

Refugee resettlement in Lexington

Kentucky Refugee Ministries offers help for international asylum seekers

By Beth Connors-Manke

When I walked into Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) on a Thursday morning recently, I felt that I was in a quintessential non-profit: space was tight and people were everywhere. I was looking for Barbara Kleine, director of the Lexington office of KRM, but when I entered the house on Maxwell Street, it wasn't clear to me where her office was.

"I'm looking for Barbara, do you know where her office is?" I asked the first person I could, which turned out to be a man shorter, older, and darker than I.

With bright eyes and smile, he answered, "Me, Barbara, too." His thumb pointed upward, to the second floor of the house. Having taught English as a second language for 5 years, I knew that meant something like "I need her, too. She's upstairs."

Grateful for his help, I smiled and padded up the stairs, where I found, as I said, the quintessential non-profit atmosphere. It reminded me of my time working at a domestic violence shelter in Cleveland—a small informal space where lots of people were looking for help. The biggest difference between the refugee office and the shelter in Cleveland was that at KRM there were languages and names I'd never heard before—sounds that come from places like Iraq, Bhutan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

When I found Kleine, she was on the phone, explaining to a church the value of sponsoring a refugee family. KRM is an affiliate of the Episcopal Migration Ministries and Church



Beatrice Mbaya, a caseworker for Kentucky Refugee Ministries who is from the Democratic Republic of Congo, with Dhan Rai and the Katwal family, refugees from Bhutan.

World Service, two national church-based programs that resettle refugees. Authorized by the U.S. Department of State, KRM assists people who have been given refugee status by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and have been legally admitted to the United States.

Kleine finished her call and turned toward me. She explained that when an

interested church called, she gave the call her full attention. "Churches all over the city are really supportive of this ministry," Kleine said.

Churches are especially important to an organization like KRM that receives some federal funds, but really gets by on private donations and the support (in the form of volunteers, donations of household goods, and money) of Lexington churches.

Kleine herself became involved in refugee resettlement through her church, Maxwell Street Presbyterian, which donates space for the office and the cultural orientation programs KRM provides.

"At the time, I wanted to go to work for a non-profit," Kleine said, speaking about her entrée into refugee work. "I thought, this will be great, helping refugees, people who have lost everything—not only all of their possessions, but lots of times much of their family, and maybe even the protection of their home country. They have nothing. What I did not realize when I started was what an impact refugee resettlement and refugee co-sponsorship has on churches and volunteers and people in the community. This experience can really transform them."

I wondered what transformations Kleine had observed in churches that work with refugee resettlement.

"It makes our world much smaller. We realize what people in other parts of the world are having to survive. I think it makes churches appreciate what we have here. I think it broadens the viewpoint of people that don't have the opportunity to travel globally or to do global mission work. This way you get to do global mission work right here in the city."

"By 'mission' we mean providing basic services and support. We have a policy of no proselytizing because many refugees are fleeing from religious persecution, and we do not want them to feel even an implied pressure to attend any church."

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Quentin Tarantino, king of the mooks

One basterd's inglorious response

By Michael Dean Benton

"The Second World War could still deliver more stories and films, but I believe that Quentin put a cover on that pot. With 'Basterds,' everything that can be said to this genre has been said. The film destroys every symbol. The work is done, end of story..."

— Brad Pitt in *Sterne*, a German magazine

"Historians must, as best we can, cast light into these shadows and account for these people. This we have not done. Auschwitz, generally taken to be an adequate or even a final symbol of the evil of mass killing, is in fact only the beginning of knowledge, a hint of the true reckoning with the past still to come."

— Timothy Snyder, "Holocaust: The Ignored Reality" (*The New York Review of Books*: July 16, 2009)

In media theorist Douglas Rushkoff's 2001 Frontline documentary *Merchants of Cool*, he outlines the marketing category of "mooks" and "midriffs." The mook is essentially an outgrowth of 1990s MTV Generation marketing that seeks to speak to the inner idiot of men. The mook, as a marketing image, is proudly ignorant and revels in displays of destruction. This standardized conformist dumbass-culture operates behind a veneer of exuberant irrationality. Emotional or intellectual content is rejected in

favor of the "wow" factor of stylishly cool shocks to the system.

Quentin Tarantino rose to fame in the 1990s and is a leading purveyor of "mook" culture. From the beginning of his career he proudly cited his broad knowledge of obscure violent videos from long-forgotten genres. He has repetitively produced a series of imitative movies centered upon strings of stylish set scenes of violence. There generally is not a clear reason for the violence in his films, other than personal motivation. In his films (especially post *Jackie Brown*), style is supreme and overrides any concerns of meaning or narrative.

The last Tarantino film I watched in a theater was *Kill Bill I* (2003). It was a non-stop series of images of extreme violence, situated in a simplistic comic book format, with no thought or reflection. Even worse were the twisted attempts at humor. Particularly disturbing was the intended comedy of dry humping a comatose woman. I recall observing the negative impact this twisted attempt at humor had on some of the adult males in the audience, who laughed and jeered as if on cue. One male viewer next to me twitched and giggled throughout the movie, his leg jerking as heads flew and blood spurted. My companion, after the movie, said that my face during the viewing reflected my distaste and disgust. It was more my reaction toward the viewer's laughter than the movie.

Herein resides my main problem with Tarantino's films. The simplistic nature of the cartoonish characters and plots of his films allow "any" viewer to seize upon the "story" as representing his (or her) own viewpoint. Furthermore, the absence of "effect" in regards to the hyper-violence removes any sense of context for the character's actions beyond personal motivation. This keeps the characters from moving beyond their



Brad Pitt, as Lt. Aldo Raine in *Inglourious Basterds*, loves to kill NAZIS.

cartoon nature and allows the audience to revel in violence for violence's sake.

In order to think about this I will outline some of the characters in his latest film *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). Most prominent, in the advertisements and trailers for the film, is Lt. Aldo Raine (Brad Pitt), the leader of the American assassination squad. He

simply wants scalps of Nazis because they are "evil." The only background we get in regards to Aldo is that he may or may not have been a moonshiner back in Tennessee. This characterization is so broadly drawn that this character could easily become a NAZI without any significant changes. Raine's background and those of his men are never fleshed out.

In contrast to this cardboard character, I'm reminded of the economy of a classic pulp film like *The Dirty Dozen* (Robert Aldrich, 1967) in which the avenging men are introduced quickly and efficiently. It allows the characters to be more than interchangeable parts in a broadly drawn revenge thriller. *The Dirty Dozen* still operates within the genre conventions while allowing us to develop a sense of the people involved in the thriller.

Raine's counterpart is the brilliantly deductive SS officer Hans Landa (Christoph Waltz). He is called the "Jewish Hunter" by the French Jews he hunts, and Tarantino states that he is intentionally a "brilliant detective." He is the classic stereotype of the "cultured" NAZI monster that will be destroyed, or brought down, by his increasingly irrational hubris. Yes, his verbosity is amusing when we forget his sinister intent, but, as with Raines, with a change of clothes and era, Landa could be Detective Robert Green on *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*.

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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.

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Building a basil economy, pt. 3

By Danny Mayer

Editor's Note: In an effort to provide Beth Connors-Manke with some much needed time off (sort of), this column will spell hers from time to time. As with Beth's, the column will grow from individual and group initiatives within the community, mostly from our immediate community of Lexington. Unlike Beth's column, however, for the most part this promises to be poorly written, hastily-conceived, and in general to exhibit poor taste.

A few years back I penned what I thought would be a regular column for Lexington's *Nougat Magazine* that I was going to title "Suburban Flaneur." It was to be an evolving primer for re-inhabiting our bleak suburban Lexington worlds.

For reasons too numerous to detail here, that column never appeared. *Nougat* folded, and I moved downtown—all of which ensured that Suburban Flaneur would never happen. If *North of Center* ever gets desperate for content—and that prospect always seems only an issue away—we may print an abridged version of the only piece I wrote under the Suburban Flaneur byline as a matter of historical curiosity. In the meantime, though, you are stuck with this.

More recently, in issues two and three of this paper, I authored a two-part article on a related topic titled "Building a Basil Economy." This more contained piece looked at how

the current local food and gardening zeitgeist might lead to workable alternatives to our current money-centered economy (and lives). Growing our own food, I argued, allows us to detach on our own terms from a global economy based increasingly in transnational finance and new "hot markets" of exploitation. At the same time, it might reconnect us to a more intimate economy of local production based



in basic human needs—food, yes, but also friendship, clothing, art, shelter, communication.

I'm resurrecting that phrase, building a basil economy, for the title of this column for several reasons. There are the easy ones: it fills column space across the page, a great attribute according to our layout editor; I'm lazy and lack creativity and this title is already there; I like the way it sounds. In addition to these, I can cite at least two more important reasons.

