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Lining the top four shelves of the bookcase that extends down an entire wall of Malmberg's office, above the Bibles and Biblical study guides and messy stacks of papers, there are cartoon figures—hundreds of cartoon figures. Teletubbies hang from the shelving, Darth Vader looks on ominously from the corner, Gumby salt and pepper shakers stand amidst the cartoon clutter. They're all there: Powerpuff Girls, Popeye, The Flying Squirrel. On the shelf directly behind Malmberg's desk sits a nun trapped in a snow globe and Jesus and Moses action figures.

The unexpectedness of the mammoth collection seems to fit right in with Malmberg's persona. Clearly, the man is willing to go out on a limb: there's a rubber chicken hanging upside down from his shelf. In his office. At a church. Suddenly, finding out that he skateboards might be just a little less surprising.

As far out of the realm of possibility as skateboarding might be for most fathers, Malmberg's hobby started as a way to spend more time with his two sons. "My son likes anything where he can teach the old man a thing or two," says Malmberg. "I think he enjoys being the expert."

When Malmberg expressed interest in joining his sons at the skatepark, his 14-year-old, Max, built him a skateboard using old board parts, and Malmberg had his first "uneventful" skateboarding lesson on a relatively flat driveway about a year ago. "It's a sport that really anybody can be involved in," said Malmberg of his humble beginnings on the consignment board. "It's a really democratic—with a small d—sport. The layout for equipment is fairly minimal."

But the fact that these days, he's heading over to the skatepark alone to practice indicates his affinity for the sport has gone beyond father-son bonding time. "I can go out and I can fall down and make my mistakes and build my skills a

little bit," says Malmberg.

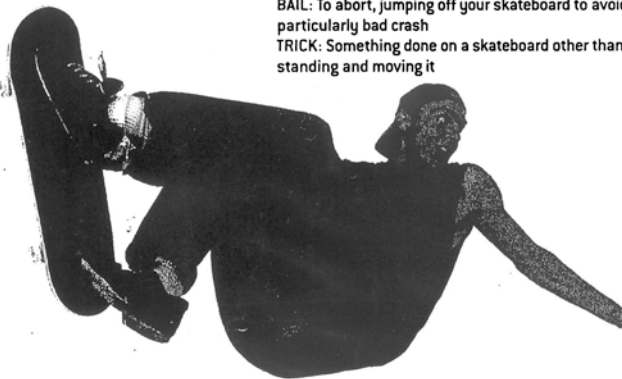
Malmberg described his skateboarding exploits in a recent sermon at Second Church in Newton a few months back, and the sermon has since become sort of a rallying cry for the skatepark



Skateboarding Tern

If you, like Reverend Malmberg, are still trying to figure out skateboarders are talking about, memorize these skatebo slang words.

- FREESTYLER:** A skateboarder who does tricks
- GOOFY-FOOT:** Description of a boarder who rides with right foot forward
- STOKED:** Ready for action; excited
- BAIL:** To abort, jumping off your skateboard to avoid particularly bad crash
- TRICK:** Something done on a skateboard other than standing and moving it



project of the Charles River Conservancy. Reverend Richard Malmberg, the skateboarding preacher, has become an unlikely fundraising figure for the project.

Once built, the 40,000 square-foot Charles River skatepark will be the largest on the East Coast. In 2000, the Charles River Conservancy began advocating for a skatepark near the Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge in Charlestown, and they are currently fundraising to supplement Big Dig mitigation funds for the effort.

"I think having a world-class skatepark in the Boston area is going to give this sport an anchor on the East Coast that it doesn't have yet," said