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Mall of God Southland Christian buys Lex. Mall

By Andrew Battista

On July 13, leaders of Southland Christian Church held a public forum on the Lexington Mall property, which they have agreed to purchase from the Maryland-based Saul Centers, Inc. The terms of the transaction have not been disclosed publicly. Southland held the meeting to solicit feedback from neighbors, nearby business owners, and anyone else interested in how the property would evolve in the hands of Lexington's largest megachurch.

Southland's contract with Saul Centers, Inc. is well-known by now, as is the fact that by purchasing a commercial space appraised at over \$10 million, the megachurch will expand its brand to a third campus while effectively removing as much as \$100,000 in annual tax revenues from the already-depleted LFUCG budget. Like all churches, Southland is a nonprofit organization and therefore will render unto Caesar duty from only a portion of their new property: the sections that indisputably exist to make money (i.e., the Applebee's and Perkins facilities that are lumped into the sale).

Many people in Lexington have uncritically accepted Southland's expansion and have seen the purchase agreement as a service to the community rather than a drain of its resources. City officials rejoice that an eyesore like the derelict Lexington Mall—a wart on our semi-suburban landscape and a reminder to people of how fickle consumer desire is—will be converted into a space where people can worship,

network, and enjoy Christian fellowship. Mayor Jim Newberry, who doesn't see anything wrong with the budget shortfall Southland's purchase will create, has lauded the agreement, saying that Southland is "widely respected in our community."

That government authorities like Newberry are so eager to see this transaction take place is, I believe, a telltale sign that Southland is in no way perceived as a threat to the secular status quo. In fact, the megachurch upholds it very effectively. The pact between Lexington's quintessential market-minded church and the Maryland-based real estate firm raises an important question about how Lexingtonians—of all religions—will imagine the relationships between church and state, consumerism and Christianity. Make no mistake; this is a question that transcends religious faith and affects all people.

One thing we know is that traditional retailers never would have returned to the abandoned Lexington Mall. At one time, the mall on Richmond Road was the face of a brave new suburban retail experience. Built in 1975 on a patch of land that used to belong to Mary Todd Lincoln's grandfather, the mall offered a surreal retreat. People who once patronized independently-owned stores along Main Street could instead drive out of town a few miles, park their cars, and wander amazed inside an enclosed and artificial "downtown" boulevard of storefronts.

But consumer preferences change over time, and successful retailers are



Southland Christian proposes to replace this relic.

the ones that keep pace architecturally. By the early 1990s, the allure of the indoor mall shopping experience faded away (it could have been that the decision to build the Lexington Mall was always nearsighted—just four years after the property was completed, Joan Didion famously wrote that malls are "toy garden cities in which no one lives but everyone consumes"). Customers grew disaffected with the soullessness and fabrication of modest-sized malls.

Meanwhile, cars became an integral part of everyone's lived experience. Retailers, who got tired of renting expensive spaces near competitors, transitioned into the big box business model, made viable by gobbling up even more land—even further away from urban centers—and building mall-like stores for themselves. Only recently have some big box companies

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DIY kids "Making a future growing food"

By Beth Connors-Manke

There was a guy who kept coming back. It was three times, I think. The first time he was considering if he'd buy anything. He had 35 guys to cook for, so only the big pile of collard greens would be in his ballpark. But it didn't seem like he'd cooked greens before so they didn't tempt him. As for the okra, green beans, mint, and potatoes, there weren't enough on the table for that size dinner. (The entire lot of tomatoes had sold out to a neighbor up the street.) He walked away.

A few minutes later he was back. This time he just wanted to give a donation to the kids and ask more questions. What were they doing? How did it work?

This was a Saturday morning, there was a table full of just-harvested vegetables, but this wasn't the Farmer's Market downtown. This was 7th and Elm Tree, right next to the East 7th Street Center, the home of Kids Cafe. The growers and sellers were a group of young northside do-it-yourselfers, part of the S.E.E.D.S. program.

S.E.E.D.S., which stands for Service, Education, and Entrepreneurship in Downtown Spaces, is a program instigated by some northside middle-schoolers. Yes, instigated. Jodie Koch, who runs the program and is the program director of Kids Cafe, said she started S.E.E.D.S. because some kids kept, well, bugging her.

"The reason I wanted to start a program like this was because I had



S.E.E.D.S. entrepreneurs Petra Navarra, Dorcas Kaindu, Andrew Ross, and Cristian Juarez.

some middle-schoolers approach me, saying 'I want to work for you this summer, how can I work for you? How can I make money?'" They were looking for work at Kids Cafe or with Jodie's husband Ryan, mastermind and masterbrawn of Seedleaf.

But, the kids were mostly too young to legally work or participate in the city's summer youth employment program. Being a knowledgeable do-it-yourselfer herself, Koch won a grant through Partners for Youth, which got the venture off the ground.

Here's how it works: participants meet twice a week during the summer to create a business plan, grow and harvest at the group's garden plots in the London Ferrell Community Garden, and sell their vegetables. If the kids are faithful and committed to the collective work, at the end of the summer they receive a stipend in the form of a \$100 gift certificate.

Assessing the participants midway through the program, Koch said, "I

don't know how strong a motivation the \$100 gift card is. I think that's what gets them at first, but now that they're actually into it, it seems like they enjoy the program."

When I met up with the S.E.E.D.S. group at 9 AM this past Saturday morning, I didn't sense any of the impatience that comes when people are simply doing a job to get some money. Andrew, Cristian, Dorcas, and Petra, the day's crew, were there to harvest and try their hands at selling their produce for the first time. The discussions were all about what and how—what to harvest, how to display it, what to charge for the fresh food.

Most of this discussion was prompted by questions from Felice Salmon, who helps coordinate S.E.E.D.S. Salmon describes the curriculum of the program as a "learning initiative" and an "opportunity to follow the Socratic method of teaching.

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Appalachian Voices come to Lexington

By Derek Brown

Thursday, July 22
Ben Sollee and Daniel Martin Moore
w/ Yim Yames.
*The Lexington Opera House. 401 W Short
Street. \$25. 8 P.M. All ages.*

In Kentucky few topics are as fiercely debated as the future of coal. Lexington native Ben Sollee decided to use the power of music to shine a light on this divisive issue for the rest of America to see.

Outraged by the destructive effects of surface mining in the eastern portion of his home state, Sollee organized a collection of local musicians to spread awareness on the controversial practice of Mountaintop Removal (MTR) in Appalachia. All artist royalties from Sollee's latest album, *Dear Companion*, are being donated to Appalachian Voices, an environmental organization dedicated to combatting irresponsible strip mining practices in the eastern United States.

"It is our hope that, with the help of Appalachian Voices, we can show a few more folks around the nation the amazing culture, heritage and land of Appalachia that is being destroyed for nothing more than electricity," said Sollee.

Sollee had been toying with the idea of using his music to raise awareness for some time when he heard Flyrock Blues, a demo on the Myspace page of fellow Kentuckian Daniel Martin Moore. Sollee was so moved

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JULY 14, 2010

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

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UK's failed mission Wendell Berry and "Top 20"

By Danny Mayer

"We did not expect and we did not invite these challenges. But even in the presence of such obstacles, our commitment to mission and mandate remains the same. Our shared ambitions are still before us, fixed on our collective horizon, unmoved by time or fate or by short-term challenges we cannot control."

Lee Todd, President's Budget Message, June 17, 2008

"Rather than trying to be nationally or globally prominent as a great research institution, if the University of Kentucky would meet its local responsibilities and really meet the needs of the land and the people of this state, it would be a city on a hill."

Wendell Berry

On June 23, the *Lexington Herald-Leader* informed area readers that Kentucky author Wendell Berry was in the process of removing his papers from the University of Kentucky special collections archives. Berry, a UK alumni and former faculty member in the UK English Department, sent a letter to the university dated December 20, 2009 in which, according to the *Herald-Leader*, he "excoriated his alma mater" for voting to accept last October a \$7 million dollar gift-bribe from Alliance Coal to construct an unneeded dormitory for male basketball players, to be unsubtly named the Wildcat Coal Lodge.

"The University's president and board have solemnized an alliance with the coal industry," Berry wrote in the December letter. "[This is an act that] puts an end to my willingness to be associated in any way officially with the university." The papers

are currently in the process of being moved to the Thomas D. Clark Center for Kentucky History in Frankfort.

