

# NORTH OF CENTER

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2009

FREE

TAKE HOME AND READ

VOLUME I, ISSUE 4



An anonymous artist's interpretation of the meaning of the DREAM Act.

## Our students

### The DREAM Act's plan for integrating our colleges

By Michael Dean Benton

*Ammmeeeeerica, what a beautiful scary place to be  
but then living in fear is normal for us  
we are all scared shitless of the immediate future  
by the way, are you scared of me?  
...  
'cause I'm scared of you,  
of your silence pinche mustio  
your silence makes you really scary  
& the distance between you and I makes it even worse*

Guillermo Gomez-Peña  
"On Fear of the Other" (2000)

Sunday, June 14, I walked toward the auditorium in the main building on the campus of Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) in the shadow of the University of Kentucky football stadium. I was there on a Sunday to attend an extracurricular event, and the noises from the auditorium told me that it was going to be a lively event. There were about 40 people, predominantly students, to discuss and coordinate their efforts toward getting the DREAM (Development,

Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act passed in the House and the Senate.

The latest version of the bipartisan legislation known as the DREAM Act (S. 729) was introduced by Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) in the Senate on March 26, 2009. In the House of Representatives, the bill is called the American Dream Act (H.R. 1751), and it was introduced on the same day by Howard Berman (D-CA), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA).

The DREAM Act seeks to address the problem of immigrant children who were brought to the USA at a very young age and who have since grown up here, excelled in school, and stayed out of trouble. These are students who have proven over time that they have the necessary skills to succeed in American society and that they have the desire to become productive American citizens.

Observing the high school and college students gathered in BCTC's auditorium, most of whom would benefit from the DREAM Act, I was presented

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## The Lexington Pride Festival

### Recognizing the 40th anniversary of Stonewall

By Mathias J. Detamore

It was a near oppressively hot day to be outside this past Saturday afternoon as I meandered into Cheapside Park. I found myself using my papaw's tried and true technique of carrying a handkerchief in my back pocket. At regular intervals, I would draw the cloth to my face and wipe the sweat from my brow as I attempted to negotiate the geography of a transformational queer space in downtown Lexington. And truth be told, I should have worn sunscreen. The sleeveless t-shirt that I sported in my peacock-esque attempt to attract boys left my shoulders a little red and raw today.

But there is no denying that Pride was in abundance on the streets of Lexington this weekend. And heat notwithstanding, Cheapside Park was busting at the seams with bears and leather daddies, gay nudists and

progressive churches, drag queens and gay moms and dads with their kids, and always the beguiling and delicious eye candy. Regardless of your relationship to the politics of the ever growing acronym LGBTIQQA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning and Allies)... it goes without saying that a plethora of forms of queer life and advocates were showering in Pride even while baking in the sun.

From 11:00 in the morning until 8:00 in the evening, the day was rallied by live entertainment, vendors, food, and a range of grass roots political and advocacy groups. A carnival area in the back at North Upper and Short Streets included the "Royal Flush" dunking booth, where one lucky hit with the baseball dumped a toilet bowl's worth of water onto the head of the gracious patsy below, the "Moon Bouncer" room, and a Velcro wall

where anyone so inclined to put on a Velcro suit could throw themselves up against it. Rainbow wares were in ample supply for sale and everyone was in some state of elation to be celebrating in solidarity.

The whole block was awash in the sounds of the entertainment from live bands to deejayed dance music, the climactic finale of the Pride Idol competition to a rocking Drag Show. The festival gave way to the Red Party at 9:00 p.m. to benefit AIDS Volunteers of Lexington (AVOL). There under the still warm, moist evening air, Xanadu materialized through the ambrosial trappings of Chelsea Pearl and Sasha Grant and their entourage of half-naked, winged and bedazzled seraphs. Eyes darting through the audience seeking out furtive glances—so many people beautiful and glistening. The energy was high as the pulsating lights and raucous sounds lulled the sea of

bodies into ecstatic waves of tumultuous bliss.

Pride was palpable.

This marks the second year that the Pride Festival has made its home downtown in Cheapside Park. Prior to this, Pride events sponsored primarily by the Pride Center of the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization (GLSO) were small, intimate events held at different family farms within the community. As a result of bringing a range of different social organizations in concert with GLSO, including AVOL, Lexington Fairness, Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, and others, the first Pride Festival on June 28, 2008 was an overwhelming success with an approximate attendance of roughly 3000 people. It seems to me having attended both festivals

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Participants and onlookers mingle in this panoramic photograph of the 2009 Lexington Pride Festival, held in and around Cheapside Park on June 27.

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# The Neighborhood

*North of Center* is a periodical, a place, and a perspective. Keep reading to find out what that means.

**Editor & Publisher**  
Danny Mayer

**Features**  
Beth Connors-Manke

**Film & Media**  
Colleen Glenn

**Culture**  
Nick Kidd

**Sports, Layout**  
Keith Halladay

**Contributors**  
Andrew Batista  
Michael Benton  
Brian Connors-Manke  
A.G. Greebs  
John P. Lackey  
Troy Lyle  
Lisa Schroot

Please address correspondence, including advertising inquiries and letters to the editor, to:

[noceditors@yahoo.com](mailto:noceditors@yahoo.com).

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## Misadventures...

...on someone else's land

By Beth Connors-Manke

On Saturday, June 20, the *Herald-Leader* ran an article by Beverly Fortune about the newest development in the CentrePointe saga: the project has gotten an infusion of—no, not cash—but dirt. Six inches of it that will then be seeded. This is to make the block more “attractive” and “presentable.”

In the months since it became clear that all that was being developed in the middle of downtown was mud and animosity, I've heard lots of plans hatched by residents about what could be done with the land. I've heard regular Lexingtonians propose plans to the Urban County Council, and I've heard people spend their lunch hours sketching out ideas for how the block could be used publicly. A park, a sculpture garden, an ice rink.

If you're one of those people, don't get too excited. The large grassy plane in the middle of downtown won't be available to the public. According to Fortune's article, “While the CentrePointe site is planned to become a grassy lawn—once the seed is established in a few months—it will not be a public park, at least not anytime soon. The construction fence will remain in place, and sidewalks will not be replaced.” No doubt the security cameras attached to the signs on the property will also remain—cameras that we at North of Center noticed appeared just after the guerilla kickball game on the site.

Some residents' frustration with (and opposition to) CentrePointe is rooted, I think, in the shared idea that some land, although owned privately, has public value and significance. The public may not have ownership rights to that land, but we do have some claim. Those of us who love downtown

see that the CentrePointe debacle has made a hash of a public's claims on its own city.

Now, there's no telling what the Webb Brothers will say about plans for the site by the time this column goes to press. Maybe they will renege on the miserly cordoning off of downtown's newest green space. Maybe not. Maybe they'll hold to their power to sequester the property. But why not share CentrePointe Parque with the rest of us until construction begins? Private land can be made available for public use.

The London Ferrell Community Garden is a perfect example. The garden is on land owned by Christ Church Cathedral, which has graciously made the area available to community gardeners. In this way, collective care and use of the land can be fostered while the site remains private property. And, I'd argue that the property has more worth because it has been opened to the neighborhood—more people value it now that they work it for food and find fellowship there.

**Saturday #4: June 20, 2009**

As I walk to the garden on Saturday mornings, I usually muse about the city. This Saturday, though, I was preoccupied with news about a friend who has just been diagnosed with cancer. I worried about her and her family.

When I arrived at the garden, I was greeted by a group of gardeners whom I had not met before. Ryan was out of town so Stephen and Dejon were the gentle taskmasters for the morning. We had a light morning of harvesting spinach, cabbage, kale, and collard greens. Two men wandered up with plastic bags ready to be filled with greens. Beth and Wendy invited them to harvest some. Little Redden, a sweet boy, helped me find pea pods and pull

them. As he munched on some peas, Redden told me, “I like to be healthy.” (He's got good parents, for sure.)

It was a meditative and healing morning for me. I crossed into the garden worried and scared for my friend but left feeling a little more at peace. Being present with the other gardeners, with Redden showing me “baby pea pods” and “mommy and daddy pea pods,” made it a bit easier—for the time being—to cope with my friend's cancer and the prospect of her death. I owe that peace to the public quality of the garden (not to mention the congenial atmosphere Ryan, Sherry, and others have fostered there).

