

# NORTH OF CENTER

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7, 2010

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VOLUME II, ISSUE 7

## Confessions of a guerilla gardener

### A second-generation horticultural hooligan tells all

*Editor's Note: This manuscript was left, anonymously, on the doorstep of NoC headquarters in a tightly wrapped brown paper bag one late night in mid-December of 2009. Given the sensitive subject at the heart of the strange tale, we subjected the original manuscript and bag to a battery of finger-print, chemical and DNA analyses—all of which returned inconclusive results, save for an odd finding shared by many of the tests that both bag and manuscript pages contained heavy DNA traces of a rare sub-breed of prehistoric razor-tooth gar long thought to roam the deep waters between Locks 8 and 7 on the Kentucky River.*

*We here reprint the left manuscript unedited, pretty much as we found it, to celebrate creativity during the spring gardening season in Kentucky. We cannot, however, vouch for the tale's veracity. In fact, after an extensive fact-check that has nearly bankrupt the NoC Investigative Reports Fund, the only part of the tale that we could confirm involved this editor, who has publicly acknowledged, many times in print, person and deed, guerrilla gardening basil and tomatoes at several Lexington spots for his Lexington Free Store. So we offer it up as the sort of fiction that has a certain power and truth all its own.*

*It's doubly-creative.*

#### Tobacco: the gateway crop?

There's trunk-loads more money to be made raising a *killer* crop than there is in raising a crop that kills. For those who've been away on the mission-fields for the last half century, *killer* (as in *killer* crop) is slang for *funk*, *skunk*, or crassly put, *the shit*. One pound of the mean green will net you about the same as 1500 pounds of burley tobacco.

That's right, 1 pound of marijuana = \$3000; 1 pound of tobacco (you know, the kind that used to be grown around here in small patches) = maybe a buck-ninety on a good day; literally, 1 dollar and 90 cents—and that's if you can find a place to sell it (Lexington's seen fit to erase all memory of tobacco markets). But no one needs to be told why all tobacco farmers haven't made the switch to raising weed yet. Growing weed can be lucrative but, as we all well know, is highly illegal. Get caught cultivating it and you could lose your shirt, your tractor, and a shit-pot of money. Tobacco's legal, and, according to most leading doctors who no longer smoke Lucky Strikes, highly lethal.

The problem is it's no longer economically feasible for a small-time farmer. When the powerful tobacco lobby and their pet legislators finally did away with the tobacco program (the price-support system that, among other things, guaranteed small farmers a fair price), well, droves of small tobacco farmers threw in the proverbial towel. And who could blame them? Tobacco's the most labor-intensive crop known to humankind. Why put in all that time and sweat just so R.J. Reynolds can give you less than the year before (which was less than the year before that, which was...)? You get the picture.

But marijuana, well, it practically grows itself. It is a weed after all. And I can guarantee you that if it weren't so damned illegal, tobacco farmers would be coming out of retirement, donning the coveralls, firing up old Farmall 140s, and sowing every available acre in the magically delicious herb. Highly unlikely anytime soon, but a *killer* vision nonetheless. Until marijuana

#### Time-line of guerrilla gardening (1649-1975)

In 1649 Gerrard Winstanley issued several pamphlets aimed at rallying hungry, landless locals to take up hoes and shovels and cultivate "the commons" at St. George's Hill in Surrey, England. In April of that year, Winstanley, along with his 30 or so "Diggers" (as they became known) broke dirt and planted parsnips, carrots, beans, and barley. They were eventually chased off, imprisoned, and fined a whopping 10 pounds each.

The most famous American guerrilla gardener was undoubtedly John Chapman, aka "Johnny Appleseed." While our legends have turned him into a quirky kid chomping apples and wandering aimlessly around, the truth is he was a late 18<sup>th</sup> century (ad)venture capitalist. In 1801 he set out for the west, one lucrative idea ahead of those soon-to-be settlers who were growing anxious back east. His business plan: grow apple tree saplings west of the Alleghenies and sell them to the settlers who were sure to come. He was a guerrilla gardener because the land west of the Alleghenies did, in fact, belong to someone else: an array of Native American tribes, who, for a thousand excellent reasons, were wary of the white savages. Like all shrewd white men at the time, Chapman befriended the Indians he encountered, learned enough of their languages to convince them he was not a savage, and shared some trade-secrets. His venture took him deep into the Ohio Valley, all the way to present day Indiana.

In 1969 a group of Berkeley students transformed a university-owned, fallow lot into what they called "Power to the People's Park." Their activities attracted thousands of volunteers, young and old, and for several weeks the community gardened!

When Liz Christy, a young artist living in New York City, noticed tomato plants growing in a rubbish heap, she started scattering seeds of her own in vacant lots and empty tree pits around the city. Christy first coined the term "Guerrilla Gardening" in 1973. The "Green Guerrillas", as they were known in NYC, continued to thrive, and in the early 80s were legitimized when the city took control of vacant lots and spaces and leased them to the guerrilla gardening movement. Several of their projects are recognized as official community gardens.

Also in 1973, my old man planted a handful of marijuana seeds on the abandoned Southern Railroad right-of-way in High Bridge, KY. He grew 21 pounds of decent bud and sold it all for \$2100 in the capital city, Frankfort. By the standards of the day, he was a major player. For his children, Christmas was extra special that year.

is decriminalized and finally legalized, growers, including some former tobacco farmers, will continue to raise the shit illicitly, providing supply for an ever-increasing demand. And some of these underground farmers will consider the *I-ching* of cultivating

pot (more on this later) and turn to *Guerrilla Gardening*.

If you haven't heard, the illicit cultivation of any botanical on someone else's land just happens to be a

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## From production to consumption

### Seedleaf and the food-to-fork dilemma

By Katelynn Austin

It is no understatement to say that we are ruled by the junk food gods and our prayers are not being answered. Our health is deteriorating, our natural resources are deteriorating, as are our family meals that used to find us sitting around a table of homemade food.

In response to this state of affairs, a growing number of food activists have appeared on both the global and local scene to emphasize the value of fresh produce. Global organizations like Terra Madre and Kitchen Gardeners International have given rise, here in Lexington, to local groups like In-Feed, the Lexington Urban Gleaning Network, Seedleaf and the Bluegrass Community Garden Network—not to mention the more anonymous workers on local farm and urban garden initiatives that have also begun to flourish here. Each of these groups, in one way or another, have asked individuals to weigh the cost of a candy bar or chemically-infused processed foods against their own and their communities' health: nutritional, environmental, economic, and social.

Here in Lexington, as groups have begun to push for greater accessibility of fresh produce as a practical choice

over fast food, they have begun to come upon new challenges.

What happens, for example, to the bags of fresh produce after they make it home? Who wants to eat vegetables and how much bribing must be done? Who has the time to cook a meal anyway? Who wants to prepare and clean-up a meal and convince the family to sit down when they need be doing five other things and can instead munch on a bag of Doritos? And it's not just these questions being asked once the colorful produce makes it home. There are other questions: Who has the proper cooking materials? Cooking space? Dinnerware? Recipes? Sadly, the amount of fresh food that makes its way to the people often makes its way to the trash.

What can be said for this? I hope it was made into compost?

#### Food to fork

The "food to fork" issue is something being addressed by Seedleaf, a Lexington non-profit dedicated to affordable, nutritional and sustainable food in Lexington and throughout Central Kentucky. Seedleaf's Becca Self likened the situation to a woman taught how to give birth and not to parent. It is a two-part process, she

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## Florida does Lex

### Creative Cities finds the Bluegrass

By Danny Mayer

It didn't dawn on me that Richard Florida was a bullshit artist until I read the opening lines of his article, "There Goes the Neighbourhood: How and Why Bohemians, Artists and Gays Affect Regional Housing Values," which I found on the Richard Florida section of Richard Florida's Creative Class website. For several weeks, I had been trying to pinpoint my unease at Florida's thesis of the creative class, which essentially posits a global market of "creative capital" that flows across distances unequally.

Building from this is his thesis that regional and, more particularly, urban locations need to produce the conditions necessary to attract those who possess that creative capital, called—wait for it—the creative class. What cities need to do, Florida claims, is twofold: they need to retain the talented class that already lives there, and they need to attract the globally creative people who, apparently, have left the confines of their own less-creative cities. It's a game of supply and demand, and creative people are the commodities. More of them, according to Florida, is good. Always. And your city has to play ball or else.

Now I've got to admit, Florida's done a neat trick, so I call him a bullshit artist with great respect and admiration. First of all, he's constructed a catch-phrase, the creative class, that is

pretty difficult to critique. As a friend of mine told me over beers one night, "I mean, who's against creativity?" And he's right, at least here in Lexington.

I've been reading treatises left and right on the benefits of creativity. The word's been used admiringly by artists, university presidents, city council people, the Herald Leader, the Kentucky Kernel, and the list goes on. I've even heard a mayoral candidate wax ecstatic about all the creativity found in the economically poor neighborhoods surrounding Loudon Avenue. Everyone, it seems, fucking loves creativity.

