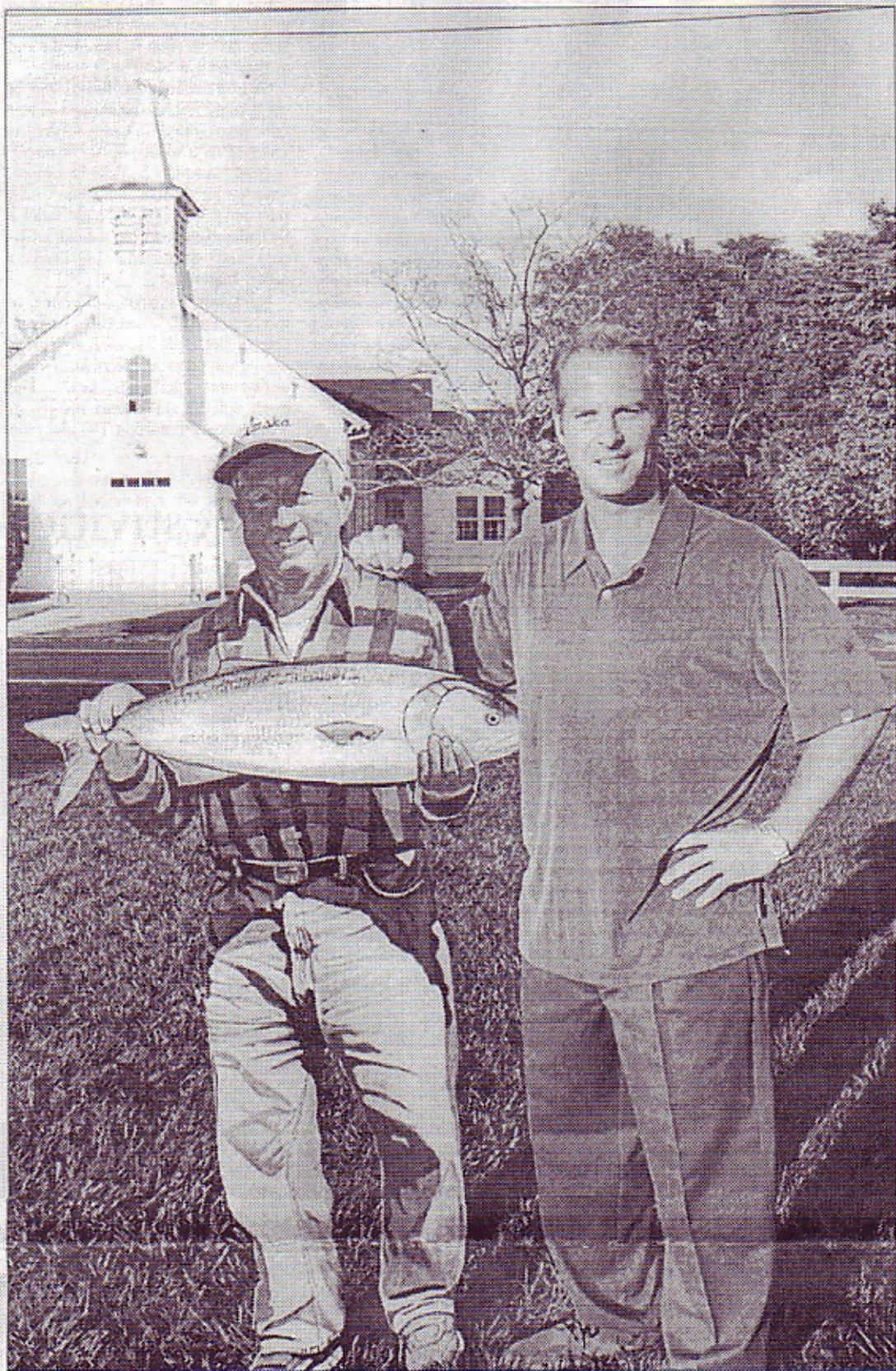


THE EAST HAMPTON STAR

SHINES FOR ALL



Morgan McGivern

SCOTT HEWETT

Reeboks And Human Landscapes

BY J.D. SAMUELSON

“With my artwork, I am throwing myself on the wall. The show is a chance for my friends and other people to see what I do.”