I'm not quite sure how this happens, how being out in public actually soothes me sometimes. Maybe being around strangers who have no obligation to know or understand my personal pains calls me out of myself. Maybe being in a shared space like the garden reminds me of how big life is and how it perpetually rights itself through cycles of life and death, joy and pain. I do that know that being out in public often does me good, and I believe there needs to be relatively unstructured, non-consumeristic spaces for public interaction.

Sharing the soon-to-be grassy CentrePointe block with the rest of us might do us all some good, just as the garden has done me some good. And those cameras, maybe they'd see kids rolling in the grass, people of all stripes—bankers and wanderers—relaxing in the afternoon sun, and Dudley Webb finally playing that high stakes kickball game with the guerilla kickballers.

*This is part 3 of a continuing series. Look for more of Beth's updates from the London Ferrell Community Garden in future issues.*

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## Pride (cont.)

*continued from page 1*

that this year will easily exceed last year's success. The emergence of a visible festival in the heart of downtown for the LGBTIQQA community speaks volumes to the distances we have come to cultivate fairness and solidarity in our city and across the commonwealth.

This year almost down to the day, the Pride Festival recognized and remembered the Stonewall Riots on Christopher Street in New York City during the early morning hours of June 28, 1969. There, on an equally oppressive hot day—one of the hottest ever recorded in New York history—a small brigade of NYPD officers titled the “Public Morals Squad” attempted a routine raid on a mafia owned gay bar called the Stonewall Inn. The ensuing riot that erupted over the course of that night spawned five nights of waxing and waning violent encounters between an emboldened group of gay men and women and a humiliated and angry police force.

Ostensibly the hinge point around which the contemporary Gay Rights Movement pivots, the Stonewall riots created a moment in time that reconfigured our entire approach to civil liberties politics. The idea that gay people are legitimate citizens that should not have to hide or shy away from being

open about their identities and familial formations have created new sets of expectations for and between government and its citizens. Pride, Gay Pride since Stonewall, has always been about the political struggles and social awakenings for justice where being free is being free to be who you are and how you define yourself.

Critics of the Gay Rights Movement, myself included, often rally against a stalled political campaign bent on “marriage” and the limited set of benefits and beneficiaries to which and about whom such a political project attends. Let us not forget the homeless gay youth living across the street from Stonewall in Christopher Park and Sheridan Square who were so instrumental in activating and engaging the violent moment in time that brought us to where we are today. A more robust political project must grapple with making the so-called “rights and privileges” of marriage available to everyone, not just the economically solvent and politically inclined, and should reengage the radical rupture in history that Stonewall indeed created to remember our roots, demand social and environmental justice for all, and resist complacency.

However, politics aside, I am PROUD to be a gay man in a city that recognizes the need for recognition.

## Official NoC proposal for CentrePointe

With Centrepointe in a financial stalemate, Lexingtonians have offered a number of interesting ideas regarding best use of the Main/Lime/Vine block. After a particularly inspired late night here at NoC headquarters, we have decided to add to this list and provide our own ideas for best use of the undeveloped space.

We aim to address the needs and talents of a great variety of Lexington's citizens; therefore, we propose approaching the space with a focus on permaculture, which is a system of perennial agriculture that values the enrichment of local ecosystems. Thus, in permaculture one thinks small rather than big, in terms of microclimates rather than forty-plus story hotel complexes. It's a good model for approaching city space.

We hereby propose:

- Stop the dumping of dirt and planting of grass at once. Let us build the place up on our own.
- Direct the folks at Seedleaf to begin building soil through composting by local businesses. Nearby citizens will also be encouraged to learn composting methods by contributing their own egg shells, coffee grounds, etc. Have tree companies bring in woodchips to help. The added benefit: it will take a long time and re-teach us the need of going slow.
- Replant a quarter of the surface area

in hemp, and a quarter in field crops (squash, tomatoes, beans, etc.).

- In the middle of the space, construct a mini-outdoor amphitheater, about 500 capacity, for Shakespearean summer theater and other performances.

- Construct multi-use row houses along Morton and Vine. In them, place (1) a free food cafe for feeding the homeless or anyone who needs food; (2) a small demonstration factory for processing the hemp grown on site into paper, clothes, and other products. Sell these products to local citizens at another store on the block. Above this store, start Kentucky's first medicinal marijuana clinic and make it a joint venture with UK medical services. The goal here is to have these buildings house a majority of small scale businesses that generate their goods from the site and its nearby environs. Devote the rest of the building space to social services, a small market about twice the size of Wine and Market (operated by the Lexington Farmer's Market), and maybe add a local family doctor and dentist.

- Offer work in the site's gardens, acting in amphitheater performances, custodial work, and any other goings on at the perma-park first to the residents of Phoenix Park, who if they wish could work and learn new trades, gather healthy food, make a little dough, and generally feel a part of the larger community.

## DREAM Act (cont.)

*continued from page 1*

with overwhelming evidence of these students' dedication and desire. They had spent the entire weekend working and studying in a democracy school designed to develop their sense of community, an understanding of the benefits of networking, the necessity of developing leadership skills and a historical sense of the broader social issues that affect them.

As a professor at a community college I come into contact with students of all ages, backgrounds, and capabilities. Most of my students believe they deserve a chance to better their lives, but unfortunately many of these students seem to be passively waiting for someone to give them that life and/or opportunity. The students gathered for the DREAM Act meeting that Sunday are not passively waiting for an opportunity to succeed; instead, they are actively working to produce the opportunities for their participation in what, for better or worse, is labeled the American Dream.

I realized despite the fact that I have interacted with some of these students inside and outside of the classroom, I was poorly informed about the harsh realities many of them face on a daily basis. This is why the students have been focusing on a project of informing the American public about the facts of the DREAM Act as a necessary first step in gaining acceptance and support for it to be passed in the House and the Senate. They encouraged me to learn for myself about the proposed legislation and to in turn share it with others.

According to the National Immigration Law Center, the DREAM Act, if enacted, would make two major changes to current federal laws:

- 1) Permit certain immigrant students who have grown up in the U.S. to apply for temporary legal status and to eventually obtain permanent status and become eligible for U.S. citizenship if they go to college or serve in the U.S. military.
- 2) Eliminate a federal provision that penalizes states that provide in-state tuition without regard to immigration status.

The benefits to American society would be the integration of committed, skilled and proven future-citizens ready to work toward building a better society. Immigrants could contribute future taxes from their incomes, and they could be responsible citizens able to assume leadership roles.

The DREAM Act students would also become eligible for federal work study and student loans. The time spent by these students as conditional residents attending a form of higher education would be counted toward the time necessary for the residency requirements for naturalization. At the end of the conditional period, the students would need to provide proof that they have either completed a degree at a certified college or served in the US Armed Forces for at least two years.

The students granted conditional permanent resident status would then be able to legally work a job, drive a car, go to school, and otherwise participate in society like other American students. The only major exception would be that they would not be allowed to travel abroad for lengthy periods of time. Additionally, they would not be eligible for federal Pell Grants or other federal financial grants.

On the other hand, though, the prohibition against states providing their own financial aid to these students would be lifted. States **would not be required** fund these students' education; instead the DREAM Act would end federal penalties assessed on states that on their own decide to provide aid to these students. Currently ten states help deserving immigrant students by allowing them to pay in-state fees at state colleges like other state students. In retaliation, the federal government, under section 505 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996, began assessing monetary penalties against those states for granting these exceptions. The ten states are California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah and Washington.

There have been attempts to increase the penalties for aiding undocumented students and to extend the punitive measures to include educators and charity services that provide aid or succor to any undocumented person. A recent attempt was the 2006 Sensenbrenner Bill, which was immediately opposed by religious organizations because they could be arrested for providing food or charity to undocumented immigrants.

