

So it's official. Shelter Skate Park will be closing down after March 30th, 2007. An era here ends in rainy Eugene. Dominic, our fearless leader, has been a soldier to keep the doors of the Shelter open as long as he has. But to trudge further would be a financially futile endeavor. I'm sharing this story because I hope that we can take something from this oh-too-familiar loss. I think most of us have learned from skateboarding that life moves forward when we visualize a goal, give it all we've got, taste it, bail, taste it, slam, and eventually succeed. Dom made a particularly tasty vision a reality for all of us. I trust that the resonance of his gesture will ripple throughout the skate scene for years to come.

Maybe this, the third indoor park to close here in six years, will spur the revolution we've all been talking about - while R.I.P. Crazy 8's, The Edge, and now The Shelter ☹. It's up to us to seize this opportunity to carry on the torch. It's what we want, it's what we've been rallying and petitioning for years. Yes we have multiple outdoor parks. No you cannot skate them the majority of the year. If anything, the quantity not quality of our Eugene parks has fragmented the skate scene. What we need is a centralized, accessible, covered, and lit skate park that will get us through the rainy months and become a staple of our summer skating. If built right, by reputable and experienced construction crews, a unique, diverse, and quality park will bring in extra revenue from out-of-towners, will provide kids with a safe after-school space, and will give the Eugene skate scene a neutral venue to meet for community events.

It has become obvious that there just isn't the demand for cheap indoor skate sessions in this town, after the closing of now a third indoor park in the last six years. People just didn't want to pay to skate. But freedom from the illusions of a material existence lies at the heart of skateboarding. That's what makes it within the reach of so many boarders. It's not golf, sky-diving, or an expensive board sport. It's free, it's fun, it's creative, and it's rewarding. It brings us together, strengthens our bodies, and teaches us discipline, focus, and visualization to actualization. For many of us, skateboarding has been the catharsis we've been hungering after; how many people here would say that skateboarding saved them at one time or another from slipping into the dark side? The proof is in the smiles of the little guy who just learned to ollie, the older skater who's just found his board again, and the tomboy girl who was always told she couldn't, but just proved 'em all wrong. C'mon, Eugene! We live in one of the rainiest cities in the Northwest. We love that the city has built us a plethora of parks to ride. But this next round, lets take into account our weather, our community, and the feedback of those that ride. Support your local skate park.

- Erica Winters