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Teens want skatepark close to home

By JOE KEO
The Tattoo

Bristol needs a skatepark, city teens agree, but they differ on where it should be built.

Everybody seems to want it close to where they live and go to school.

While students at Bristol Eastern High School overwhelmingly said they wanted it across the street at Page Park - and some preferred a Chippens Hill location - teens from Bristol Central and Memorial Boulevard, its feeder school, had a different answer.

Kids from the south and west section of town chose Brackett Park, with Rockwell Park their second choice.

"It's where all the skaters are anyway," said Kyle Morin, sophomore at Bristol Central High School who favors Brackett Park.

"Honestly it should be near the middle of the city because people [that skate] are young and can't drive," said Luke Saglimbeni. He also suggested locating the skatepark near a hospital in case someone gets hurt.

Brackett Park - right in the middle of downtown Bristol - is also the choice of a city police officer and the director of the Bristol Boys and Girls Club.

Both made the argument that teens who now skateboard in town are doing it downtown. It only makes sense to put the skatepark where kids are already skating, they said.

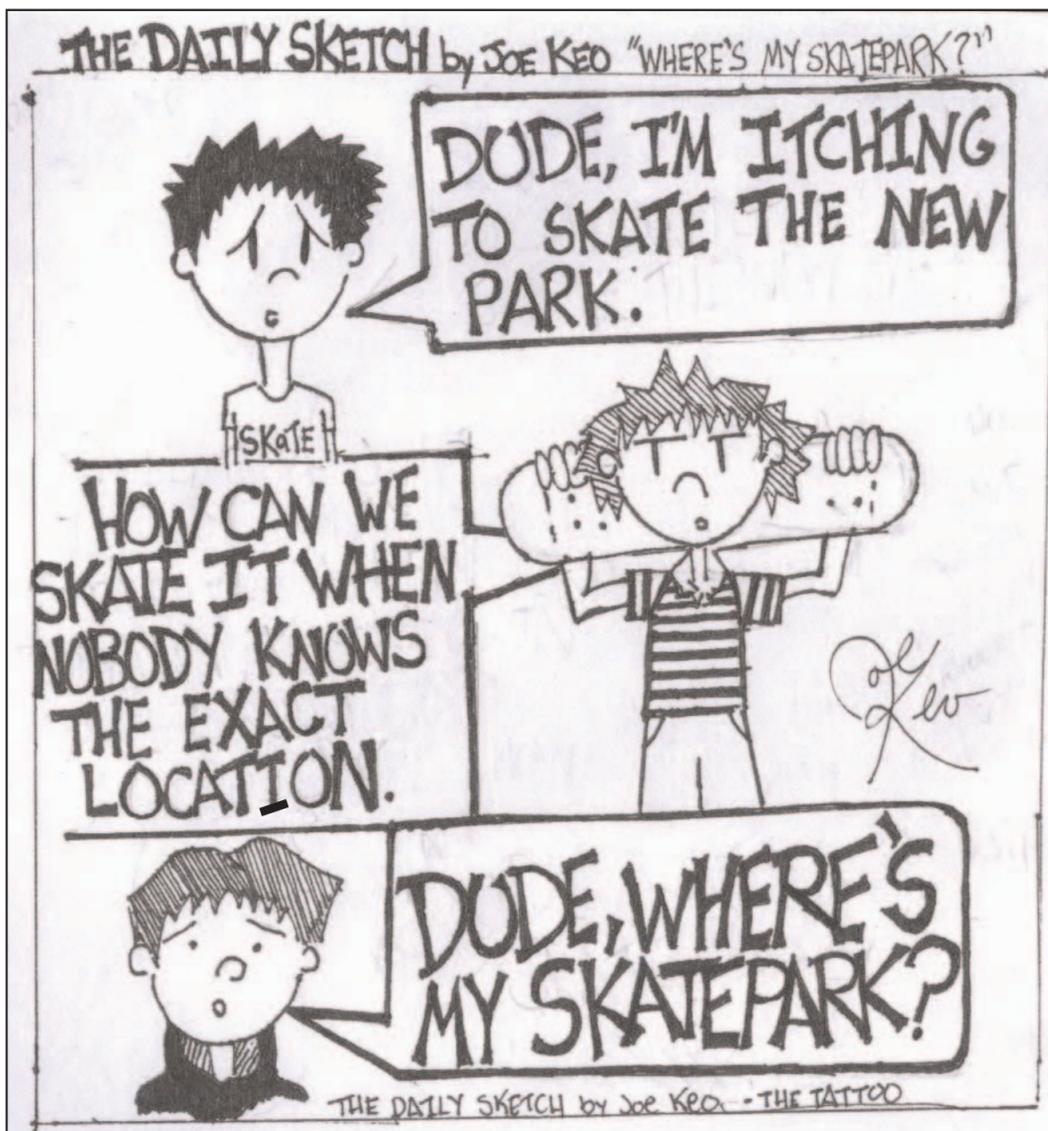
"I see a need right downtown," said Jim Truscio, director of the Bristol Boys and Girls Club. "That's where I happen to see a lot of kids skateboarding."

