

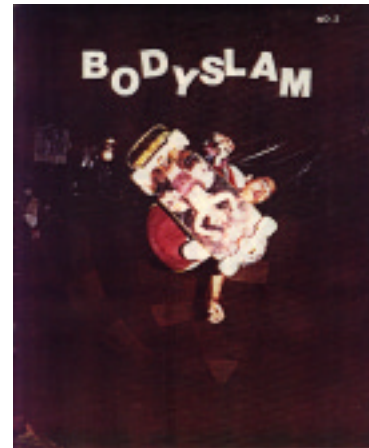
**MORE
OLD SCHOOL
THAN YOU**



**A skateboarder's progress
or
The roots of BODYSLAM
skateboarding mag of vert only**



**by
mark conahan**



INSTEAD OF "BODYSLAM - SKATEBOARDING mag of vert only," It should have been called "diary of a young man as an eqvist." Five issues appeared between 1982 and 1987 - three in Oregon and two in New England. MC and friends felt underrepresented by the skateboarding press. They tried submitting photos with no result. They were ripping and they had a radical scene happening but nobody knew it.

ONE DAY LONG AGO, Craig picked up a metal-wheeled skateboard that had been abandoned in the sidewalk. Kids need to remember to pick up their toys. The tiny flat board said "Fifteen Toes" on it and a graphic of three footprints. MC wanted to be a surfer but didn't live close enough to the beach. Since the predominant culture in town was law-rider it just had to be surfers. MC had a subscription to Surfer Magazine and one issue included a story about skateboarding and the possibilities opened up by the development of urethane wheels. started skateboarding a lot. He made

do with the metal wheels until he could get ahold of some urethane "Cadillacs." MC skated every day on that metal-wheeled piece of shit. Amazingly, the neighbors never complained about the noise even when he used their driveway. So MC is definitely more old school than you. Did you learn to skate on metal wheels? Eventually he got some urethane





wheels and a better board. Loose bearings, were followed by precision bearing Road Riders and a flexible fiberglass board, then kick-tailed solid wood, then a fiberglass Z-Flex followed by laminated wood, concaves, foam and p-text, foam/graphite and eventually back to laminated maple.

They skated streets, sidewalks, curbs, hills, ditches, and then we started building ramps. **Plywood was nailed to tables** and skated like a ditch. Next they built a **twelve foot high by eight foot wide ramp** with 30 feet of runway up to it. They skated it for hours - kick turns, front-side and backside "wheelers," and "Bertlemans." It was dangerous. There were no bones broken but plenty of flesh wounds and splinters.

MC came up with the idea to make a ramp like a pool wall and built a four foot transition **quarter-pipe**. The original idea was that it would be portable - put it up against a wall for instant vertical!





The crew kept looking for pools, and drove long distances and paid to ride the skateparks. They collected memberships from Skatepark Montebello, Skateboard World, Skatopia, Concrete Wave, Pipeline, Skatercrass, Endless Wave, Big-O, Del Mar, Lakewood, Marina Del Rey. the young MC hung at Phil's pool when Tony Alva and other Dog-Town legends were there, Ninth

Street pool with Doug Schneider, Upland skatepark and the Mt. Baldy Pipeline with Kevin Anderson, who they also knew from Phil's pool. An eight-year-old Eric Dressen used to skate the quarter pipe. They trespassed to skate **pools**, **ditches**, bowls, pipes, whatever they could find, ditched school to go to skateparks. They worked in shops, and practiced handstands, 360s and wheelies, jumped over sticks and cars and barrels and each other, jumped off loading docks and picnic tables, grabbed rides on the back of cars in parking garages and ran from cops and didn't always escape.

Mark and Craig were locals at **Super Bowl 1**; they skated it before it was open and used sledgehammers to clean it out and skate after it closed. Superbowl was a third generation park. They had a full-pipe like



Upland but they added pool coping to the vertical bowls. Aerials, RocknRolls, fakie 360's pipe fly-outs and rollo-ins were the radical moves.

MC moved to Portland Oregon in 1977. It rains a lot in Portland; that was hard. He eventually found skateboarders. There was a downhill scene at a local park - a long smooth road closed to cars. Skaters sponsored by a local shop eventually took him to an eight-foot wide

half pipe with eight foot transitions and four feet of vertical in a barn at a dairy farm. Larry, the owner, could fakie the ramp higher than anyone else. MC showed them what to do with the top, three wheels out, man. They made the ramp wider and cut it down to just two feet of vertical and built a platform on one side. MC went there almost every night for a couple of years. **Larry** ripped. Huckabee drove 50 miles each way every night, stopping to pick up Harris

and MC on the way to Larry's, a few hours of skating with fresh milk and cookies afterward.