As a result of the proposed bill, a Lexington educator that works with immigrant populations related to me how for the first time in her life she had to consider whether she would risk the comfort of her life by deciding whether she would do her job or serve all of the students in her community. She states that "the Sensenbrenner Bill,

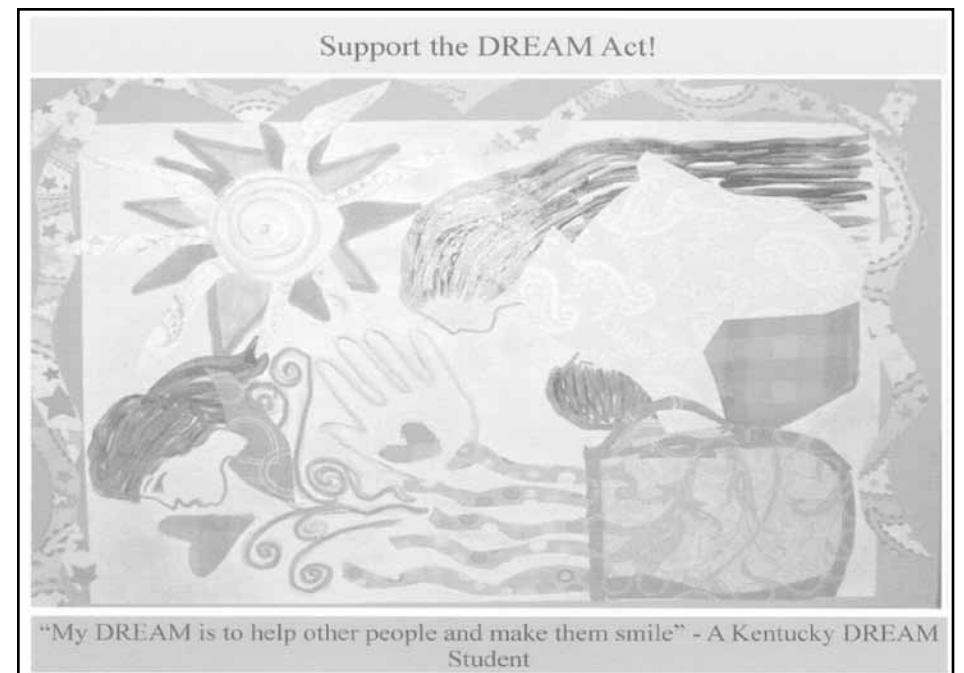
way. The schools' message? If undocumented immigrant students just try hard enough they will realize the American Dream.

Unfortunately, it is when they apply for college that they learn the illusionary nature of the American Dream that has been held out to them. If we betray the trust of these students by denying them the opportunities we promised them, it will be a great loss for them and us.

It is estimated that approximately 65,000 undocumented immigrant students graduate from American high schools every year. If one ignores the human side of the story and decides to solely focus on the economic impact, then it is still clear that the DREAM Act would stimulate the American economy. Birgenou, once again, on this economic benefit: "Financial aid and

we are wasting their talent and imposing economic and emotional costs on undocumented students and on U.S. society as a whole" (April 21, 2009). student Azucena Leon summed it up perfectly, by reminding me that The DREAM Act is important because it "allows all students to positively contribute to the future of our country."

Sitting in that auditorium on the campus of Bluegrass Community and Technical College, I observed a group of students who have a passion for learning and for serving their community. They discussed how they could work to realize their dreams. They are designing, printing and distributing post cards with student statements and art that can be mailed to elected representatives. They are developing a documentary about Kentucky's undocumented immigrant students. Through various



a path to citizenship is a sound and humane investment. If we provide up-front loans and grants to talented students seeking to escape generations of poverty, society will be paid back many times over. With higher education, they will be able to raise their standard of living as they become taxpaying citizens. We must seize the opportunity to adopt these well-designed state and national policies that will be good for everyone — our students, their families, our state and nation."

The College Board in a public policy statement adds: "Without educating these students to their full potential ...

mediums they will express their ambitions, their fears, and their goals. They hope to produce an associated multimedia book to accompany the documentary, and we discussed the possibility of creating a website where they could host the stories, art, poetry and statements as they gathered them, allowing for the immediate interactive engagement of the students' realities with those who are investigating the DREAM Act.

These students are inspiring. They are struggling to achieve their dreams. I believe they are representatives of the American Spirit and deserve the chance to contribute fully to American society.

## Nixon more racist than ambivalent on abortion question

NoC News Analysis

Readers of the Wednesday June 24 Lexington Herald-Leader may have been confused when they scanned over the headline on former U.S. President Richard Nixon on page five of the news section. The headline to the NY Times article by crack reporter Charlie Savage read, "Nixon was ambivalent about abortion."

This headline may have caused some readers to understand that Nixon was unsure—ambivalent—about whether he was "pro-life" or "for a women's right to choose." This was not the case at all.

Savage's article noted that while Richard Nixon made no official remark regarding the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that struck down most state and federal laws banning abortion, Nixon did in fact take note of the verdict with a private aide on the day after the decision was handed down.

According to Savage, the Republican Nixon shockingly "worried that greater access to abortions would foster 'permissiveness,' and said that 'it breaks the family.'" Certainly pretty standard pro-life stuff.

On the other hand, the objective journalist quickly notes that the ambivalent Nixon "also saw a need for abortion in some cases."

And what were those cases? Here's Savage quoting Nixon from 1973: "There are times when an abortion is necessary. I know that. When you have a black and a white." Nixon then quickly provided a second example in which an abortion might be permissible: "Or a rape," he said.

Because Savage does not offer a single sentence that attempts to make sense or otherwise even mention Nixon's comparison of a woman's sexual encounters—with a black man and with a rapist—the reader might get the impression that Nixon was in fact ambivalent about abortion, when in fact his ambivalence was in large part a function of racist views.

Even most pro-life advocates, after all, call for exceptions in "exceptional" cases. Rape is sometimes one reason offered by the pro-life side, along with danger to the mother's life. So Nixon's ambivalence about abortion, as in the case of rape, is certainly not ambivalent to many pro-lifers.

And of aborting oreo babies? We at NoC confess to having uncovered little to nothing from the pro-life (or pro-choice) crowd regarding the question of aborting bi-racial babies—pro or con—but it seems pretty obvious that Nixon's statements were pretty seriously underpinned by, dare we say it, strong aromas of racism.

Only you wouldn't know that from reading the Herald-Leader article—title or otherwise. Their journalism makes no mention of this, one way or another. Not a sentence.

In light of this, perhaps a less confusing and more accurate headline, one that the Herald-Leader could have chosen to run in the paper, might have drawn from PressTV's online article titled, "Nixon backs abortion of interracial babies." Here's another: "In offering exceptional reasons for abortion, Nixon compares black/white sexual procreation to rape."

Or more simply: "Tapes show Nixon held racist views."



A major question often asked of supporters is "who would qualify" if the DREAM Act was passed? Students who came to the USA at the age of 15 or younger at least five years before the passing of the DREAM Act would qualify for **conditional permanent resident status** upon acceptance to college, graduation from high school, or completion of a GED. Students would not qualify if they had committed crimes, or if they were considered to be a security risk. The conditional permanent resident status would be awarded for a limited time, up to six years, and they would be required to enter into some form of higher education or military service.

if passed (it did pass the House) would have criminalized me and thousands of others for simply serving the students or their family members." This is the chilling side of the restrictions that face aid workers and the families they attempt to aid. Someday, could I be arrested for advising an undocumented student? Would I be persecuted for feeding a neighborhood family?

Robert J. Birgenou, the Chancellor of The University of California-Berkeley, speaks of undocumented immigrant students as "our students" because they have been educated in American schools—as mandated by the Supreme Court in 1982—that have encouraged them every step of the



## “It’s bottom up, not top down”

The Al’s Bar Cult Film Series creators discuss the series, what makes “cult,” and the decade Benton can’t remember

*The following is a transcript of a late night, porch-sittin’ conversation at North of Center HQ.*

Colleen Glenn: So, let’s step back to last August. We were sitting at Common Grounds and we were talking about how it’d be cool to screen movies at Al’s Bar. So, why do you think cult films work so well in a bar setting?

Michael Benton: Or, why did we start it, right?

CG: [Who’s asking the questions here?] Yes, that’s a good question. Why did we start it?

MB: Both of us, we’re kind of limited in what we can show in the

**“A cult film means it speaks to a group of people.”**

film classes we teach. We need to frame classes along a certain timeline; we’re always trying to teach the best films—or what the critics consider the best. But there are a lot of films that slide out of that canon. Films that are powerful, and if you’re a filmmaker or you’re a film fan, they have an extreme impact on you. Yet, that film may not enjoy that broad consensus of opinion.

CG: Part of what we’re doing, then, is recovering lost or forgotten films.

MB: Exactly. Some of these movies were popular at one time but have fallen by the wayside, whether due to a change in technology or a falling out of favor. In other cases, they were never popular except for a few die-hard fans. Ed Wood’s movies, for example, are terrible. But some people love them and will watch them over and over again.

