

# Craftsman plies his trade



Ken Eaton puts an antiquing finish on some of his belts.

By DIANE HUBEL

There is nothing ordinary about the Leatherworks store in the Little Mall, in Rochester from the 129-year-old barnwood on the walls to the handmade leather goods.

Even the proprietor, Ken Eaton, is unusual. It is not every day that a 22-year-old will decide to go into business, then act as the main salesman, manager, and supplier of goods.

Handcrafted leather goods are sold in the store. Most of them are made by Eaton himself, although he will buy some on consignment. He has also been teaching his father and a friend, Bill Eason how to make the belts.

"No two things in here can ever be the same," he said. "Even though I may try to duplicate something I really like, it will not turn out the same."

"Nothing ever does when it is made by hand. The dye may react differently to the different leather, or something else may be different, but there is always the subtlety."

THE STORE itself is a blend of old and new. When Eaton began planning it he said he wanted it to be a mixture of contemporary and traditional. Otto Bucholz, a friend of his, and an architectural student, helped him design the interior of the shop.

Graphic designs on two walls contrast with the weathered barnwood on the remaining two walls. An old time cash register and a 1920 solid cherry display case contradict the modern chrome overhead lights.

"I wanted to use the barnwood, yet I wanted to have a contemporary look too," Eaton said. "Otto

helped me put it together. He helped me make it work so I could have it both ways."

The barnwood has a bit of a history itself. The barn was built in 1845 on the corner of 26 Mile and Schoenherr. Eaton bought the barn, and he and Eason ripped it down. The barn itself has never been painted, and the coloring in the wood comes from natural elements and the weather.

Eaton said that since there are no schools that teach leatherworking he has had to pick up most of his techniques on his own. He began by reading a basic leatherworking book, then began ex-

perimenting with colors and dies to find the processes he likes best.

HE BEGAN leather working nearly three years ago. However, a year and a half ago he decided to become a professional craftsman and has been working at the craft full time since then.

When he first decided to earn his living as a craftsman he traveled to the various art shows to sell his leather goods. He later set up his first shop in Rochester on University. However a zoning ordinance forced him to close that shop.

He went back to the art shows

for the summer, and opened up the new shop in the Little Mall in September.

"When I opened the first shop on University I had been saving and I had quite a little nest egg," he said. "But by the time I opened this one up all I had was a lot of ambition and about 13 cents."

He usually stocks around 175 belts, as well as an assortment of key rings, visors, purses, and other leather goods. Now he is attempting to build up an inventory of 400-500 belts in time for Christmas.

The Leatherworks is open Monday through Saturday.

## Ronald E. McCreary heads plastic show

Ronald E. McCreary, advertising manager of D-M-E Company, Madison Heights, has been elected chairman of the National Plastics Exposition of the Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc. (SPI).

In his capacity as chairman, McCreary will coordinate the planning arrangements and staging of one of the largest industrial trade shows in the United States.

Held on a three year cycle, the next NPE will take place at Chicago's McCormick Place in December 1976.

More than 400 exhibitors will utilize in excess of 300,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space to present the latest developments in plastics materials, plastics processing machinery, tooling and instrumentation which will be previewed by more than 43,000 show visitors.

As advertising manager of D-M-E Co., a manufacturer of mold bases, tooling and components for the plastics industry, McCreary has been an active participant in the preparation and staging of SPI Expositions for many years.

He served as vice chairman of the Society's 1973 National Plastics Exposition and was chairman of the advertising and public relations committee of the 1971 NPE.

He has also been an active member of a number of other SPI committees serving the interests of the overall plastics industry.

The McCreary's and their two children reside on Post House Court, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.



Ronald McCreary

## 'Niterite' car service offered

Roger Penske Chevrolet, 2811 Telegraph Road in Southfield, has a new around-the-clock service called "niterite."

It's designed for the motorist whose car needs service, but he or she is unable to bring it in during regular business hours.

The new program permits the motorist to bring the car in, leave it parked and locked in the designated "niterite" parking area, fill out a service envelope and then deposit it with the car keys in a slot provided.



"What I like most is that they don't bounce my checks. I think that's really great. They put it on my Master Charge, should I goot, which I have been known to do."

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## Hairstylists forgo tipping

If you've just had your hair styled or nails manicured at John of Birmingham, don't attempt to tip the people who served you.

"We're professionals," said manager Jim Payne, "and we don't believe accepting tips is a professional thing to do."

"Our clients are amazed when we tell them 'no thank you.'"

Payne said the six employees at John's, 544 N. Woodward, agreed three weeks ago to stop the traditional practice of accepting tips.

"We're going to create a new trend in the business... we're sure others will be following suit."

"Tipping's an old fashioned idea that's been distorted by time," said shop owner John Kohler of Orchard Lake. "Management should pay their help proper wages so employees don't have to live on tips."

Payne said it was working out well. "Everybody benefits by it... there's no cut throat competition" among the hair dressers to get the customers who give the bigger tips.

Hairdresser Goldie Patterson just got her license and has been working at John's for one month.

"We all discussed it and decided it would be a good thing to do," said Miss Patterson. "We may be getting less now, but it will be better in the long run."

She said her customers are "really surprised."

John of Birmingham has been in business for 10 years and employs three hairdressers, two shampooers and one manicurist.



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