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Another Try for Belfast's Hard-Times Skatepark

by Ethan Andrews

On a recent afternoon, Nikademus Cody, Ian Ferrel and Rex Radford were admiring a low wooden box with a metal rail along one edge. It was a big improvement over another rail-edged box, now tumbled into a corner of the Belfast Skatepark.

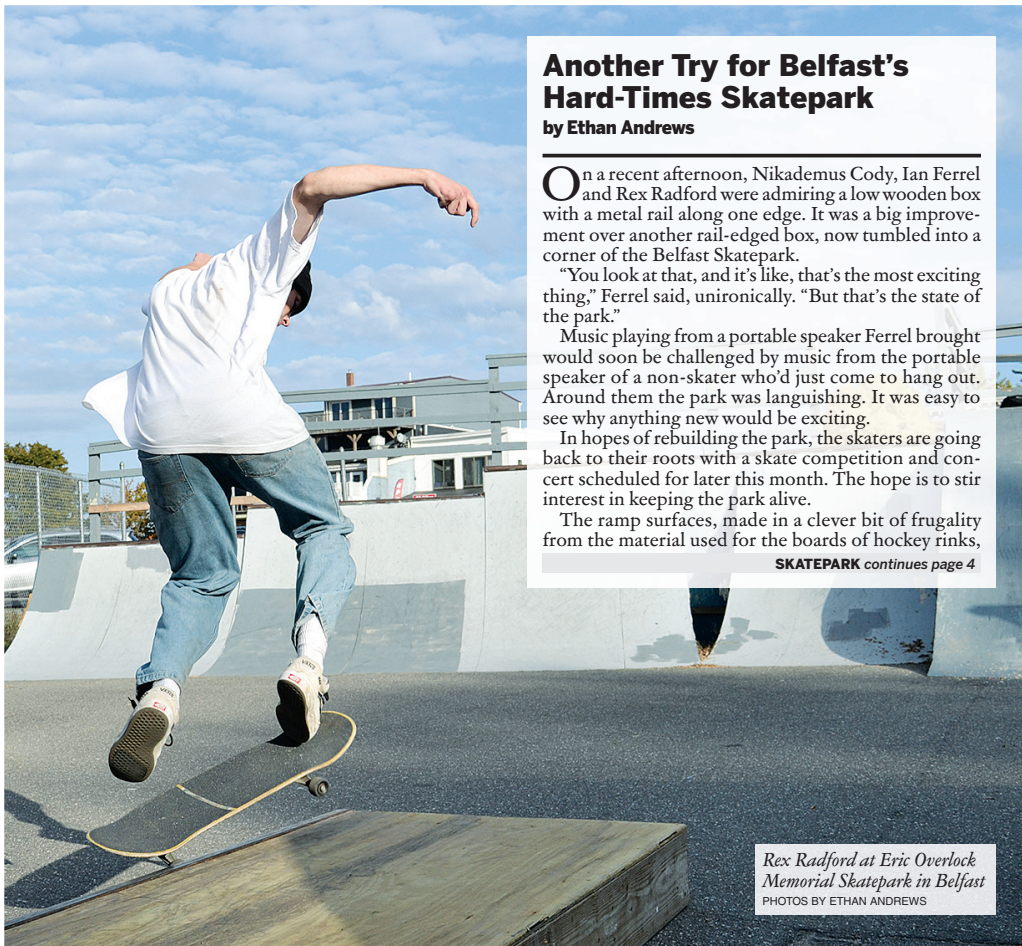
"You look at that, and it's like, that's the most exciting thing," Ferrel said, unironically. "But that's the state of the park."

Music playing from a portable speaker Ferrel brought would soon be challenged by music from the portable speaker of a non-skater who'd just come to hang out. Around them the park was languishing. It was easy to see why anything new would be exciting.

In hopes of rebuilding the park, the skaters are going back to their roots with a skate competition and concert scheduled for later this month. The hope is to stir interest in keeping the park alive.