Though the story has largely been seen as a repudiation by Berry, a tireless coal activist throughout his public life in Kentucky, of UK's position on coal, the author's divestment from UK was in fact rooted in a more fundamental disagreement with his alma mater: the university's quixotic quest for becoming a "Top 20 Research University" by the year 2020, a process that has meant, Berry has argued, the sacrifice of state needs and resources for national and global interests and pursuits. For Berry, the Coal Lodge is just the most visible symptom; the disease is the UK Top 20 Mission.

It is this disease, UK Top 20, that Berry's letter compels us to address. We must ask, as a state university, is UK's mission, to be ranked nationally in the Top 20 of public research universities, one that will benefit the state, as Lee Todd (and nearly every publication covering Lee Todd) has claimed these past 10 years? What exactly do Top 20 research universities do?

According to Todd, who has used the same misleading statistics for over 5 years now, Top 20 research universities will make the state richer, smarter, healthier, and better-employed. This is true, of course, except when it is not, which is often. The correlations Todd makes tend to be more regional than Top 20-based. Incomes are low in North Carolina, Georgia and many other southern states home to Top 20 universities, a region where incomes are lower than the rest of the nation; conversely, in the northeast, even failed non-Top 20 universities like Rutgers and the University of Rhode Island are situated in states significantly richer than Kentucky. Even more damning, the statistics clearly show that the difference between the national "average"

and states that house Top 20 institutions is negligible. Statistically, the greatest jump by far is simply getting UK to average. Plainly put, Top 20 doesn't measurably do the things Todd claims it does.

But Top 20 does do certain things. On page 19 of the 2008/2009 Operating and Capital Budget Plan, housed on the university's Budget Office website, the university offers an operating budget comparison between the year's 1998-99 and 2008-09. The comparison sheds a pretty stark light on what Top 20 does do: spend and cost money, shit loads of it.

In the 1998/99 school year, two years before Todd's arrival ramped up a Top 20 rhetoric embraced and openly celebrated throughout the university community, the university's operating budget was 1.05 billion dollars; ten years later, as Top 20 hysteria was beginning to crest, its operating budget stood at 2.2 billion dollars, a 100% increase. Rather than benefiting the state, there's considerably evidence to show that the university has actually sucked away needed state resources, all

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Castlewood Neighborhood Association Meeting

Thursday, July 22

6:30 pm

Grace Baptist Church

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DIY kids (cont.)

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Giving the kids the opportunity to learn the foundational principles of a business, setting them off in the right direction and then their creativity and unique ideas get to be incorporated in what the garden becomes, what the business becomes."

Perhaps one of the most important things Koch and Salmon are teaching the S.E.E.D.S. crew is how to utilize local resources. Cricket Press has designed the logo for the group. Local artist Luella Pavey has helped the kids with their signs. Marketing advice has been provided by Griffin Van Meter, and Becca Self helped S.E.E.D.S. put together a consumer survey.

One of the things northsiders know is that fresh produce can be hard to find on the north side—if you're looking in stores. That reality helped spur the program, Koch said: "That was part of our thinking: fresh, affordable produce is not necessarily available in walking distance to most of the residents here. That's part of the education and service piece: understanding what your community needs and then help your community get that."

As for affordable, a vegetable lover could not have done better this Saturday morning. Since this was the first time

S.E.E.D.S. was selling its produce, pricing was more an art than a science. The group decided to sell the food by the handful—usually 50 cents a handful. All told, the kids made \$17 on their first day of selling: \$14 from sale of vegetables and \$3 from donations. They sold all but a final bundle of greens and some mint that had been purposely set aside to give to a neighbor.

I'm not sure why the guy came back to the table the third time, but I think it was because he liked and respected what the kids were doing. It was hard not to. In their green S.E.E.D.S. shirts, they were a group of quiet, focused kids who were *doing something*. Andrew and Cristian had washed and prepped the greens; Petra had made a sign announcing, "Kids making a future growing fresh food"; Dorcas was pounding the pavement selling the food to front porches on 7th Street.

The best part? People were buying. Koch and Salmon have been teaching the S.E.E.D.S. participants how to utilize their resources, but best I could tell, these DIY kids already knew how to do that. They wanted to have a project over the summer so they went to an adult who could help make that happen. They put it in motion, and they'll be the ones to keep it rolling.

Studio visit with J.T. Dockery

By Chase Martin

When I meet J.T. Dockery, he's sitting in a coffee shop, wearing thick-framed glasses and a battered fedora, scribbling in a notebook as a barista fires up the blender. "I used to keep my own studio," he chuckles over the noise, "but there've been some domestic troubles on the home front, lately." So, since around last October, he's been filling his sketchbooks in coffee shops—usually Third Street Stuff. "Luckily, most of my drawings are 11 x 14 or smaller, so they're pretty portable," Dockery explains, gesturing towards a crammed shoulder bag slumped against his chair.

Dockery creates surreal, intricately detailed works of ink on paper, often combined with text rendered in jittery lettering. Many of these illustrations are designed to work together like a graphic novel, but the stories he's telling are rarely straightforward. "I work in narrative, but for me, the writer part of my brain and the visual part of my brain are always working together, even if it's not a sequential story," he says. A plot about a tough gumshoe detective may veer suddenly into a series of panels about oozing space creatures invading from above. Though the story lines in his art are often labyrinthine, they are consistently compelling.

Influenced by the hard-boiled characters of film noir, underground comics of the 1960s and '70s, and gritty photographers such as Weegee, one page of Dockery's work may startle you with its stark beauty—another may make you wonder what prescriptions he's taking. "Absurdity and surrealism just kind of come out of me," he remarks. Dockery's instantly recognizable style makes use of bizarre, erotic, sometimes repulsive imagery paired with text that can in turn be funny, philosophical, or frightening.

Many images that start out in his sketchbooks find their way into his finished work. "I definitely refer back

to them. They're a way to keep drawing: ideas come out that take different forms later on." With his Rapidograph pen, he points to a finished drawing of a stylized heart holding a gun. "This came from a sketchbook I filled about 3 years ago. I opened it one day, and there was this subversively cute cartoon heart there, holding a gun, waiting for me." His current notebook contains abstract compositions, an eerie portrait of a man's face, and a detailed replica of a *Master of Kung Fu* comic book cover he loved in his childhood.

He grew up in Jackson County, Kentucky, where he developed a love for comic books and began drawing at an early age. When he was around 20, he stopped drawing temporarily when he discovered he was developing arthritis. "The pain really bothered me at that age," he recalls, "but when I started drawing again it really helped me get through a tough time." He eventually attended UK and Morehead, and at first wanted to pursue a career in academia before finally deciding to devote himself to artistic efforts, intrigued by the union of narrative and visual imagery.

He has been busy. In 2008, he finished an oversized, 50-page graphic novel, *In Tongues Illustrated*, a tour-de-force of hallucinatory illustration and narrative. He is also collaborating on a project titled *Creekwater* with a friend from his band, The Smacks!, that's being serialized in the newspaper *North of Center*. "It's very old school to have a story that's developing from week to week, literally like chapters in a book." He is also working on some drawings for a book that will be printed by Larkspur Press, and is slowly chipping away at *The Organ Grinder*, a new graphic novel.

This article was originally written for the Institute 193 blog, located on the web at www.institute193.org/blog. See some of Dockery's work at covertlyandbysnatches.blogspot.com

Troubles for EKPC's Smith power plant

Active citizens and the PSC take action for cleaner water in Lexington

By Miranda Brown

Momentum is building to stop the proposed coal-burning Smith power plant in Clark County, just upstream from Lexington. Citizens continue to speak out against the plant and in favor of a cleaner, job-producing solution. At the most recent permit hearing for the plant, Lexington resident Erika Skaggs put things into perspective for the audience and the Army Corps of Engineers: "Every time we lose a stream, a source of clean, fresh water to pass onto our children—that is a disaster."