CG: Well, there’s something about that campy aesthetic that totally defies the parameters of normality. It’s escapist. One of the cool things about the Cult Film Series at Al’s is that we get to show films that—at least traditionally—wouldn’t be shown in a classroom or a mainstream theatre. Our decision to screen cult films was practical, too. Given the bar setting,

we needed films that could be watched and enjoyed with some degree of noise and conversation in the background.

MB: We were very fortunate to have Josh at Al’s Bar who offered the space to us for the series. And the setting works perfectly, because, as you so aptly phrase it, “B movies were meant to be seen in a bar.”

CG: I think that the venue in which we watch a film makes a big difference in how we understand and experience that film. The movies we’ve screened—especially stark, gritty films like *Cockfighter* and *Savage Intruder*—seem amplified with the backdrop of the bar around it. One of the things I love about the cult film series is watching the movies with other people, seeing their reactions, and talking about it afterwards—and during! It’s a community experience.

MB: I think that’s the key to the whole notion of cult. A cult film means it speaks to a group of people. And other people may despise it, degrade it, or think it’s dangerous. But certain people are passionate about it.

CG: How do we distinguish between a B film and a cult film? There is some overlap, but they aren’t the same thing. Historically, B movies were an industry term for movies that were shorter than 90 minutes and made on a low budget. From the earliest days of the studio system, it was common for the studio to make a certain number of feature films each year and a certain number of B pictures. The B film often ran after the feature. And B films were profitable, because they cost little to make and little to distribute (they were paired with features). They also kept the actors busy, too. Rather than have your actors sitting around on the lot waiting for their big chance at a feature, you’d put them in B pictures to see what they were made of, to get a feel for how you might cast them. John Wayne, for example, made quite a few B films before he got his big break in John Ford’s *Stagecoach*. Though I think what a B film was in 1940 is probably different than what we would call a B film now.

MB: Are there really B films now? Is that even possible? Because I’ve always thought of B films as connected to the drive-ins, as the “other” film. When you were out making out in your car, it was the second film.

CG: You weren’t watching the movie, Michael!

MB: I have a whole gap in my B film knowledge.

CG: No wonder you keep picking films from the ‘80s—you missed them the first time you saw them.

MB: Cult films are somewhat different than B films. B film refers more to the production. It is derived from Hollywood’s notion of what films will be funded and promoted versus what films will ride along the coattails of other pictures. Cult film has to do

**“It’s kind of a subversive act, to ‘cult’ a film.”**

with *after* the production. An audience designation. Saying we don’t give a damn what you did with your marketing or whether this film was a success.

MB: A good example for me is *Donnie Darko*. It came out in the late

‘90s and I remember hearing it was really good and worth seeing, but it disappeared almost immediately from the theatres. Then some years later they re-released it on DVD and it started to build a fan base through word-of-mouth, leading to a re-release in theaters and a new director’s cut DVD edition. That, for me, is what a cult film is. When people re-discover a film or people come around as a community and start to talk about it. In the case of *Donnie Darko*, people even made their own films and soundtracks by way of responding to it. It’s really interesting. It’s about making that universe your own.

CG: Part of what we’re talking about is that the audience is claiming a certain film that others don’t “get.” It’s a sort of cache of cool.

MB: For me, it’s a hardcore group of people who are into a pretty unknown film. The idea of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* being a cult film anymore just doesn’t work. I mean, at one time it was a cult film, but now it’s permeated the culture.

*continued on page 8*

**GREEN** CORNER OF THIRD AND JEFFERSON  
252-9539

**LANTERN**

EVERY SUNDAY



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**8:00-12:00**

## Review: *The Brothers Bloom*

By A.G. Greebs

In *The Brothers Bloom*, a quirky con-man movie, Mark Ruffalo and Adrian Brody star as the eponymous brothers, who happen to share a single name Stephen (Ruffalo) Bloom (Brody). There’s a cute explanation for this, as there is a cute explanation for almost everything that happens in the movie. Charm, even more than fake gunshot wounds and hat tricks, is the glue that binds director Rian Johnson’s latest film together.

The brothers are the self-described best conmen in the world. Stephen, who fancies himself the Herman Melville of con artists, engineers the broadly plotted cons, while his younger brother, Bloom, stars in them as the tragic anti-hero. But Bloom is antsy. He fears that he’s losing himself in the cons that he runs. He lets Stephen talk him into one last job, giving lonely and bored millionaire orphan Penelope (Rachel Weisz) the time of her life, and relieving her of a good deal of cash along the way.

So far so good, but almost from the outset *The Brothers Bloom* suffers from its weird casting. The cast isn’t bad per se. Brody, Ruffalo and Weisz are all great actors. However, it does feel somewhat arbitrary. It’s not just

that Ruffalo and Brody don’t seem like they’re related; they don’t seem like they’re from the same planet.

Brody is an especially odd fit, since it feels like he’s transferred his performance in the holocaust film *The Pianist* into a romantic comedy whole-cloth. There’s a lot of sighing and a lot of ennui. This is all fairly affecting. After all, Brody has won several very prestigious awards for his ability to project ennui. But sometimes he seems so consumptive that it’s hard to imagine him finding the strength to get out of bed to shower, much less aggressively charm someone out of their money.

*The Brothers Bloom* is an unrepentant genre movie. The trouble is, it doesn’t seem to have a very good sense of which genre that is. It has touches of American gangster movies, vaudeville, and quasi-Russian existentialism. There are car chases and gunfights, and fake shootings and real shootings, a mysterious Japanese woman with a penchant for blowing up Barbie dolls and a suspicious Russian man missing an eye. The characters rush between Montenegro, Russia, New Jersey and Mexico, riding in trains, steamboats and a series of vaguely ridiculous European cars. The result is something suspiciously close

to a Baz Luhrmann-directed remake of *The Sting*.

All this might sound somewhat exhausting, but it’s cut with some very long shots of Adrian Brody brooding, which ends up slowing down the movie quite a bit. *The Brothers Bloom* runs just under two hours, and in no way does it feel any shorter.

Which isn’t to say it isn’t charming. This is an extremely charming movie. Occasionally, it is an aggressively charming one. It is also, fundamentally, a movie that depends very heavily on its eccentricities and quips. And though these are good enough to carry us through the first half, they become progressively less and less frequent as the plot becomes murkier and murkier.

Not to put too fine a point on it, Brody’s character is a bit of a drag. He stares. He broods. He fails to act, and then he hates himself for failing to act. He’s in love, he’s afraid. He runs away, he stares, he broods. This, much more than sight gags with camels, is the really exhausting thing about the film.

*The Brothers Bloom* isn’t a bad movie. But like a lot of movies that aren’t quite good, and certainly aren’t terrible, it never quite satisfies. On the other hand, there are worse things than

being mildly unsatisfying. Aggressive stupidity, for instance, leaps to mind.

Bear in mind that last week, *Transformers 2*—reputed to be one of the worst movies of the year, and possibly of all time—had the highest midweek opening of any movie. Ever. That means that almost ten million people were so excited about seeing the *Transformers* sequel that they remembered what day it opened and then hauled themselves to the movie theater on a Wednesday night.

This is not good news for our society. I don’t have anything against action movies, in general. But I think we can all agree that Michael Bay is not a force for good in the world.

So instead of being disappointed with *The Brothers Bloom* for not being the best grifter movie ever made, I think we should all take time to appreciate what it wasn’t. It wasn’t stupid. It wasn’t sexist, racist or pointlessly loud. It wasn’t illiterate. That actually puts *Brothers Bloom* in a minority of movies currently in theaters. So while this film might not be the best thing since bourbon, it may be the best thing you’ll be able to see right now. And that’s not bad.

*The Brothers Bloom will be released on DVD and Blu-ray in October 2009.*

# Culture

## Music on the 4th: a Phoenix Park primer

By Riot Rose

Like many of you, I suspect, the wave of neo-patriotism that has swept our nation since 2001 has, if anything, caused my own patriotism to wane considerably. However, like the birthday of a friend I love but am equally embarrassed by, July 4<sup>th</sup> has consistently remained one of my favorite days of the year. Perhaps it's because Independence Day has come to be a celebration of freedom completely open to interpretation (as have the majority of national holidays).

For Lexington, the Fourth of July is the biggest party in town—one that everyone is invited to. It's one of the only occasions wherein thousands of people, from counties near and far, swarm the downtown streets in complete revelry all day long, generally throwing aside their differences in socio-economic status or political affiliation to focus instead on a mutual appreciation of things that we as Americans tend to collectively revere: the day off work, drinking in public, various deep-fried snacks, pyrotechnics and debauchery in general.