The Bristol police officer argued strongly for locating it in Brackett Park. The officer, who commented on the condition of confidentiality, said cops mostly kick kids out of the downtown area around Barnes Group, Webster Bank, City Hall and the mall.

"Any suggestion to put a skatepark in an outlying area is a waste of time," the officer said. "We do not encounter anywhere near the amount of problems outside of the downtown area as we do downtown itself."

The officer said police and teens both need the skatepark. Cops get tired of repeatedly kicking kids off private property, but don't have anywhere to send them, he said.

"With the amount of time and paperwork it takes to process just one youth on a criminal trespass complaint, it would take half the shift to arrest all the kids trespassing on just one establishment," the officer said.



Joe Keo / The Tattoo

Contrary to what teens may think, the officer said most cops don't have a problem with skateboarders - they just get sick of chasing them away over and over again.

Building the skatepark downtown offers the advantage of added police protection, the officer said, which would help deter problems.

"We police officers talk amongst ourselves about how to solve this problem and where a park should go," he said. "It has been the general consensus that the closer to downtown the better."

After city park officials said they wanted to hear from Bristol teens to figure out where to put the skatepark, journalists from The Tattoo spoke with more than 40 young people on the issue.

Kids around Eastern and Chippens Hill argue that Page Park is a good place to build it because it's near Route 6, and it has a good amount of land to develop.

"There is more space and a larger skatepark could be made," Julie Krosnicki, a freshman at Eastern, who favors Page.

Jason Brzozowski, a sophomore at Eastern, agreed. "There is plenty of open room to build lots of stuff," he said.

Jared Roberge, a junior at Eastern, said he likes Page because it is close to his school. A skatepark across the street would give kids something to do before and after school and during

study halls, he said.

Russell Baylock, an accomplished skateboarder and a sophomore at Eastern, said he feels "very tingly" about Page Park.

Others say that the old leaf pile by Chippens Hill Middle School is an ideal spot.

Adam Brandi, 14, an Eastern freshman, likes Chippens because he said it is a larger and more secluded area.

But Naomi Graves, a sophomore at Central, said it would be a mistake to build the park behind the middle school.

"They shouldn't put the skatepark near Chippens Hill Middle School because the kids will be skipping to go to the park," said Graves.

Kids that attend Central or Memorial Boulevard School lobbied for the downtown locations of Brackett or Rockwell Park.

Lester Warzocha, a freshman at Central, likes the idea of having the skatepark built at Brackett Park.

"There is a lot of space and it's goin' to waste," said Warzocha.

Truscio said he can tell where kids have been skateboarding because he sees damage to curbs and other places favored by skaters.

He's noticed skateboarders all over downtown, Truscio said, including behind the Boys and Girls Club and especially when he's heading home after work when it's dark.

"I don't think their intention is to damage," said Truscio. "But the outcome is damage. You can just see where the kids are. They're taking advantage of skateboarding opportunities."

Matt Coyne, a 12-year-old seventh grader at Memorial Boulevard, said Brackett Park has the advantage of being close to the Bristol Boys and Girls Club and other places kids go.

Matthew Tyrell, a seventh grader at Memorial Boulevard, would also like to see the park at Brackett.

"There's nothing there," Tyrell said. "It'll attract more people."

And for teens, said Tyrell, "It'll be another place to go."

According to 11-year-old Mariah LaPointe, a sixth grader at Memorial Boulevard, there isn't much for someone her age to do at Brackett Park.

"There's no fun there," LaPointe said. "If they built it there, it would be more fun."

Tattoo staff writers Kate Haire, Jen Plonski, Samantha Lawrer and Danielle Letourneau contributed to this story.

A Doozer of a band, but more bubble gum than punk

By SAM YOSAfi
The Tattoo

When the band Doozer appeared at Bristol Eastern High School last Wednesday, it just reinforced my certainties about what is wrong with punk music today.

With the revived label of "punk" floating around like the flu among teenagers nowadays, this band falls right into the mold of a modern-day "punk" band.

They're extremely whiney and mainstream-oriented. To be quite frank, they're all pop artists dressed to appeal to the masses. With an array of outfits and hair-dos, they could look like anything from Abercrombie & Fitch models to members of a death metal band.

With the absence of world-renowned bubble-gum pop

groups such as N*Sync and the Backstreet Boys, the 12 to 18-year-old crowd is getting restless and needs fresh faces to faint over.

