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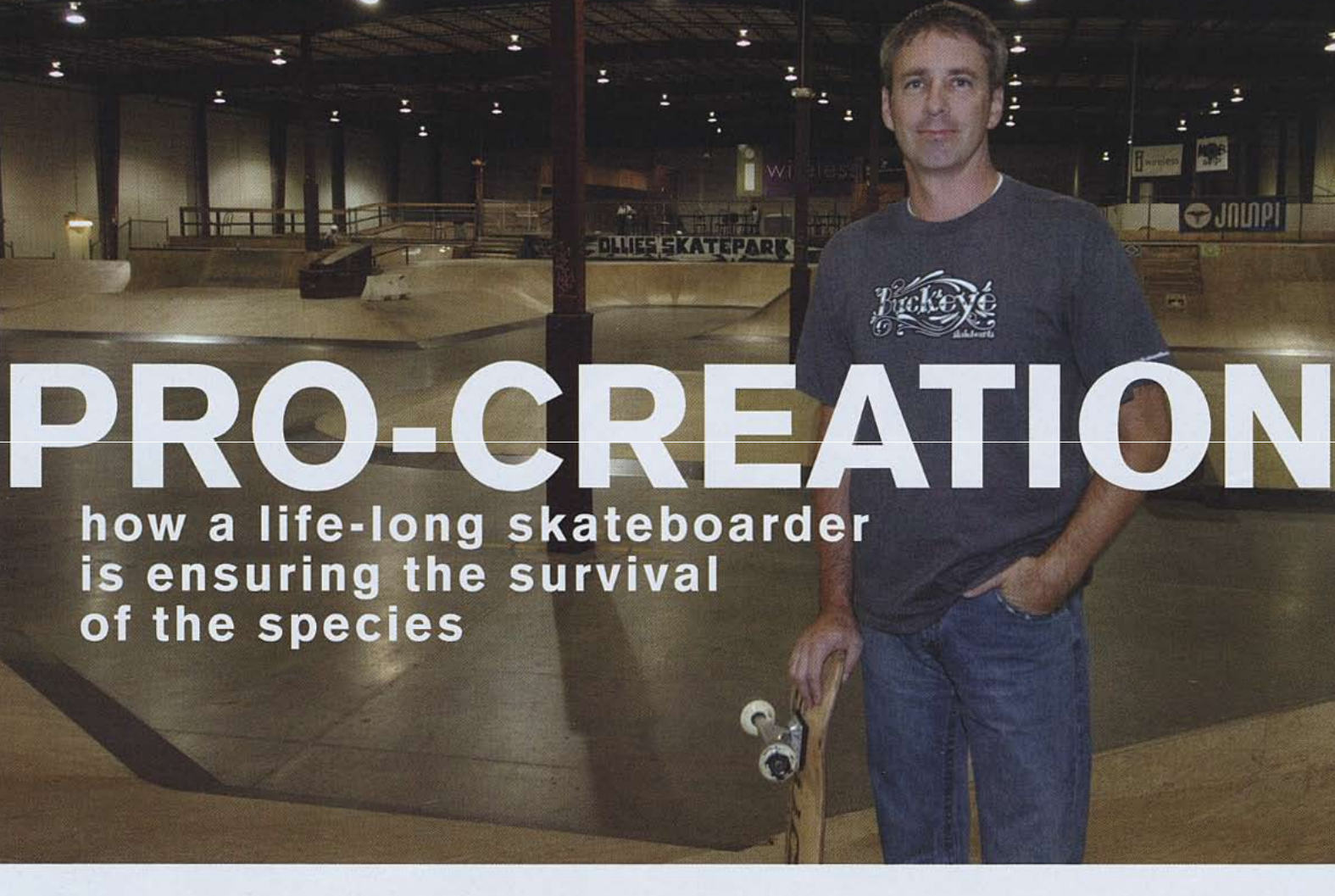
tobias albert
LG WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: DALLAS, TX

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SUMMER CONTEST RECAP

CHAD KAGY GOES TO THE CIRCUS

SIMON TABRON • JEAN POSTEC • BUCKEYE BOB • RED BULL'S BACKYARD BUILD-OFF
SKATEBOARDING FAUX PAS • FMX STATE OF THE UNION • WHAT THE PROS THINK



PRO-CREATION

how a life-long skateboarder is ensuring the survival of the species

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WHO IS BOB LEFFLER? WE ALL KNOW GUYS LIKE HIM. They're the guys positioned just out of frame when someone takes a killer photo during a pro skatepark demo. They're the guys standing right next to the parents of the kid who will demolish a local contest 30 seconds from right now. People like Leffler are the ones you notice from the stands, not because you recognize them, but because you don't. They're the ones all the pros seem to know, and who, somehow, just seem to belong, no matter how big the event.