First, I felt like the limited feedback I received from friends about that article missed my point, something no writer likes to experience. While I think people appreciated the writing, and at least two noted with glee the vague marijuana references and skillfully procured use of expletives (both things nearly always a winner in a free bi-weekly paper), I didn't get a sense that anyone actually thought building an economy based on human need of things like food, shelter, and clothing was actually possible or practical at this point in time, which is a sad and pathetic testimony to our current historical moment. As my oldest and perhaps closest friend Tim wrote to me, "You put out an extreme view point in

order that your audience may budge just a bit. Great rhetorical tactic."

Second, I realized when writing the article that there was more to my topic that I wanted to explore and write on, something I assume all writers *do* enjoy experiencing. In writing my piece, I included John Walker's urban gleaning ideas, Geoff and Sherry Maddocks' ideas on community economics, my own efforts operating a free-store stand, and Ryan Koch's efforts working with the nonprofit gardening group Seedleaf. But I excluded as much as I included. I missed talking about food not bombs, the growth in guerrilla gardens, the turn to dinner parties, the creation of this newspaper, the enjoyment of alternate forms of sport, the proliferation of marijuana as a Kentucky cash crop, the possibility of turning elderberries into your own intoxicating forms of wine, the ways to procure free Kentucky rock, and the many forms of bartering that take place on a daily basis, just to mention a few. In my mind, to talk about what I call a basil economy without these and other things seems to miss the point. The very word *building*, after all, implies a process, not a two-part article.

My hunch is that by calling attention to these acts, groups, people, and economies, and by taking them seriously, I will make my argument better that the joys and labors that I celebrate are not rhetorical acts or the opiate induced ravings of a degenerate that they may seem at first glance, but rather very real possibilities for a different way of living. After all, an economy rooted in local, often personal, production of food and pleasure and clothing and shelter is not only possible, but is in fact already happening, already building. We are just waiting for you to get up off your fat, lazy, uniquely American ass and join in the fun.

At its best, then, this column should call you to be a producer, to make something, to be creative, and to share it with us, we who should be your friends. In other words, it should offer you the psychic tools, base knowledge, and inspiration to help build something.

In the next column, Danny will define what the hell he's talking about.

North of Center is currently seeking submissions from artists and graphic designers for a nameplate logo. Please contact Danny Mayer or Keith Halladay at noceditors@yahoo.com for details and submission instructions.

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Pedicab in service

Sprocket Jockeys: part cab, part bike

NoC Staff News Report

Two bike-related services appeared on the Lexington scene during this month's Woodland Arts Fair: a free "bike-check" station for fair visitors who did not want to deal with the hassles of automobile driving, and a pedicab service for those who *did* drive and needed transportation from their cars to the fair. While the bike-check idea is a wonderful civic perk that, hopefully, will be supported and expanded to other public gatherings—Thursday Night Live held at Cheapside comes to mind here—the pedicab service is an

example of new small-scale entrepreneurial activity popping up in our city.

Sprocket Jockeys, run by Lauren Pfannerstill and James Gonyer, is a transportation service with very old roots. The human-powered cabs that are used to transport riders combine the old world technology of rickshaws with the less-old word technology of bicycling. The resulting combination, known as a pedicab, looks like the front of a bike has been fused to a rickshaw in the back.

Currently, the pedicab service is operating free of charge until Pfannerstill and Gonyer work out a

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fare system, which should happen once UK gets back in session. In the meantime, jockeys (pedicab drivers) work for tips. "Here in the beginning," Pfannerstill says, "we want people to experience it before they start having to pay a set price." Thus far, she continues, everyone's been impressed with their rides. "At Woodland, everyone loved the service—jockeys, riders, and business owners," who appreciated having customers dropped off closer to their storefronts.

While there is no set route or geography that Sprocket Jockeys will cover, Pfannerstill lists some time and places you can expect to see and use pedicabs: "The original goal is Thursday through Saturday nights downtown. We'll also be doing UK football games—basically places where large groups of people get together and need rides from their cars." Eventually this will translate into pedicabbing at shows and conventions at Rupp, and with the Equestrian Games coming

next fall, hour long bike-tours of the city.

All in all, Sprocket Jockeys promises to be a pleasant experience all around. As Gonyer points out, taking a pedicab is a refreshingly sane experience. "You can enjoy the scenery at a pace faster than walking but slower than driving. You can meet and talk and interact with the people who drive you around and with those you encounter on the streets." Call it another way to interact with the city environments and to support a small start-up business.

Pfannerstill agrees. "It's not riding a bike or walking, and it's not riding in a bus. It's open air, super comfortable. It's enjoyable."

For more information or a pick-up downtown, call 859-913-PEDI (7331). Sprocket Jockeys is also looking to train the first group of pedicab operators. Training spots are limited, so get in touch with them at the above number if you are interested.



A young Sprocket Jockeys customer prepares for a ride at the Woodland Art Fair.

Refugees (cont.)

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Refugees Rather Than Migrants

Twenty years ago in Louisville, Donna Craig began KRM around her kitchen table. Over the years, KRM as a whole has worked with 5,300 refugees and asylum seekers from 36 different countries, including Cuba, Bosnia, Somalia, and Sudan. This year the Lexington office of KRM has primarily worked with refugees from Iraq, Bhutan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

I asked Kleine about the success of a recent Social Innovation Forum sponsored by Global Gain that spotlighted KRM and refugee issues. “It spread the word about who refugees are and what their experience is. I think most people don’t know the difference between a refugee and other

get permanent resettlement in a country of second asylum like the U.S.,” Kleine said.

“Usually what happens is that they are either in refugees camps, as is the case with most of the Africans or the Bhutanese [that KRM resettles], or they are delegated to certain areas of cities and really not given permanent residency status in the country to which they fled—so they usually aren’t able to work, and they don’t have a lot of the rights of the people who live in that country. Sometimes people live in a refugee situation for decades.”

KRM sees refugees who have been doctors, lawyers, architects, and engineers. The agency also works with people “who have never had electricity, who have never turned on a light, never held a pencil. Most fall some place in between,” Kleine said. The

KRM anticipates a record-breaking year, with a projected 200 refugees resettled through the Lexington office. This number is up 100% from two years ago, which is a harbinger of both good and bad.

The good news is that KRM in Lexington has been very successful in its work. Because Lexington has historically been a good area for employment and cost of living, the organization has maintained a 95% success rate for having its clients self-sufficient by their 120th day in the U.S., one of the measures used for resettlement agencies. If an organization’s ability to find employment for its clients drops below a certain standard, it stops receiving refugees. From an administrative point of view, KRM can and should be proud of its accomplishments.

The challenge is that, with national numbers of refugees up and an economy that is down, KRM’s success means that the agency is sent more refugees to resettle at a time when it is hard to find employment for them. Kleine thinks that, while Lexington is still faring better than some other larger cities, it is now catching up in terms of lack of employment.

“We’ve resettled several Iraqi physicians who speak English better than I do,” Kleine said. “Even for them, it has been difficult to find entry-level employment.”

The economic crunch has affected KRM in other ways as well. Through private and church donations, the organization supplements rent until refugees can find a job. Like everything else, this funding has dwindled, exacerbating jobless refugees’ feelings



The exterior of the Neighborhood Center.

of insecurity and creating strain on KRM’s ability to provide resettlement services.

Despite the challenges, KRM is working diligently to resettle its latest arrivals: 23 refugees who arrived last week. KRM’s small office is teeming. As often as our country has failed to live up to the ideals in the famous poem by Emma Lazarus on the Statue of Liberty—“Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free”—KRM is certainly striving for the promise of that poem: that America can be a place of promise for exiles.

This series on refugees in Lexington will continue its look at the challenges of refugee life in our next issue. If you are interested in joining KRM’s work, you can contact the agency at 859-226-5661 or krmlexington@gmail.com.



The simple sign marking the location of the Ministries.

immigrants,” Kleine observed.

“Refugee” is a status accorded an individual by the UNHCR, differentiating that individual’s migration from that of most émigrés.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was created in 1950 to help the estimated 1 million people uprooted by World War II. In the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, the Council defined a refugee as a person who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

“Of the number of people legally admitted to the U.S. as immigrants each year, seven percent are refugees,” according to Kleine. “Refugees are the most vetted group of immigrants.” They are also eligible for U.S. citizenship within five years.

The UNHCR explains the difference between a migrant and a refugee: “Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve the future prospects of themselves and their families. Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom. They have no protection from their own state—indeed it is often their own government that is threatening to persecute them. If other countries do not let them in, and do not help them once they are in, then they may be condemning them to death—or to an intolerable life in the shadows, without sustenance and without rights.”