The ramp surfaces, made in a clever bit of frugality from the material used for the boards of hockey rinks,

SKATEPARK continues page 4



Rex Radford at Eric Overlock Memorial Skatepark in Belfast
PHOTOS BY ETHAN ANDREWS

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HiLo Art—

Kenny Cole's Savage Menagerie

by Alan Crichton

Kenny Cole's latest exhibit, "Jesus Christ! Visioning the New Normal," at Camden's Zoot Coffee will be on the walls until October 31, and it's worth a good look.

The artwork mashes together the big themes of our times: world domination, gold fever, war, politics, religion, race, climate change, hypocrisy, anger, savagery, truth, lies, alternative realities, and the labyrinth of digital technology that pushes our faces into everything all the time.

In another time, this might have been a wildly controversial exhibit. But zoned out on caffeine, oatcakes, the endlessly fascinating World Wide Web, and the warm hubbub of Zoot, we are too busy being part of the exhibition. All around our heads float 16 images that gnash and bite, chop up the world, harangue, win, lose, burst the seams, and part the oceans, and we are smack in the middle of it all, virtually and literally.

The art in these paintings makes them seem cool. Cole's hand and brush are quick and committed, always in service of communicating the conflicting ideas that swarm everywhere. The jagged brushwork, the wild, bright colors and the underlying cartoonery of every character suggest humor. But looking longer, there is the burn of unease.

Why is that penguin in a top hat sneaking away? What are those nine ferocious polar bears about to do? Did Santa Claus start that blaze he's running away from? Hey, Jesus is built like a Schwarzenegger superhero! Do those dolphins bite to kill? Who are all those frenzied, screaming, gun-toting guys with the books? Look at these paintings for just a little while ... Wow, they are hot!

This is satire in the irreverent George Grosz, Max Beckmann mode of a hundred years ago, pricking the conscience of a world falling ever faster into fascism and saying it right out loud. In a conversation, Cole pointed out that there are currently over 200 U.S. Christian denominations, and a staggering 45,000 globally ... so many claims on Jesus's truths: humility, love, patience, courage, compassion, honesty. Think



"Pulpit-Polar Disturbance" by Kenny Cole

how many have been enforced with hypocrisy and brutality over 20 centuries. Our USA underpinnings are based in the purity of those values, yet we, too, have used the powers of heaven and hell to grasp and hold political dominion. Visioning the New Normal? ... Jesus Christ! indeed!

Cole is as tangled in our many webs as the rest of us. But he consistently asks us to emerge from the instant answers and distractions and all the rabbit holes that have become our "virtual homes" and re-enter the world of real time, real problems, real confusions and seek real answers that can possibly carry us through the next few centuries. Could a set of paintings somehow help us do that?

River Arts Calls for Submissions for Fall Show

Geoff Bates

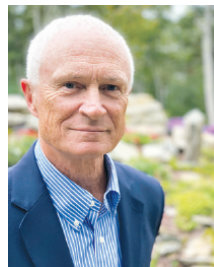
River Arts, located at 36 Elm Street in Damariscotta, invites artists to submit work for a juried show called Artist's Choice. The deadline for submission is Saturday, October 15, at 4 p.m. South Bristol artist and curator Geoff Bates will serve as juror. The show will be on view October 18–November 19. A public reception will be held on Saturday, October 22, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Works in all media, realistic or abstract, will be considered, including but not limited to painting, sculpture, fiber, photography, ceramics, original print making, drawing, encaustic and pastel. Artists may enter two pieces with a size limit of 24 inches in any direction, including frame, or one larger piece with a size limit of 48 inches, including frame.

Bates earned a BFA in drawing and printmaking from the University of Georgia and an MFA in painting and printmaking from Ohio University and is retired after working for over 45 years as a creator, educator and curator.

The list of accepted artists will be posted on the River Arts website and Facebook page by Wednesday, October 19.

For more information and complete submission guidelines, visit riverartsme.org or call 563-6868.



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