For years, East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC) has been planning to build a coal-burning facility just southeast of Winchester on the Kentucky River. The utility provides energy to parts of 87 of Kentucky's counties. EKPC's original intent for the new plant was to increase overall generating capacity so that newly joining regional cooperatives could be supported even during peak use

seasons. However, since hatching the original plans, new cooperatives have backed out of joining EKPC, and high energy prices have further reduced the demand for electricity. The site for the proposed 276 megawatt plant, and its proposed coal ash landfill to store waste, is less than 20 miles upstream from Lexington's drinking water intake. When coal ash pollutes drinking water, there is risk of mercury and arsenic contamination—among other fears that accompany the presence of coal waste.

Even though EKPC has put financing for the plant temporarily on hold, the utility continues to seek pollution permits for the plant. On June 8, the Army Corps of Engineers held a 404 permit hearing in Winchester to hear public comments on the permit that would allow East Kentucky Power to bury nearly 14 miles of streams and wetlands with coal ash emitted from the proposed Smith plant. While the Corps has yet to release its statement on that permit, the hearing was filled

with overwhelming opposition to the plant. Of the 32 testimonies, only one spoke in support of plant construction.

Hearing testimonies included that of Skaggs, who cited the Army Corps of Engineers' own mission to "reduce the risk of disaster" and "to deliver innovative and sustainable solutions to the nation's energy challenges." She called on the Corps to fulfill its mission statement by recognizing the disasters that surround coal mining and coal burning in Kentucky: "Every person who loses their life...because their environment is toxic—that is a disaster."

Other citizen testimonies cited the plant site's proximity to Winchester's and Lexington's water supplies, the dubious financial status of EKPC, and the wealth of alternative options to the Smith plant. Most of the power that Smith would produce could be covered by energy efficiency initiatives, home weatherization, local, small-scale hydropower at existing dams, and wind power.

Meanwhile, other state and federal agencies are responding to citizens' outcry against this new power plant. The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC), in defense of ratepayers, recently ordered an investigation into the necessity of the Smith plant. Reconsidering its original four-year-old decision on the necessity of the plant, the PSC announced June 22 that it will begin investigating EKPC's evaluation of electricity need, as well as co-op consumer needs and EKPC's increasing debt. To facilitate its evaluation and allow input from customers and affected others, the PSC will soon hold a public hearing. Lexington readers should stay tuned for updates on this opportunity to help prevent the construction of the Smith plant.

For more information and periodic updates, readers can visit kftc.org/stopsmith or contact Kentuckians for the Commonwealth organizer Sara Pennington at sara@kftc.org.

Southland Christian buys mall (cont.)

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begun to fold, as the next wave of consumer convenience appears to be the Internet.

Such is the cycle of the retail property industry, an enterprise that builds, decorates, and paves with only one concern in mind: getting the consumer to walk through the doors. In today's open market of vacant commercial properties, semi-suburban monstrosities like the Lexington Mall are the biggest losers, and many properties like the one Saul Centers, Inc. is unloading have been vacant for years.

I've recounted this well-known history of U.S. retail to make a point: even though megachurches are not for-profit organizations, they locate their worship spaces and facilitate their expansion according to the logic of the market. Churches like Southland see themselves among many entertainment experiences that compete for people's limited time. Ted Haggard, who used to pastor a megachurch in Colorado before he got involved in a few unsavory relationships, said that "in order for Christianity to prosper in the marketplace of people's time and energies, it needs to have consumer value." Thus, Southland's existing main campus, a 115-acre plot of land that is a half-mile long from end to end, has several buildings that look like a cluster of stores out at Hamburg. The same is true of Lexington's Quest Community Church, which built a sanctuary in 2009 that blends in perfectly with its neighbor, Meijer.

Recently, I e-mailed Southland's Senior Executive Pastor Chris Hahn and asked him why he thinks megachurches have been so successful in wooing people away from wherever else they might spend time on the weekends.

"Many of the mainline, traditional denominational churches are too focused on keeping traditions rather than reaching people with the fresh wind of the gospel. This is not attractive to most people," said Hahn. He admitted that megachurches do well because they hold people's attention

effectively. "They simply offer more things for people to be a part of," while at the same time they create a large environment where "it's easy to 'go to church' and not be 'involved.' This is attractive to some." Either be involved or don't be involved. In other words, church is like Burger King: your way, right away.

What makes Southland's purchase remarkable is that the church, which has mastered the fundamentals of the American religious landscape, is acquiring a property that represents the shopping habits of a bygone era. The deal is a veritable back to the future moment. In terms of geography, a rehabilitated Lexington Mall is somewhat of a redemption, but the proposed transaction has left many people scratching their heads, wondering how an alleged nonprofit could come up with enough coin to drop on a \$10 million property when it already sustains two campuses and employs over 80 people.



The forlorn facade of the Lexington Mall.

Of course, we all know that many nonprofits do make money, but the reality is that megachurches make a lot of money, a collective \$7.2 billion per year as of 2006 (a figure that has no doubt increased since then). Southland is like many megachurches in that it has bookstores, coffee shops, and apparel outlets on site. Its ministerial team creates an environment whereby worshippers express their spiritual identity by

spending money. Southland's members were even urged to start patronizing the Richmond Road Applebee's, Home Depot, and Perkins in anticipation of the property transfer. The line between marketing and ministry, or evangelism and entrepreneurialism, has been thoroughly confounded by megachurch ideology. As one journalist puts it, why shouldn't these categories be merged when what's being pitched is a high-concept product like eternal life?

The Lexington Mall episode dredges to the surface what many people have suspected all along: that Christian empires of this magnitude could never exist without the help of government subsidies. Indeed, this is not the first time that uneasy collaboration between the church and the government has facilitated unwarranted expansion. Three years ago, downtown Lexington's Central Christian Church acquired a property from Windstream Communications. The

property was appraised at \$1 million, and at the behest of Central Christian, Windstream decided to "gift" \$500,000 to the church (writing it off as a tax-deductible charitable contribution) and sell the property to Central Christian for \$500,000. Both the corporation and the church took advantage of the special status our government affords religious organizations.

What sours the matter all the more is that many churches exploit their advantage as tax-exempt entities to propagate the socially-regressive agenda of conservative politics. When Southland's Head Pastor Jon Weece broke the news of the Lexington Mall purchase to his congregation, he recounted some of the church's memorable accomplishments, which include the establishment of a medical clinic.

"We decided, right then and there, that the role of the church is different than the role of the government," Weece said during the July 3 service. "It's not the role of the government to meet the medical needs of the uninsured."



The arches of the abandoned agora.

Although Southland is to be commended for providing care for 1,100 people in Jessamine and Fayette Counties, the number of people in these two counties who have no access to healthcare is at least 40,000 (a conservative estimate). Should these people just suck it up and wait for every other church to start its own HMO? Weece's message is a fair and balanced repetition of the punditry and white noise we hear all the time CNN and Fox News. Only in church it comes with the gravitas of a charismatic leader who is allegedly tapped in to the will of God. Evidently, the government cannot subsidize healthcare, but it can subsidize the freedom of worship that our founding fathers won through war.

But why should the government subsidize church property expansion but not people's healthcare? I was puzzled by what Pastor Weece said in church, so I asked Hahn this very question and a related one: What is the relationship between the church and the state?

"Jon's comment was more to the role of the church to meet the needs of people through the love of God," said Hahn. "He was not making a political statement about government. He was making a rallying statement to the church to be focused outwardly rather than inwardly. The Bible teaches that we as a people are under authority and that we are to submit to the leaders of the land. We will be submissive to the laws of the land and to the government and its leaders who God has put in place."

The sale of the Lexington Mall to Southland Christian Church should be a catalyst for introspection among Lexington's citizens. If the New Testament has a central message, it is that Jesus established a Kingdom of God that counteracts (and is incompatible with) earthly kingdoms. Lexington is Rome, Newberry is its emperor. The only difference is that, this time, he's letting the church off the hook.

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Film & Media

Steve McQueen's *Hunger*

By Michael Dean Benton

The first film in the Collective Cinephilia series I have chosen to review is Criterion's new release of the British visual artist Steve McQueen's 2008 debut film *Hunger*. The high-quality Criterion DVD edition and the superb extras accompanying this release make for an outstanding viewing experience.

