

Be-Mar offers entertainment on wheels

Emily Morry 4:55 p.m. EDT May 14, 2015



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(Photo: File photo)

Three generations of Moffitts have made their mark on the village of Honeoye Falls.

The family first moved to the area in the 1800s. The following century, Harland Moffitt Sr. opened Moffitt's Grocery Store, a North Main Street mainstay until its closure in 1962. By this time, the family name had become associated with an entirely different line of business.

The brainchild of Harland Moffitt Jr., Be-Mar Associates (named after his partner's wife, Betty, and Moffitt's mother, Mary) was established in 1958 to provide mobile roller-skating events for children in western New York.



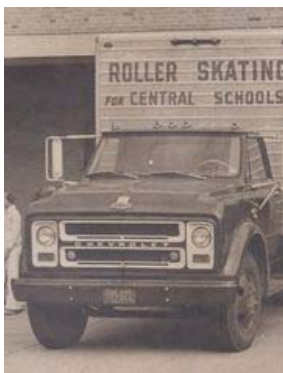
Be-Mar Associates was founded by Harland Moffitt Jr. (Photo: Provided by John Moffitt)

According to Harland's son John, "(My father) saw a need for kids to do some physical exercise ... in this climate, obviously we're limited to certain things, so he thought it would be a good activity, something the kids could do in a safe environment, in schools and YMCAs, things like that."

With the twin goal of entertainment and exercise, Be-Mar offered its services to after-school programs and fundraisers at local educational and recreational institutions. In addition to providing skates, skating instruction and music, Harland and his employees supervised attendees and engaged them in a variety of games.

After a long and successful run, Harland hung up his roller skates in the mid-1980s and passed the company on to his son, current town of Mendon Supervisor John D. Moffitt.

The family business now also includes John's sister Sue among its 12 employees and currently serves about 200 schools in western New York.



Elementary schools comprise 85 percent of Be-Mar's customer base, but Moffitt has found a little success with older student groups as well:

"Kids get to that high school age and they think it's (roller-skating) not cool, and then all of a sudden they go to college and it's like, 'Hey, I remember when I used to do this!' and they think it's cool again."

Nostalgia is certainly one of the company's selling points, but perhaps Be-Mar's greatest attribute is its dedication to the physical health of young people.

Be-Mar Associates has been providing roller-skating fun for decades. (Photo: Provided by John Moffitt)

In recognition of its commitment to fitness, the business received a grant in 2008 from the Greater Rochester Health Foundation to provide its services to a number of city schools that otherwise would not have had the financial resources to offer such an event.

Be-mar has benefited the health of students beyond the Rochester area as well. The Honeoye Falls-based business serves customers within a 100-mile radius and frequently transports its mobile operation as far as Buffalo, Syracuse and the Southern Tier.

Thanks to this expansive and loyal customer base, Be-Mar Associates is still delighting children at multiple roller-skating parties every day almost 60 years after Harland Moffitt Jr. first thought up his unique company.

Morry is a Rochester-area freelance writer.

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