But should we? There are any number of critiques of Florida, none of which get mentioned when, for example, our local politicians take jet trips to see other "creative" cities, or when people urgently press the need for Lexington to "get on board" with what's going on all around them. Critics have pointed to the long-term success of cities Florida calls un-creative relative to their more creative counterparts. In fact, critics on the right have pointed out, correctly, that much of Florida's data come from the days just preceding the stock market bubble of 2001—when tech and other creative industry jobs were arguably over-valued.

#### Hawking creative values

The question of value is apt. While Florida and the promoters of

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## In forthcoming issues

# 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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## Robert Morgan and recycled art

By Phillip March Jones  
Creative Director of Institute 193

Institute 193 and Robert Morgan were recently awarded an EcoGrant by LFUCG to conduct a series of educational workshops aimed at exposing the public to the possibilities of recycling as a method of art-making. Morgan works with junk and found objects, assembling them into speaking cultural artifacts shaped by the artist's Catholic childhood, previous drug addiction and the AIDS epidemic of the 90's. His work addresses the concept of recycling both physically and conceptually.

Through a process of collection and assemblage, Morgan is able to transform hair brushes, children's toys, old radios and other various discarded objects into works of art that speak both to the life experiences of the artist and to the former lives and stories embodied by the objects themselves.

The recycling of objects, photos, memories, and experience makes Morgan's work engaging to people of all ages and education levels. Morgan is a Lexington-based artist whose family goes back to the early pioneers of central Kentucky and the mountains of Appalachia. The Institute 193 project serves as a formal introduction of Morgan's work to the larger community of schools, community centers and art enthusiasts.

*"Robert Morgan: All that Glitters..." will open at Institute 193 on Thursday, April 15, from 6:00-9:00 P.M.. Institute 193 is located at 193 North Limestone.*



## This week in labor history

April 8-16: slave revolts, births and criminal syndicalism

### NoC News

On April 8 in 1712, a slave revolt occurred in New York City, a city that at the time exploited a large slave labor force to grow its economic might. On the night of the revolt, twenty-three slaves set fire to a city building and waited—with hatchets, swords and guns—for white townspeople to respond to the fire. They killed nine people and injured six more before fleeing. In the roundup of slaves that occurred afterwards, twenty-one were executed and six committed suicide rather than be captured. The uprising resulted in new slave laws that included, among other things, more leeway in allowing masters to "discipline" their slaves—so long as the beatings did not result in loss of life or limb.

Historical accounts record that the uprising began on Maiden Lane, at the time an apple orchard on the northern rim of the city. Today, Maiden Lane is located in Manhattan's financial district.

On April 9 in 1898, Paul Robeson was born. Robeson—a lawyer, actor, singer, scholar, and political activist—caught the attention of red-baiting U.S. Senator Joe McCarthy, who in the 1940s singled out the popular black performer for his black nationalist and anti-imperialist views. McCarthy's persecution of Robeson led to the singer

having his passport revoked in 1950. It took eight years before Robeson was allowed to travel abroad once again, which all but ruined his performance career.

Two years later, on April 12, 1900, Florence Reece was born. Author of the famed labor song "Which Side Are You On?," Reece lived in Harlan County during a bloody series of strikes in the region, most fought to claim the right of miners to collectively organize for better wages. Much like today, mine owners responded violently to the call for bettering workers' rights. They hired their own private militia for security, and then set them to beating, jailing and harassing union leaders who were organizing on behalf of workers. Reece wrote "Which Side Are You On" at a time when Harlan Sheriff J.H. Blair and some of his men had shown up and ransacked Reece's house in search of her husband Sam, a union organizer. Unable to find her husband, Blair and his men waited (unsuccessfully) outside in hopes of ambushing him when he returned home.

Reece's song captures the need to make clear and definite stances in choosing to support workers over owners. But her first lines, "If you don't want your husband to die in the coal mine/I'll see you in the morning out on the picket line," also point to the

lead role women have historically taken in social justice movements. In this, the song's lines connect Reece and other Harlan women to a long history of female activism, from Emma Goldman, Rosa Parks and the courageous women sitting in the frontlines of the 1960s lunch-counter sit-ins, on up through tireless female activists like Amy Goodman and Cindy Sheehan today.

On April 14, 1930, over 100 Mexican and Filipino farmworkers were arrested for union activity in Imperial Valley, California. Eight were eventually convicted of criminal syndicalism, or of unlawfully attempting to change the way government or industry is run or organized.

On April 15 in 1915, the Agricultural Workers Organization, an IWW union, formed in Kansas City, Missouri.

And finally, on April 16, 1968, the Memphis sanitation strike ended with criminally underpaid black sanitation workers winning a ten cent salary increase. The strike ended twelve days after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in Memphis, where he had been organizing in support of the striking workers.

*Dates come from 2010 Labor History Calendar of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).*

## Food-to-fork (cont.)

*continued from page 1*

explained, each dependent on the other.

I had my doubts. "But everyone knows how to cook," I said. "They just choose convenience over cooking."

"Everyone knows how to follow a recipe, but they don't know how to cook," countered Self. "They don't know how to make cooking a lifestyle, how to incorporate fresh produce, how to cook seasonally, or how to see that cooking can be convenient, community-building, and fun."

Self and other food activists have begun trying to address the disconnect from this farm-to-table economy. On the fourth Saturday of every month at Maxwell Presbyterian Church, they hold public cooking classes. At the classes, over stories and laughter participants learn to cook and preserve food while preserving their health and the stability of their communities.

Self is finding out that knowing how to cook is not the only problem. There's also the accessibility of cooking facilities and cooking supplies. "If we are going to have Community Gardens why would we not have Community Kitchens or places where people can actually prepare the food? Public accessibility to food requires public access to kitchen facilities and supplies," she says.

The space issue has limited the cooking classes from expanding to reach larger groups of people. They need ample oven space, counter space, and stoves, silverware, cookware and dishes. "Food to Fork" has its challenges. However, a good time has never seemed to be a problem."

### Community potluck and pizza parties

Last May a Pea-Pickin' Party was held at the London Ferrill Community Garden on Third Street. At the Pea-Party, everyone was encouraged to pick as much peas as they could; meanwhile, Sylvan University's Culinary Arts students cooked everything on site, providing quick, easy, and delectable meals. As Ryan Koch, director of Seedleaf, said "Since we were practicing the fun of gardening and cooking, why not have a party? When people cook out, people come out."

"Lots of people came out to eat," Self said, and as a result another idea formed.

### Pizza party

Pizza. Such a universal affinity for this food exists that society has decided that it is a good enough reason to have a party in its own right. Everyone loves a pizza party.

Out of the success of the Pea Party sprouted the idea of the Pizza Party. One thing led to another, and well, now a large pizza oven will be built in the London Ferrill Garden by student volunteers in the masonry program at Southside Technical High School off Harrodsburg Road. Under the supervision of teacher Bruce Hayden, the Fayette County public high school students will construct the oven out of naturally-found Kentucky stone. They have already crafted numerous models for the oven in class, which they will then use and apply in building the one for the garden.

It's like a BBQ pit, only it's a pizza oven. In a vegetable garden. It's a wonderful example of the Lexington community at work.

And it all makes sense. The oven creates a natural place for people to congregate—a circle of conversation,

community, and food. The two related problems of food access and preparation converge: fresh food and cooking in the same space. The ingredients are simple: dough, cheese, some tomato sauce preserved (as taught by Becca) if desired, and vegetables. Needed equipment is virtually limited to something for cutting up vegetables. No plates needed; no silverware needed. No mixing, no beating, no thawing, no filling. Simple ingredients, simple cooking, and simply delicious.

As a community project, it is perfect. You can feed huge amounts of people cheaply, nutritiously, and seasonally outdoors, with little clean-up. People get to personalize their meal.

Recalling what Self said regarding cooking classes, "It is hard to make everyone happy: their likes and dislikes, cultural food preferences, and dietary needs." On a pizza, however, you throw on what you like.

*A date for the installation of the oven has not been set; go bug Rebecca and Ryan at Seedleaf for details on the pizza opening: [seedleaf.org](http://seedleaf.org).*



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## The guerilla gardener (cont.)

*continued from page 1*

global phenomenon. Guerrilla gardens and gardeners are cropping up everywhere, even in the quaint, tree-lined neighborhoods, suburbs and exurbs of Lexington. I've even seen the editor and contributing writers of this very publication stooping over someone else's dirt, minding some illicitly planted leafy green—not Mary Jane, of course.

Truthfully, before I knew what the moniker meant, I was already a guerilla gardener. In fact, long before the influence of Liz Christy's NYC "Green Guerrilla" movement of the early 1970s reached the urban-hip "Guerrilla Gardeners" in present-day London, I was apprenticing under an unassuming professional green-thumb in rural, central Kentucky—my old man. He got his start in the late 1940s, helping his grandfather tend tobacco south of Lexington on Route 29 in the greater High Bridge area, and though farming was never his primary calling, he raised a crop of tobacco every year from 1970 to 2002. He told people it was a way to supplement his income, but I know that he was addicted to raising the dirty leaf (plus, it was an effective way to break wayward sons of their acute wanderlust).