Normally an individual cannot get refugee status unless she has crossed the border from her home country to another nation, Kleine explained. (Exceptions Kleine has seen are some refugees from Cuba, Iraq, and areas of the former Soviet Union. The Iraqis who come directly from Iraq have sometimes aided U.S. companies or U.S. troops.)

After an individual or family gets status from the UNHCR, they can apply to get permanent resettlement. “Fewer than 1% of the world’s refugees

conditions of their arrival can vary as well. Some of the Iraqi refugees that come to KRM arrived in the U.S. with one big suitcase per person, which is substantial according to Kleine. Other arrivals come with much less: sometimes a family of six will arrive with what amounts to a gym bag.

“Some don’t have underwear to wear the next day,” Kleine said.

Provisions for Refugees

KRM and its co-sponsors, individuals or groups who commit to helping an individual refugee or family, have to provide a plethora of goods and services, sometimes even before the refugee has arrived in Lexington. All of KRM’s resettlement services are mandated by the State Department, and the organization is monitored to make sure it is providing those resettlement services.

Services include securing “apartments that are affordable, that are safe, clean, decent housing, that are on a bus line, and that the landlord will rent to [our refugees],” Kleine said.

“We have to fully furnish the apartments—have sheets on the bed, toothbrushes in the bathroom, food in the refrigerator.”

The agency and its volunteers also help newcomers apply for Social Security Cards, schedule health assessments, register children in school, secure and prepare for employment, find transportation, and learn English. All of this happens on a very short timeline—some of it in a matter of days and some in a matter of a few months.

Farmers’ Market now accepting cards

The Lexington Farmers’ Market, with help from the Kentucky Farmers’ Market Association, now accepts EBT (Food Stamp) and debit cards.

Customers wishing to use their EBT cards can come to the designated table and swipe their cards to access their food stamp accounts. Customers decide how much money they would like to withdraw and they will receive the equivalent amount in market tokens, which can be spent just like cash on EBT-approved items.

Debit customers can swipe their cards for tokens that can be used to purchase anything in the market. Look for the EBT/DEBIT sign.

The Lexington Farmers’ Market is open Tuesday/Thursday at S. Broadway and Maxwell 7am-4pm, Wednesday at the Mall at Lexington Green 4-7pm, Saturday at Cheapside Park on Main St 7am-3pm, and Sunday on Southland Dr from 10am-2pm.

Visit www.lexingtonfarmersmarket.com or call 859-967-4760 with questions.

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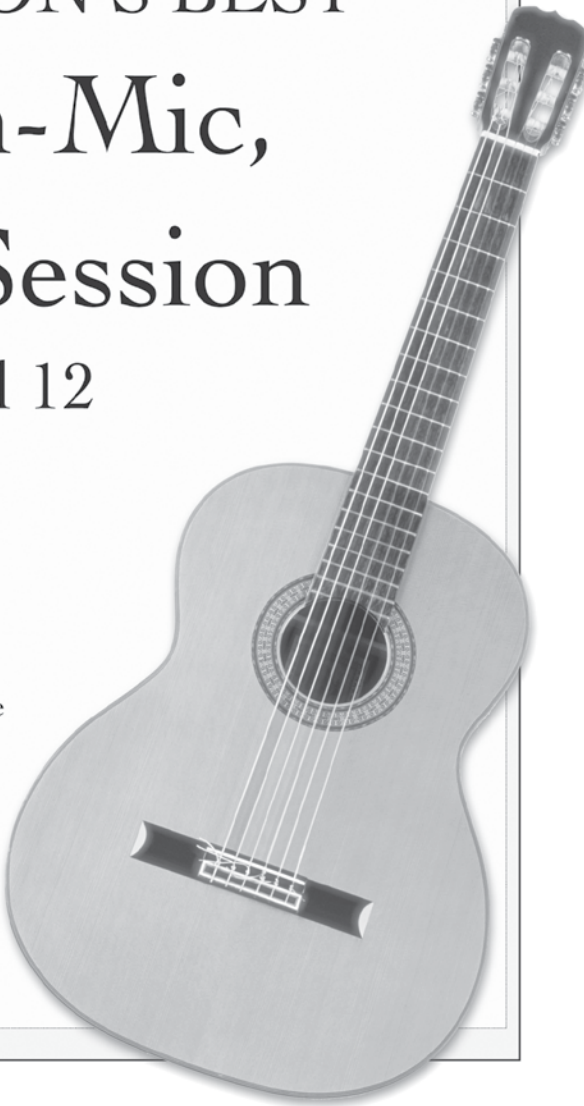
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Review: *District 9*

A ray of light in a summer of gloom

By Troy Lyle

Spoiler alert: *if you haven't seen the movie yet, read at your own risk.*

In a year filled with unimaginative film making, rehashed story lines and poorly executed sequels, comes a movie with soul. *District 9*, the freshman offering from director Neill Blomkamp, is a riveting tale in the vein of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, where mankind struggles to maintain its humanity in an era when society has clearly lost its moral compass.

Produced by Peter Jackson (*The Lord of the Rings*) and Carolynne Cunningham (*King Kong*, *Pitch Black*), *D9*'s story will be familiar to science fiction fans the world over. Classic themes, such as man versus technology/versus aliens/versus the unknown, crash like giant waves in a tsunami as the film's breakneck pace never loosens its grip on the watcher.

A story of extraterrestrial refugees marooned in modern day South Africa, *District 9* begins like a documentary with a series of interviews and news excerpts that introduce the audience to the film's modus operandi. It's been 28 years since the aliens' space ship broke down over Johannesburg, during which time they have not attacked, have not brought technological advances, and have done little more than become a public nuisance. So much so that South Africans have come to detest the aliens, calling them "prawns," a derogatory dysphemism in the vein of "spear chucker," "porch monkey," or "wetback," whereby the aliens are compared to the bottom feeders they resemble.

This growing unrest among South Africans forces politicians and world leaders to debate what should be done with these aliens, who are the last of their kind. It is here that the film's lead character, Wikus van der Merwe (Sharlto Copley), an employee of

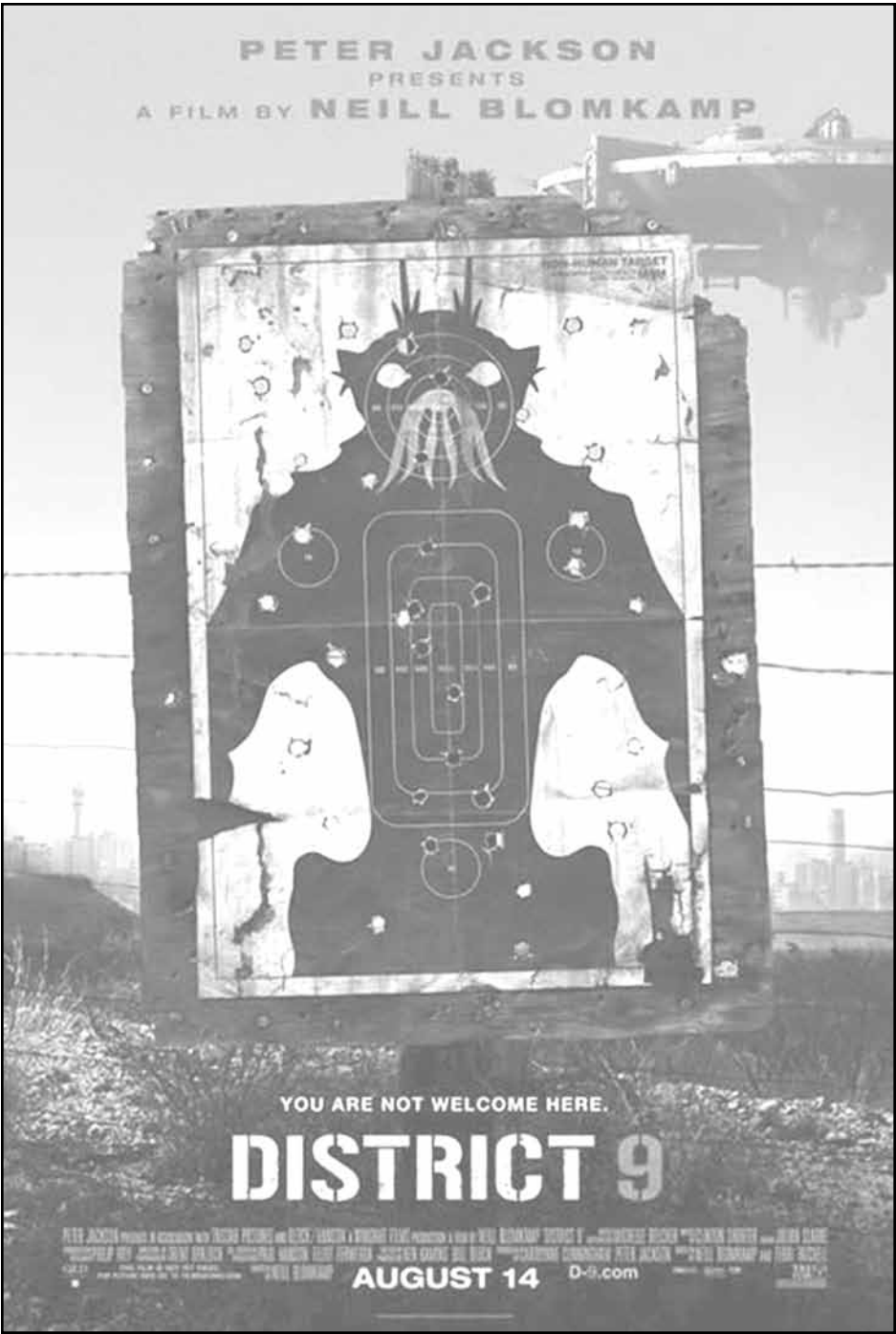
Multi-National United (MNU), the corporation allocated the task of controlling the aliens, is appointed to evict the aliens from District 9, a makeshift slum that has come to house the aliens on the outskirts of Johannesburg.