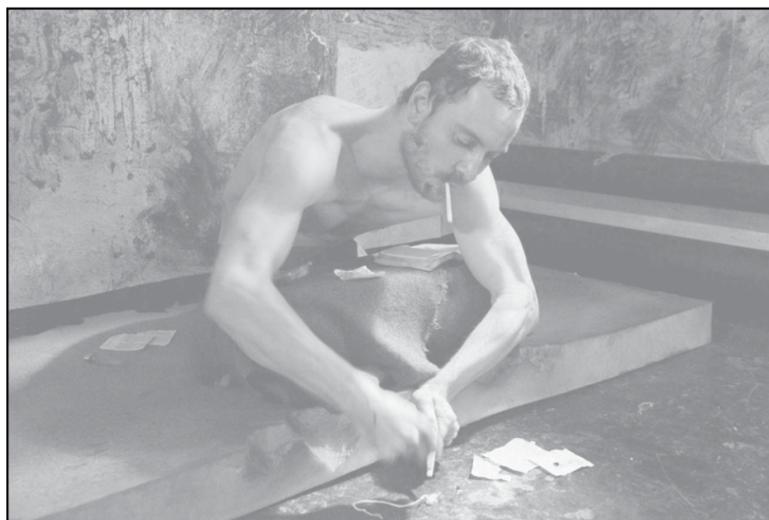
The film depicts the 1981 Irish hunger strike by IRA prisoners in the notorious Maze Prison. Ostensibly, the film portrays the buildup to the hunger strike from Margaret Thatcher's declaration that IRA prisoners would no longer receive "political" status during their incarceration; instead, they would henceforth be treated as "criminals."

Resisting the general impulse to center the film immediately on the traditional hero of the story, Bobby Sands, the IRA leader and first martyr of the hunger strike, McQueen instead develops the stories of separate characters and vividly brings to life the tense environment of the Maze and its inhabitants—both guards and prisoners.

In a master class of subtle, intelligent filmmaking McQueen starts off following the daily ritual of prison guard Raymond Lohan as he gets ready for work at the Maze, including looking under his car for a bomb before starting it while his wife looks fearfully out the window. Lohan is a walking time-bomb of desperation and rage. McQueen provides visual set pieces of his isolation amongst his fellow officers, his solitary smoking in the cold outdoors, and his ritual cleaning of his bloodied knuckles.

Lohan does not come off as sympathetic character in that we see him repeatedly engaging in brutal acts against the Irish prisoners as retaliation for their resistance and protests. However, the characterization of Lohan does transcend the stock cartoonish nature of evil guards in films like *The Shawshank Redemption*. Hundreds of prison guards were murdered by both sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The film vividly depicts the reality of their charged situation; at the same time, the film calls to mind the conclusions of the Stanford Prison Experiment that brutality is inherent in the powerful position of the guard, who preemptively feel the need to enforce complete compliance in order to provide the (in)security of a docile population.

The next section follows a new prisoner, Davey, who is quickly labeled



Michael Fassbender as Bobby Sands.

a "non-conforming" prisoner and who is locked in a cell with Gerry. The two prisoners engage in the IRA prisoner protests of refusal to wash, refusal to wear prison uniforms (they wear a single blanket), and most dramatically, covering the walls artistically with their feces and food remains. The confrontations of the prisoners and guards are stunning scenes and fiercely depict the struggle between these forces. This may be some of the most difficult scenes I have seen lately, simply because of the realistic portrayal of the violence. Celebrated shocking films like *Hostel* or *Inglourious Basterds* can't compete with this kind of intensity, because they are escapist in nature, and *Hunger* does not seek to escape the brutal nature of these struggles between guards and prisoners.

Surprisingly, it is not until the 25 minute point in the film, during a dramatic, violent, riot police disciplining of the prisoners that the traditional protagonist/hero/villain (depending on one's view) of this story, Bobby Sands, appears. Up until this point we have experienced a visual and aural depiction, but rarely have we heard anyone speak. Slowly the film begins to introduce more dialogue, until, in one of the most amazing set pieces, in a film of brilliant scenes, at the half-way point of the film, Sands talks combatively to a contentious priest for 22 minutes about the initiation of the IRA hunger strike. Once again, this is a masterful scene with two brilliant actors that completely emphasizes the seriousness of this decision as well as the differing positions concerning the proposed hunger strike.

The end of the film follows the ensuing decision to carry out the

hunger strike and the agonizing disintegration of Bobby Sands. Michael Fassbender, in a career moment, turns his body into a cinematic tool for portraying Sands determined hunger strike. Through his disciplined diet of 600-1000 calories a day over 10 weeks, Fassbender lost weight for the role, but it is in his carefully measured, agonizing movements that he most vividly depicts the implications of Sands' actions.

The film has been condemned by critics from all sections of the political spectrum in the UK/Ireland. Some criticize the portrayal of the guards as too humanizing, some complain that the prisoners are glorified in their political struggle, and some believe that McQueen is wrongly questioning Sands' motivations for initiating the hunger strike. For me, this demonstrates the multi-layered vision McQueen brings to this historical moment. Many critics around the world agreed and put the film in their lists of the top films of 2008. To truly appreciate this film, I recommend a viewing of the intelligent discussions of the director/actors about making the film and the contemporaneous BBC documentary "The Provo's Last Card" on the hunger strikes.

It has been announced that McQueen's next film will be on the Nigerian musician-activist Fela Kuti.

Currently the DVD is unavailable in local rental stores, but you can request that they provide it for rent. It is available locally for purchase and you can rent it online through DVD services like Netflix. In the spirit of "collective cinephilia" I look forward to comments about this review and/or the film.

Collective Cinephilia

Frustrated by the dearth of decent films in the theater that I can review I have decided to start a new column dedicated to bringing to attention film on DVD that should not be missed. We may, currently, be seeing the slow strangulation of collective cinema viewing of thought-provoking films in the communal theater, as 3-D spectacles, action blockbusters and infantile narratives dominate the cinemplex.

Thankfully, though, at the same time, we are also benefiting from the worldwide online explosion of a "collective cinephilia" (Jonathan Rosenbaum) brought about by the technology of the DVD format and the global scope of online film criticism/studies. So, while still recognizing the benefits of theater screenings, we should also turn toward the potential of films on DVD and the possibilities for cultivating the appreciation of film through these new technologies.



The premier DVD company is Criterion Collection (<http://www.criterion.com/>) whose mission is to release film classics, forgotten masterpieces, important cult films, and the best of current world cinema "in editions that offer the highest technical quality and award-winning, original supplements." Adding to the prestige of Criterion, is their online global forum and film screening space *The Auteurs* (<http://www.theauteurs.com/>) where you can watch high-definition films for \$3 and start threads in their online forums for discussing your favorites with people from around the world. Most of us cannot travel the world to attend major film festivals, and unless you live near a major metropolitan center, most of the films they screen will never come to a theater near you.

— Michael Benton

Stan's top-10 sci-fi films of all time

By Stan Heaton

I grew up staring at the stars. I wondered what alien species looked like and what kind of advanced spacecraft could take us to them. I wanted to be an astronaut with a laser pistol, saving the universe from evil. In other words, I was (and am) a nerd. The first step is admitting it; my second step was embracing it. As I became more and more interested in film, I started to gravitate toward science fiction movies. I watched the big sci-fi blockbusters before maturing into more thoughtful pictures, slowly working my way backward to *Metropolis* (1927) and *Le voyage dans la lune* (1902).

What I have discovered is that science fiction, better than any other genre, explores the technology of the film medium for the purpose of revealing what it means to be human. This exploration of humanity, this looking toward the stars to find out what's inside us, has kept me a loyal sci-fi nerd, and it is the motivation for this list of the top 10 science fiction films of all time.

#10. *Jurassic Park* (1993)

This Steven Spielberg dinosaur adventure makes the top ten list

because of its use of computer generated images to create a world of wonder and terror. When the T-Rex steps through the powerless electric fence and violently roars in full frame, it signals the strength of computers and the possibilities of human innovation while simultaneously showing the true force of nature (themes that are present throughout the film's narrative).

Jurassic Park is visually and aurally stunning. Hearing the Velociraptors call to one another as they conspire against the human characters is terrifying and wonderful. But even as CGI and advanced sound effects are on display, the film reminds us that our responsible use of those technologies is of the utmost importance.