### Growing green: a proposition

Some time in the early 1970s, a friend of a friend approached him with an altogether irresistible business proposition and the potential to supplement his supplementary income. As it were, said friend of a friend understood that he (my old man) lived on a farm near the Kentucky River, was in possession of some notable agrarian skills, and was for the most part an easy-going, open-minded dude. What would such a fellow, friend of a friend proposed, think of cultivating *X* pounds of marijuana on some remote corner of his property for guaranteed wholesale at a highly competitive price? Well?

My old man was scattering pot seeds hither and yon before anyone could say *funkskunkcheebastraightdank*.

Of course, this was long before that giant sucking sound known as "The War on Drugs" broke the silence and serenity of the countryside. In fact, the culture was trending in the direction of tolerance and de-stigmatization if not outright acceptance of casual marijuana use, perhaps realizing the ocean of bigger fish to fry. This was a kinder, gentler era when property rights extended into the airspace above your land; the age before county

sheriffs, local and state police were paid overtime and double-time to helicopter overhead in search of evil green to be rooted out and "destroyed" in front of the anxious, propagandizing cameras. (Now, whenever I see a clip of fatigue-clad cops incinerating somebody's crop, I can't help but suspect that I'm watching the "highlight" reel and that the vast majority of "booty" has been spirited away to some other more discreet fate. One can only imagine.) No, back then the gravest fears for marijuana growers were predation by groundhogs and deer, cutworms and burrowing insects, or theft by purposeful or even haphazard interlopers.

But just as an extra precaution, my old man planted his first illicit crop along the old Southern Railroad right-of-way (disused since 1909), an ancient, tree-lined thicket that bordered the western edge of our farm, passable only as a game-trail and visited only by your typical riff-raffing no-good-doers (truants, ruffians, hobos) and clandestine teenage lovers looking for a safe place to scrump. And so, my old man was self-inaugurated as High Bridge's first and most prolific guerilla gardener.

### Semantics

I know what you're thinking. Guerrilla gardeners, as we know them today, work under a completely different set of auspices. They do what they do with a strong sense of common good, a conviction to add value to otherwise undervalued and neglected spaces, perhaps even with close affinities to other movements and collectives working for greater social justice through enhanced environmental and place-making ethics, not to mention clout in spatial politics worldwide. Undeniably, guerilla gardeners around the globe would say that illicit gardening, like sex, is more interesting and invigorating with multiple partners. Like all guerilla movements, it actively seeks new recruits. But cultivating marijuana—an endeavor predicated on secrecy—would seem to be antithetical to the aims of guerilla gardening as social movement. Outside of family and closest friends, you don't want anyone to know where your shit is growing. It can create temptations that aren't easily quelled (Note to self: legalizing marijuana could make us even more ethical).

So while illicit cultivation of an illicit plant on someone else's land might seem to undercut the loftier, idealistic aims of guerilla gardening, it is guerilla gardening nonetheless. Richard Reynolds, author of *On Guerrilla Gardening: a Handbook for*

*Gardening without Boundaries* and perhaps the most outspoken proponent of guerilla gardening worldwide, includes marijuana growers in his taxonomy, recognizing that some folks choose to garden expressly for the purpose of stimulation—that is, narcotic stimulation. Reynolds even notes the advantages of guerilla gardening marijuana: unlike the "mass-market drug agribusinesses... the guerilla's boutique approach" to cultivation doesn't require an army of thugs to shoo away snooping law-enforcement agents. Since cultivation occurs on someone else's property, aside from getting caught red-handed, there is very little evidence pinning grower to the act of growing.

### A tense digression

Dad says he never worried too much about getting caught back then. He recalls only one real close shave, returning home from work one summer evening to find the place abuzz with state police. He quickly learned they weren't there for him; apparently, two local men—Tommy and Dubby, elderly deaf-mute twins—had fallen off the river-cliff on our property. The story was that they had been picking ramps in a particularly steep spot, one of them had slipped, and when the other went to help, both men fell.

Both survived, too, but lived the rest of their lives in a nursing home. Dad always suspected foul play—the story sounded odd considering everyone knew that ramps could only be found in one spot around there—across the river on the Mercer County side. Besides, both men were deaf-mutes, so how did anyone know for sure what happened? Was insurance money involved? Inheritance? Disability payouts?

The only funny thing about the whole ordeal was that the police traipsed back and forth through the pot-patch and never knew it. It was a classic case of misdirection... "Hey, what's that over there...old men falling down a cliff?"

### I-Cha-Ching

There's a wonderful passage in Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire* that speaks directly to the *I-ching* of cultivating marijuana, the dynamic and often nerve-racking balance of opposites: "There they were, a couple of jolly green giants lurking behind the barn—and I found myself in a state of almost perpetual anxiety and dread. I'd read in the papers that the state police sometimes did aerial reconnaissance to locate marijuana gardens, and anytime I heard the drone of a small plane overhead, I raced outside to see if its flight path would take it over my plants. The slowing down of any full-size American sedan on my road was enough to rattle me. Every day that fall I weighed the risks of detection, and a killing frost, against the potential reward of a few buds."

The *I-ching* of illicit cultivation, the tense balance of risk and reward that Pollan experienced is, in large part, displaced through guerilla gardening. In my old man's case, the risk was unloaded on the Southern Railroad. With less risk of having your assets seized, the reward is all the sweeter, or skunkier: *I-ching* revised to *I-cha-ching*. But would I ever consider guerilla gardening marijuana on a neighbor's property, or on any private citizen's property for that matter? Sure, if that citizen happened to be Blackwater's Erik Prince, the CEO of Halliburton, one of Sam Walton's heirs or even Bill Gates. Would I do it on my current neighbor's property—Donnie, the disabled Trucker? Of course not. I might be a dedicated pothead, but I have a community ethic.

### Family operations & the price of cocky

I was aware of my father's marijuana cultivation years before I was ever invited to participate. On my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday my old man gave me my great-grandfather's shaving tin stuffed with 21 fatties from that year's harvest. 1991. Through the 1930s and 1940s my

### Rewind: a confession digression

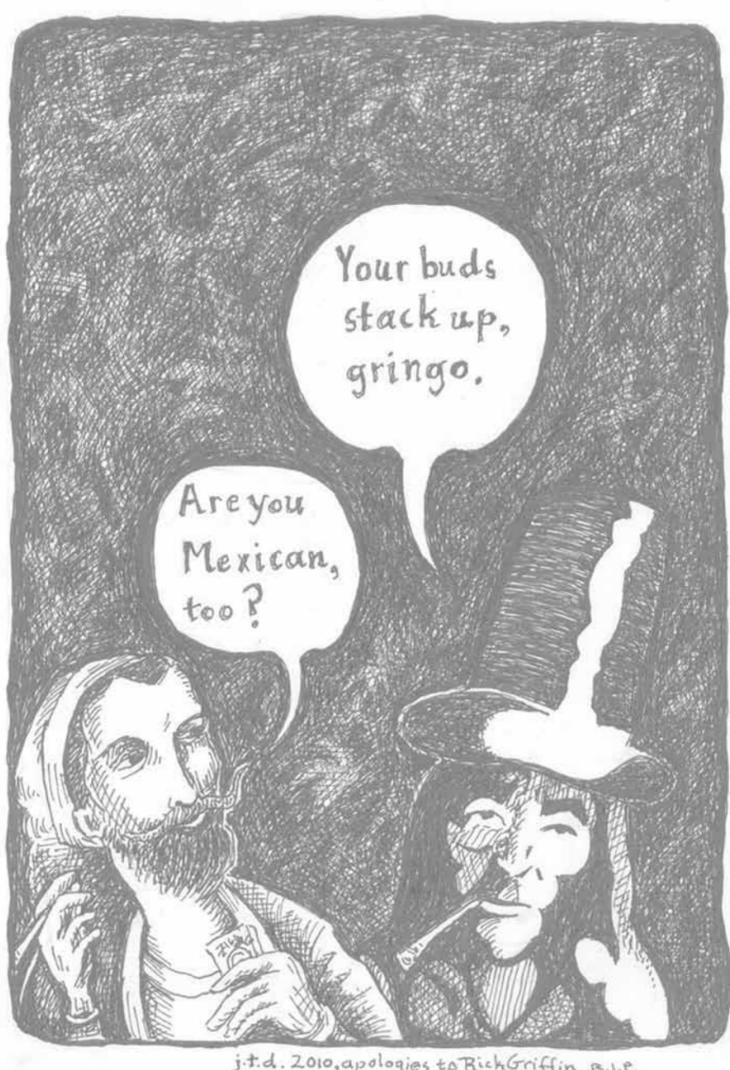
Dad, do you remember when that pound of weed went missing back in 1985? It was me. I'm sorry. While I know you probably knew all along I took it, I just want to make it official (as official as printing it in this community newspaper 24 years later can be): Yes, I confirm old-hat. And I have to say, it was the straight-dank. In my own defense, I was only trying to protect the family secret. A bunch of us "friends" were camping at the farm one winter night (read: sobering up with a fire in the stripping room). Friend 1 started snooping around the barn while I was dozing and came across this dusty old map case. I swear I didn't know you had a pound of weed stashed inside. When he opened it, his eyes fell out, and he quickly spread the news to friends 2, 3, 4, and 5. It was all I could do to convince them it was mine, that I had grown it, and that I was planning on sharing some if they would just shut the fuck up. So...I shared some, but instead of replacing the slightly lighter stash back in the map case, I kept the rest. And smoked it. In breakfast-link-sized hooters. You'd be proud, though. I managed to make it last until 11th grade, 2nd hour, Mrs. Braden's English class.