Leffler, better known as "Buckeye Bob" to folks in the action sports universe, isn't a spotlight guy, and he'll tell you that up front. But he matters... a lot. Why? Leffler, and a handful of people like him nationwide, are the pistons in the engine that's keeping the sport of skateboarding thriving in the 90 percent of America that doesn't touch an ocean.

Skateboarding has been the fire in Leffler's belly since a chance thunderstorm in 1975 sent him scurrying for shelter in a neighborhood drugstore in Pittsburgh. That's where he saw Skateboarder Magazine for the first time. "I must've spent over an hour reading it from cover to cover," Leffler recalls. "I ordered my first skateboard a few weeks later and have been hooked ever since."

"I always wanted to be a pro skateboarder. We used to go watch the Pepsi Pro Skateboard Team do demos on a plexiglass halfpipe back in the 1970s. I thought they had the coolest job in the world," says Leffler.

The dream of being a professional skateboarder came to a screeching halt in the early 1980s when a young skateboard prodigy from Southern California burst onto the scene and changed everything. According to Leffler, "I saw Tony Hawk skate in about 1980, and that was it. I knew I could never skate like that."

Still, even now, there's seldom a day when Leffler doesn't roll into a bowl or vert ramp.

"Bob's amazing. He's like 40 and has all this other stuff going on, and he's still completely ripping it," says Eric Willman. Willman is the head skateboard instructor at Ollie's Skatepark, the Team Pain-designed park in Florence, Kentucky (a suburb of Cincinnati) that Leffler and his wife Kristen rescued from certain demolition two years ago. Willman has known Leffler for a long time, and he's had a chance to see an interesting dichotomy — Leffler the skater who never completely grew up and Leffler the patriarch who's seen his youthful skateboard dreams evolve into something even bigger in recent years.

There's a sly grin Leffler, the father figure, makes sometimes. Something about the angle of his mouth and the sparkle in his eyes suggests he knows a secret the rest of us haven't figured out yet. This is the expression that emerges when Leffler watches Alex Longcamp skate. Perhaps, Leffler sees a little bit of himself in the driven and ultra-talented Longcamp. There's no doubt, however, that Leffler sees something else in the skinny, lanky 13-year-old skater — the future.

Buckeye Skateboards has sponsored Longcamp's amateur career practically since the beginning. Buckeye, by the way, is Leffler's other venture, founded in 1999. "Bob and Buckeye were behind Alex before anyone had ever heard of him or had any clue how good he was," recalls Willman. A fixture at Ollie's most evenings and weekends, Longcamp won the Cincinnati installment of the invitational Etnies Hometown Heroes contest in 2006, earning him a trip to compete in the national finals in Lake Forest, California. And, just as a wide-eyed Leffler did 30 years ago, he dreams of becoming a professional skateboarder.

TEXT BY BRYAN WRIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN REY

The difference this time is that Longcamp has support... and lots of it. His father David, a skateboarder when he was in his teens, made sure his son started out four years ago with good equipment, good places to skate and good role models, like Leffler.

"Once we met Bob, that's when Alex's skating really took off. Alex looks up to Bob and values his guidance and support," says David Longcamp. "Alex wants to go all the way, as far as skateboarding will take him. Thanks to Bob, he's in a position where that can happen."

Longcamp's promising career, however, could just as easily never have gotten off the ground. If Leffler hadn't taken the leap of faith in 2004 that saved Ollie's from the wrecking ball and transformed it into the premier indoor skatepark in the Midwest, if he had never sunk his savings into launching Buckeye Skateboards, two pivotal components of Longcamp's success so far would have never materialized.

David Longcamp speaks for parents all over Cincinnati and surrounding communities, "If it wasn't for Bob, Ollie's would still more than likely be closed. We are so grateful to him for taking a huge risk and reopening Ollie's."

What if Leffler had attained his own dream of becoming a pro skateboarder, what then? Would the story have ended there? There are skaters all over the nation who are happy not to speculate, because Leffler's own experience, ultimately, drove him to become something of a champion for young, talented skaters looking to take their careers to the next level.