#9. *The Matrix* (1999)

This film emerged in the late 90s as the mind-bending fight for the future of humanity, starring the ultimate mind-bender himself, Keanu Reeves ("uh, like, I know kung fu and junk"). Despite Mr. Reeves's shortcomings, he's perfect for the role of Neo, a hacker-turned-Jesus hero who battles a group of machines that enslave the human race in the Matrix in order to feed on their people juice. This film makes the top ten because it is genuinely thought

provoking in the way that it connects computers to humanity. *The Matrix* features some astonishing camera techniques that amp up the action—Mmmm . . . bullet-time. If you're a fan of this film, you might want to check out John Carpenter's 1988 movie *They Live*, which resembles *The Matrix* thematically. It's cheesy, and it stars wrestler Rowdy Roddy Piper, but a true nerd shouldn't mind either of those things.

#8. *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)

I've always struggled to find things to say about this film. I had to rewatch it just to write this article. Basically, *A Clockwork Orange* follows a young hooligan named Alex (Malcolm McDowell) through the trash covered streets of future Britain. He and his gang of droogs speak a mix of British street slang, Russian, Spanish, and baby talk, and they violently and sexually assault others before Alex gets caught and sent to prison. While incarcerated, Alex is chosen for a government experiment in which a team of scientists brainwash the violence and sex out of him.

Once brainwashed, Alex returns to his former stomping grounds and is forced to confront those he wronged

in the past. Of course, the plot does little to explain this film. There is something intensely disturbing about watching Alex get into a bit of the old ultra-violence. As I watched it again, I felt a bit like Alex when his eyelids were pried open and he was forced to watch violence even though it made him sick.

Kubrick seems to be keenly aware of this connection between Alex and viewer, and he plays it up using Beethoven as counterpoint music in both the film narrative and the soundtrack. Ultimately, *A Clockwork Orange* is a bleak and terrifyingly watchable vision of a future that might already be present, and for that, it makes the top ten.

#7. *Brazil* (1985)

Terry Gilliam's directing career has had its ups and downs. He's not always capable of reining in the fantastic in a way that makes a coherent and interesting movie for the audience. In *Brazil*, however, his lunacy thrives. Set in a futuristic society that is governed by a hilariously inefficient bureaucracy, the film warns of the spiraling evils of state control. If you despise paper work

continued on page 7

Music

JULY 14, 2010

Boomslang fest calls for local artists

The Boomslang Local Music Project

The Boomslang organizers at WRFL want this year's festival to showcase the vivid imagination and innovative knowhow of our best local musicians while providing a truly unique experience for Lexington visitors and natives. To accomplish both of these goals, we have decided to make a special call to the Kentucky music community.

While our selection committee will choose a handful of local and regional acts (based on how we perceive an act's

- Arranging a theatrical performance piece
- Using film or other visual art elements in conjunction with your music
- Covering work from a specific album, artist, or theme
- Composing a completely new set of songs for the event
- Composing a conceptual music piece concerning a specific topic or theme
- Performing some of your songs using unconventional or unfamiliar instruments

BOOMSLANG

sound and performance to complement the festival's overall mission and programming), we are also sending out a special request for bands to think beyond their usual material and create a completely unique performance for this year's Boomslang festival.

This means putting your regular set of songs on the shelf and pushing yourself to make something totally new and, perhaps, totally different from the standard fare.

Past examples include Big Fresh's "History of College Radio" set at FreeKY Fest in 2008 (a selection of songs they covered to examine the history of WRFL programming) and Everyone Lives Everyone Wins' "Many Hands, One Wave" sonic experiment for Boomslang 2009 (which used a live radio performance simulcast as well as video and visual art performance elements).

Other ideas and/or concepts to consider for your Boomslang performance (by no means are you limited to these ideas!):

- Incorporating an art installation into your performance (you are encouraged to contact local venue/gallery owners to discuss how this might be accomplished—we're big on collaborative efforts)

To respond to this special call for artists, simply fill out the entry form, attach your proposal and send everything to:

Boomslang Local Music Project
Submissions
c/o Ben Allen
205 Vanderbilt Drive
Lexington, KY 40517

THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS JULY 23.

Selections will be made and bands notified by July 30.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Ben Allen at benthegm@hotmail.com.

Institute 193 series kicks off 7/23

Friday, July 23rd

The Slowest Runner in All the World w/ The Ascent of Everest

Institute 193. 193 N Limestone St. \$6 suggested donation. 7 P.M. All ages.

I was striving to understand why a band would have a name as terrible as The Slowest Runner in All the World while listening to "As the Sea Swells She Bleats and Moans Like a Goat in Heat," the opening song from their Flophouse Sessions EP. (The EP is available for a free download through the band's Myspace page.) So I started thinking about someone running slowly to the music, which didn't jibe with the audio—slow running, after all, is oxymoronic, whereas the Slowest Runner's music makes good sense. So I started thinking of someone running in slow motion, which fit nicely in spite of the melodrama.

The Slowest Runner's music lends itself to this sort of mental cinematic

exercise. It's described on their Myspace as "post-baroque" music, utilizing an array (guitar, bass, drums, piano, violin, cello, tape loops, and distorted vocals) of instruments to make dramatic, movie soundtrack-like songs forged with rock. They remind me of Louisville band Rachel's, as both bands compose longer songs that unfold like short stories without words, drawing you in subtly, building upon expectations, heightening tensions, climaxing, resolving.

A similar act, The Ascent of Everest, will be sharing the bill on this evening, though their music features more vocals and is of a more straightforward rock variety. These two cinematic bands complement each other perfectly and will give Lexington a memorable inaugural installment of the NoC 193 music series, a joint project of Institute 193 and *North of Center*.

— Nick Kidd

193/NoC music collaboration in works

Last winter, NoC editor Danny Mayer attended the Morgan OKane show held in the tiny but open space that houses Institute 193. Essentially, the show was the after-party to Daniel Martin Moore and Ben Sollee's free show at CD Central in support of their album, *Dear Companion*.

Morgan OKane, a four-piece un-miced band who busk street-corners in Brooklyn and play wild music in the vein of Uncle Dave Macon, could not have fit the space better: intensely personal, loose and, with Sollee and others sitting in for some songs, collaborative.

The show's success prompted Mayer to ask Phillips about the possibility of doing other shows at

the Institute. Both owners struggle to pay bills out of pocket on their community-focused startups. A monthly show might offer a means of generating another income stream to help pay for things like the rent on Institute 193. The Institute could provide the space, and NoC could publicize the shows and bands in the paper's music section.

The two haven't really figured anything else out beyond that—the lazy retch Mayer hasn't found the time to meet with Phillips to discuss it further—other than this month will be the first of the 193 NoC Music Series (the name itself even subject to change) to be publicized in the paper.

Your support is appreciated.

BOOMSLANG 2010 LOCAL ARTIST APPLICATION

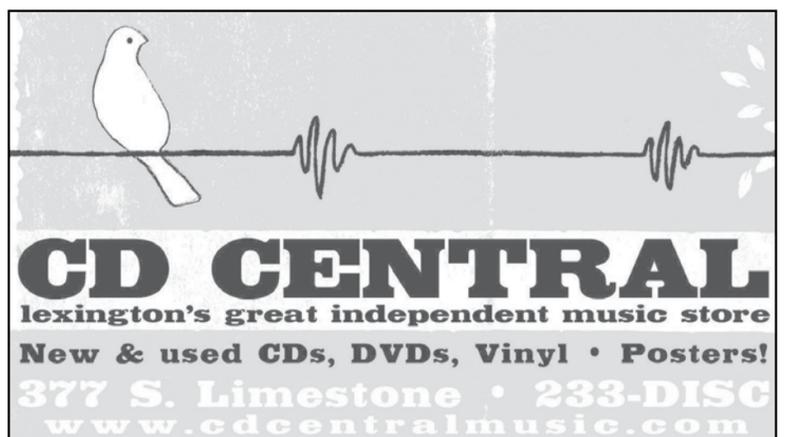
Name of Artist/Group: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Please include a short narrative describing your proposed performance, explaining why your band's idea would be a great fit for Boomslang and how your performance will enhance the overall festival atmosphere. Also, while we have reserved a number of venues for the Boomslang weekend, we encourage you to visualize what kind of space would best suit or benefit your performance: PLEASE INCLUDE THIS AND ANY OTHER GENERAL LOGISTICAL INFORMATION IN YOUR NARRATIVE!