During this period MC also skated **Halsey ramp**, Ron Fujii's, the Ride-On demo ramp, **Glisan pool**, Rock Creek, ramps in Vancouver, WA and Pat's ramp. Pat's had a roof, made from stolen roof trusses, carried home on foot. Fujii moved his ramp to his house and MC was on TV jumping over the news van off the side. Fujii's dad offered MC 100 bucks if he could one-wheel the top of the six feet of vertical. He was ready to pay up too, but MC wouldn't take it - he only got two wheels out and Ron was standing right there.

MC was visiting southern California on school breaks and skating. He also visited skateparks the way back to school. The gang made road trips to skateparks in Canada and southern California and to Tri-Cities skatepark in



Kennewick, Washington to skate the **forty foot diameter keyhole with four feet of vertical.**



They did demos and went to contests. One summer MC and three other skaters got paid to do demos all over Oregon wearing polyester tennis clothes. Huckabee drove the truck. They did safety demonstrations and freestyle routines. a highlight was MC's transfer across a six-foot gap between two quarter pipes. They made \$200 a show.

The Larry's scene continued for a couple of years, there was some other skating going on, slalom and downhill races but MC, Larry, Harris and Tom skated ramps. They macked skaters who didn't skate vert.

In April 1979 Kanaa Surf sponsored MC to skate in **The**

Dog Bowl Pro at Marina del Rey skatepark. Kanaa flew him to LA and he spent a couple of days beating the crap out of himself trying to get used to the bowl. The Dog Bowl was crowded and so MC did most of his practice in the upper pool. He spent some time working on laybacks with Duane Peters who later told the owner of Kanaa surf that all his skaters were losers. Skating curved walls and concrete is different from skating a wooden half-pipe. MC had moves like layback airs and allies, a couple different inverts, stuff noone else was doing - but the beating was too much. He placed near the bottom of the standings in front of Craig and all his old So. Cal pals. It was okay, though, he skated with the top vert pros of the day, got some new skateboard gear and a **t-shirt**. He could barely walk when it was over but was a hero to his pals in Oregon. MC skated in a pro contest! He wore that t-shirt a lot after he got back.





Eventually all of the first generation ramps got torn down. We became punks. We got mohawks. We listened to the Sex Pistols and the Circle Jerks and Black Flag. We wore funny clothes. **Huckabee** sang Louie Louie with Henry and Black Flag in Seattle; stage-diving back into the crowd after singing "me gotta go now." He got pistol whipped after a show in Seattle and lost a front tooth. He became a punk rock hero. Huckabee and Bill Reese had a band called **Dirge**. They skated a lot, mostly at Marcus's and in the street. They macked skaters who weren't punks.

Thrasher magazine appeared in 1981 to show the way - The boys introduction to DIY. Thrasher's production was so crappy compared to the slick skate publications we were used to, that MC figured he

could make a magazine just as good if not better. Mark and Tom made **BODYSLAM - skateboarding mag of vert only**. Thrasher was really cool, eventually plugging BS as "the virtual god of all skate 'zines."

BODYSLAM was intended to promote vert skating. There was bad blood between the freestyle-downhill-stalam axis and the vert rats, the same crap that still goes on between vert skaters and street skaters to this day. BODYSLAM was a venue for Tom's photography and MC's comics and they skated vert. They made some good friends through the mag and eventually did put street pictures in the 'zine. It was a useful calling card when MC moved to Massachusetts in 1983. Tom had already moved to San Francisco.

The BODYSLAM₃ cover was printed just before the move. The completed BS₃ included shots of two primitive Massachusetts ramps.