On this day, which stands as an exercise in stamina and tolerance on many different levels (the heat, the crowds, the beer), city officials turn their cheek on behavior that would in no shape or form be acceptable on any other day of the year: swimming in the fountain, wearing cut-offs or perhaps a bikini top in public. Personally, I take it as an opportunity to show off my favorite skirt. It's a homemade thrift store find, made of navy blue fabric with yellow and red drums and excerpts of the Declaration of Independence scrawled all over it—it is truly awesome.

Indeed, there's something for just about everyone at Lexington's downtown 4th of July festival: for the truly motivated and athletic, a top-of-the-morning 10K will commence, starting at Cheapside Park (July 4, 7 A.M.). For those with panache (but on a budget), the Lexington Philharmonic will provide a free concert on the steps of Transylvania's Old Morrison Hall (July 3, 7 P.M.). And for those who could care less about panache (and who are looking to drop \$20 - \$98), LFUCG's Red, White and Boom will be presenting Hank Williams, Jr. (July 4, 4 P.M., Rupp Arena Cox Street parking lot).

While these and other happenings no doubt merit mention, I figured I would write about the event I tend to schedule my day around - the free concerts at Phoenix Park (by the downtown library), sponsored and organized by CD Central and WRFL. For my money, there's usually one or two "don't miss" shows, coupled with a few "take 'em or leave 'ems." Fortunately, this year's lineup is pretty rockin' all around.

Here's a breakdown of all five bands performing, so you can plan your day.

### INDEPENDENCE DAY MUSIC AT PHOENIX PARK SCHEDULE

#### 10:30 - 11:30 A.M.: CASINO VERSUS JAPAN

A hidden treasure in the Lexington music scene, Casino Versus Japan had me at first listen a few months back - a 2002 melodic electronic split vinyl with California electronic duo Freescha. I've since done my homework, discovering that a) CvJ has had 6 or 7 releases since the late '90s, all of which are fantastic (the ones I've heard, at least); b) CvJ's song "It's Very Sunny" was featured in a 2002 Hummer commercial (a self-described "moral dilemma," in which the circumstances of starving artistry overwhelmed CvJ's anti-Hummer sentiments); and c) that CvJ has been on a public hiatus of sorts, having not released anything or played a show in at least seven years.

Granted, I presume that a live performance from this one-man ensemble, which consists solely of Erik Kowalski, would be a complicated task. Kowalski, who moved to Lexington from Wisconsin less than a year ago, plays all the instruments on his recordings: keys, drums, bass, guitar and all of the various knobs, buttons and pedals that distort and loop the instrumentation on his beautifully sculpted compositions. Needless to say, configuring a set-up for a live show has gotta be tricky. "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain," Kowalski has said.

Casino Versus Japan is prepared to come out from that curtain, however. Kowalski said he's itching to start playing again, and is excited about the Phoenix Park show and the multiple releases he has in the works for 2010, which includes a collaboration with longtime fan Bradford Cox, of Deerhunter and Atlas Sound.

CvJ's soundscapes are layered with ambient waves, electronic samples and unobtrusive dance beats. Complicated and textured, yes, but melodic and accessible for highbrow music aficionados and fairweather electronic fans alike. Though 10:30 may be a bit early for an act that may end up stealing the overall show, it should be a fantastic start to one of the greatest days in town. —*Riot Rose*

#### 12:00 - 12:45 P.M.: MATT DUNCAN

Matt Duncan moved swiftly from a poised-for-super-stardom Parlour Boy to a solo piano act playing gigs in smelly dives. Fortunately, he's making short work of stepping out of that Parlour Boy shadow. He began playing his sunny piano pop around town early last year, and shortly

thereafter expanded into a full band that included fellow PB John Buckman on drums, guitar ace Clifton Keller and the multi-faceted Trevor Tremaine on everything else. He even broke out a horn section during a recent show at Al's Bar.

You might be surprised to hear the freshest music in town coming from a man with a piano, but Duncan makes it happen. There is magic coming out of that Yamaha. Duncan has worked diligently toward hand-crafting a collection of tunes, and he hopes to release his full-length debut sometime this year. He isn't rushing it, instead taking the time to lovingly perfect each little gem.

This isn't to say that he's not recording. The Magnetic Fields nod "I'm Tired of Good Times" appeared on Lexington's Know Your Own Vol. 3, and the too-short sing-along "Petunias" can be heard on last year's inspiring Pet Milk project. Two more songs, "Mean Streak" and "There's A Thousand Boys," have been available on his Myspace page for many months now.

All of Duncan's songs are instantly infectious (we're talkin' Wham!-caliber catchiness here), and he sits center stage demanding your attention seemingly without even trying. As Duncan remarked at an early show at The Dame, "That song sounded good; let's play another one." Keep 'em comin', Matt. Lexington needs your happy-go-lucky tunes. —*Samantha Herald*

#### 1:00 - 2:00 P.M.: CHICO FELLINI

Chico Fellini has been gaining momentum roller coaster-style since their formation in 2006. Shows were few and far between in the beginning, but well-chosen, with the band playing all the local and regional hot spots in addition to a handful of event shows (Beaux Arts Ball, CMJ, SXSW) that seemed to skyrocket the band into the mindset they needed to pull off the epic feat that is their self-titled debut album.

*Chico Fellini* is an intense experience, containing exactly nine songs and spanning the spectrum of musical genres and influences. Where else could you turn and expect to hear influences ranging from David Bowie to Antony and The Johnsons to Nine Inch Nails? This quartet likes to cover all the bases.

Chico's live performances quickly became something of a legend throughout Lexington. They are guaranteed to pack houses and get the masses out and onto the dance floor. Understandably, taking a dark and methodical band out of the club and into the sunshine of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July could be worrisome to some, but anyone who caught their performance at CD Central on Record Store Day would know that they are quite capable of conveying their energy

no matter the venue. Chris Dennison's falsetto soars just as high out in that open air. —*SH*

#### 3:30-4:30 P.M.: MOON TAXI

Moon Taxi is a 5-person feel-good jam band playing this July 4<sup>th</sup> at Phoenix Park. From their debut album "Melodica" up through their latest release, the live album "Live Ride," Moon Taxi serves up the tried-and-true jam-band gems with strong beats, catchy lyrics, and exciting guitar riffs layered atop meandering melodies. Those familiar with jam-band culture will appreciate the Taxi's take on the genre, though they mix things up by incorporating unconventional instruments (didgeridoo, double bass, Native American flute, etc.) to carve out unique territory and craft something for everyone.

These Nashville natives aren't strangers to Lexington concertgoers, having drawn large crowds to their regular shows at The Fishtank and the Terrapin Hill Harvest Festival. Anthemish, sunny, booty-shaking tunes like "Funky Respiration" and "Tattooed by the Sun" will spark sure-fire jolts of electrified bliss through the downtown crowd, enticing even the staunchest anti-jammers to put a little boogie-woogie in their patriotic lockstep. —*Polly Radford with Nick Kidd*

#### 4:45 - 5:45 P.M.: TINY FIGHTS

Separating them from perhaps all other bands playing at this gig, no Tiny Fights song that I've heard would pass as a radio single (WRFL excluded). Not to say their songs aren't catchy and danceable as hell. They are. They're just too spacey for most airwaves, which is totally cool with me - they manage to captivate at the same time. Tiny Fights laces together elements that could easily be a recipe for disaster—laptop beats and echoey vocals, swirly guitar loops and slowed-down tribal distortions— but somehow it all comes off seamless, beautiful and utterly engaging.

Having played together for less than a year, the band - a trio of early-twentysomethings living in Lexington and Louisville via Ashland, Ky. (Adam Dickson, Jamie Adkins and Aaron Wilburn) - is young, which is surprising given the modern day psychedelic-kraut-inspired-space-rock complexity of their sound. Though you can hear traces of the Floyd, CAN and Animal Collective, there's not much point in dwelling on possible influences. Tiny Fights brings something completely new to the table.