Wikus, a somewhat buffoon of a man, naively and inadvertently falls prey to MNU's corporate agenda. He has been exposed to the alien's biotechnology causing his DNA to mutate, resulting in him being a pawn for MNU's underlying desire to harness and profit from the weaponry of the aliens, which can only be activated when exposed to alien DNA. As a result Wikus is now the most wanted man in all of Johannesburg. With MNU wanting his DNA and all of South Africa fearing his ever changing body, Wikus is forced to hide in the only place he knows no one will find him - District 9.

The film's pulsating pace lends itself to the style of action and adventure that Hollywood's fans have come to crave, but don't underestimate the movie's greater vision. At the heart of this tale lies a story of humanity, suffering and sacrifice, both on the side of Wikus and the marooned aliens. *D9* is much more than a science fiction film. Its in-your-face themes draw from far deeper emotional cores.

Numerous foreshadowing and overlapping metaphors point to current struggles facing America and the rest of the world today, including an ever-increasing immigrant population, corporate roles in population control, and policing such is currently being used in the war in Iraq. *D9* also offers commentary on an unregulated and out-of-control military industrial complex and uneasy race relations like those boiling over throughout the world today.

Blomkamp, a native of Johannesburg, displays an amazing vision considering this is his first full-length picture. And Jackson's deft touch



with computer graphics and fantastical characters are spot on. But the film as a whole isn't without its own shortcomings. There are at times obvious deficiencies in terms of backstory. For instance, the ability to transcend what should be overt language barriers between humans and aliens is never broached, the aliens have ridiculous human names like Christopher Johnson, and towards the end, the movie loses its believability when the good guy wins against all odds approach falls well short of expectations.

Despite these small aggravations the film as a whole is a fine offering in a summer in which Hollywood has shown little imagination. Couple that with *D9*'s social conscience, and you have what many are already calling this summer's best film and an instant cult classic.

District 9 is currently being shown at the following theaters throughout the greater Lexington area: Cinemark Fayette Mall, Cinemark Woodhills Movie 10, Regal Hamburg Pavilion 16, The Movie Tavern, and AmStar Stadium Cinemas.

Inglorious Basterds (cont.)

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In American culture we are faced with a polarized political system in which all sides are calling their opponents fascists. We are slowly losing any sense of historical understanding

of fascism as it becomes a derogatory term to be slung haphazardly at your opponents. Ripped from its context, the historical understanding of fascism, the sinister Landa, the hysterical Hitler, the effete Goebbels, simply become labels that can be applied to anyone we want.

Brad Pitt claims "that Quentin put a cover on that pot" and "the work is done" because they have destroyed all of the symbols associated with the WWII genre. The ignorance here is in assuming that this is simply a cultural genre that one can assault and failing to recognize that these are powerful symbols that have not been fully dealt with, because "the true reckoning with the past [is] still to come." Perhaps, most irresponsible in this film, is the ignorance of the ultra-nationalist mentality of fascism, which encourages us to accept that anything done in the name of god, country, mom and apple pie, is ok.

Shoshana (Mélanie Laurent), who escapes an earlier massacre of her Jewish family by Landa's men, is the hidden victim secretly plotting an extreme act of violence. She escapes and appears years later, without any explanation, magically acquiring a 350 seat cinema that will become the centerpiece for a fantasy plot to eliminate the NAZI hierarchy. Shoshana becomes a victim of convenience for Tarantino in this film. She has no purpose other than to facilitate the confrontation between the two main male protagonists. Sadly, we continue to hear the ridiculous assertion that Tarantino is producing positive female characters. Close reflection on this character will quickly show that she is but a sketch used to advance the plot.

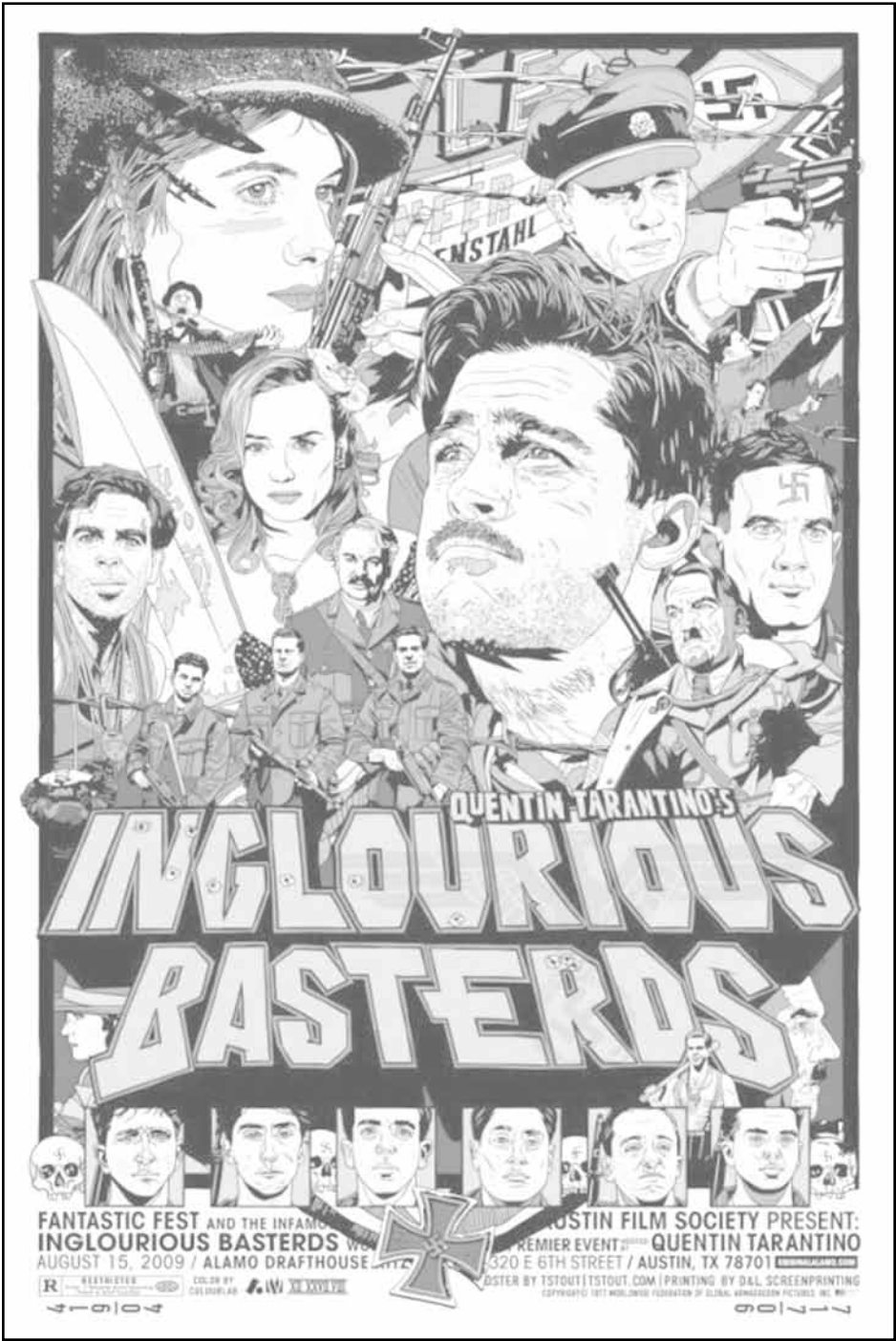
Uniting the three character threads is a series of over-produced "set pieces" intended to move the plot. A few of them are powerful; if anything, Tarantino is a master of stylish set pieces. In particular, the opening scene and the later basement pub scene are effective tension moments. Unfortunately the book chapter style of the structure is riddled with holes

and eventually collapses under the weight of a 158 minute pulp film.