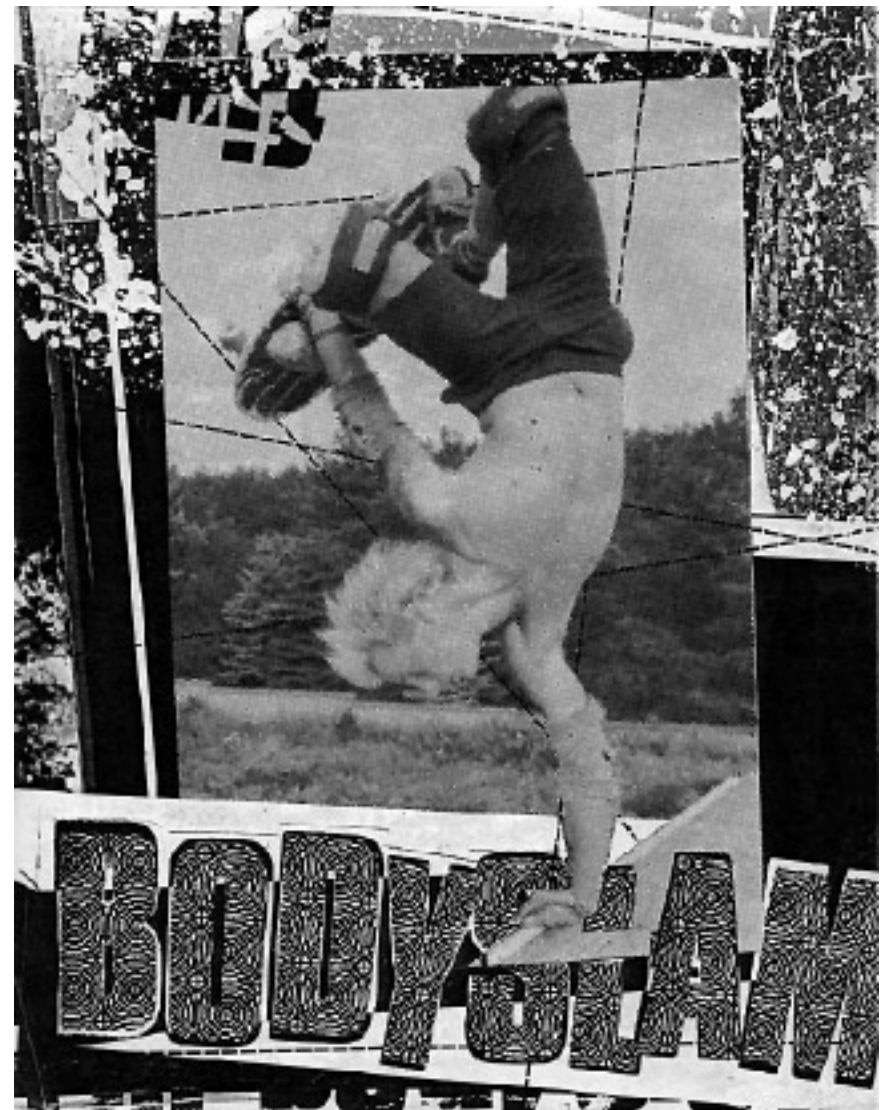
BODYSLAM4 had some Oregon stuff in it thanks to Jay Mugging but most of it was east coast material. MC met the Grinner at a ramp in Danvers - a native guide! Glen took MC to a bunch of ramps as well as the City Hospital banks, Turtles, Skate Lab, Cambridge pool. At Braintree there were cool people (Sean McLean, Fred Smith, the Wrecker) who were skating way better than MC. These dudes eventually formed a band called the Loud Ones and a couple of them picked up sponsors. They put up with Max because he didn't bail.



Max dragged Glen and Dave forward to a ramp deep in the heart of Maine for the contest described in **BODYSLAM4**.

MC was still doing comics too. Thrasher published a dozen MC **comics** and drawings and some writing between 1982 and 1988.

BODYSLAM5, completed in 1987 was entirely east coast. Featuring the Grinner, the Loud Ones, the Wrecker,





Contart crew, Newton Will, Canton, Chelmsford, Halden and Rhode Island ramps, it was all vert, baby. BS5 was also the last BODYSLAM. MC applied the skills he acquired making the 'zine to a graphic arts career.

MC wrote a "quarlier than thou" letter to the Boston Phoenix. They did a story featuring the Contart Crew that showed complete ignorance of the real Boston hardcore. Once again, MC was feeling ignored.

Back to Oregon in 1990. Most of MC's old pals weren't skating anymore. Jay Mugging was recently out of jail. There were still a few ramps around and the Burnside park was just getting started. Howard Weiner opened City Skate, an indoor skatepark. It had a slippery half-

pipe and a big curved mini-ramp bowl area. Ryan Neuhoff was still skating, he built a ramp at his in-laws' house across from the police station in Keizer, Oregon.

Now it's 2002 and there are a shitload of skateparks again. Last year MC skated at Newburg, Donald, Lincoln City, Beaverton and Burnside. If you skate **Burnside** early in the morning, there's nobody there.

Skateboarding is disgustingly popular again. There is a hardcore bench-sliding scene out in Beaverton. Budes use the flat-bottom of the big half-pipe as a runway up to a picnic table, which is is bullshit! There is a new indoor skatepark in Portland, Ten bucks to skate for two hours and no serious vert, more bullshit. It's hard to imagine how that's going to work when some of the best skate spots around are all free. Burnside even stays dry unless it's really windy. Ask Howard what their chances are.

MC's skating is nothing special these days. People bang their boards if he busts out the frontside invert but Flatlander brats also flip him shit. It doesn't mean as much to him as it used to. MC just skates now and only worries about impressing himself. 