ancestor (and namesake) barbered the heads of many a man and boy from Cincinnati to High Bridge, and this particular razor case was probably just one of many he had owned, probably nothing special to him but certainly special to me. It was just a flat, metal box with a hinged lid. The next year, 1992, I was growing my own weed. Dad had long since sold the small farm (where he'd grown his first illicit crop), bought my mother a house in town, and started sharecropping tobacco on a 200+ acre tract straddling the Norfolk-Southern line between High Bridge Road and the Kentucky River. Technically, he was still guerilla gardening—because he didn't own this land. He just tended the tobacco. The owners were, for the most part, absentee, and proprietary check-ups came only on occasion (to shot-gun mistletoe out of the walnut trees or hack cedars from the hillside for holiday tinseling). Thirty-two years roaming this piece of earth, and I can count the times I saw the owners on one hand.

When I first started cultivating marijuana of my own, my father had several well-established growing locales, spread out across the largely wooded 200 acres. One such spot was "The Barrels", a clearing along the once-terraced slope to No-Name Creek which twisted urgently to the Kentucky. A quintessential under-story cedar grove in decline, with clusters of sizeable cedars here and there grown too large for anything but admiration, co-habitation, shade, an eternal hug. Half-way round the hill (toward the old house spring), square on the terrace, three half whiskey barrels aligned perfectly along a narrow slit in the canopy of scrubby elms, locusts, hackberries, and coffee beans. A simple groove for the sun to slide west. Dad had cleared the bramble and fringe, lined up the half-barrels, and started the compost years before.

The first buds I grew there, the memorable crop of 1992, even impressed the most committed connoisseur, Rat (also commercial grower and strategically proud Seminole), I'd befriended at the Glyndon Hotel in Richmond, KY, my residence at the time. He lived in a one-room shack in Estill County for the growing season and smoked up the winter months down home on Big Cypress "rez" with his fortune-telling mother. We traded for a few seasons, managed to rack up outrageous bar-tabs down at Woody's, and knocked around Richmond in the wee hours, stoned silly, smoking up the youth. His assessment: "Your buds

*continued on page 8*



# Review: *Clash of the Titans*

A decent homage, but not exactly an Easter miracle

By Stan Heaton

If you don't know who Ray Harryhausen is, then get on [imdb.com](http://imdb.com) immediately and look him up. Mr. Harryhausen is a pioneer in special visual effects. His stop-motion animation and creature creations have inspired science fiction filmmakers from Steven Spielberg and John Landis to George Lucas and Peter Jackson (see *The Sci-Fi Boys* [2006]). Using lumps of clay, plastic, and a 16mm camera, Harryhausen was able to deliver his vivid imagination to the movie screen in its unbound form, not shackled by the constraints of scale or film or reality. Though he directed many pictures, his legacy will be his visual effects work in classics like *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963), *One Million Years B.C.* (1963), and *Clash of the Titans* (1981).

In these films, characters often confront the most impossible of beasts. In *Jason and the Argonauts*, Harryhausen created a group of skeleton warriors, summoned from the earth to fight Jason and his soldiers. The entire scene is a wonder. Blades from the skeletons clang against those of the human actors, and the Argonauts jump over swords as the skeletons swipe at them; it's downright impressive for 1963. This is the sort of movie that my dad looks back on with a great deal of nostalgia for his childhood adventure days, and he has Ray Harryhausen to thank for it.

By 1981, when the original *Clash of the Titans* was released, Harryhausen's brand of special effects was old hat. Most of America was ready to trade the grotesque clay monsters and sleek alien spacecraft for more realistic visual splendors. Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) had ushered in a new wave of science fiction, with its attention to the mechanical details of spacecrafts and its immense outer space vistas. Other filmmakers, George Lucas and Ridley Scott among them,

**Clash is billed as an action flick through-and-through, and it delivers.**

followed Kubrick's lead and began their ventures into computer-generated imagery. Since then, computer graphics have dominated the movie business, but there will always be a unique place reserved for stop-motion films (as *The Fantastic Mr. Fox* [2009] has shown us).

Despite its antiquated graphics, the original *Clash* maintained a large fan following, and like many cult-classics, someone decided to remake it. The new *Clash of the Titans* follows Perseus (Sam Worthington) on his quest for revenge against Hades (Ralph Fiennes) for the murder of his earthly family. Along the way, Perseus learns of his godly heritage, meets a few loyal soldiers, and battles a menagerie of mythological beasts. It's predictable, but people aren't going to see this movie in the hopes of a revolutionary plot. The movie is billed as an action flick through-and-through, and it delivers.

Worthington's chiseled jawline and good acting skills make him a formidable action star. After performing well in 2009 with roles in *Terminator: Salvation* and *Avatar*, it's no surprise

between the gods. The Kraken takes center stage in the movie's trailer, and most of the film narrative is a count-down to its release. The scene in which this tentacled monster ravages the coastal city of Argos is clearly meant to be a moment of visual awe that harkens back to Harryhausen's prime, but much like the original *Clash*, it seems a bit tired.

**Beyond the graphics: stories of life and death**

*Toy Story* came out in 1995, and the number of advances in computer graphics that have made films significantly different for a viewing audience since then could probably be counted on one hand. Special effects alone just can't carry a film anymore. Sure, *Avatar* made gobs of cash, and its use

As I sat in the dark theater, sipping my expensive Mr. Pibb and thinking about Easter, I couldn't help but draw the connections between Perseus and Jesus. They are both the offspring of a god and a virgin mother, both die

**Special effects alone just can't carry a film anymore.**

and are resurrected, and both choose to serve mankind while on earth. This is where the new Perseus falters. Joseph Campbell, the famed comparative mythologist, shows us that, through-



COURTESY LEGENDARY PICTURES

*Are you not entertained?*

that he was selected to play Perseus in *Clash*. His monologues in the film are cheesy in the most Hollywood of ways, but he delivers them as well as anybody can expect. Liam Neeson and Ralph Fiennes, who play Zeus and Hades, respectively, bring some acting weight to the film, but nothing noteworthy.

In the true spirit of the original, the real stars of this latest *Clash* are the monsters. The enormous desert scorpions, mystical jinn, conniving witches, and bat-like harpies all round out a world full of strangeness that, I can only imagine, should captivate the teen boy demographic. Medusa, the horrible and beautiful Gorgon, is poorly done. Her face and body shine with the lifelessness of computer animation. I'm not exactly sure how to describe bad CGI; I just know that it looks too fake for me to enjoy. Maybe "stupid" would be a good word. Yes. Medusa looks stupid. This error is partially made up for by the Kraken, a sea-beast that destroyed the Titans in the war

of 3D enhanced graphics had a lot to do with that, but it had a lot of other things going on. I'm not sure the new *Clash* does.

The stories in both *Clash of the Titans* movies vary greatly from the myth of Perseus as told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*. The most significant difference in this latest rendition is Perseus's utter denial of the need for gods. In Book 4 of *Metamorphoses* and in the 1981 *Clash*, Perseus accepts many gifts from several gods in his quests, and he later honors those gods with sacrifices and spoils. The 2010 Perseus wants nothing to do with the gods. He even plans to destroy Hades out of revenge. I find it strange that the filmmakers would think this to be a viable narrative in American culture. Have we already killed our gods and replaced them with dead presidents? with machines? with ourselves? Or have we simply lost the language skills necessary to interpret our own spiritual metaphors?

out time and across cultures, myths are meant to bring people to the recognition that transcendence exists across all life. Death, Campbell points out, is a vital part of the transcendence because it allows new life to begin (see *The Power of Myth* [1988]).

Jesus's death on the cross is also his spiritual birth into the plane of transcendence. The Buddha goes through a similar transformation under the bodhi tree. In the *Clash of the Titans*, Perseus defeats death and rejects Zeus's offer to join him on Olympus. In his rejection of death and his insistence on remaining human, Perseus waivers from the hero's path; yet, he lives happily ever after. I'm troubled by this deviation and worried that our culture is losing its ability to understand the metaphors of myth, though I'm certain that most people won't care about either of these.