Pro street skater Wil Waldon finally "made it" three years ago. Leading up to that point, he had trudged away at local contests and demos up and down the East Coast, sacrificing nearly everything to achieve his dream. Only the generosity of a handful of sponsors kept Waldon going through the lean times. One of those sponsors was Leffler's Buckeye Skateboards.

"Bob was always a good guy," says Waldon. "He helped me out when I needed boards and he was truly into skating to have fun. There are other companies out there that just wanted to leech off skateboarding. Bob wanted to help skateboarding."

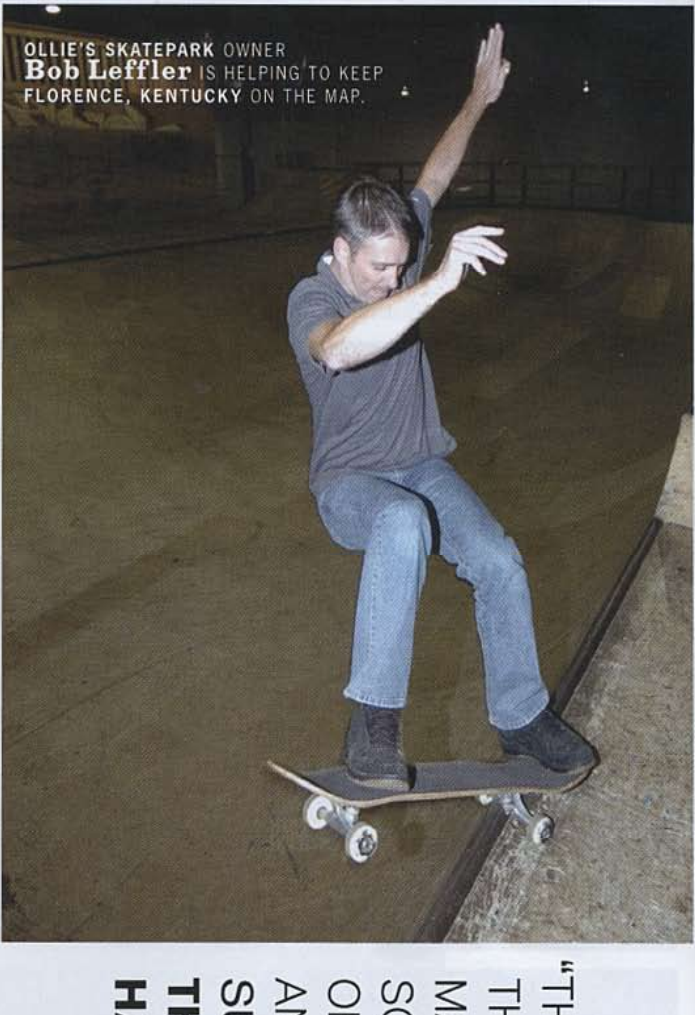
That's the thing about Bob Leffler. It's clear that everything he's done to this point — moving temporarily to SoCal, a work transfer to Cleveland, Ohio and sessions at the legendary Apple Skatepark with veteran pro Alan "Ollie" Gelfand and Brett Martin, launching his own skateboard company, buying and reviving a failing skatepark, even the decision to build a backyard vert ramp for himself and his four children — everything has been about his genuine personal excitement for the sport and his desire to see it flourish.

And the ramps at **Ollie's may just be Leffler's proudest accomplishment so far.** Under Leffler's ownership, the park has become a must-skate destination for any skater traveling within 150 miles of Cincinnati. Leffler proudly points out the park's pro-caliber vert ramp, a Skate Armor monster with a massive over-vert section at one end, and he's happy to talk about the who's-who list of skaters who have sessioned it. Bob Burnquist, Anthony Furlong, Lance Mountain, Neal Hendrix, Jake Brown and many more. It's all part of Leffler's vision to get new skaters stoked on the sport and keep them engaged long-term.

"When I started skateboarding it wasn't one of those things that many kids did," Leffler reflects. "Now I'm always looking forward to getting new pro demo's to come to Ollie's. New and different contests. Just different ways to keep everyone interested. Looking back I'm proud I stuck to something I loved to do."