What I say

So what does the record company decide to do to solve this dilemma?

The trend of getting a group of guys who could no doubt be in an actual bubble-gum pop group while also playing instruments seems to be catching on. This is how current day pseudo-punk has come about.

With music expanding within itself, there are a countless number of sub-genres with which you could label every band that's out there today, but to keep this particular teenage idolization frenzy general, it now carries the name "pop

punk."

And deservedly so. It seems as if a majority of these bands formed with the sole purpose of selling out, even before they become somewhat famous.

Their song subjects are the same as their bubble-gum counterparts, overused and watered-down like all the rest. If you listen close enough, you'll swear Justin Timberlake himself is on vocals.

But who could blame this new breed of attention whores? After all, it seems to be working. During third period at Eastern, while Doozer was playing, they had a large group of girls standing in awe about how "hot" they all were, yet none of them noticed the fact that Doozer's musical talent was a bit lacking.

It's sort of sad how today's musical standards have been replaced by looks, rather than

musical integrity. Thanks to the media and radio, teens base their personalities on what is spoon-fed to them rather than

as bands try hard to appear as real and hardcore as possible. It's actually quite entertaining to watch if you have never

malts for fun.

But then, when they actually play their music, you think you're listening to the New Kids On The Block with real instruments instead of the synthesizers.

As long as you have eye candy, the sheep will flock. The average person will tune out what they hear and zoom in on what they see.

A domino effect will occur and everyone will claim themselves a true "punk" and get a holier-than-thou attitude with their music. This held true as overprotective Doozer fans verbally attacked anyone who had anything remotely negative to say about the band.

So I will give this new-age punk phenomenon some credit: it does bring together the hordes of teenage girls who previously were outcasts, or had no personalities.



Sam Yosafi / The Tattoo

Doozer plays in the cafeteria on Wednesday, Nov. 20 at Bristol Eastern High School for "Spirit Week."

searching for themselves.

If MTV says it's cool, it must be. If I don't conform to being a non-conformist, no one will talk to me. The only thing punk about today's music is the look,

heard the band before seeing them play. You'd expect a different sound coming from a group of guys that look like they spend their weekends off in the woods sacrificing ani-

The Rising: a calm voice for hard times

By JOE BATTISTA
The Tattoo

While most kids my age are listening to hip hop or hard rock, I'm listening to Bruce Springsteen, my favorite artist.

My college roommates looked forward to seeing Nelly perform at the Video Music Awards on MTV, but I was content with Springsteen opening the show and setting the tone.

Half an hour after Springsteen's new album, The Rising, went on sale at midnight on July 30, I bought it in Asbury Park, N.J.

Little did I know then that almost two months later, the CD would help me through one of the toughest days I have ever had to face.

Before I got The Rising, I had heard it was about Sept. 11.

Yet I had no idea that the album was so personal.

I listened non-stop to The Rising after I got it - and even snuck into one of Springsteen's rehearsals - but the significance of the disk had not yet hit me.

I listened and listened, though, getting excited about such strong songs as "Mary's Place" and "Lonesome Day."

In tune

As I left for college the album helped because I was away from my family and friends and the one thing I could still do to make myself

feel at home was listen to The Rising. Don't get me wrong, I have many other Springsteen albums, but this one was special to me. It was from my time, not my father's.

My father was one of the people who got me into Springsteen.

He took me to my first concert in 1999 and supported my stupid ideas, such as sleeping in Asbury Park for The Rising's release.

As I continued to listen to the album, it hit me.

On Sept. 10, I was watching a Springsteen television special with Ted Koppel and I realized that the next day would mark the one-year anniversary of the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

That got to me.

September 11 was a rough day for everyone, but what I saw on that day will never leave me.

I walked outside the door of my school and watched the flames from the World Trade Center with my own eyes from just two miles away.

I walked outside my school and watched the flames from the World Trade Center ... my father worked only two blocks from the Twin Towers.

It was a terrible sight.

And on top of that, I knew my father worked only two blocks away from the Twin Towers.

Everything turned out okay with my family. But it was not the same anymore; something was missing.

That feeling stayed with me until I started to put The Rising and Sept. 11 together.

Whenever I felt like a good cry, I would sit at my computer, put on my headphones and listen

to it.

If I cried, I cried.

That hole that I felt was filled with the music.

When I needed cheering up, I would listen to the title track, "The Rising," and if I just wanted to keep myself calm I would listen to "My City of

Ruins."

All the songs did the same job. They made me feel better about what happened.

Everything Springsteen says in The Rising's songs is taken almost from the mouths of people who experienced it.

Listening to them, I felt reassured by the voice of a man whom I've never met, but whom I idolized.

The Rising made me feel safe and in control.

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