No, most people will only care to see the Kraken, without ever considering what it might represent.

## Cult Film Series: *Eat the Rich*

'80s cult classic good food for thought today

By Patrick Bigger

Alex is really not your typical hero. For starters, Alex doesn't have a gender pronoun attached to Alex. Also, Alex is helping foment a proletarian revolution in England by forcibly re-appropriating the fancy restaurant Alex used to work at, renaming it *Bastards*, and feeding the obnoxious politicians, socialites, and idle wealthy to one another.

This is the backdrop for Peter Richardson's 1987 tour de force *Eat the Rich*, showing as part of the Cult Film Series at Al's Bar on Wednesday, April 14. Lanah (Alan) Pillay, Britain's first transsexual superstar, plays Alex, a down and out waitperson who is totally fed-up with flaky friends, rude social servants, populist rightwing politicians, and capitalism. The logical response, obviously, is to go door to door signing up other disaffected poor people. Alex is aided in the struggle by such diverse characters as Lemmy from *Motörhead* (who also provides the stellar soundtrack) as a

shady arms dealer and Christopher Malcolm of *Absolutely Fabulous* as a Soviet double agent who surreptitiously guides Alex and their misfit crew of class warriors against the reactionary forces that dominate every aspect of their lives.

In terms of the villainy, Nosh Powell plays Nosh, the boorish British Home Secretary with aspirations to

**Michelle Bachman and Sarah Palin could probably stand to take some lessons from the movie.**

become Prime Minister. The anti-poor rhetoric of Nosh is hilariously, if eerily, familiar. "Some of us are very, very rich. But most of you are very, very poor. And you know why? Because

you're all lazy bastards!" Nosh's drunken macho crap gets him into a number of tough spots (his wife kicks him out for carousing with the Queen and philandering with double agents), and yet he remains as popular as ever with the public.

While it's a caricature, Nosh's vitriolic injunctions against the poor, the left, immigrants, women, terrorists, liquor store clerks, and Paul McCartney pretty well capture the political climate of Thatcherite Britain. Margaret Thatcher was elected in the midst of the economic crisis of the late 1970s, and promptly went to work dismantling the social support structures won by the British working class throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Her use of brutal tactics against striking miners provided the template for breaking the Air Traffic Controller's union in the United States and anticipated the rise of Neoliberalism worldwide.

*Eat the Rich* was a comical snapshot of the frustration many working people felt at the time, but its message remains important. The current

Teabaggers/Tea Partiers and other fascists would undoubtedly welcome a popular charismatic politician like Nosh into their ranks. Hell, Michelle Bachman and Sarah Palin could probably stand to take some lessons from *Eat the Rich*.

The question is, where is Alex in 21st century America? Following the catastrophic failure of Soviet Communism, the pathetic disarray of leftwing rhetoric and organization that is more likely to reproduce the conservative practices they used to oppose than challenge them, and the explicit betrayal of progressive promises made by Democratic politicians, Alex's message is as important as ever.

Am I suggesting we should feed rich people to each other? Not really. But is it awesome to watch this bizarre working-class fantasy play out on screen? Absolutely.

*Eat the Rich will screen Wednesday, April 14 at 7 p.m. at Al's Bar (corner of 6th and Limestone) as part of the Cult Film Series.*

# Music

## Acid Mothers Temple w/ Over-Gain Optimal Death

Wednesday, April 14th

*Cosmic Charlies*

Doors @ 8pm; Show @ 10pm. \$8 advance. \$10 at the door. 21+

Cosmic Charlie's lives up to their name Wednesday the 14th. That's when they play host to Acid Mothers Temple, a group of Japanese psychedelic heavyweights as well known for their prolific recording catalogue (having released at least five studio albums in the last year alone) as they are for their phenomenal high energy live shows.

Acid Mothers Temple formed in 1995 under the guidance of guitarist Kawabata Makoto as a musical offshoot of the Acid Mothers Temple soul-collective, a loosely based commune with members spread across Japan. Originally a rotating cast of players, the band's lineup has congealed over the last ten years into a core group consisting of Kawabata and three others. Their unique style of reverential psychedelia borrows from the usual suspects: Hawkwind, Syd Barrett-era Pink

Floyd, early Black Sabbath and various other early seventies progressive rock groups, all the while not forgetting the Teutons of the continent and co-opting the cream of the Krautrock crop.

All this is then filtered through Japan's wildly inventive Tokyo Underground scene and its legendary run from the late seventies to the early nineties. The result is a precociously atavistic sound whose uniqueness prove AMT's continued relevance to the scene.

Now in their fifteenth year together Acid Mothers Temple—whose members are all in their forties or older—show no sign of losing their musical tenacity: their Lexington show is the fourth to last date on a whirlwind tour of 30 concerts in 32 days, during which time the band will have made a full circuit of the U.S. covering both the East and West coasts and much of the Midwest and South, while still managing to fit in one Mexican and two Canadian dates.

—Joe Fisher



COURTESY ACID MOTHERS TEMPLE

Acid Mothers Temple play Cosmic Charlie's.

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## CD Central celebrates milestone with week of live music

By Saraya Brewer

We've always known April to be a big month for tomfoolery, Starburst jellybeans and (at least in Keeneland country) seersucker suits. Fortunately, this year, it's also a big month for independent music. We've got the April 23rd WRFL event "Bringing in the New Age with No Age," a celebration of the station's forthcoming expanded listening area (more on that in the next issue), and we've also got CD Central's 15th birthday, a milestone event that will be celebrated the entire week leading up to Record Store Day (April 17).

CD Central's festivities will kick off on Monday, April 12, with a series dubbed by the store's granddaddy, Steve Baron, as the CD Central Family Jam: four consecutive days of in-store shows by bands featuring members who either work at CD Central or have worked there in the past. On Friday, April 16, the store will celebrate the release of the Apples in Stereo's new album (their seventh), Travellers in Space and Time, at Cosmic Charlie's, where the band will be play the kickoff show for the album's 14-stop tour (look for the CD Central table at the show—the shop will be giving away posters and other yet-to-be-determined swag.) Finally, CD Central will close out the weeklong shebang with a Record Store Day celebration on Saturday, April 17th, featuring a full day of in-store shows, free food, exclusive releases and what Baron promises to be "one hell of a used CD sale."

### CD Central 15th Anniversary Celebration

With the exception of Friday's Apples in Stereo show at Cosmic Charlie's, all events listed are at CD Central, and are free & all ages.

Monday, April 12, 7 P.M.

BEAST PER MINUTE (formerly Posture): improvisational math rock featuring Will Burchard (CD Central staff 1999-2001).

Tuesday, April 13, 7 P.M.

HELIUM THREE: new project featuring Ben Allen (CD Central staff 2004-2007).

CROSS: garage-doom-psych featuring Mike Turner (CD Central staff 2004-2006).

Wednesday, April 14, 7 P.M.

ALL AMERICAN WEREWOLVES: hardcore punk with a flair for the raunchy, featuring Mike Lunsford (CD Central staff 2003-present).

Thursday, April 15, 7 P.M.

CASINO VERSUS JAPAN, ambient electronica featuring Erik Kowalski (CD Central staff 2008-present).

Friday, April 16, 9 P.M. (at Cosmic Charlie's; \$12; ages 21+)

APPLES IN STEREO: psychedelic sugar pop of the Elephant 6 variety.

Saturday, April 17, Noon to 5 P.M.

### Record Store Day

Founded in 2007, Record Store Day has become something of a national holiday among independent record stores across the world, with approximately 700 national and hundreds of international stores participating in their own independently organized activities on that day. CD Central has been participating since 2008. If the weather holds out, the shows will take place in the back parking lot, facing Jersey Street. Local traveling pizzeria Hardwood Pizza Company will have pizza for sale, made on the spot in a portable wood stove, and look for a Vespa demonstration as well.

### Performance schedule

(all bands are locally-based, except where noted)

Noon—Contra-punctus: acoustic bass-driven prog duo.

1 P.M.—Rough Customers: indie ska-punk.

2 P.M.—Wooden Wand (solo show): acoustic woodsy folk.

3 P.M.—Coralee & the Townies: roots-rock darlings.

4 P.M.—Rachael Sage (from New York): piano-driven gypsy rock.

CD Central is located at 377 S. Limestone St. For more information, stop in the store, call (859) 233-DISC or visit [www.cdcentralmusic.com](http://www.cdcentralmusic.com).

## Drive-By Truckers hit Buster's

Saturday, April 10

Drive-By Truckers w/ Langhorne Slim Busters's, Doors @ 8pm; Show @ 9pm. \$20, \$23 Day of show. 18+

I first stumbled upon the Drive by Trucker's Patterson Hood one night at a bar in Athens, Georgia, shortly after splitting a small bag of mushrooms with a good friend. I had heard about Hood in Flagpole Magazine, Athen's free weekly paper, and decided to go on the spot. This must have been sometime around the summer of 1999, back when I did such things.