I've said it before and chances are I'll say it again: Tiny Fights is my favorite new band in Lexington. Go see them. If you're not dancing or crowd surfing at the end of their set, you'll be wishing that you were. —*RR*

## Elsewhere in Lex

### A few things to check out in the next two weeks

By Trevor Tremaine

#### Wednesday, July 1

Everyone Lives Everyone Wins w/ Tiny Fights, Cross  
*The Void, 518 East High Street, 8 P.M. All ages. \$5*

It's hard to discuss the doom-drone-drift jams of ELEW without relying on well-worn identifiers like "monolithic" and "glacial." I'm gonna try not to. Or maybe I just fuckin' did. Whatever the case may be, these boys are louder than God, precise, eternal, tapping into a sound continuum a la Stockhausen's *Kontakte* (albeit a decidedly more static strain) rather than simply "playing." Imagine if the Theater of Eternal Music were punks and you're getting warm. Tiny Fights are a terrific, constantly evolving local Kraut outfit: one chord jams, tons of phase, mystery electronics, distant chants, pulse, ebb, flow. Come experience *maximum trance state*.

#### Friday, July 3

Street Gnar, Idiot Glee, Noisycrane, Trance Substantiation, Drive Far Fast, Josh Blaine, Silverware  
*Al's Bar, 601 North Limestone, 8 P.M. Free.*

This show looks like a doozy. The only thing the seven projects on this bill have in common is that they are a) local and b) solo acts. Street Gnar is Case Mahan of Tight Leather/Jovantaes fame, who will be exploring a dubby, industrial flux with off-kilter guitar, electronics, and primeval moan. Bedtime's James Friley will be doing a stripped-down take on his delirious bedroom pop as Idiot Glee. WRFL personality and ex-Laloux keyboardist Ainsley Wagoner performs under the delightful moniker Silverware. Think charming odd-ball strum-stick and piano tunes with a demented psychedelic Appalachian bent. Trance Substantiation is a local mystery—far-out hotwired electronics

that harkens back to the pre-digital, pre-doctrinal days of Japanese noise.

Cody Swanson, the svengali behind this unlikely evening, will be banging out his own lonesome indie-folk under the familiar Noisycrane banner, but without the fanfare. A cold slap in the face to whiny scene solipsists. (It should be mentioned that many of these artists appear in their nascent recorded forms on a terrific local comp called *Resonant Hole, Vol.1...* ask a hep friend where to procure...)

#### Monday, July 13

Deer Tick w/ Dawes, Englishmen  
*Al's Bar, 601 North Limestone, 9 P.M. \$5*

I saw Deer Tick open for Castanets at Lexington's hallowed Icehouse a couple of years ago, and, to be quite honest, they not only *stole* the show, but befouled it, defiled it, and spray-painted a few misspelled curse words

on it before they returned it and snuck off into the alley with a smirking laugh and a crooked cigarette dangling from their collective sneer. Eschewing a set of countrified indie rock originals for covers of classic Rockabilly and early Rhythm 'n' Blues, they rocked the crowd of collegiate, thrift-attired hipsters like suds-swilling juke joint hep-cats, establishing a direct psychic connection with the youngsters through utter sincerity and musicality.

Unlike other modern day practitioners of Golden Era r'n'r, the Deer Tick do it sans posturing, sans costume changes, totally reverent and capable: a boogie-woogie backbeat, pitch-perfect spring reverb, one-four-five and nothin' but the truth. I dunno if this is what they do all the time, but even if not, they seem to have a pretty intuitive understanding of "the live thing," and chances are, this won't suck.



# A challenge to skateboarders

Hey! Drop the alternative pretensions—you ought to be better at what you do

By Keith Halladay

When I was a youngster in Southside Virginia, athletic boys played sports: football, baseball, basketball, tennis, golf, and soccer. Unathletic boys either played in the school band, played role-playing games, or were really good at science. That was how it always had been and would be, for evermore.

Until, it seemed, the period in the early 1980s, in which skateboards evolved from skinny plastic

some combination of these physical shortfalls, you could always buy a skateboard, grow floppy hair, listen to Agent Orange, smoke cigarettes, and be accorded a level of coolness that band guys, science nerds, and (needless to say) Dungeon Masters would never experience, at least until their software companies went public. And the best part was that you didn't actually need to be very good at it: if you could Ollie, that was enough to evade charges of poseurdom, granting you a legitimate shot at the cheerleading



KEITH HALLADAY

Local skateboarders enjoy a sunny June afternoon at Woodland Park.

contraptions to the broad, modern boards with laminated wooden decks that we see today. And during that period skateboards were suddenly everywhere, because as far as anyone could tell it was something else—something new—the unathletic kids could do, maybe even while smoking cigarettes (or worse!) and listening to loud, frightening hardcore music, to the dismay of concerned citizens across the land, who quickly learned to associate skateboarding with pandemic delinquency, and banned it from various public places, thus making the unathletic kids even cooler.

Now look: I'm calling it as I saw it. If you were too fragile for football, too uncoordinated for baseball or golf, too heavy for tennis or soccer, too short for basketball, or possessed

squad. Skateboarding was alternative, rebellious, anti-establishment, and sexy.

But let's be honest: nobody was any damned good at it. Good at the rebellion, maybe, but not the essential athletic act of making a skateboard move in uncommon ways.

You're right now muttering, "Tony Hawk, you idiot." Well, of course there are exceptions to the rule (more on Mr. Hawk in a moment), but here's the thing: 25 years later, although many good athletes have taken up the sport, *still* nobody is any good. I know this, because I've lived within sight of Woodland Skatepark for the last six years, and just as then, everyone there is doing...Ollies.

But they're alternative, rebellious, anti-establishment, and sexy, right?

It's sometimes difficult to think so. On June 21, Woodland Park hosted the "Cosmic Invasion" competition, sponsored by Element, the skateboard and clothing manufacturer, and with a strong marketing presence by Vans, the venerable shoemaker. The competition took place in a municipal facility dating from 1999, one of hundreds much like it across the country. And generally, within certain restrictions, in Lexington and most places, skateboarding is most certainly not a crime.

Not especially alternative either: a rather square friend of mine, a staid academic sort, owns and plays five editions of the *Tony Hawk* series of video games (one of the most successful game franchises of the past decade), and thus can discuss slides, lip tricks, and the no comply with the confidence of an old pro, despite never having ridden a skateboard in his life. Likewise, when one can flip on the tube on a Saturday afternoon, to a major broadcast network, and watch the AST [Mountain] Dew Tour or the Disney-backed X Games, interrupted by HP ads featuring Shaun White...I'm not sure how much more in bed with corporate sponsorship the sport needs to be before it's disqualified from anti-establishment status.

Which is just fine by me. I don't begrudge White and Hawk cashing in on their athletic abilities, and I have no particular anti-corporate agenda; in fact I think it's great, because they are indeed superstar-caliber athletes who should be rewarded for their accomplishments. You can argue the merits

of a social value structure which pays its athletes so much, while so many go hungry, but if we're gonna pay utility infielders and career NBA reserves salaries heading toward eight figures, there's no reason to deny the best pro skateboarders their fair share.

That's not alternative, rebellious, or anti-establishment, though it may still be sexy. Yet this facade persists, and I think it's become detrimental to the progression of the sport.

By way of example, the faux-rebel vibe explains why the usual gaggle of skateboarders at Woodland Park aren't especially good: it's because they don't work very hard at it—not even as hard as the kids in your average Little League practice. Instead, they mostly smoke cigarettes and listen to loud, frightening hardcore music.

Before you dash off your angry email, yes, my blanket indictment spreads too far, and yes, I'm a grumpy old guy; every once in a while you see a youngster putting in the time, doing the work necessary to really improve. Maybe this kid or that one is the next superstar. But by and large, it seems passive participation in the skateboarding culture (however purchased and sanitized) is more important than active participation in the athletic endeavor.

So that's my challenge to you, skate rats: ditch the attitude, work harder, and get better, and you'll still score the cheerleaders. And if you're really, really good, you might even get your very own HP commercial.

Address hate mail to [noceditors@yahoo.com](mailto:noceditors@yahoo.com).

**Al's Bar**  
proudly sponsors  
**Lexington Bike Polo**  
*2nd place at Cleveland Bike Polo Tournament*  
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**Wednesdays & Sundays**  
**Coolavin Park**  
*Post-game shenanigans at Al's*

# Quick start bests Lopez' 3-goal effort

"They're playing way sloppy bike polo today," one spectator remarks

Wednesday, June 24, 2009  
Coolavin Park

NoC Sports Desk

At 6:34 P.M., under clear and sunny skies, six Lexington Bike Polo players ceremoniously threw in their mallets at Coolavin Park's center court to begin the first match of the night. Humidity and high heat contributed to court temperatures that soared to as much as 86 degrees Fahrenheit, making for what one fan described as "way sloppy bike polo."