At a pivotal moment near the end of the film, Shoshana prepares to burn down her cinema with the NAZI hierarchy inside. We see her applying her stylish costume for the night as the soundtrack begins playing "Putting Out the Fire" by David Bowie (from Paul Schraeder's 1982 horror film remake *Cat People*). The song and music is inappropriate to the sense of drama and time, and the tracking crane shot through the hallway is awkward. This would have been the moment in which Tarantino's characterization of Shoshana could have been powerful, but instead he is more concerned with producing hollow stylish effects than delving into his character's mindset. Shoshana remains an empty cipher, and her ridiculous end becomes simply another set piece for Tarantino to act out his phallic fantasies.

Undoubtedly, for many Tarantino fans, this film will be a pleasure. I watched it twice this week in order to work out my reaction to the film. The first time was late on a Friday night, and the crowd laughed throughout the stylishly violent film. The second viewing was on a Sunday afternoon, and the theater was filled with two busloads of UK football players and staff. The football players were actually more restrained than the Friday night crowd. I talked to the man next to me after the Sunday repeat viewing, and he said that he enjoyed seeing good win and evil destroyed. As he walked away from me, I noticed the back of his shirt. It said, "Make war, not love" above the image of a firing machine gun. I wondered who he thought in this world were the deserving good, and who were the evil people that needed to be destroyed.

Inglourious Basterds is playing everywhere.



Culture

Live music you need to know about

NoC’s music staff breaks down the next two weeks

Thursday, August 27
Nightmares w/ S.M.E.L.L.
The Void, 518 E. High, 8 P.M.
\$4. All ages.

Nightmares is a super-group of sorts, three seasoned explorers of dark electronic esoterica. Mark Solotroff is most noted for masterminding the seminal Power Electronics outfits (the now-defunct) Intrinsic Action and Bloodyminded, the latter of which might be one of the most amazing live bands I’ve ever seen—all black leather, miles of mic cable, piercing feedback, scowls and grins conveying the same basic truth, channeling the energy of hardcore while jettisoning its pretense, its dogma, its adherence to convention. David Reed, alias Envenomist, alias Luasa Raelon, is Central Ohio’s

constantly pushing his music further and further down a beat-driven wormhole before anyone can come remotely close to getting settled in. Admirably, you’ll almost never hear a dull moment with Girl Talk—he provokes a party-like atmosphere wherever he’s played, even if you’re just listening with headphones.

Feed the Animals is available as a “name your own price” (i.e., free) download on illegal-art.net. —Nick Kidd

Saturday, August 29
Crazy Dreams Band w/ Jana Hunter, Tiny Fights and Attempt
Al’s Bar, 601 N. Limestone, 9 P.M.
\$5. All ages.

Lexie Mountain, the Witch Queen

having appeared in late 2007 on producer Nigel Godrich’s TV series “From the Basement” and joining the unbelievable lineup for this September’s All Tomorrow’s Parties festival in New York.

And now, thank Fortuna, they’re playing right here in Lexington at Buster’s. For a band I regularly cite as one of my favorite rock bands, I have precious little experience with any of Autolux’s material beyond *Future Perfect*, so I eagerly expect their Lexington show will give us all a taste of whatever’s coming soon (surely a sophomore LP... eventually).

For those unfamiliar with Autolux, expect something between the shoe-gaze rock of My Bloody Valentine and the heavy, distorted, noise rock of Sonic Youth, sprinkled with the raw grit of *In Utero*-era Nirvana. It’s dark and brooding, drifting to and fro between restrained angst and evil release. While Autolux is firmly dedicated to melody—however distorted—they play some pretty sinister stuff.

You can download a free new(er) single, “Audience No. 2,” from Autolux’s website. —NK

Friday, September 11
Ill Ease w/ Lazer Crust
Al’s Bar, 601 N. Limestone, 9 P.M.
\$5. All ages.

A double bill of unhinged pop sounds at Al’s! New Jersey’s Elizabeth Sharp, aka one-woman band Ill Ease, mixes bits of late-70’s New York art-scuzz and no-wave, English fem-punk, and the stripped down aesthetic of K Records-style indie pop into fuzzy lo-fi songs with the charm of Maureen Tucker, the playful sexiness of Stereo Total, and the sharp grooves of Delta 5. Live, Sharp builds the songs in front of you, looping choppy, bass-heavy guitar riffs before tight-roping around to the back of her drum kit and settling into wildly clattering percussion patterns (think Keith Moon, the High Water Marks’ Jim Lindsay, or Animal from the Muppets) and layering in her coolly laconic vocals. Lazer Crust = Jason Zavala’s post-Elephants, post-Zavala project. Though JZ now lives in the vile ‘ville, we still claim his exuberant drama pop as our own.

Check illease.com for more info and free downloads. Visit youtube.com/illease to check Sharp’s ‘Song-a-month-o-matic’ project. Free Lazer Crust at myspace.com/lazercrust. — Ross Compton

Free Sept. concerts at Duncan Park

A Friday evening concert series is happening at Duncan Park throughout September to help christen the new stage. Here’s a run-down of the shows:

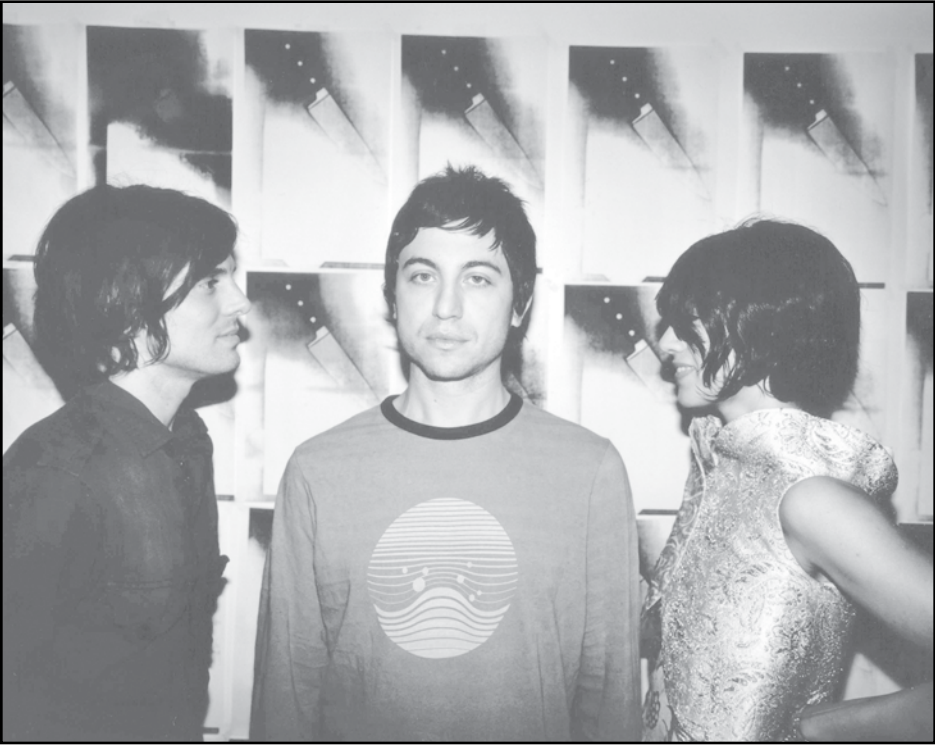
- September 4: Tee Dee & The Scandalous Band
- September 11: SDQ
- September 18: Shade
- September 25: A Community-Day Celebration featuring The Swells Brass Band with other acts TBA

The concert series seeks to establish Duncan Park as a viable locus

for events like those happening on Southland Lane, with their Southland Jamboree, and other events happening at other Lexington parks. Why not start building toward something for the Northside, right? There will be an idea booth where you can make suggestions for what will take place at future Duncan Park events, so if there’s something you’d like to see or hear, have your voice heard!

The concerts start at 6 P.M. and are wrapped up at 7:30. Al’s Bar is donating food for the first two Fridays, so get there early.