Each week Flagpole devoted an entire section of the paper to 3-sentence blurbs about all the shows playing around town that week. Hood's 3-sentence blurb about an upcoming Thursday night show must have caught my fancy, because by around 10:00 that night my friend and I had already jack-legged our way through a small crowd at Tasty World to a seat for some drinks and giggles while catching the end portion of opening act (and country superstar legend) Redneck Greece Delux. If I recall, Greece played his hit "Rednecks, White Socks & Blue Ribbon Beer," and the mushrooms kicked in shortly before Hood took the stage.

Hood played by himself, standing with an electric guitar slung low across him, hollering into the microphone songs about unapologetic gun-toting rednecks with their drugs, kin-based sexual relationships, and repressive Christianity.

A week later at the now defunct High Hat, I caught the first of several Drive By Truckers shows during that hot and enjoyable summer in Athens. These were always sweaty, always loud, always joyous. That summer I scripted a film scene in my mind that featured their song "Too Much Sex (too little Jesus)" and tried to muster up the courage to see if they would take me on tour with them as an unpaid roadie so I could write a 'band-on-the-road' story for Flagpole.

I never got the nerve to ask them, which is a bummer, because the Drive By Truckers were one hell of a band in '99. Of course, they are a hell of a band now, too. Though the venues have gotten bigger and more expensive, though the line-up has been added to- and subtracted from, and though the audience base now includes the kind of frat guys who used to attend David Allan Coe shows, the sound coming from the stage remains just as it always was: sweaty, joyous, loud.

—Danny Mayer



DANNY CLINCH

Drive-By Truckers.

Al's Bar proudly sponsors Lexington Bike Polo

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Post-game shenanigans at Al's

# ROCK solid against Hard Knox

By Troy Lyle

Skating with the mercurial speed of a demon possessed Cerynitis, the Rollergirls of Central Kentucky (ROCK) handed the Hard Knox Brawlers their first defeat of the 2010 season. Not even the slippery concrete of the Knoxville Convention & Expo

bout's opening jam. She put the gas to the Hard Knox's Insecticide, leaving her buckled and bruised and on her back in front of ROCK's bench.

"One of my goals for this bout was to hit harder and more often," Slay said. "And to play together more as a team. In our last bout against Blue Ridge we lost our focus and became

Ryder Die. But for Die it was ROCK's blockers, not jammers, who made the difference.

"Paraethal, Sissy Bug, Kitty O'Doom ... the entire team .... everybody kept the Knox jammers on the floor or in the pack until I could make a scoring pass," Die said. "It was a beautiful thing! You can't have high scoring jammers without great blockers."

Subsequent penalties slowed the ROCK express, negating their initial push and allowing Crash Cymbal and Unsweet T to score several points for Hard Knox. But ROCK would not be denied.

Half way through the first half with the score knotted at 22, Rainbow Smite brought some serious pain to Knox's Unsweet T. She blasted T into her own team's jammer wall laying out three players in the process. Only to have the brilliant block whistled by the zebras and land her in the penalty box for two minutes.

No doubt Smite disagreed with the call as she displayed two thumbs down heading into the box. Hard Knox wisely used the penalty time to squeeze out two points in each of the next jams.

But Knox's success was short lived as Slay slithered her way to five points in a full jam that seemed to wear out the Knox skaters. That was all the opening the ROCK wall made up of Sharon Moonshine, Smite and Shock needed to pound on Knox's jammer Insecticide and give Die the space to brilliantly juke her way to the lead and another four point jam.

## Round 2

At the half ROCK was in firm control with the score at 42 to 25, but the bout was far from over. Knox started the second with a power jam resulting from a late first half penalty incurred by Slay.

To make matters worse two other ROCK skaters earned some butt time with penalties of their own. Leaving only two ROCK blockers on the track to fend off Knox's onslaught. When the power jam was all said and done Knox had gained six points on the silky wheels of Unsweet T.

The one down point of the bout happened shortly thereafter when

ROCK - 76

Hard Knox Brawlers - 61

Saturday, March 27 at Knoxville Convention & Expo Center

ROCK Top Scorer: Ryder Die  
Hard Knox Top Scorer: Unsweet T

ROCK Most Penalties: Ryder Die  
Hard Knox Most Penalties: Hella Kitty & Miss Thang 2 (tie)

ROCK MVP: Team  
Hard Knox MVP: Team

ROCK's next bout is this Saturday against the Lafayette Brawlin' Dolls. Doors open at 6 P.M. at the Family Sports Center in West Lafayette, IN. Bout begins at 7 P.M.. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door.



Todd Reimero

Sugar Shock blasting her way to lead jammer.

Center was enough to slow down the girls of ROCK, who despite a heart-breaking opening loss returned to form on March 27 for their first win.

## Round 1

ROCK set the tone early and often as Ellie Slay laid down the law in the

more concerned with what they were doing. Against Hard Knox we stuck to our game plan from the opening whistle until the last."

And it showed. Four jams into the first half and ROCK was already beginning to build a lead on the skates of Slay, Bitty Bast'rd, Sugar Shock and

## Bike racing back in the bluegrass!

By Dan Dickinson

On March 20th, Lexington's Commonwealth Eye Surgery / Pedal the Planet bike racing team hosted a day of racing at the Cold Stream research park on Newtown Pike. Racers came from throughout the state as well as Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee.

The event organized racers according to skill level with category 5 being beginners through category 1 for the elite. For the women categories ranged from 4 to 1. There were also categories based on age for masters (40+) and juniors (under 18).

The various races lasted from thirty minutes to an hour on a 1.3 mile loop. This style of racing is fast and furious with average speeds reaching 25 mph and racers riding only inches apart. On this relatively flat course some riders were hitting speeds of more than 35 mph.

The first race of the day was the Cat 5 Men. This race was marred half-way through by a crash. Several riders went down with one, Dave Marshal, injuring his elbow. The crash split the field apart and many strong riders burned out trying to chase the lead group. Jeremy Burroughs managed to

beat McDonald's Lewis Jackson to the line with Mark Roth finishing third.

In the Men's 4/5 race, two riders had attacked with one lap to go but were caught by a charging peloton shortly before the finish. UK's Drew Lavey started his sprint a long way out but managed to hold it to the line for the win with Pedal the Planet's Brendan Canty finishing second.

The men's 3/4 race saw several attacks throughout, but none were successful. The race came down to a sprint finish where Lexington's Eric Barnett finished third behind Sean Steele and Nathan Roberson of Louisville.

Eric Barnett also placed 3rd in the Masters 40+ race behind Curtis Tolson of Texas Roadhouse and Michael McShane of Calistoga Racing.

Marilynn Hartman of Texas Roadhouse dominated the Women's 1/2/3 race. About halfway through the race she attacked the field and soloed to victory. In the Women's 4 race Erin Greene was victorious with Sharlyn Golding finishing second.

The Men's 1/2/3 race saw the fastest action of the day. It didn't take long for a break away of four riders to form with two riders from the Texas Roadhouse team. Behind them the chase group kept dwindling as riders were unable to keep up. Despite Texas Roadhouse having two of the four riders in the winning break, Lee Hauber of Fetzer Cycling was able to win the final sprint in impressive fashion.

Bike racing will return to Lexington on Memorial Day, May 31, as part of Bike Lexington. A series of races will be run downtown from 1-7 P.M. following the family fun ride.



COURTESY OF DAN DICKINSON

UK's Drew Lavey sprints to the win.

Knox's Diable Diaz took a tumble which injured her right shoulder. She would later return after slowly skating off the track.

During her absence Knox did anything but fold, reeling off point after point as ROCK's play was stymied by several unwarranted penalties. It took a massive effort from jammers Die and Bast'rd and key blocks from O'Doom, Ragdoll and Paraethal to slow Knox's roll and hold on to a double digit lead.

"I was focusing on being more aggressive," said O'Doom, who managed quite the fan club as several family members made the trip down to see her compete. "I have been skating for three years now and have all the skills necessary to make the key blocks. I just have to keep my head in the game and be fearless on the track."

A fearlessness her family must have inspired with their 'Kitty O'Doom Fan Club' T-shirts.

"I was so nervous," she said. "This was the first bout any of my family had ever seen me skate in, and I wanted to perform well."

If punishing the other team's jammers and blockers time and time again is performing well, then O'Doom had it in spades as she maintained an impenetrable front wall that helped clear the way for ROCK's jammers.

By far the scoring highlight of the bout came on the hellishly fast wheels of Unsweet T. Once again ROCK yielded a power jam leaving a ton of open track for T. Track she used to the fullest scoring a bout high 15 points.

continued on page 7

## Roller Derby Terminology

**Jam:** when Team A's jammer is sent to the penalty box leaving no one on the track to score points for Team A. Creating a situation where Team B is the only team who has a jammer who could possibly score.

**Jammer:** the skater on the track who can score points. The jammer is identifiable by the star on her helmet. The jammer starts each jam behind the pack. After she has lapped the pack once (known as a nonscoring pass), she is eligible to score points for each subsequent skater she laps.

