

Skate: Bothell boy grinds away

From Page B1

"These are young kids who do these amazing things. They're loving their sport. You can see it in their faces," said Wyndi Rejniak, the company's marketing coordinator.

As part of his sponsorship duties, Skyler hands out sodas and attends store openings. He also is sponsored by two Seattle skateboard companies, Randoms Hardware and Quiksilver.

Competition is a problem for Skyler only when he wins big.

"He usually wins T-shirts and shoes that are way too big for him," Miller said. "He dresses his brothers really well."

Not so long ago, the term skateboarder conjured up kids on the fringe in black leather jackets, Miller said.

But with an increase in the

number of city-sponsored skate parks and a growing number of participants — boys and girls — the sport has acquired legitimacy and a strict code of etiquette.

At a skate park, "You don't cut in front," Skyler explained. "You go out and wait your turn. You don't get in anybody's way."

Skyler's mother is part of a growing number of skateboard moms who scoot from one skate park to the next, not unlike a generation of soccer moms.

"I take my paperwork to the skateboard park," said Miller, who runs a home-based day-care.

She admits, however, to being unnerved at times, watching her 4-foot 2-inch tall, 65-pound son zero in on a new challenge and then try to conquer it.

"We were at a competition, and he had to try this 10-foot

drop. I'm thinking 'negligent parent.' But I'm peeking through my fingers hoping he'll make it."

For parents interested in the sport, Miller advises visiting local skate parks.

"Get out and watch the competition, meet the kids. We've met some great families that way."

Skyler, an honors student, practices three hours a day.

"I've learned some wise things from my son," Miller said.

"He says the bumps and scratches are like the aches and pains you get from sitting in the hard plastic chairs at school, if you're not getting them, you're not learning."

You can call Herald Writer Janice Podsada at 425-339-3029 or send e-mail to podsada@heraldnet.com.