—Nick Kidd



Autolux drops into Buster’s on Sunday, September 6.

undisputed master of dark synth drone. Jonathan Canady is the man behind the long-running cold-wave project Angel of Decay, as well as the notorious Deathpile. Together, the three explore infinite, barren tundras of sound, skies scythed wide, the entrails of night oozing through into ever-distant horizons, sunrise always a dreadful promise. As a counterpoint, S.M.E.L.L. will offer up some very, very stupid improvised music. You’re welcome. —Trevor Tremaine

Thursday, August 27
Girl Talk w/ Grand Buffet
UK Student Center, Grand Ballroom, 8 P.M. \$10 for students w/ UK Student ID, \$15 General Admission. All ages.

This will be a live show worth experiencing, especially if you’re in the mood for dancing. Girl Talk is one man, Gregg Gillis, who’s gained notoriety by pillaging pop music’s vaults to create sample-based mash-ups that often combine otherwise disparate artists. Both live and on record, Girl Talk makes an ADD-friendly, ever shifting, familiar-yet-fleeting soundscape the norm. He uses most of his samples from popular hip-hop songs—which rely heavily on samples themselves—and moves from hook to hook, sample to sample at a frenetic pace (averaging, based on his 2008 LP *Feed the Animals*, about 6 samples per minute). Gillis brazenly over-stimulates his listeners with plenty of peaks and few valleys,

of Baltimore, leads this ecstatic prog-psych-soul orchestra (more like *Arkestra*?) with possessed vocals that channel Patti Smith, Patty Waters, Linda Sharrock on *Black Woman*, and Judy Henske’s “Snowblind,” winding in and out of simple, direct gospel melodies while a loose & limber band busts Annette Peacock-styled grooves, *deep*-in-the-pocket rhythms, out-of-control electronics, horrible digital synths (played without cracking a smile), all combining to create tunes that blast off into space only to seek, inhabit, then raze *terra nova* for the next flight, with iconoclastic aplomb akin to Magma and early-70s Mothers of Invention. And this is based on low-res MP3s from their MySpace page—this kinda thing has *got* to be insane live. —TT

Sunday, September 6
Autolux w/ Candy and Mini-Mansions
Buster’s, 7 P.M.
\$7. 18+

Autolux’s *Future Perfect* appeared in 2004 and quickly became a staple album for me. I remember shoving it down my roommates’ ears all the time and hearing it regularly on WRFL, though I’ve hardly heard a peep from the band beyond that LP. About 4 years ago, when I saw them perform a new song at The Southgate House, I assumed more new material was imminent. I was wrong. There’s been almost nothing since 2004, though the band has flown back onto the radar after



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Changing landscape for concert venues

By Nick Kidd

Cosmic Charlie’s will be opening in September, signaling the end of The Fishtank and the beginning of a new era for the intersection of Woodland and Euclid Avenues. While The Fishtank has gotten a rap for being a jam-band venue, it’s consistently played host to bands like Club Dub, The Other Brothers, and, back when it was open on Sunday’s, Bluegrass Collective. (The unfortunately named) Cosmic Charlie’s is owned and run by the same people who run Fishtank, though they’ll now have a much larger space to accommodate patrons and nationally touring musical acts.

Charlie’s will inhabit the old Lynagh’s Club, more recently known as The High Life Lounge, right across the street from The Fishtank. They’ve already gone a long way to revamping the interior of the soon-to-open venue, including painting its walls with the work of local artist Niah Soult, building a large new stage, and extending the bar.

Charlie’s is courting some excellent bands in the coming months, with

talks already in the works to bring the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Sugar & Gold, Jemina Pearl (better known as the lead singer from Be Your Own Pet), The Asylum Street Spankers, Moon Taxi, a Velvet Elvis reunion show, and the return of Sunday night Bluegrass Collective shows.

Time will tell if they’ll shake off the jam-band reputation or not, but based on their Cosmic moniker and the giant Jerry Garcia and Phish logo painted on their walls, I’d say they’ll probably stick to what they’re known for.

Buster’s Billiards and Backroom is a mouthful, so we’ll just call it Buster’s forevermore. But it’s back, or, rather, the *name* Buster’s is back—other than the pool tables and the jukebox, everything else has changed. Opening on September 4, Buster’s has completely renovated the Old Tarr Distillery, making it the de facto primo music hall in Lexington. Since The Dame recently closed, this is certainly welcome news. I could speculate why Lexington didn’t really take to the relocated Dame, but instead I’ll hope Buster’s can one-up

continued on page 7



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Flowers dominates in 3-1 bike polo romp

Mad Dog becomes unhinged in crushing loss

Wednesday, August 19, 2009
Coolavin Park
NoC *Sports Desk*

If you had Brad Flowers in your fantasy bike polo league, you awoke last Thursday morning with a great big grin on your face. Flowers scored three goals in pedaling Team 1 (Flowers, Tiff Morrow, and Kristen Avis) to a 3-1 victory over Team 2 (Tim “Mad Dog” Buckingham, Grant Clouser, and Nick McLean) in the fourth game of bike polo action at Coolavin Park last Wednesday night.

With only one set of lights functioning at the courts, the 8:00 joust time created visibility problems as the two teams battled under fading sunlight in the late summer dusk. The darkening conditions seemed to play the most havoc on Tim “Mad Dog” Buckingham, who spilled off his bike and onto the scorching blue surface of the court several times during the match.

His first spill, at the 8:01 mark, left Buckingham splayed on his face at

mid court and Brad Flowers, dressed this night in a stylish pink shirt and matching blue gloves, all alone to ride it in going the other way for a 1-0 T1 lead.

True to his name, Mad Dog fought back erratically from the embarrassing face-plant. On the upside, at the 8:03 mark the bearded giant blasted

It’s like fifth grade up in here,” Brooks railed. “And I want that [placed] in big bubble quotes.”

his way through bike traffic for an 8-foot goal. Moving from right to left 25 feet from the goal, Buckingham furiously cut an angle to the goal and manhandled a shot back across his bike and through the cones for the

tying score. After making the shot, Mad Dog immediately circled back left, raised his mallet with one hand, and with the other began blowing kisses to both fans and players, who in the two minutes since his first flop had been heckling him with sordid and rotten names.

As the game wore on, Mad Dog—some say the nickname is a shortened version of “Mad Dog with Rabies”—continued his revenge romp, though admittedly with less than stellar success at the scorecard. At the 8:05 mark, he bear-hugged Morrow near mid-court, falling once again off his bike and forcing Morrow to go foot down. Later, Mad Dog’s emotions got the best of him when he brutally bent Avis’ mallet with a hard karate chop to the middle of the shaft, which caused a one-minute equipment time-out.

Things settled down after these eruptions, though, and at the 8:09 mark Flowers made it 2-1 T1 with a steal near midcourt that led to a contested shot and goal over some tight

transition defense by McLean. Two minutes later, Flowers finished things off with a streaking open goal shot from 20 feet, which gave T1 a 3-1 victory. Fittingly, the breakaway shot was set up by an Avis block of a Mad Dog shot on goal.

More on Mad Dog’s bent shaft

Though she was using it at the time, Kristen Avis was not the owner of the mallet that Mad Dog Buckingham bent at the 8:06 mark. Rather, Avis was playing with a mallet borrowed from the stash of bike polo player Alex Brooks. Still rehabilitating from a broken arm that required surgery last year, Brooks had left the bike polo courts early for scheduled treatment on the arm. When Brooks learned several hours later, at Al’s Bar, about Mad Dog’s antics—and the great chuckles players and fans had with Brooks’ pathetically bent shaft—the rehabbing bike polo player expressed disgust. “It’s like fifth grade up in here,” Brooks railed. “And I want that [placed] in big bubble quotes.”

On how to be a UK football fan in 2009

The author thinks this is all still very new to you, and offers words of wisdom

By Keith Halladay

So the University of Kentucky football season is upon us, with the first home game, versus the devil-spawned Louisville Cardinals, less than a month away. UK football is coming off three straight winning seasons, which hasn’t happened since the 1954-56 seasons, under Blanton Collier. That’s a long time, long enough to become unaccustomed to the behaviors and attitudes of the “winning” college football fan.

So that we’re on the same page, two bits of history, in chronological order: first, the Peasants’ Revolt of 1381, which teaches us about behaviors. As I recently learned from the excellent BBC series *Terry Jones’ Medieval Lives*, the Peasant’s Revolt, in which several thousand English serfs marched on London, stormed the Tower, and generally aggravated the nobility, established forevermore the essential relationship between college football fans and the teams for whom they root. How, you ask? Let me explain.

The Revolt was one of the first recorded instances of the huddled masses of a particular place rising as one for a common cause, and voicing their collective opinions loudly and boisterously for the benefit of whom-ever would listen. While individually the English peasants were virtually worthless, taken en masse they were an economic force of tremendous importance to the landed gentry and royalty for whom they toiled. Then, as now, there was strength in numbers.