**Lead jammer:** the first jammer to emerge from the pack cleanly (that is, without incurring a penalty) is designated by the referee as the lead jammer. She now has the advantage of being able to call off the jam if she wishes.

**Power Jam:** a two-minute period during which the action happens. The jam may last less than two minutes if the lead jammer decides to call off the jam. There may be any number of jams in a bout.

## Lex. teams stoned at Spring Polo Invite

NoC Sports Desk

Columbia, Missouri's Comosexuals might want to consider moving to Lexington. After two trips to Lexington this past year for competitive bike polo action, Comosexuals Charlie Hill, Pete Abram, and Nick Jacob have yet to taste defeat on the courts of Coolavin. In the team's most recent undefeated blitz through the inner-bluegrass, last Sunday's Spring Polo Invite, they bested a diverse field of nearly 20 squads and more than 60 players to claim the championship hardware.

The double-elimination format began slowly at 10:00 A.M. on Easter morning as Lexington Bike Polo City Representative Chris Simpson addressed a visibly hungover crowd of polo players over the court speakers. The strong regional flavor of the polo gathering was reflected in the fact that the top seven finishing teams hailed from seven different cities.

Lexington teams may have felt the exhaustion of hosting the weekend gathering—in general they appeared battered and, at least in the case of Tiff Morrow, visibly bruised. Of all the Lexington squads, only Your Team (Simpson, Brad Flowers, and Nick Redbeard) made it to the Final Seven (Kentucky cousin of the Final Four), finishing in seventh place.

Courtside pandemonium temporarily broke out when City Rep Simpson announced that teams would be forced to engage in partner-swapping. Essentially, squads playing each other would be forced to trade one player from each team for the remainder of the tournament, effectively jumbling up teams and cities. Once the uproar subsided, the Comosexuals bagged their second Lexington crown—and in the process proving equally adept doing it both straight and with partner swapping.

# Opinion

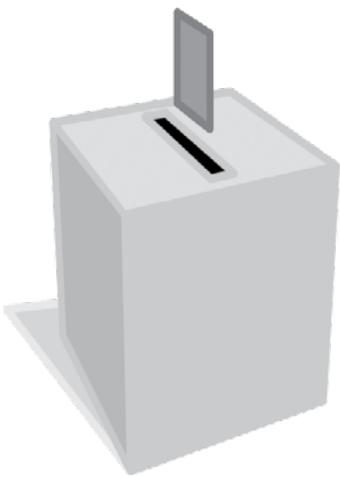
## Restoring the right to vote: Why, how and who to contact

By Austyn Gaffney

In a state that prides itself upon its namesake as a commonwealth—a democratic body in which the people hold supreme power—our elected officials are silencing the potential voice of over 186,000 Kentuckians. These are the men, women, and youth who have served their time in prison after committing felonies, and who have since reintegrated into society. Although they participate in our communities, hold jobs, and support their families, former felons are not granted the right to vote. In denying felons of a basic right of citizenship, our current state constitution victimizes our neighbors and friends by promoting “felony disenfranchisement.”

Here’s how things currently work. Unless a former felon receives permission by the Governor to have their voting rights restored, they are unable to have a firm hand in our democracy. This strict, narrow process toward enfranchisement has led to one in seventeen Kentuckians who currently cannot vote.

This is a statistic seen even more vividly through the lens of race. In Kentucky, one in four African Americans are barred from the vote due to felony convictions. This outrageous ratio seems to constitute the policy as a discriminatory measure



of disenfranchisement. Dating back to the Restoration period of the post-Civil War Era, different forms of these disenfranchisement laws prevented free slaves from voting. According to a 2006 study by the Kentucky League of Women Voters, the language in our state Constitution denying voting rights can be traced back to 1850.

In the 21st century, when the equality of democratic participation is meant to prevail over the racial and social injustices of the past, Kentucky and West Virginia are the only two states in America that deny former felons the right to vote.

Proponents for enfranchisement argue that voting offers an awareness of individual empowerment. It makes sense. The thinking goes that if former felons are allowed to play a consistent role in the betterment of their community, they are less likely to strike against it. In fact, former felons who are granted this right are half as likely to commit another crime in the future.

Some have argued against granting former felons the right to vote. These critics allege that once convicted of such a crime, felons should be stripped of their constitutional rights. Roger Clegg, for example, president and general counsel of the Center for Equal Opportunity, wrote an article for the Lexington *Examiner* in which he stated, “[y]ou don’t have a right to make laws if you aren’t willing to follow them yourself. To participate in self-government, you must be willing to accept the rule of law.”

Of course, voting is not a privilege. It is a right granted to all citizens at birth and claimed at the age

of eighteen. In more liberal states such as Vermont and Maine, felons are even able to maintain their rights in jail and vote while serving their sentences.

Social justice organizations across the state have united in the fight against felony disenfranchisement. Groups like Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (KFTC) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) have hosted lobby days and rallies at the Capital in Frankfort in order to support this restoration. They have focused their efforts on the passage of House Bill 70, an amendment that would restore voting rights after someone has served their debt to society, including prison time, probation, and parole. It would limit the specific crimes eligible for enfranchisement by excluding those crimes related to murder and sexual assault. Hundreds have traveled to Frankfort in the past month to support the passage of the bill, including former felons who have tried and failed repeatedly to regain their vote.

Unfortunately, the bill has yet been voted upon. Until it is heard in the Senate State and Local Government Committee, it remains stalled and in limbo. It cannot be heard until the chairman of the committee, Senator Damon Thayer of the 17th District, agrees to put the bill up for a vote. He refuses to acknowledge its importance, arguing that current constitutional provisions are already set in place to return voting rights to felons. These include a pardon from Governor Beshear, a requirement for the Corrections Department to inform ex-felons of their right to appeal, and a requirement that Corrections Departments give felons the necessary materials to start that process.

However, this is an incredibly slow process and not all former felons have their rights returned. The Kentuckians for the Commonwealth have documented many such instances of felons being denied their petition to the governor, including one former felon from Henderson, Charlie House, who has tried to get his rights back four times, but to no avail.

Silent protests have been staged within Sen. Thayer’s influential committee; supporters of HB 70 like Charlie House have driven to Frankfort to brandish signs reminding other Senators of the bill. So far, nine of the twelve members of this committee have made promises to their constituents that they will vote yes if the bill is proposed. This majority offers two more votes than necessary to pass the bill. However, due to the excessive intricacies of our state political system, only Sen. Thayer can put the bill up for vote, and if he refuses, it is impossible for our representatives to support our interests and vote upon HB 70. Currently, Sen. Thayer is denying the right to vote to both his fellow Senators, and the former felons of Kentucky.

However, I am not out to demonize Sen. Thayer, but to pursue a just end for all former felons successfully reintegrated back into Kentucky. Thayer is simply the means through which to achieve that end, and his refusal to comply with the demands of his fellow Senators and statewide constituents is an embarrassment to the supposed prestige of his elected position. The only way to get HB 70 passed and a long-overdue amendment to the Kentucky constitution added is to put pressure on Sen. Thayer to bring up the bill before his committee finishes their session.

*To make your voice heard when others’ are unable, play a role in this movement by contacting Sen. Thayer at 859-621-6956, writing on his Facebook Page, or talking to him in person in Frankfort.*

## Creative Lexington (cont.)

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Lexington’s creative spirit consistently cite the need to attract the coming wave of hi-tech jobs, they’re doing so only partially informed. First, as Florida will tell you, Lexington’s not the only town with a high-tech interest. It’s competing with the other 1,221 cities who also really, really want creative people to think they’re cool. We’re not really unique in what we’re doing.

But on top of that, the supposed creative jobs—ones with a college degree that certify one as creative—are not even projected to materialize in large numbers. Put more directly, the so-called knowledge economy for which the Creative Class are the anointed leaders, is in large measure a hoax. The high tech, high knowledge creative jobs are, in aggregate, not productive of new jobs. Offshoring of knowledge jobs, enabled by the high tech industry that simultaneously connects people across the globe, is what is going on now, at least throughout the U.S. Why would a company pay someone in Lexington U.S. wages when they can offshore computer or software specialist tasks to equally educated people in India—and pay Indian wages?

Creative Class boosters don’t acknowledge that the knowledge economy can be offshored, too, in most cases much easier. This possibility is borne out in projections by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The BLS projections for the top 30 “job growth” jobs of the next 10 years consist primarily of jobs that do not require a college education—do not require, that is, “creativity” as defined by Florida and his creative thesis (unless you count having a “creative” wait staff as something that a bona fide “creative type” might desire to have in his neighborhood).

And yet, to listen to summits like the Creative Cities, making Lexington a high-tech hub (along with the other 378 or so cities doing the same thing here in the U.S.) is our ticket into 21st century prosperity. Certainly these jobs will surface, and certain people (whose job will allow them to be hyper-mobile and pick up and leave for other cool-looking towns when they so desire)

will no doubt benefit and make good money off of the creative class, but it is not a structural solution to what ails our city.