The footwear designer Scott Hewett's third annual show last weekend at Ashawagh Hall in Springs was a snapshot of the process he uses and a springboard to the future when he hopes to be a gallery owner as well as a successful artist. His inspiration comes from looking at the work of other artists and from music. "When I go out and see other people's stuff, the first thing I want to do is run home and get painting."

That he has time to paint at all is a feat in itself (no pun intended), but, to hear him tell it, he doesn't really have a choice. "I wish I could slow down, focus on one thing. I am a full-time footwear designer. I play in a band. I am an artist. I fish, kayak, go mountain biking when there is time. We are remodeling the house. . . ."

Sitting in a small home office where the part-time painter custom designs shoes for some of the biggest names in professional sports, he laughs at the first art contest he won. He was 5 and lived in Branford, Mass., with his parents and two brothers, one older, one younger. His sketch of the Virgin Mary riding into Bethlehem on a donkey won him a trip to Boston to meet the cardinal.

When asked if he wanted to kiss the cardinal's ring, the young artist's response shocked the aging leader. "I basically told him to beat it. I am pretty sure I was sent to bed early that night," he said.

Mr. Hewett says he was always creative but that, with one exception, he has always been a little bashful about his work.

"I would draw girls anything they wanted. Other guys would be out playing football, and I was in the

basement drawing a horse." Nonetheless, he was an athlete, a swimmer, and, he said, wishful he would grow another few inches so that he could dunk a basketball.

In his last year at the Massachusetts College of Art, he became concerned about a career. He thought of working for an advertising agency or,

'I have made it as a footwear designer and now want to make it in the fine arts.'

if he aimed higher, as an illustrator for Disney. After he graduated in 1988 with a degree in illustration and fine arts painting, a roommate helped him find a position at the Boston-based shoe company Stride Rite. He was offered a full-time position after a year.

Not long afterward, Reebok came to Mr. Hewett with an offer for him to design shoes for the golf great Greg Norman. In less than two weeks he was on a plane to Thailand, where he took a crash course in all things Reebok. By 1995 he had designed shoes for Michael Chang, the tennis pro, Frank (Big Hurt) Thomas, the White Sox slugger, John Daly, the golfer, Sean Kemp, the basketball star, and even a signature shoe for Todd Skinner, a professional rock climber.

The next big step came when he was able to work exclusively on basketball and cross-training lines. "That is how you know when you have arrived," he said. When Reebok needed shoes for the Philadelphia 76ers' Allen Iverson, the National Basketball Association's hottest rising star, Scott Hewett got the job.

Mr. Hewett met his future wife,

Diane Mendelman, who grew up in East Hampton, on a blind date during the summer of 1990. Because of nervousness, each brought along a friend. By 1995, both couples had married. That year, the couple decided to ditch the Boston shuffle and moved to Noyac. While Mr. Hewett continues to work for Reebok, he now has more time for painting. His wife, a graphic designer and potter, is on the board of the Celadon Gallery in Water Mill.

"I have made it as a footwear designer and now want to make it in the fine arts," Mr. Hewett said. He said he would know if he had arrived if he was recognized by his peers and if he sold something for more than \$20. "I do not feel it right now," he said.

Sold 11 Pieces

Mr. Hewett's responses are modest. At a solo show last year, however, he sold 11 pieces, getting more satisfaction than when he did family portraits on commission in college. "I like to paint for myself, not play Color Forms with people who want to make the hair more wavy."