"I feel like a circus promoter sometimes riding a skateboard that is open 363 days a year, 30 all night skates per year, skateboard lessons every Saturday morning, skate camp for kids in the summer. Keeping the park clean and trying to keep everybody happy is like juggling bowling balls sometimes. But I love it and wouldn't change a thing...well I wouldn't change much," surmises Leffler, with a familiar sparkle in his eye. < SR >

For more info on Ollie's, visit the park's web site at www.skateollies.com



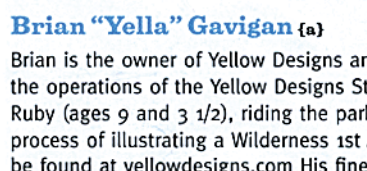
OLLIE'S SKATEPARK OWNER Bob Leffler IS HELPING TO KEEP FLORENCE, KENTUCKY ON THE MAP.

"THERE'S A SLY GRIN LEFFLER, THE FATHER FIGURE, MAKES SOMETIMES. SOMETHING ABOUT THE ANGLE OF HIS MOUTH AND THE SPARKLE IN HIS EYES SUGGESTS HE KNOWS A SECRET THE REST OF US HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT YET."

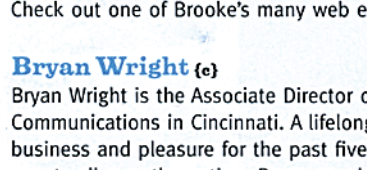
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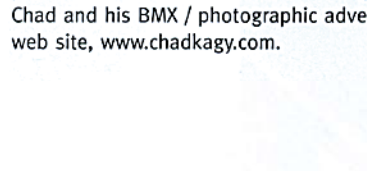
Brian "Yella" Gavigan (a)
Brian is the owner of Yellow Designs and spends his days choreographing the operations of the Yellow Designs Stunt Team, being Dad to Chloe and Ruby (ages 9 and 3 1/2), riding the parks and streets of Denver, and is in the process of illustrating a Wilderness 1st Aid Guide. His stunt team and t-shirts can be found at yellowdesigns.com His fine art website is: briangavigan.com.



Brooke Geery (b)
Brooke Geery was once called the female Steve Crandall, and is yet to figure out if it is a compliment or an insult. Though she's recently taken to writing about BMX, her background is in extreme sports involving boards, and she prefers to write on the internet. Afterall, she was educated entirely online and even learned to type in chat rooms. Brooke lives in Portland, Oregon, where she is intent of having the nicest yard on the block, although everything she plants dies.



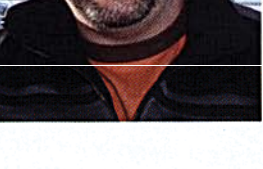
Bryan Wright (c)
Bryan Wright is the Associate Director of Public Relations at Strata-G Communications in Cincinnati. A lifelong action sports enthusiast, he has mixed business and pleasure for the past five years, marketing action sports and events all over the nation. Bryan caught the BMX bug before pegs were even invented and has been an avid mountain biker and BMX dabbler ever since. Most importantly he is a father of two sons.
Bryan can be reached at bored_writer68@hotmail.com.



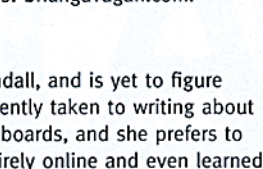
Chad Kagy
You may have seen Chad on TV, as he's something of a BMXer. In fact, Chad won a gold medal in vert at the 2006 X Games. Somehow he still finds time to take photos and contribute to this here magazine, amongst others. For more about Chad and his BMX / photographic adventures, visit his newly updated personal web site, www.chadkagy.com.



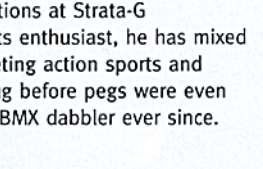
Tobias Albert (d)
Tobias Albert is a professional skateboarder who won the LG World Championships in Dallas, TX.



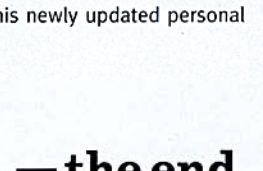
Simon Tabron (e)
Simon Tabron is a professional skateboarder.



Jean Postec (f)
Jean Postec is a professional skateboarder.



Buckeye Bob (g)
Bob Leffler is the owner of Buckeye Skateboards.



Red Bull's Backyard Build-off (h)
A contest where skateboarders build ramps and perform tricks.

— the end.