After the mallets were unsorted and the teams decided, Team One (T1) consisted of Kyle Hord, Drew Combs, and Chris Simpson. Hord and Simpson formed two-thirds of the Lexington team that finished in second place at the April 18 Cleveland Bike Polo tournament. The third player on that formidable squad, Kevin Kliment, now sat opposite his former teammates. Joining Kliment on Team Two (T2) were Texas-reared phenom Rich Lopez and Tiff Morrow.

Just before the joust, Kliment set the tone for the night when, with shirt off, he lazily circled the court on his bike with cigarette in hand. Though not a particularly large or imposing person, Kliment skillfully maneuvered himself in relation to the sun in order to produce a series of menacing shadows and ominous smoke clouds. The dark, flat images and nicotine blasts

washed over T1 and seemed to rattle the team.

Unfortunately for Kliment and T2, the bold smoke-out tactic backfired. By joust time Hord, Combs, and Simpson appeared to have regrouped and refocused, scoring thrice in quick succession within the first three minutes.

To open the game (6:42 P.M.), Combs controlled the joust and quickly shuffled a pass to Simpson, who outmaneuvered Kliment for a lightning quick and easy score—"candy from a baby" easy. Three minutes later Simpson scored again, this time on an unassisted shot from the front corner. From here it took less than a minute for Hord to walk it in on a run-out to an undefended T2 goal.

And just like that, four minutes into the match T1 had opened an imposing 3-0 lead.

T2 parried the opening three-goal offensive with a mini-run of their own that featured strong defense and opportunistic play. At 6:50, Lopez maneuvered a tough shot in traffic in front of the T1 goal to make it 3-1. A minute later, Lopez scored again, on an assist from Morrow, which gave him a straight on shot from center court into an untended goal.

The third scoring run typified T2's increased physical play on defense and gritty, quick-hit scoring capability.

At the 6:53 P.M. mark, Combs entered deep into T2 territory and threatened to score. With Kliment

	Goals	Assists	Steals	Impalements
<i>Team 1</i>				
Drew Combs	1	1	1	
Kyle Hord	1	1	1	
Chris Simpson	2			
<i>Team 2</i>				
Tiff Morrow		1		
Kevin Kliment	1			1
Rich Lopez	3	1	1	

draped on Combs' rear and Morrow tending to his front as she defended the goal, Combs had to pull out left, where he and Kliment quickly got tangled.

In the scrum, Combs managed to unseat Kliment with a well-placed shoulder-to-shoulder check. Combs' mighty blow nearly impaled Kliment in the scrotum as he fell crotch-first towards his now perpendicularly turned handlebar. Before Kliment went "foot down," though, he miraculously sidehooked a pass around Combs in the direction of Lopez at midcourt, who coasted the other way for an easy open goal score.

The crowd twittered with spontaneous 140-character shouts of delight as T2 surged back to even the score at three apiece.

The pace slowed somewhat as the heat and humidity began wearing down the players. The teams traded goals over the next three minutes,

with Hord first executing a wonderful mid-court pickpocket of Lopez that resulted in an uncontested shot, which dribbled in off the right cone for a 4-3 T1 lead.

Lopez soon made up for his mid-court humiliation at the pedals of Hord by picking off a cross-court pass from Simpson and skillfully pivoting around to hit Kliment, who was speeding the other way to tie up the score.

The match concluded with Combs and Kliment engaged along the fence adjacent to T2's goal, Lopez sprawled on the ground six feet away for no apparent reason, Morrow and Simpson playing tiddly-winks off in the shadows, and Hord sending another dribbler through the cones for a grueling, fifteen minute long, 5-4 victory for the bikers of T1.

After a beer break, players re-threw their mallets into center court, this time less ceremoniously, to re-draw teams and recommence play.

# Opinion

## No TLC from KLC

KY League of Cities shows lack of respect for Commonwealth communities

We are all in this together! Each and every one of us plays a central and vital role within our community. We invest in each other daily through our toil, our tears and our time together. We are all more than neighbors, more than simple acquaintances or passersby. We are brothers, mothers, lovers and friends all united around what we share in common – Lexington, the bluegrass, Kentucky.

years for them and their families, with nearly \$21,000 being spent at Azur, which is co-owned by Sylvia Lovely's husband, Bernard Lovely. An undisclosed amount of money was also spent at Bowles Rice McDavid Graff and Love, a law firm where Bernard Lovely is a partner.

Furthermore, the Herald-Leader reported that nearly \$176,000 was spent on airline tickets and hotels in

received at least 25 percent of its revenues from public sources. Lexington alone paid \$26,000 to the KLC in 2008. Cities also use funds from taxpayers to pay league premiums and liability insurance. The city of Richmond, for example, paid \$360,000 in premiums the same year.

We could go on and on about where and how the league spends "its" money, but we would rather focus on the more tangible and meaningful aspects of what it means to be a positive and contributing member of a community.

Take for example several aspects of KLC's mission statement provided on its website. Listed as parts of its "mission and values" are such statements as:

- "The KLC serves as the united voice of cities by supporting community innovation, effective leadership and quality governance"
- "Our core values describe how we fulfill our mission by representing the enduring ideals and principals that guide all of our actions"
- "We believe our exceptional services and products help cities function effectively and enhance the quality of life within communities"
- "We believe building and cultivating relationships with governments, organizations, and individuals furthers the mission of KLC"
- "We embrace credibility built on a commitment to high ethical standards, accountability, competence, and non-partisanship"
- "We embrace teamwork and continuous learning that drives improvement and innovation"
- "We embrace caring and mutual respect that fosters a supportive working environment"

Is it just us or do you feel the KLC, by its actions at least, is less than sincere and borderline deceitful when it makes statements regarding "cultivating relationships, embracing mutual respect and commitments to high ethical standards and accountability," especially in light of how

it's managed to pad the pockets of its leaders and its leaders' spouses the past three years.

To make matters worse the KLC now states that it will no longer make its records available to the public under the Kentucky Open Records Act. Why else would the KLC close its doors and records to the public if it didn't think it was doing things it didn't want the public to know about in the first place? Doesn't the closing off of its records come off looking like an admittance of guilt?

Let's cut to the brass tacks here and say what needs to be said. Because the KLC is moving in the direction of less public oversight and accountability, we can't know for sure if it's ethically doing its job.

More importantly, though, is the mindset of the heads of public/private partnerships like KLC, who seem to think they are entitled to their inflated salaries. Three-hundred thousand dollars is simply too much, especially when on top of such an inflated salary there are such perks as free meals, free trips and personally padded retirement packages.

Not only is that salary a great big sign of disrespect to all of us, it also works to diminish the quality of life of people who actually live in cities. How many part-time/full time public service jobs like Ryan Koch's at Seedleaf are potentially drained away into Azur's bank account and Lovely's checking account every year (the two accounts actually hitched together in matrimony)? How many possibilities plucked by lack of funds?

Regardless of whether the league is a public entity or not, it is a member of our community. As a community member it should honor all of us, along with itself, by adhering to a higher standard of values—or even simply adhering more closely to its own. One of us can only succeed when all of us succeed. Because the KLC is not only responsible to itself as an organization, it and Lovely are also responsible to all off "us" and all "our" futures.



And it is this commonality that binds us together. That makes each of us important to the rest. Though we may disagree on many issues, we all in one way or another share the core values associated with being a member of that family. Core values like trust, accountability and respect.

Unfortunately not all of our community's members embrace these core values. Just recently the Herald-Leader reported on the exorbitant salaries and questionable spending practices of the Kentucky League of Cities. On June 18, Linda Blackford reported that in 2008, KLC president Sylvia Lovely received a compensation package of more than \$315,000 and was provided with a BMW SUV by the league. Her compensation package has since been reported to have been a raise of nearly 25 percent over a three-year period.

In addition, the league's three top officials were reported to have spent more than \$300,000 on meals, travel and other expenses in the past three

the last three years, \$8,100 was spent on a trip to Dublin, Ireland, for the Lovelys, \$4,563 on a six-seat box for a season at Churchill Downs in 2007, \$4,000 for two UK season basketball tickets, and \$2,300 for plane tickets for the Lovelys to attend President Barack Obama's Washington, D.C., inauguration and the Bluegrass Ball.