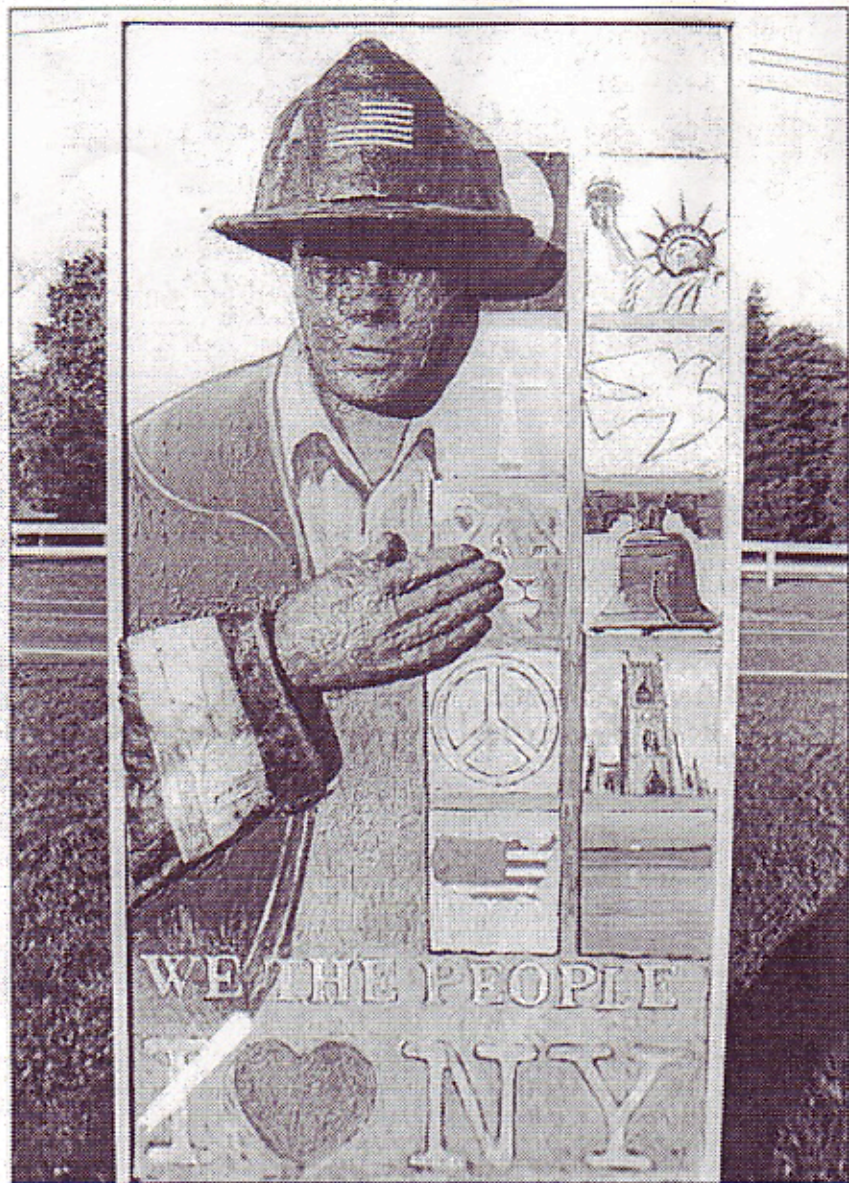
While his current work includes some portraits of friends and translations of photographic images, his paintings are more often landscapes of quiet places where the natural and human worlds intertwine.

"I am fascinated by the process of rusting, of oxidation and how it changes the texture of a material," he said.

Lately he has been going for a third dimension, employing textures other than his preferred solution of acrylic paints and terpinoid-based gel.

"A lot of people think my paintings are oil, but that's just controlling the paint." He added that he preferred acrylic because of the control

Continued On III-5



SCOTT HEWETT'S recent work has included mixed media pieces influenced by the Sept. 11 attack at the World Trade Center. *Morgan McGivern*

Hewett

Continued From III-1
it allowed. "I am an impatient guy," he said.

A handful of pieces at Ashawagh Hall show not only the third dimension but his sentiments about the role of art in a post-Sept. 11 world. One of the most striking pieces is one of the simplest: an image of the American flag over a relief of Band-Aids.

"People need to look at art. It

reduces the stress of everyday life," he said.

Mr. Hewett said it was sometimes difficult to watch people looking at his artwork, an experience he likens to the difference between dancing in front of a mirror when no one else is around and performing solo on a stage.

"It's about confidence. You have to go out there and, like I said, throw yourself against the wall. If you're not willing, you might as well put your brush away."