Lexington has bought Florida’s snake juice, to the tune of a massive 3-day Creative Convention. If previous coverage is any indication, the word “class” and questions of “who wins in this scenario of increasing rent and property values” that coincide with rich out-of-towners settling into our neighborhoods will get pushed to the side, but this should not be surprising. Look at the creative class who are in attendance. Culturally diverse and gay-friendly, I’m sure. But mostly rich: the winners in the larger neoliberalization of the global economy, people who can claim with a clear mind that selling creativity is what Lexington really needs because they’ve been to Paris and Florence and San Francisco and Austin, and they know what works.

### Mobility

There are, of course, two types of mobile humans in Lexington. There is Florida’s Creative Class, who are untethered to any city and who can, because of high tech internet and other capabilities that they celebrate, travel the world in a matter of seconds to accumulate capital—creative or otherwise. This very small group (proportionately) is who the Creative Cities is really trying to reach.

But there are others, a much larger group of Lexington workers, and technology and hypermobility (of goods across borders) has also effected their livelihood. It has also made them more mobile, as their jobs increasingly shift to places with cheaper, or more abundant, labor to exploit. This other group—migrants, out of work factory workers, E. KYians leaving the holler, and increasingly college-educated classes with no job prospects and high debt—has a different sort of mobility. They’re forced to move, and their livability issues are way different than the creative class.

It is this class that I’m more concerned in hearing about, particularly with how they fit into Lexington’s idea of attracting and retraining talent. Their talent.

## ROCK v. Knox (cont.)

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Much to the delight of everyone present, Diaz made another late appearance, only to be thwarted by a hard hitting Moonshine who was having no part of her return. When the final whistle blew the score differential was much the same as at the half, ending at 76-61.

### The Difference

Having lost in such dire fashion to the Blue Ridge Rollergirls two weeks earlier, ROCK changed its attitude and approach coming into Saturday’s match with Hard Knox. In the words of nearly ever skater—they knew they needed to play more as a team, hit harder and stay focused if they were going to have a chance to win.

“At Hard Knox we really amped up our communication and strategy,” Bast’rd said. “We took the Blue Ridge loss...absorbed it...and figured out how we can play more as a team.”

Sissy Bug echoed Bast’rd’s sentiment.

“We knew if we were going to win against Hard Knox we would have to train and play as a team and become effective as a pack,” she said. “We utilized the lessons we learned from earlier mistakes and trained harder and pushed ourselves further than ever before.”

For may of the ROCK crew like Bast’rd and Two Key Terror, the Blue Ridge bout was their first exposure to live derby action.

“I think some of our newer skaters were just learning the feeling of bout-ing versus scrimmaging against Blue Ridge,” Smite said. “You could tell they

everyone felt much more comfortable this time around.”

Bast’rd couldn’t agree more.

“Just having that tiny bit of experience under my belt made me more ready in Knoxville,” she said.

### Up Next

Someone once said the only thing sweeter than wining once is winning twice. That’s exactly what ROCK will attempt to accomplish this coming Saturday in West Lafayette, IN, when they take on the Lafayette Brawlin’ Dolls. It’s the season opener for the Dolls and ROCK is hoping to play spoiler when all is said and done. But more importantly, ROCK wants to build on what it started against Hard Knox.

“For the first half of last season we kept losing and losing,” said Sugar. “Getting a win this early does a lot of great things for our team mentally.”

Or as Sissy Bug put it, “This win has set the trend for the rest of the season ... so watch out girls ... watch out Lafayette!”

Regardless of who wins or loses, there’s always one constant among the girls of ROCK and any other derby team for that matter—each other.

Derby is about being part of one big family, said O’Doom.

“Hard Knox is such a great team,” she said. “They’re all really sweet girls which makes the bouts all the more fun.”

O’Doom’s final words may sum it up best.

“The best party of derby is being able to knock each other around on the track and then go share a beer together at the after party.”

I'm not from here by Kenn Minter



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## Guerilla gardening (cont.)

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stack up, gringo." And my gratuity: "You're Mexican, too?"

"The Wagon" was another spot of horticultural note: a rusty, rotting old tobacco wagon with debilitating chassis-issues; a loaded water-tank, three 100 gallon baffles-big, had broken its back several tobacco seasons prior. And parked on the hill, it glowered to a state of hunched disrepair, hard bed warped and wood grayed. Frost-weed and ironweed hemmed it deeper each year; walnuts and locusts sprouted in the weeds and a grape-vine found its way up. But in the middle of the tangled mess, one side of the wagon's wobbly bed caught a pocket of sunshine on the dome of the hill, full sun from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. and partial till sunset.

We grew some monster weed in there, all cozy and tucked in the overgrowth. It was a convenient spot—for a while. In later years, 2007 to be precise, we were visited the ugliest, cruelest kind of inhospitality available to growers of illicit crops. We were robbed, but we had it coming I suppose. We were a little too brazen, and the weight swung to the dark side of *I-ching*, risk fully realized. The wagon was too close to the barn and the main dirt-road. Planting

weed in places that were just obvious worked best when planted singly with good cover. But the old wagon was *too much* just obvious, and after several successful years someone finally patterned our trail and wiped us out.

Completely. A menagerie of Orange Crush, Bubbleberry, and Peak 19 clones—in full, glorious fucking bloom—gone. I'm 99.9% sure I know who did it, too. What can I say? Asshole scumbag. Mother-fucking low-down chicken-dog. Someone else might've gotten revenge. I rehearsed a few vengeful scenarios myself but never acted. Call me weak. As a gardener, I was accustomed to disappointment and taken to brooding and did nothing but sulk and resolve to stretch the remaining harvest as long as I could. There'd be no extra buds for sale, though, no poundage for far-away friends anticipating Kentucky's cornucopia. Only gravelly disappointment and wispy assurances for next fall.

### Back on the Tracks: last crop on Ho Chi Minh Trail

Of my 15 years raising marijuana, disappointments like this, while painful in the short-term, were thankfully few and far between. I was fortunate enough to see the vast majority of

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crops through from seed to flower; fortunate enough to have a selfless, patient dad show me the ropes of growing and share many a bountiful autumn. Some of my fondest recollections involve two of our last guerrilla beds, named with gracious bows to history, "Hanging Gardens", a hidden promontory with an incredibly dangerous approach, and, with only semi-conscious homage to the greatest guerrilla leader Americans have ever known, "Ho Chi Minh Trail."

Honestly, this later trail was named not so much to honor the North Vietnamese guerrilla hero-president, but to identify the secrecy and stealth needed to navigate our version—a meandering hint of a path through a thick cane-break along the Norfolk Southern right-of-way that finally opened onto a small cliff-top clearing, just large enough for five or six robust she-plants. It was the thick cane-break that lent an air of Southeast Asia. One had to *Viet-Cong* this trail.

Our last crop was a fitting enough tribute to our tenure on this farm—a few pounds of decent bud. In the spring of 2009, the landowners finally sold the place, and we packed up three decades of farming equipment and memory and vacated without too much ado. As dad is fond of repeating, "You never own land; it owns you." But I've failed to mention the 900 pound gorilla (or billion-dollar Corporation) in this text, so I'll give it a go. My dad and I really benefited from the great American railroad experience. Dad started his guerrilla gardening career on railroad property—the perfect scapegoat—and we finished our illicit cultivation together on railroad property. In many, many respects, we owe them big, something like an eternal flame, or in our case an unending bong-hit of something chronic. Note to all future growers: railroad right-of-ways

present the guerrilla gardener with some prime real estate. But you have to be an adventuresome sort, willing to explore, to reclaim strips of land that, in most cases, have been neglected for years. The rails are what concern railroad companies, keeping them clear of obstructions. The earth beyond the ballast is of much less interest to them. It's possible to work up some fantastic growing locales if you're willing to walk the line with a keen eye, like John "Appleseed" Chapman, noting the sun's trajectory, potential shade-makers, accessibility, and relative obscurity to both rail and private property beyond.

Take a weekend off from your usual norms of relaxation. Some exercise will do you good. Don your hiking boots, ripped up jeans and old sweater. You can catch the Southern line in Lexington as it cuts across Broadway just south of Bolivar and turns due south itself. You're only 20 or so miles away.

After Nicholasville and Wilmore, you'll pick up the "rat-hole" again, the less than flattering moniker Engineers of old gave the stretch from Cincinnati to Danville, where the rail-bed cuts deep, narrow canyons through the rolling terrain. It's some of the finest country you'll see in central Kentucky because you're seeing it the way the railway intended—a consummately back-forty experience. You might even find our old haunts and secret gardens if the solitude of the tracks, tense silence, and looming sense of something loud and heavy about to arrive hasn't already spooked you back to the hum, glow, and safe monotony of Lex.

But should you make it all the way to southern Jessamine County, don't go thinking you'll find any kind-bud growing this year, or even next. We've moved on down the line, too, and left the place crawling with DEA, ghost-hunters.

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