KLC argues that it is not a public agency, and therefore is not subject to the rules and governance regarding expenditures and open records like public organizations such as cities or states. However, it has been reported the league, which serves 382 member cities throughout Kentucky with lobbying, legal advice, insurance and other services, received roughly 25 percent of its revenues from public services in 2008. Blackford reported that a 1993 opinion from the state Attorney General's office found that the Kentucky Association of Counties, similar to the KLC in its structure and services, was a public agency because it

## Our problem with CentrePointe

Last week while at the Wine and Market grabbing some groceries, I was asked by one of the stores workers if I still had a copy of our first NoC issue. It turns out she's friends with one of the Webbs—I think it was Dudley—and had told him about our editorial challenging both he and the other Webb to a free range bocce game at their pit. She wanted a copy for him so he could read it.

At first I thought, "Holy shit, what the hell did I write in there?" But after returning home and rereading the piece and deeming it mostly tame, I soon started thinking, "Well, I'll have his ear for at least an issue." What might I say?

I guess I'd have to be honest and say that I don't think we'll agree on much of anything. At root, I don't accept most of the assumptions made by the Webbs. The entire purpose for the redevelopment of the block is based on the economic assumption that a big hotel will attract many large conventions, and therefore is a good thing for the city.

I reject that core principle, mostly because I hate large conventions. They're shitty. They attract shitty jobs. Most of the money goes elsewhere, to shitty greedheads living out of town. The restaurants are bland, overpriced, forgettable, and yes, shitty. Same with the bars. Property values inflate, making it more difficult for local places like Mia's, the Dame or the Mad Hatter to stick around in their rented digs.

I hit at least one convention a year, so I know my convention sites. Philadelphia. San Francisco. Atlanta. Washington D.C. New Orleans. Every single one is the same. A hodgepodge of "Authentic" Irish pubs, peaty scotches at forgettable yet insanely expensive hotel bars, some variant of a high-end steakhouse, and a nine dollar burger joint. I always get pissed having to walk the extra 10 or 20 minutes to get to the interesting places—the kinds of places in New Orleans, San Francisco and Philadelphia where you take pictures to show your friends. So telling me that CentrePointe, as a hotel convention hub, is the economic solution to the Main/Lime/Vine block doesn't register with me. Who the hell wants to go to a convention center? Certainly nobody who actually *lives* here.

Of course, it's not as if CentrePointe and the Webbs are the main issues here. As a budding journalist, it's been heartening to see a broad local support network develop through the media that has openly criticized what's going on at CentrePointe. Eblen and the rest of the *Herald-Leader* have had some thoughtful critiques and on the subject (though they could do more); Ace has had a series of thoughtful essays on the topic; the Lexolutionary kickball game was organized through Facebook at the site; and in that most old school of media, the talk around the barstool has been varied and multifaceted on the subject.

All of this has at the very least generated a citizen response that caused

the Webb's to make token cessions like planting grass seed at the site. For me, it's inspiring to see a group of different people materialize around this place. It has the potential for helping spark a new coalition of individuals and interests to counter the uncritical "pro-business" reflex that seems to dominate thinking in this city.

At the same time, though, that coalition thus far seems to find the Dame a greater loss than the Rite Aid that was also demolished. Yet if we're talking about needs for people around there, Rite Aid's far more necessary. In addition to basic goods, it also housed a pharmacy that many nearby residents—particularly at risk neighbors (the elderly, the car-less, the job-less, etc.)—relied upon. And though they pop up occasionally, I rarely read (and never hear) consternation expressed about how CentrePointe's parking fix, a structure replacing Phoenix Park, will displace the homeless who spend much of their time in and around it.

This isn't to say that centering our arguments on pointing out how CentrePointe's ugly architecture will cost the city dearly, or how the mud pit makes the city look worse for the Bluegrass games (why exactly should I care again?), or even on calls for community involvement that are predominantly still fixated on making Lexington "marketable" to outsiders are the wrong things to do. Lord knows they're all certainly valid here. But there's other fish to fry, and they don't involve the money shot of "fixing" Lexington's white main street so that people will feel "compelled to stay."

A couple blocks away sits the Lyric theatre, located on Third Street along what was once, during Jim Crow's era, a part of Lexington's thriving black main street. The city, according to Andrew Battista's article in *NoC's* first issue, seems legally bound to develop the sight as a "culture-preserving facility." The other sites mandated by then Mayor Pam Miller for similar development included the UK Basketball Museum, the Kentucky Theatre, and the Downtown Arts Center. The Lyric, a black theatre that attracted black talent ranging from Duke Ellington to Ike and Tina Turner, is the only site not yet fixed. If you're black and living in the East End, the hubaloo around CentrePointe in *Ace*, the *Herald-Leader*, and here (4 articles in 4 issues) has gotta sound a bit weird.

Here we are complaining about CentrePointe and the indignity of not having a community voice, when five blocks away lies what is arguably an equally important structure that the city *does* have ownership over and an ability—and even mandate—to develop. This past Tuesday (June 30) the council sat down and began deciding the fate of the Lyric. What they've concluded is far from over. But what we as citizens of a community must *do* is have a say in this. I'm not saying to go storming out to your council people to shout out about saving it; I'm talking about listening first to those people who have been working on the Lyric. Why not harness our energy to support those individuals whose interests intersect with ours—in fact, whose interests I'd guess if we sat down and talked about it—are in fact ours.

**Correction:** We failed provide credit for two of the three photographs accompanying the article on *Ultimate* in the last issue. The photographer is Bill Patterson. Our apologies.



## Al's Bar Cult Film Series (cont.)

*continued from page 4*

CG: Right, but a cult film isn't necessarily unknown. It's more underground, if that makes sense. But a certain amount of time needs to have lapsed in order for a film to become "cult."

MB: Yes, and that goes back to the notion of availability. When I was growing up, if you wanted to see a film unadulterated, you had to see it in the theatre....

CG: We're talking about the nickelodeon days, right? Before sound?

MB: Because anything above PG was going to be cut to hell on TV. Then you have VHS come out. And the idea of a film being available on VHS was good, but only so many films ended up on VHS at the time. Then you have that whole shift over to DVD, and certain films never made that shift. They got lost in the shuffle. I mean, how many films are we talking about here? They're still rescuing these films. Think of groups like Criterion—this is part of what they do.

CG: I just really like that concept of the audience countering any measures a studio may or may not have taken to promote a film. It's kind of a subversive act, to "cult" a film. But this doesn't mean that some films

that are heavily promoted and funded can't become cult. *The Big Lebowski* is not a low-budget film. It may appear low budget, but it's not. It's almost as if it were made to be a cult film. And it became one, for sure. But it wouldn't have if the audience hadn't responded to it. That's not something the writer, director, or studio can decide.

**"Cult indicates a kind of rebellious embrace on the part of the audience. It's bottom up, not top down.."**

MB: Right. *Repo: The Genetic Opera*, which came out this past year, was being promoted as a cult film. That just isn't possible. It's sort of like punk rock. Cult indicates a kind of rebellious embrace on the part of the audience. It's bottom up, not top down.

CG: Oftentimes when I think of cult films I think of the adage "it's

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so bad, it's good." Though this is certainly not true of all cult films... Plenty of them are good and bad in one glorious package. One of my favorite films that we showed this past year was *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* In this case, Russ Meyer was a B director with a cult following. Anyway, if you watch Meyer's stuff, it's clear that he was a terrific director. The cinematography and mise-en-scene are incredible in that film. But the narrative and script—well, they're amusing and even potentially subversive—but they're corny. I believe his script is intentionally flat, though. Those aren't characters that warrant fleshing out...He wasn't interested in creating a deep, serious film. It was more like he was skimming the surface of some funky pond. I mean that as a compliment.

MB: In those days (the 1960s and 70s), you had a lot of freedom to experiment. And this goes back even further. When you think about the classics of film noir, many of them were B movies. You could make weird,

trippy movies where maybe your cuts were off, your angles were unusual... If people were paying attention, they might think, "What the hell is going on?" But true filmmakers were watching this stuff, and learning from it.

CG: Absolutely. I'm fascinated by the fact that B-director Roger Corman trained so many A-list directors and actors. I think part of the phenomenon of B and cult films is that they offer the director a lot of room to be creative, in terms of style and content. Sometimes it takes awhile before that creativity can be recognized.

MB: Films have only been around a little over a hundred years. Some films are only now getting the appreciation they deserve...It's so great to be able to work and play in that little playground of these lost films.

Check out *Performance (Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg)*, starring James Fox and Mick Jagger, on July 15, the next film to be screened in the Cult Film Series at Al's Bar. All screenings are free. 7 P.M.



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