

No competitor in sports —a wheeler in business

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Call him "hurricane" Alan. Alan Davidson, just 20 years old, is taking the business world by storm. A Hunting Woods resident, circumstances have found him rolling into the skate business with ease.

Davidson opened Road Runner Skates at 124 S. Woodward in Birmingham several weeks ago for two reasons.

"First it was getting to be a big hassle to sell out of my home, and second, I like being my own boss," he said.

For six weeks last year, Davidson lived in California where roller skating is a heavy trend. In fact, he says, it's the rage in many parts of the country and really hasn't peaked here yet.

"I saw thousands of people skating every weekend in a park in San Francisco," he said. "And then in New York City one day, I rented a pair of skates and became instantly and completely addicted."

WHEN HE became a skating addict, he joined a big crowd. Davidson says that 26 million people roller skated this summer.

"That means about 13 out of every 100 people in the U.S. put on roller skates," he said. "That's more than double the participation in any other sport."

"For me personally, skating is relaxing and it's fun. I was never competitive in sports otherwise."

Although he liked roller skating, he found he didn't like the way most rental skates looked.

"I looked through some sporting goods catalogs and found some that looked good and called a Chicago dealer," he said. "They didn't know who I was and quoted me wholesale prices."

After ordering his skates, he found there was a long wait to get them. "So I knew that everyone must have that trouble."

He began ordering a few pairs of commo-sized skates and peddling them among his friends. The business grew like topsy, and that's when he rented his small, upstairs space in Birmingham and became an entrepreneur.

TODAY, HE does repairs, takes special orders and is even beginning a trade-in aspect to his business.

Davidson said to attempt skating a person needs the boots, the skates, bearings and wheels.

"All are separate components," he said. "I always suggest high tops because there's more support and I like leather

or suede for comfort. Although I can mount skates on joggers or gym shoes, you can't do tricks or jump curbs in them. It's dangerous."

Road Runner Skates is open from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday. Sundays he serves lemonade from noon to 6 p.m.

Davidson carries 15 types of wheels

and a good assortment of boots and skates. Wheels come in a variety of colors and grades. Sizes carried begin with children's size 10 and go to men's size 15 by special order.

After the Christmas rush, he plans to go back to school nights to complete his business degree. Meanwhile, he's learning all about business first-hand.

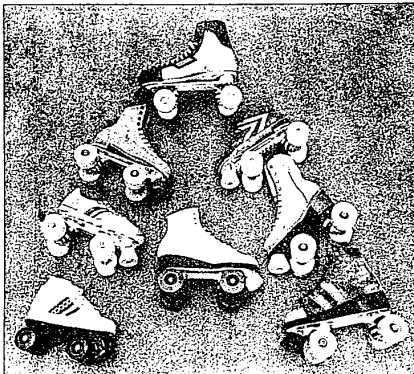
Call him at Road Runner Skates, 646-4098.



Alan Davidson, 20, hopes to be ahead of the roller skating craze when it comes to Michigan. His Road Runner Skates store in Birmingham opened late last month.



Brian Rhudy, 12, takes a flying leap over Alan Davidson and Mike Hilt, 12 (above). The jumps are one of many tricks adept roller skaters can do. Brian and Mike regularly make deliveries and pass out flyers for Road Runners Skates. Davidson regularly mounts skates on cowboy boots, hiking boots, jogging and tennis shoes. They come in many styles, fabrics and colors.



Staff photos
by
Mindy Saunders

Carry Meadow Brook memories all through the year

Story: CINDY HOOGLASIAN
Photos: DAVID FRANK

If Meadow Brook Music Festival ends too quickly for you, there's a way to carry some of those moonlit memories through the year.

Meadow Brook T-shirts, umbrellas and carryalls are just some of the mementos music lovers will find in The Treble Clef, the festival gift store adjacent to Trumbull Terrace.

In its second year this season, the shop offers a wide variety of musically oriented goods. Most are produced by

local and state artists, with some novelty-type items designed and made expressly for The Treble Clef.

The store is operated by members of the Meadow Brook Music Festival Women's Committee with proceeds benefiting the festival.

The committee decided to undertake the commercial effort after attending a conference of music festival women volunteers held at Blossom Music Festival in Cleveland, Ohio.

Learning that Meadow Brook was the only major music festival which did

not have a gift shop, they set up a cart to sell lawn blankets. The Treble Clef opened in 1979.

SHOPPERS WILL find goods to help them enjoy visits to the festival more. One of the most popular items is a hand-painted picnic basket made by committee members.

The woven wood baskets are thoroughly lined in cotton print. There are matching cotton napkins and a wooden tray which glasses can be placed on.

Picnickers who have neglected to bring all the small items which make

outdoor dinners successful will find corkscrews, blankets and emergency rain gear. For dessert, there are chocolate eighth notes, sharps and flats.

Designed just for the festival is a Meadow Brook poster by Kalamazoo artist Stephen Hansen, a handmade treble clef tie tacks and charms in sterling silver by Southfield silversmith Fay Herman, and hand-painted wicker trays by Birmingham designer Barbara Prince.

Rochester resident Ronald Petrella designed note paper with witty sayings

like "Mozart will not be Haydn at Meadow Brook."

For real music lovers, there are notes on towel racks, record holders, a tote bags, keyboard wrapping paper and even briefcases to hold sheet music.

THE TREBLE CLEF is headed by shop co-chairmen Janette Engelhardt and Ruth June Thornton. Women's Committee president Irene Kinsey said

the workers hope to present the festival with a \$10,000 check at their October meeting.

The group will hold a fundraiser Aug. 15, a matinee performance which features Tex Beneke and the Modernaires, Helen Forrest and Jonny Desmond. There will be an afterglow so that concertgoers can meet the stars.

The Treble Clef closes for the season with the final Meadow Brook Music Festival performance Aug. 31.



Proceeds from The Treble Clef sales will go toward the \$10,000 goal set by members of the Meadow Brook Music Festival Women's Com-

mittee. The shop is run by co-chairmen Ruth June Thornton (left) and Janette Engelhardt. (Staff photo by David Frank)



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