

Scooters are back on the scene

■ The latest fad in hip transportation, scooters are a flash from the near past, but are they here to stay?

By Kristina Johnson
for the Emerald

They're light. They're fast. They're shiny. They're not bikes, and they're not skateboards. They're scooters, and stores around Eugene can't keep enough of them in stock. Alex Fong at Paul's Bicycle Way of Life on Alder Street said scooters are the fastest selling item in the store.

"These are the craze; if you don't have one, you're not cool," Fong said. "We order about thirty at a time, and then they're gone."

G.I. Joe's sporting goods store has resorted to a waiting list for customers desperate to get in on the latest in transportation.

"They sell like hotcakes," salesman Jason Brawner said. "We can't keep 'em in stock."

Brawner said 10- to 12-year-old boys are the biggest fans of scooters, which sell for about \$120 each. But the fad hasn't gone unnoticed on campus.

"A lot of college students have bought them," Brawner said. "They fold down into a small, compact unit, so anybody can carry them anywhere."

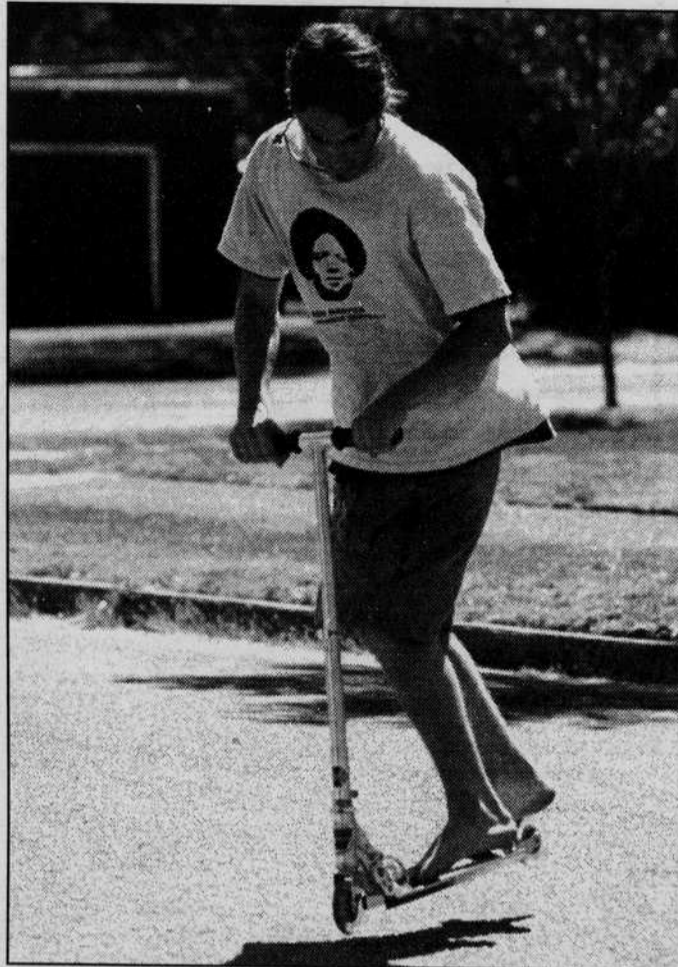
The sleek aluminum scooters evolved from the kickboards kids used to ride in the 70s and 80s. Fong said Paul's Bicycle Way of Life has always carried some form of scooter, but they weren't popular until a few months ago when the Razor model hit the racks and started selling out.

"I guess they're in the magazines kids read," Fong said.

Instead of the big bicycle tires found on old kickboards, the updated scooters sport two oversized rollerblade wheels and handlebars that make steering easy. They weigh from 6 to 7 pounds, depending on the brand and can be folded into a parcel as small as one by one-and-a-half feet. While motorized models exist, the most popular versions are powered by pushing off the sidewalk, skateboard style.

Ryan McNamara used to skateboard, but he said scooters are more fun to ride.

"They're easier to maneuver," he said. "I would say on a flat surface, they're faster than a skateboard." McNamara, 27, bought his "JD Bug" model a week ago to get back and forth to his job at Blockbuster. "I'm three blocks from work. It's a hassle having to take my bike, and obviously this is



Azle Malinao-Alvarez Emerald

Freshman chemistry major Ryan Koons rides a newly evolved scooter on campus.

faster than walking. Scooters are a blast. They're really fun to ride."

McNamara said he noticed scooters a couple of years ago when they started showing up in

“These are the craze; if you don't have one, you're not cool.”

Alex Fong
Paul's Bicycle
Way of Life

Asia and Europe.

"I know in Japan and bigger cities in Asia, there's not enough room for bike racks, so people start using these."

When Paul's Bicycle Way of Life first started stocking scooters, the Razor model was the only one available. Two months later, according to Fong, "there must be 30 other companies that make the same thing." One model even features front suspension. A mountain scooter?

"It's more to take the cracks out of the curb and sidewalk," Fong

said. Officer Frank Lewis of the Campus Police said he didn't anticipate serious safety issues resulting from the scooter trend.

"They'd have to follow the same rules as bicycles," Lewis said. "They'd be better off wearing safety gear, like helmets and kneepads."

Are campus bike racks destined to be replaced by scooter lanes? It may be awhile.

"Those things?" Dan Hirai, a 26-year-old political science major from Seattle, said. "Those are the things we used to cruise around on in third grade. It was like a progression. First your parents got you a big wheel, then they got you one of those, then they got you a bike with training wheels. You should go down to Goodwill and look for one, because that's where they're gonna be in a week after kids get tired of 'em."

Even Ryan McNamara admitted that the scooter has its limits.

"For going to work I've given up on my bike, but across town is kind of far on a scooter. It gets a little tiresome."

GREATER GOODS
515 HIGH ST EUGENE 485-4224

NATURAL FIBER CLOTHING: FLAX
TENCEL OG COTTON HEMP
RAYON KNITS LINEN

OPEN MON-SAT 10-6 & SUN 12-5

532 W. 8th #4, 1 bedroom.....	\$425
2090 Roosevelt #10, 1 bedroom.....	\$375
29840 Willow Creek Rd #3, 2 bedroom.....	\$550
3995 E. 19th, 2+ bedroom.....	\$650
540 E. 34th, 4 bedroom.....	\$995
791 W. Broadway #A, 4 bedroom.....	\$1150

741-4676
Free listings and applications at
637 B Street, downtown Springfield
www.emeraldpm.com

EMERALD
Property Management, Inc.

TOP TEN REASONS TO GO TO THE BLUE HEN CAFE

10. Big portions
9. You hunger for the goodness of the hen.
8. Your significant other wants somewhere nice, but you don't want to spend a lot.
7. The basketball team partied there. Can I get a whoop whoop?
6. Huge biscuits, and I mean huge.
5. Blue cups. Has the world gone mad?
4. Free appetizers at Happy Hour.
3. The bartenders are so nice it's scary.
2. Because you're good enough, smart enough, and doggone it, you're hungry.
1. We'll give you **10% Off** with this ad.

The Blue Hen
cafe

1769 Franklin Blvd. Next to Track Town Pizza.
683-0780

She'll steal your heart...

Jiggles

Open Daily 11:00 am - 2:30 am • 2165 W. 11th, Eugene • (541) 344-6897

ODE ARCHIVES Find ODE stories since 1994
© www.dailymerald.com