This, I submit, is more or less the lot of the UK football fan who wades into Commonwealth Stadium six or seven Saturday afternoons each fall. While each of us has but a small, weak voice with which to protest a decision to punt on 4th and 2 from the opponent’s own 40, together—some 70,000 of us—we can let the coaching staff know exactly what we think of such cowardice in the face of adversity. The punter will still come on, of course,

and a touchback will almost certainly ensue, but so did the Peasants’ Revolt ultimately fail—what matters, of course, is that we were heard. And maybe next time, our boos still ringing in Joker Phillips’ headset, the Cats go for it.

But here’s the thing: you have to know who to holler at, and that’s something that UK fans aren’t yet completely clear about. Yes, I’m referring to the 2008 booing of then-sophomore quarterback Mike Hartline during a game against Norfolk State. While such a thing hasn’t happened since, it’s worth looking once more at the incident for lessons that bear relearning. And again, the Peasants’ Revolt is instructive: the targets of the hollering in 1381 were landowners and royals; since we have no royals in this country at this time save Angelina Jolie, let’s substitute “people with a college degree” for that group, and keep landowners the same. In other words, brothers and sisters, your targets, when compelled to boo by poor on-field performance, are *only* those who 1) own land, 2) own a college degree, or 3) own both.

That means no booing a player, ever, even if he’s on the opposing team. Now, I hear your protest: what about fifth-year seniors who have already graduated and purchased property? To this I respond: look, man, how often does that situation come up? Get a grip.

Anyway, it’s the exception that proves the rule. No booing players, because they’re working very hard to do the best job they can, they’re doing that job for nearly free, and they deserve nothing but love and support. However, the coaches and administrators are fair game. And let’s face it: the playcalling last year was sketchy at best. How many times can a team run the inside slant route in one game? An infinite number, evidently. Christ.

To the second historical lesson. I grew up in Charlottesville, Virginia, home of *that* commonwealth’s major university (no, there isn’t another), and, like UK, UVA was horrible at football

for decades on end. I recall going to innumerable games at Scott Stadium in the late ‘70s with my father, who had gotten the tickets free from one of a large number of friends and acquaintances who had called him that morning, desperate to unload their seats because they couldn’t stand to see the Cavaliers yet again blown out by a service academy (e.g. September 16, 1978: Navy 32, Virginia 0).

Then George Welsh took over, in 1982, and by the end of that decade the football team was winning in bunches and heading to bowl games annually. When I enrolled, in 1990, the team had put together three straight winning sea-

that stuff anymore. We were winners. We wouldn’t beat Florida State, but they were cheaters anyway (and by the way, Charlie Ward > Tim Tebow. Case closed). The fancy dress and the scramble band eventually went by the wayside, mostly, and that was okay. The football spoke for itself.

In UK’s case, I think this means, first of all, getting rid of the “pushups” the mascot does after each and every score. Two reasons: first, the Cats score a lot now, and it gets old fast. Second, that mascot ain’t actually done a pushup in years, so let’s quit the charade.

More to the point, just act like you’ve been there before, to use a credo



Commonwealth Stadium on a clear August evening.

sons, and that very year reached number one in the AP rankings, albeit briefly.

But while the program had become a winning one, resilient enough that even Al Groh in later years wouldn’t be able to completely drive it into the ground, despite his best efforts, the attitudes of the fans remained stuck in the bad old days. We retained all the traditions built up over the previous century of gridiron horror, each of which revolved around distracting oneself from the actual football being played. We wore coat and tie to the games (Laura Ashley for the ladies) to remind ourselves that we were intellectually and economically superior to the students of whatever school we were playing that day, no matter the outcome of the game, then drank so much that we couldn’t remember who won or lost anyway. At halftime the infamous Pep Band would mercilessly (and many would say humorlessly) mock the visitors for their many failings, leading to the group being banned from a number of campuses throughout the southeast.

It wasn’t until years later that we realized that we didn’t *have* to do

often attributed to the late Paul Brown. UK will be good again this year, most likely, and we don’t need to rush the field, pick fights, or generally make asses out of ourselves. It’s a winning program now. Let’s act like winners.

A brief word about the current news

Several friends and acquaintances have asked me, in recent weeks, my opinion on the NCAA’s decision to force the University of Memphis to vacate it’s 2007-08 men’s basketball season, thanks to Derrick Rose’s invalid SAT score. I don’t have much more to say than I’ve already expressed in these pages. But, for the record: the position taken by UK President Lee Todd, UK Athletic Director Mitch Barnhardt, and UK coach John Calipari himself is that Calipari had absolutely no knowledge of the situation until the NCAA told him about it.

And I believe them.

However, there are those coaches who *make* it their business to know about this sort of thing. And maybe those who don’t, should. And maybe that’s the sort of coach UK should hire next time.

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Coolavin Park

Post-game shenanigans at Al’s

Opinion

De-school yourself

“Education, with its supporting system of compulsory and competitive schooling, all its carrots and sticks, its grades, diplomas, and credentials, now seems to me perhaps the most authoritarian and dangerous of all the social inventions of mankind...My concern is not to improve “education” but to do away with it, to end the ugly and anti-human business of people shaping and let people shape themselves.”

— John Holt

“People have always learned things, but education is a relatively recent innovation, and a deeply destructive one at that.”

— Aaron Falbel

Third Street’s filling up in the early afternoon with young people wearing

backpacks, traffic’s picked up around Euclid and Limestone, and around the bend Pazzos is suddenly packed at 3:00 PM with middle-aged white people sucking pints and arguing obscure points. This can only mean one thing: school is back in session.

This is normally the time when we are supposed to welcome back all of you who checked out for the summer, and that we certainly do. But in the spirit of intellectual engagement, we have to ask, why school? Consider these vignettes, sent out to some vested audiences, as a series of gently placed broadsides against the notion that in education and schooling lie our salvation. Put positively, consider these arguments *for* de-schooling yourself.

HS students: you are learning work skills (how to show up, shut up, take orders, and not question)

We wonder what they tell you now. In our day, it was that you had better get your high school diploma or else your future life was at risk. Before that, you had to get it to stick it to the Russians. But even these fictions must no longer sound convincing. Whatever it is, they’re overselling you.

First, let’s be frank: you are learning repetition, how to take a test and know which bubbles to disregard and which ones to narrow your guess down to. You are learning how to obey authority, to show up on time, perhaps in a uniform, and to shuttle about at the sound of a bell. Your tests ask you to learn bits of knowledge and to translate that knowledge into scan trons or possibly fill in the blank questions (if the teacher is a real dick). Rote knowledge. Piecemeal information. Obedience to nation. These were all good skills for factory workers, but they also serve current contexts, too: middle management.

It’s not that the things you are learning are inherently bad. And we know that you do have some good teachers around you who inspire and engage you (though probably too few of these). But it’s forced. What your school system does, all school systems do, is to make you learn your place. You are a student. You learn. You learn from a teacher, who teaches. This

one-way transmission of education, which involves grades, homework, truancy notices and the like, is learned, and it is a pretty poor model for you to follow. It suggests to you that learning takes place while in school, that it ends when summer arrives, and that you and your peers are unable to teach each other, that strict obedience to teachers, to authority, is in itself a good.

Here’s a different model, put forth by John Holt: “I learn a great deal, but I do it in the process of living, working, playing, being with friends. There is no division in my life between learning, work, play, etc. Those things are all one. I don’t have a word which I could easily put in the place of ‘education,’ unless it might be ‘living.’”

You can do that, you already do that, but you have to be curious and to recognize that work, play, and learning happen together. Students in the not too distant past used to make their own papers, not directed by their school’s journalism instructor, and filled them with their own ideas for their world. Our world needs that from you again. We and your teachers need to learn from you as much as you learn from us. They aint going to give that authority up; you’ll need to command it.

Adjunct faculty: we care about you (but your wages suggest that your institution does not)

We know the generalities of your story. They let you teach the maximum amount of hours to keep you part-time; you teach as much or way more than your better-paid tenured faculty; each spring your contract is not renewed during the summer, and each fall it magically appears a week (or less) before classes start, hopefully filled with enough classes at the discounted adjunct rate to pay your bills. This magic trick, having your contract renewed, disallows you from collecting unemployment. You were not fired for the summer, though of course you do not get paid like your tenured faculty who do not teach. You were just let go. It keeps UK and BCTC and every other college and university from paying for those unemployment benefits. Have fun finding a job over the summer, one that starts mid-May and ends early August when you start hustling classes across several universities and campuses. Good pay and prospects in those jobs.