Appalachian Voices (cont.)

continued from page 1

by the demo he contacted Moore, who was born in Elizabethtown and hails from Cold Spring, in hopes of a collaboration. A few weeks later the two met in Louisville and discussed MTR, the far-reaching effects the practice has on the entire region and the possibility of recording an album together centered on the issue they were so disturbed by.

Moore echoed this concern to Seattle Weekly when he said that living in eastern Kentucky, "You never know if the water you're drinking is full of cadmium or methane. It's just such a far-reaching amount of pollution and disregard for basic health, basic human rights."

Sollee and Moore channeled their ideas and views into lyrics and guitar chords a few months after meeting at Lexington's own Shangri-La Studios.

The Kentucky-duo grew to a Kentucky-trio when My Morning Jacket frontman and Louisville native Yim Yames agreed to join the Moore and Sollee in Lexington and produce the album.

The result was an eleven-track compilation pitchfork.com described as a "state-of-the-state album (that) finds three musicians focusing on the ecological problems facing Kentucky." *Dear Companion* was released on Sub Pop Records February 16.

The decision to donate all artist royalties from *Dear Companion* to Appalachian Voices was based on the group wanting to "point to an organization that was doing great work to raise awareness nationally about the struggles and beauty of Appalachia," said Sollee. "We want Appalachia to profit from this record, not us."

Sollee, Moore and Yames are taking their attempts to spread awareness one step further this summer by embarking on a nine date tour through the heart of the Appalachian countryside. The trio will perform songs from *Dear Companion* as well as the group's various individual projects. The Appalachian Voices tour, named for the beneficiary of the album's proceeds, begins Thursday July 22 at the Lexington Opera House and includes stops in Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia and New York as well as a spot at the storied Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island.

An evening in as intimate an environment as the Lexington Opera House with the caliber musicians of Yames, Moore and Sollee is not an event for music fans to miss. The combined harmonies of the three Kentuckians on stage is sure to strike a chord with an audience so entrenched with the issue at the heart of the music. The show is sure to be a highlight of the Lexington summer music calendar.



Ben Sollee and Daniel Martin Moore play the Opera House.

JULY 14, 2010

Fishing connections

Shootin' n Snaggin' with the Frugal Fisherman

A month ago I was lucky enough to spend a three-day weekend paddling the Kentucky River with four close friends. We embarked at Lock 7 just below Highbridge Friday morning and made our way downriver some 9 miles to Shawnee Run, where we rowed to its back shoal and assembled camp on a semi-flat bluff 20 feet above the babbling creek below.

There we rummaged for calcite, worked flint, flourspar and various fossils, skipped smooth stones over riffles and in general stared wondrously into the cool Shawnee, hoping to see a caddis fly rise or discover a long forgotten Pliocene sea snail frozen in time. On shore we cooked Amish sausage, farm eggs from Garrard County and three fish caught by Jackson: a drum, a spotted and a largemouth bass. We made fire and laughed and marveled at the preceding week's flood and its high water mark some 30 feet above us.

Shawnee Run was our own version of nirvana. Or should I say Narnia, for it felt as though we had stepped through the back of a wardrobe that opened to a land of talking buzzards with wings spread and gawking eyes and singing red headed skinks bobbing to nature's drum.

It wasn't until returning home late Sunday night, crashing hard, and then awakening renewed Monday morning that I learned of James Harrod's stay on Shawnee Run, named by Harrod himself after encountering Shawnee Indians inhabiting the creek and its tributaries. He and a band of almost 40 men founded the first permanent settlement in Kentucky on June 16, 1774. In his honor that settlement was named Harrod's Town, known today as Harrodsburg, Kentucky, located approximately 10 miles downriver from our campsite on the Shawnee.

Part of what sustained Harrod and his men on their travel down the Monongahela and Ohio Rivers to the mouth of the Kentucky River, and their eventual crossing of the Salt River into what is today Mercer County, was

the abundant and numerous species of wildlife and fish in and around the Kentucky River. I know of no true record of this, but knowing a thing or two about spending time in the wild, I'm sure of it. Maybe Harrod enjoyed a pan fried white perch, or drum as it's commonly known in these parts, just as we did. If he was so lucky he'd know there are few things better than fresh fish in the wild.

In reading about Harrod, I grew curious. How did he and his band of mountain men view fishing? What was their 'fishing ethos'? Did they fish for food, for pleasure, or for some combination of both? Having much to do after blowing off a three day weekend, I dismissed the question. I figured I'd discover my answer one day while fishing, which I did, though just not at the end of my own fishing line as I had envisioned, but in the action of watching someone else fish.

Before we made our way down to Shawnee Run, before we polished off the bottles of peaty Laphroaig and neuron altering psilocybin, I watched Jackson fish on the leading edge of Minter's Bar, formed by the run off from the fertile river bend leading to Highbridge. At Minter's, I didn't make my way towards my own fishing pole like I normally do. No, I sat there on the roots of a large American Sycamore, smoked a cigar, sipped scotch and quietly listened to nature while watching Jackson's every move.

It was in this "action of watching" that I discovered something all together new. Having grown up fishing the large open waters of Clarksville Lake in southern Virginia, I was accustomed to casting an artificial lure countless times into various forms of cover: tree stumps, rock ledges, boat docks and the occasional bridge pylon. My goal was simple enough. Catch as many large or smallmouth bass as I could, and hopefully a bass large enough to warrant a picture or story.

That all changed this prophetic afternoon. In the lone fisherman's zen,



Breaded fish in the skillet.

in the silent flight of a grey heron, in the calming and ceaseless gibber of a creek and the graceful dive of a hungry belted kingfisher, I experienced an epiphany. Fishing is an art, a *connection*.

Couple the above with the cleaning of a drum and two bass, the sizzle of corn meal in hot grease and the savory flavor of a meal earned rather than purchased, and I knew then and there fishing was far more than the process of catching fish. I was no longer outside nature looking in. I was part of a primordial course laid out by fisherman before me, a course bound to purpose rather than sport.

I haven't made my way back down to the Kentucky River since

my discovery. But I did go fishing with a couple friends at a three-acre farm pond last week. Much to their surprise, I showed up with a bucket, a dozen night crawlers and a book. I sat on the bucket under a bur oak tree at the dam's edge. I baited my circle hook, squeezed a 1/4 ounce lead weight to the line and cast both out to the center of the pond. I reeled in the slack. I opened my book and began reading.

We fished for about three hours. They weaved and angled every inch of the pond's shoreline, catching a few bass along the way. Me, I sat there in the breeze, marveled at two crows, read a bit and had the best day of fishing I've ever experienced. I didn't catch a thing.

Bike Polo readies for BG State Games

NoC Sports

Lexington Bike Polo players were busy getting their game faces on last Wednesday at Coolavin as they prepared for competition in the July 24 Bluegrass State Games bike polo tournament.

The one-day double elimination tournament is open to any polo teams

from Kentucky or contiguous states. At last year's tourney, out-of-towners the Comosexuals bested a field of 17 teams to defeat hometown favorites TrippleLexxx in a thrilling overtime championship match.

This year promises more of the same excitement. Come on out and enjoy the fun.

A night on wheels

Derby City gallops past ROCK

Ed. Note - Our regular ROCK correspondent, Troy Lyle, was called away on a fur trapping expedition in the wilds of Montana. After a brief stay in a Great Falls clinic due to a nasty case of the Collywobbles brought on in part by a mixture of Butterscotch Schnaaps and wild mushrooms, we are hoping for his safe reclamation of this column within the week. In the meantime, you get this late submission.

By Thomas Helmers

"You know that I fell in love with a Roller Derby Queen Round and round. Oh round and round The meanest hunk o'woman That anybody ever seen Down in the arena."

Jim Croce

"I have to leave for a couple weeks. No time to get into specifics. The Montana wilds are beckoning," I was told. "I'm going to need you to go down to the Lexington Ice Center and observe the Roller Derby bout while I'm absent."

"But aside from ninety second bursts on late night cable during my salad days," I noted, "I don't know anything about Derby, Troy. I wouldn't know what to make of it. There's no way Mayer will let me publish anything I write on the bout."

"Don't you worry about that lousy disc-throwing sap of an editor. I'll take care of him. You just make sure to send him 500 words, no more, and make sure to do it by Sunday afternoon. I'll see you when I get back from Montana."

