St. This photo was taken Aug. 19, 1940. Submitted

“Three Lancaster business men today announced plans for a new skating rink and store building to be erected on South Broad St., south of the Fairfield Hotel,” announced the Eagle-Gazette on March 12, 1940. Ralph Gaffney, Frank Kiener and Dwight Dilger had received a building permit for a structure 78 by 155 feet, that would feature a rink of hard maple measuring 75 by 120. Two store rooms were to be featured along the front, and be divided by a 22-foot lobby.

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The formal opening of the Fairfield Roller Rink, 309-315 S. Broad St., was held July 4, 1940. The newspaper ad introduced Ralph Riley as the “maestro to the Hammond organ.” They were to be open from 2:30 to 5:30 and 8 to 11 p.m. each day, and open at 10 a.m. on Saturdays.

“Roller skating is the healthful family sport. If you can walk, you can learn to skate,” read the advertisement.

Mrs. Roger Eaton was the rink’s first hostess, Mrs. Chuck Mohler the second and Mrs. H. W. Eyman the third. When the rink celebrated its first anniversary (E-G July 2, 1941), they reported they were headquarters for five skating clubs: Anchor Hocking Glass, English Lutheran Church, Irving Drew Shoes, Fairfield Roller Club, and the Friendly Rollers of Mount Vernon.



Mrs. Chuck (Peggy) Mohler is shown at the Fairfield Roller Rink on Jan. 9, 1941. She was hired to work as the rink’s second hostess. Her job was to sell tickets as well as to skate and visit with skaters. Submitted

By April 4, 1942, a new ceiling to “absorb much of the roar of hundreds of whirling and spinning rollers,” and “24 modern fluorescent lights” had been installed at the rink. In spite of improvements, however, less than 10 years later the rink was up for sale.

“Plan to convert rink to plane parts assembly,” was the headline of the E-G on March 13, 1951.

The article stated Hermann Manufacturing Co. was planning to lease the building for two years and convert the building into an assembly plant for airplane parts in defense production pending City Council approval to rezone the property.

On March 22, 1951, the Eagle-Gazette reported the rink building had been purchased by Mr. and Mrs. William F. Wacker for \$55,000. Operation of the skating rink was to end by April 1, when Wacker would take possession. On April 24, the Eagle-Gazette next reported City Council had approved the change to “light industrial use” for a period of two years at their meeting the previous evening.



Frank Kiener, one of three local businessmen who owned the Fairfield Roller Rink between 1940 and 1951, is shown in this Nov. 3, 1940, photo with his skating family. Submitted

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The assembly plant did not materialize at this location. Kelly R. Hannan purchased the rink building April 30 for an undisclosed amount, and announced on June 12, 1951, that he had leased the building for a 20-year period to Don Furniture Co.

Don Furniture had been located in a single story, frame building that Hannan also owned just one door north of the skating rink. A.B. VanGundy, contractor, was hired to remodel the rink before the furniture store moved. All new, 8-foot high glass windows “modern in design” were to be installed across the front. The Don Furniture Co. was one in a chain of central Ohio clothing and furniture stores. They had been located at 309 S. Broad since 1948. George McReynolds and Larry Denman were co-managers.

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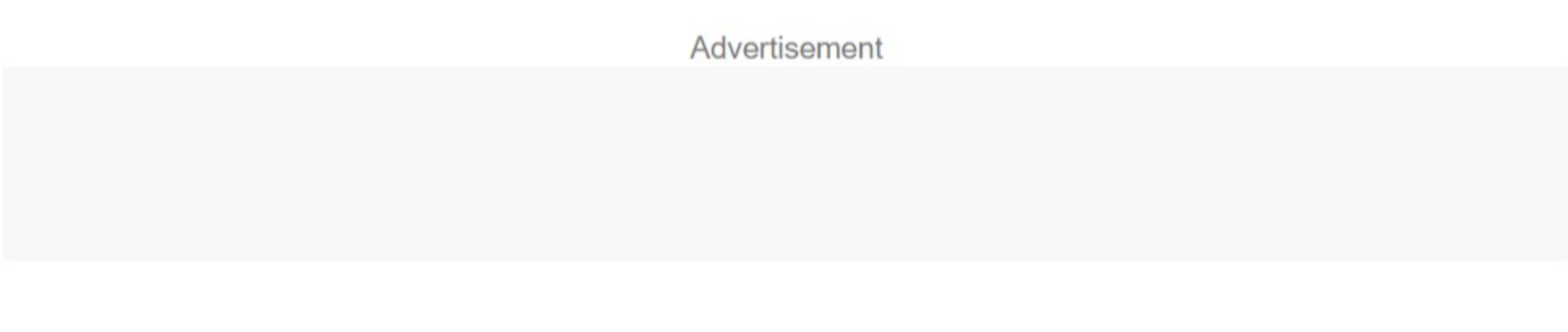
As mentioned above, Hannan was ready to move his roller rink back downtown by 1956 and did so. Out went Don Furniture and in went the Hannan Rollarena. “Rink recently acquired by Kelly R. Hannan is being completely redecorated inside and out. Russ Wayne will furnish beautiful skating music at the new Hammond percussion organ. Mr. and Mrs. Earl B. Knotts are operating the restaurant,” announced the E-G on Aug. 22, 1956.

Hannan sold his Rollarena to his daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Bender, in 1959 (E-G June 15, 1959). The Rollarena closed in 1961, and local skaters hung up their skates or traveled out of town.

Readers may contact Harvey at joycelancastereg@gmail.com.

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