You do not get money to participate in things that will better your

teaching; you do not get an office or a desk; you do not get group health insurance; you do not get retirement; you do not get faculty governance privileges; you do not get to speak your mind in a public way; you are not listened to by faculty or administration anyway; you do not pass go; you do not collect \$200.

As Scott Jaschick reported in an August 25 Inside Higher Ed article on adjunct labor, it’s not often that Wal Mart gets compared favorably to a university by a university administrator. But there it is: “Wal-Mart is a more honest employer of part-time employees than are most colleges and universities,” said A.G. Monaco, senior human resources official at the University of Akron, and yet academics are ‘the ones screaming about how bad Wal-Mart is.’ Academics ‘have to stop lying’ about the way non-tenure-track professors are treated, he said.”

Oh yes, we know your generalities, though we may not know you. How’s the education system working for you?

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Comparison by Cavegirl, originally printed in issue 1 of Dropping Out (for students).

College students: college is the new HS (except you have to pay)

This will be a difficult thing to hear: the degrees most of you are earning are declining in value, even as you pay more in tuition, books, and services for the right to get that degree. When people talk about the value of a college degree, it is a relative value. The more people earning college degrees, the less valuable your degree becomes. Many moons ago, when you were not going to school—and college was much cheaper—the college degree was gold. Now that everyone’s going, not so much. This is the law of supply and demand, and it will be in your freshman level economics class, which will be held in a lecture hall with three-hundred of your closest friends. These two things bode ill for you: growing supply of college business or communications or fashion majors, not much of a demand with near 10% unemployment that will apparently stick while rich people declare their own depression over. In terms of value for your degree, you are, in fact, moving back to high school, except it’s not free and the tuition keeps going up. We all like and want to support education, after all, but not if it means an extra couple dollars in taxes. We’ve got big screen TVs to buy.

The law of comparative advantage, perhaps found in a sophomore level class with 30 friends and one graduate student instructor, will help explain why the jobs your college degree prepares you for are going to places outside the United States where college graduates much smarter than you, and multi-lingual, work for way less. (Recall that, coinciding with declining

tax revenue to schools, we also apparently got dumber relative to the rest of the industrial world. Who’d a thunk it?) Though you, yourself, are not rich, the United States has a comparative advantage in greenbacks and service industry jobs (for now); India and other very good places have a comparative advantage in trainable and cheap college graduates.

When you’ve invested enough for an upper level course, probably (though not definitely) taught by one of those Top 20 faculty if you attend UK, you may learn about an externality. Pay attention to this part and take good notes. Economics recognizes that the public will not pay a market price for something they can get for free. This inefficiency (you heard this right: the public good is inefficient) is termed an externality. The trick is to recoup those externalities, and in the context of formerly free (read inefficient) public education, the trick has been to convince you to pay for an additional four more years of your life. You are now efficient, and with expected tuition increases, you will become even more efficient.

If you attend UK, then someday, of course, you may have a Top 20 degree. This, too, will be meaningless because (a) a Top 20 degree is a fiction concocted by UK itself, and (b) in ten years your degree will mean nothing—people will care more about the type of job you do in the trade you entered. Has UK prepared you for that? To do a good job? The answer doesn’t matter; irrespective, you will need to pay back your Top 20 debt load.

UK tenure-track faculty: Top 20 helps (but not your students or the staff or the adjuncts teaching your students)

CEO Todd has sold a very lucrative fantasy for you. Top 20 promises you big things: smart colleagues (or at least smarter than your current non-Top 20 colleagues), sharp graduate students, a lighter teaching load, an increased research load, endowments, and a competitive salary. Granted, most of you will not see the fruits of that dollar tree; most will go to academic “superstars” brought in from places not near hear, new vice-presidents of things you didn’t know exist, and your CEO’s bonus check. But it is a fantasy, after all. A brand, as we at NoC heard it described several years ago in the halls

of Patterson Office Tower. Nothing to make a stink over.

But things are not bad for you. Entry level tenure-track at BCTC, when it still had tenure, carried with it a \$37,000 salary. We surmise you begin upwards of \$50,000 and teach three less classes than the five that BCTC faculty are expected to teach. All in all, pretty good for you. You are in a privileged position: the highest of the teaching classes in the region, containing the most cultural and economic capital.

So why not use your capital to more directly and vocally deal with our communities’ pressing needs?

Changing venues (cont.)

continued from page 5

its shortcomings. Further, Buster’s could speed up the redevelopment of Manchester Street and help establish what many hope will become Lexington’s new art district.

Already, I’m impressed with the booking going on at Buster’s, which has fashioned a September concert calendar as ambitious as the revamping of the venue’s interior. On its opening night, Buster’s hosts the return of Louisville’s Wax Fang (it’s been months!) along with These United States (touring for their new album, “Everything

Touches Everything”) and infectious local pop/post-punkers Chico Fellini. This is a show of the magnitude we’d expected at the [sic] old old Dame, and hopefully a sign of things to come. Elsewhere in September, Buster’s will play host to Blues Traveler, The Derek Trucks Band, Silversun Pickups, and a must-see band from Bowling Green, Cage the Elephant.

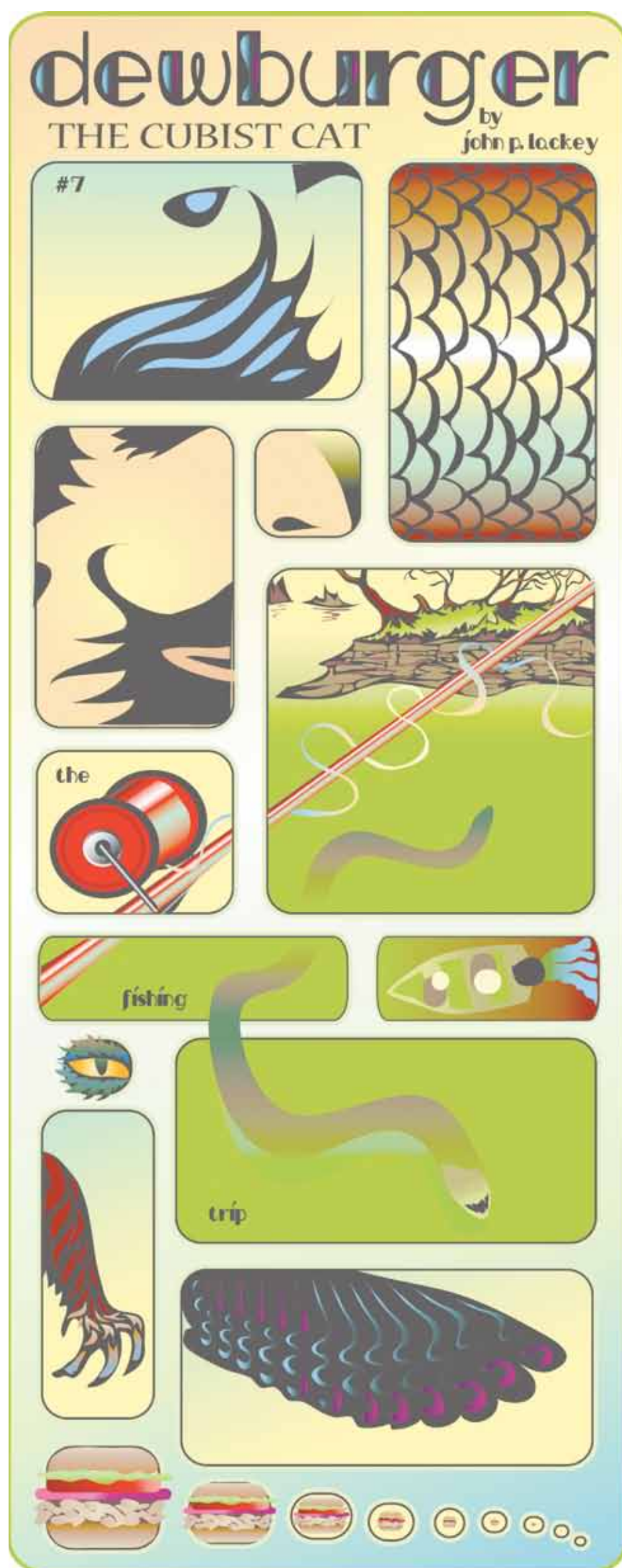
For those of us on a budget but eager to check out the new Buster’s, mark your calendar for the free concert on Saturday, September 5, featuring Goldenrod, Some Other Meanness, and Idaho, Alaska.



KEITH HALLADAY

UK students mill about the W.T. Young Library’s main entrance before the start of school.

Comics



North of Center is always looking for writers and photographers to cover events worthy of reporting and commentary in north Lexington and elsewhere. Email Danny Mayer at noceditors@yahoo.com if you're interested in contributing.



Brian Connors-Manke