With that, my evening commenced Saturday night in the upstairs bar at Pazzo's. I met one of my companions whom I had handpicked to tag along on this half-baked excursion. Three Fullers ESB's and one Calzone later, I finally felt cognizant enough to make haste to the other side of town in time for the National Anthem.

After dumping a handful of crumpled bills and Sacajawea dollars onto the counter, we made our way to our awaiting vehicle. A ten minute drive, and we were pulling into the parking lot of the Ice Center, an unimpressive monolith of painted cinder blocks and aluminum siding. I had been here before, late one winter's eve with a group of people who wouldn't bother to claim me now for an Eastern Kentucky University/Radford College ice hockey match. The place stank of mildew and stale popcorn that night and the game itself was an affront to all things sporting. Next door at the biblically themed miniature golf course I aced the dreaded "Water into Wine" hole. Fond memories to be certain, but those wouldn't even scratch the surface of what awaited me inside on this warm evening.

"This must be the place," I stated upon seeing a husky young gentleman wandering the parking lot. He wore a faded red t-shirt and had what appeared to be a large Dallas Cowboys' star shaved into the back of his otherwise bulbous head. The parking lot began to fill with all manner of sedans and SUVs as we chain smoked Kools and waited for our third companion, a suitor, I was to find out, of one of the girls who would be competing that



evening for the Roller Girls of Central Kentucky (ROCK). His arrival was delayed, something involving an excruciating decision and multiple Captain America shirts. After an appropriate lecture on the scruples of punctuality, we headed inside.

There would be no beer or any manner of vice permitted in this establishment, only good clean fun and girl on girl violence. Thankfully, I had already resigned myself to this and was in about as wholesome of a mood as I could be. After paying the requisite seven dollar spectator fee, we were ushered into the arena. I went immediately to the "Suicide Seating," right on the turn, a mere two and a half feet from where the action would be. A committed sports fanatic, I was ecstatic. Any event where I might be in danger of leaving with a few teeth missing is certainly right up my alley.

A mere three yards to our right, the black and pink clad ladies of the home team warmed up. They were imposing, yet completely striking at the same time.

I observed them as they took laps around the arena, effortlessly gliding on eight wheels. They had names like

"Rainbow Smite", "Ragdoll Ruby", and "Ellie Slay." Truly, women after my own heart.

The opponent tonight was the squad from Louisville, The Derby City Rollergirls. Their uniforms were hastily assembled and I noted that they certainly had the ROCK girls outsized. They were mean, to be sure, and I was not liking the prospects for our beloved hometown ladies, but then again, what the hell did I know? I couldn't even make head or tails out of the rules of the game even after poring through the program for a good solid thirty seconds.

At 8:15 PM sharp, the bout was underway. From my vantage point, things were very confusing. All manner of pushing, shoving, elbow pads whizzing by me at speeds I had failed to expect, let alone comprehend. Having no concept of the game, I could only gather things were not going well when ROCK member Bitty Bast'rd was absolutely laid out by a leviathan two and a half times her size a mere 3 feet from where I was now currently stationed. She hit the floor with a sickening thud,

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Berry and UK (cont.)

continued from page 2

on the pretense of gaining a national notoriety that, in hard economic terms, has mainly benefitted those at the top ends of the university—hotshot endowed professors making 125,000 for teaching one class a semester, Vice Presidents with large slush accounts, university presidents and basketball coaches benefiting from salary arms races. And yet, with all that increased operating revenue, UK still has staff—real people who live in Lexington—getting paid paltry wages.

The immense new operating budget, required for running a nationally recognized Top 20 university (or one that aspires to be one), has meant a change in focus. Ten years ago, when our university president did not make \$500,000 a year, the state contributed 27% of the operating budget, and the hospital 27%. Now, despite an over 10% increase in state appropriations over the decade, UK's larger budget has decreased that state's contribution to 14.6% of the operating budget. The hospital, which has received nearly \$700 million dollars in building bonds over the last several years—university and state debt—to create a regional hospital, now generates 34% of the university's operating budget, even though

few "students" have access to it as an educational resource.

When Lee Todd genuflected to the needs of UK basketball, it might be because "affiliated corporations," of which the Athletic Department may be the most lucrative, now nearly equal the state's contribution. And if it was Coal which won out in the bidding war, Todd's meek handling merely reflects the fact that Top 20 universities require energy, shitloads of it, and cheap coal—while immensely destructive to its regional neighborhood—is necessary for UK to reach its national goals. How could one pay for, after all, all the energy required to run all those new Top 20 buildings.

Berry sent his letter in late December, at which point the university all but ignored it. Though he is among a handful of living UK graduates known and respected the world over (his visage looming larger the more we continue to destroy our communities), UK President Lee Todd did not have the inclination to respond in person, assigning that responsibility instead to UK archives director Diredre Scaggs in late January—a month after Berry's hand-typed correspondence. The *Herald-Leader* was only able to look at the letter in June, after the university forced them into filing

an open-records request. So much for university policies of open-ness and intellectual engagement, another victim to feeding the UK beast. Todd still hasn't said anything public about Berry, but then again, he also fled a group of students who wanted to question Todd and the Board of Trustees at their board meeting. Why should Berry be any different; like the students, his interests don't make UK much money.

It is not easy to suggest that many years, money and effort have been misspent. Nor is it easy to recognize that a goal feverishly horse-whipped into the public for so many years by our paleface university president; city and state politicians; university students, faculty and Board of Trustees

members; and respectable publications ranging from the *Kentucky Kernel* on up to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The New York Times*—all slobbering over the noble goal of the Midwestern-State-U-That-Could—has been, well, wrong. Dead wrong. Damagingly wrong.

We should not fret too much over this feeling of being hoodwinked and taken for a ride; in the United States ca. 2010, we might as well add this to our list of pricked belief bubbles: a peace-loving United States; Barack Obama the liberal savior; Afghanistan the good war; perpetually rising real-estate values; sustainable service economies; the benevolence of extractive industries and the universities that are working to become them.

Letters to the editor

Happy new reader

I just wanted to write and say how pleased I am with your newspaper. I had only it browsed it occasionally at the [Chevy Chase] laundromat, but finally sat down and fully read your June 23 edition. Without a doubt, I learned more interesting and relevant information from that edition alone than I have from YEARS of reading the *Herald-Leader*.

I particularly enjoyed the technical and geographic information on the Ky. River's locks and dams, and your scathingly accurate description of the new COLT "trolleys" as a yuppie toy that ignores the people who need buses most. Also, your 4-part series on the 40th anniversary of the Kent State massacre and ensuing protests at UK deserves a Pulitzer Prize, if only for its attention to a topic that is annually censored by other media and likely unknown to today's UK students.

The complete void of local news journalism in Lexington has always

been disturbing to me. I'm convinced that the *Herald-Leader* is written in Atlanta or Chicago; by people who have never actually lived here. The very few pages of every *H-L* that AREN'T comprised of UK "Athletics" worship are hastily filled with stale 2-party political articles or another recycled story on their rotating wheel of scandals such as KACo, CenterPoint, Airport, Water Company, etc.

So, please keep up the excellent work. I look forward to seeing daily editions of *NoC* in a few years!

Dwight Nagel

Thanks for the props, Dwight. —Ed.

ROCK Coverage

It was a good night in derby ("ROCK gets best of VCV," June 23). Nice to see you capture the feeling in this article. Best fan reaction in Lexington I've seen thus far.

Michael Fleming



Top-10 sci-fi (cont.)

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and government agencies, you'll love this movie.

#6. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951)

The film, set in America amid 50s paranoia, tells the story of an alien and a robot sent to Earth to communicate a message of peace. When Americans shoot the alien, Klaatu (Michael Rennie), immediately upon his exit of his ship, he decides to investigate the human race by hiding his identity and boarding with an American family. The special effects of the spacecraft flying over the city and of the robot vaporizing tanks are impressive for 50s film, but the real strength of the movie is its evaluation of Cold War American culture.

#5. *Alien* (1979) / *Aliens* (1986)

While these two films are quite different from one another, they both deserve a high spot on the all-time list. Ridley Scott's 1979 *Alien* operates on the immense tension viewers feel as a fierce creature hunts Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) and the crew of the *Nostromo*. The film puts the viewer inside cramped corridors as alarms blare, warning lights flash harsh hues, and steam shoots from vents. As the alien picks off the crew one by one, Ripley emerges as a strong heroine determined to survive the attack. Ripley's strength increases tenfold in James Cameron's 1986 *Aliens*. The heroine joins a band of space marines and proves to be the biggest badass of the bunch. Cameron's film lacks some of the anxiety present in Scott's movie, but he makes up for it by adding more aliens. For this reason, *Aliens* is more like an action/sci-fi film, while *Alien* blends sci-fi with elements from the horror genre. Nonetheless, both films are a lot of fun to watch for their development of one of the greatest movie heroines in history.

#4. *Terminator* (1984) / *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991)

Unlike the *Alien* series, *Terminator* and *T2* are actually quite similar. *T2* is more of a remake than a sequel, substituting the T-100 (Arnold Schwarzenegger) for the good guy. The first film establishes the terror of the machine and of machine vision as the cyborg terminator hunts Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton). The second film has Sarah go through an upgrade similar to Ripley's in *Aliens*. The weak, scared Sarah of *Terminator* gets rebooted as a buff, gun-toting soldier in a personal war to kill those responsible for the future Judgment Day machine uprising. The giant leap in special effects in *T2* is the real star of the show, and it is embodied by the T-1000 (Robert Patrick), the liquid metal villain. The way his body morphs between human and weapon, and the way it heals itself after the Governor blows cannonball-sized holes into it, is spectacular even by today's standards. But the *Terminator* films don't rank so highly on my list due to special effects alone. Both movies present the viewer with complex questions about technology's role in human existence, and the redemption of the T-100 in *T2* makes these questions all the more complicated.

#3. *Blade Runner* (1982)

Ridley Scott's futuristic tale of cops and robbers is based on a Philip K. Dick novel called *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, which is as good as the movie. What the book title reveals better than the film title is the issue of defining humanity. In *Blade Runner*, a group of highly advanced Nexus 6 humanoids, known as replicants, escapes to Earth from a remote, off-world colony. Made by the Tyrell Corporation (whose motto is "More human than human"), the Nexus 6s murder their way to their creator, prompting the Los Angeles police to send Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) to kill them. As Deckard's hunt intensifies, he is forced to confront his own actions. Each time Deckard fights the replicants, they make him question

what it means to be human. Ridley's megalopolis cityscape, excellent acting by Rutger Hauer (who plays the Nexus 6 leader, Roy Batty), and the thoughtful pursuit of the meaning of humanity, all make *Blade Runner* a crucial piece of sci-fi cinema.

#2. *Star Wars: Episodes IV-VI* (1977, 1980, 1983)

The original *Star Wars* trilogy is nothing short of a cultural movement. Coupled with its release was a collection of popular action figures, character costumes, and other memorabilia. I even saw a ton-ton sleeping bag with a zipper in the stomach for sale online, recently. The story of Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), Han Solo (Harrison Ford), Princess Leia (Carie Fisher), and Darth Vader (David Prowse with the voice of James Earl Jones) is so widely known and referenced that it has become part of American mythology. Some of President Reagan's policies, including the Strategic Defense Initiative, were often referred to using *Star Wars* rhetoric. The three original films are popular for a reason. Each installment is a dramatic space adventure filled with richly developed characters, and each one explores the motivations of humanity and the dangers of machine-like empire. Moreover, Darth Vader is one of the best villains in film history. His transformation from twisted, evil cyborg to loving father is complex, compelling, and touching. *Star Wars* will be a staple for all science fiction lovers for a long, long time.

#1. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968)

No film has been more influential to the sci-fi genre as this Stanley Kubrick masterpiece. Period. Kubrick showed us space before we had gone there ourselves, and he crafted a story that explains millions of years of human evolution in one beautiful match-on-action jump cut. The filmmaking in *2001* is perfect. The way Kubrick recreates the physics of space is brilliant. There are no dramatic

explosions and no laser sound effects in Kubrick's vacuum. The model designs are also a sight to behold. *2001* brings science fiction cinema out of the sleek tinfoil flying saucers of the 1950s and replaces them with detailed vessels built for space travel (a technique copied by almost all sci-fi films since). And then there's HAL, one of the most memorable characters in film history. His singular red eye has become THE symbol for computer sentience; in fact, the new Droid cell phone uses the red eye as its background in commercials. The film also presents viewers with the puzzle of the black obelisk, a giant stone monolith that directs the film narrative. The purpose of the obelisk could keep you and your stoner buddies on "deep" conversation for days (or until you needed to get some more snacks). *2001: A Space Odyssey* is hands down the best sci-fi experience ever put on film. Go watch it.

Closing Thoughts

As I look back over the list, I can't help but notice the dominating presence of big name directors: Ridley Scott, James Cameron, Stanley Kubrick, George Lucas, and Steven Spielberg. With the exception of Kubrick, each of these men are still making movies (some more successfully than others). But, eventually, their time will end, and they must be replaced by other sci-fi creators. And that's just the problem. With movie studios increasingly relying on bankable sequels and big names to fill theater seats, a new generation of directors faces great challenges to make studio-produced sci-fi films. With the exception of Moon, directed by Duncan Jones, few compelling sci-fi films have emerged from the sea of sequels. This trend will, inevitably, affect the genre in lasting and depressing ways. Perhaps we need the old guard of science fiction mega-directors to step aside and encourage a new wave of nerds. Help us Obi-Wan Kenobi: you're our only hope.

I'm not from here by Kenn Minter



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ROCK v. VCV (cont.)

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but sure as hell, she was back upright in less than a second and skating back with fury towards the rabble that by this time had already made its way to the other side of the track.

Things were not going well for the ROCK squad. I could tell that from the scoreboard. The Derby City squad had immediately jumped out to a sizable lead, but that was of no matter to myself. I was here to witness the spectacle, not report on the specifics of strategies and play by play. It was almost half time and only now was I finally starting to get a layman's grasp on the ins and outs of strategy and scoring. The girls with stars on their helmets, I realized, were the ones to watch. Skating through the wall of competitors to day light seemed to be the priority. I found myself starting to openly cheer the ladies of ROCK while maligning the wildebeests from Louisville that had been, up to this point, completely decimating the home team.

Halftime came quickly, and mercifully. The scoreboard read Derby City 76 ROCK 9. I didn't have to be a Rollergirl enthusiast to know that things were certainly looking bleak. "No need to throw in the towel now," I thought. I'm here to witness this thing from start to finish. Never forget the '86 Mets or the Buffalo Bills. Perhaps the ROCK ladies could circle the wagons and pull off the most unlikely of all comebacks, or at the very least, put on a second half performance that could breed confidence for the next time they run into these thugs.

Sure enough, after I had gotten into a slight verbal altercation with the lad who was working the concession stand over the preposterous fact that they no longer had large soft drinks available, let alone any fresh popcorn, I returned to my spot on the floor in time to see ROCK re-emerge from the

locker room. They still were smiling, had the fire in their eye. If I hadn't known the score, I would never have dreamed that they were getting absolutely pasted by the team on the other side of the arena.

The second half became a little hazy. The beer had worn off, and there was word of a Cincinnati Red pitcher working on a perfect game buzzing through the arena. "No time to involve myself in that," I said. "There are more important things afoot right now." The home team had a different fire about them right out of the gate, having more than doubled their score a mere 9 minutes into the second half. The hitting continued unabated, escalating even. For reasons which I failed to grasp, ROCK member Meracle Whip was shown the gate with about 7 minutes remaining in the match.

The match was almost in the books. The ROCK ladies were clearly done for, but never gave up or turned down the intensity. The shining moment of the evening for my companion to my right was when team captain Ellie Slay was knocked off her feet and skidded directly into him, nearly knocking his beverage to kingdom come when the duel was near its conclusion. I must admit that I was a little envious. I had started to find myself growing increasingly smitten with these gals. The sheer athleticism and brute strength put on display before me was enough to make me as giddy as a thirteen year old watching Cinemax.

The final horn sounded and the score read like an obituary. Derby City 156 ROCK 45. Of course, that meant nothing at all to myself. I had bore witness to one of the most invigorating evenings that I could have asked for. Without question, I was now a full on Roller Derby convert. We left the assembly hall and proceeded to drink Wild Turkey and ruminate on the fine turn of events we had been involved with until the sun had nearly come up. See you in August ladies.

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