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VOLUME III, ISSUE 1

Propping up Main St. Locating city development

By Danny Mayer

For the past five years, the overwhelming majority of power—public debate, political scrutiny, positive media coverage, public and private money, development—has focused on reviving downtown Lexington and maintaining the county’s rural farmland. Correspondingly, most political and economic capital has been spent

and rural improvements have existed at a geographic remove from our everyday lives. Things are happening here in Lexington, it’s just that most of the city’s population experience little direct benefit.

City consensus: city and country investments

The evolving consensus view by city power-brokers regarding city



Main Street looking west, Summer 2010.

in the city’s center and at the county’s edges.

This urban/rural development has been pitched to residents as an investment in the entire city, a public good. Demographically speaking, however, most Lexingtonians do not live on farms, nor do they live on Main Street. They live somewhere *between* the city and the country in diverse suburban tracts. Consequently, most of our relationships to city debates and costly city

development and long-term “vision” has been that investments in a signature countryside and vibrant city are public goods, that such investments ultimately benefit all Lexingtonians, and that they offer the city its greatest “bang for the buck” in maintaining a competitive advantage over other cities. In the city center, it is claimed that city and private money

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Harry Dean Stanton: Kentucky muse

New KET documentary honors a legend and kicks off a film festival

By Lucy Jones

Showing people a picture of Harry Dean Stanton is like presenting them with a cinematic Rorschach test. If you ask them who he is, the answer says as much about them as it does about him. “That’s the dad from *Pretty in Pink*.” “That’s the dude from *Repo Man!*” “That’s Brett from *Alien*.” Or, “that’s the guy from *Red Dawn*—‘Avveeeenge Meeeee!’” Based on the reply, you can

Thurman wants to add another credit to Stanton’s long list: musician. While many of us know Harry Dean Stanton’s face from the 175 film and television credits that he boasts on IMDB, not as many are aware of his musical career. We’ve seen glimpses of him singing and playing guitar in films such as *Cool Hand Luke* and the music documentary *Dig!* (side note: how badass is then septuagenarian Stanton that he’s randomly hanging out at the Brian Jonestown



Harry Dean Stanton’s iconic Travis Henderson in Paris, Texas.

gauge everything from how old a person is to which side of the cafeteria he/she probably sat on in high school.

In his new documentary for KET, *Harry Dean Stanton: Crossing Mulholland*, Lexington-based filmmaker Tom

Massacre house party as the camera casually strolls from room to room?), but no film has explored his musical career in depth. Not until now.

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Night falls on the Jessamine A beaver tale

By Northrup Centre

“Paint what I see, simply.”

— Harlan Hubbard, Nov. 1959

Looked at from the perspective of the heavens, as one would look at a map, Camp Nelson lies just above the southernmost point of the Kentucky River’s 60 mile long southwest detour around southern Fayette and Jessamine Counties, a sort of convex riverine parabolic arc that begins near Winchester at Lock 10, turns and pivots north and west at Lock 8 a couple miles from here, and ends somewhere around Brooklyn Bridge just past Lock 7 as the river paces itself toward Frankfort and the wide, flat lower stretches beyond.

Here at Camp Nelson, the Cincinnati Arch, an uplifted spine of Ordovician rock 500 million years old running north by northeast from Tennessee through Kentucky and Ohio, peaks, creating a sort of geological land-shed that rolls back at an average terrestrial drop of 10 feet per mile toward the Ohio River. The Kentucky will twist and turn through the arch another 135 miles before its terminus at Carrollton, somewhere between Cincinnati and Louisville. Sitting on the water at Camp Nelson, more than a football field below the Highway 27 bridge that runs south from Nicholasville, looking downriver one can almost feel the entire river bed

easing back into its ancestral, north-westerly route.

The twenty mile run from Camp Nelson to High Bridge, roughly the

entirety of pool eight, is the jewel run of the inner bluegrass stretch of the Kentucky River. Today the trip is a quiet float beneath 300 foot palisades

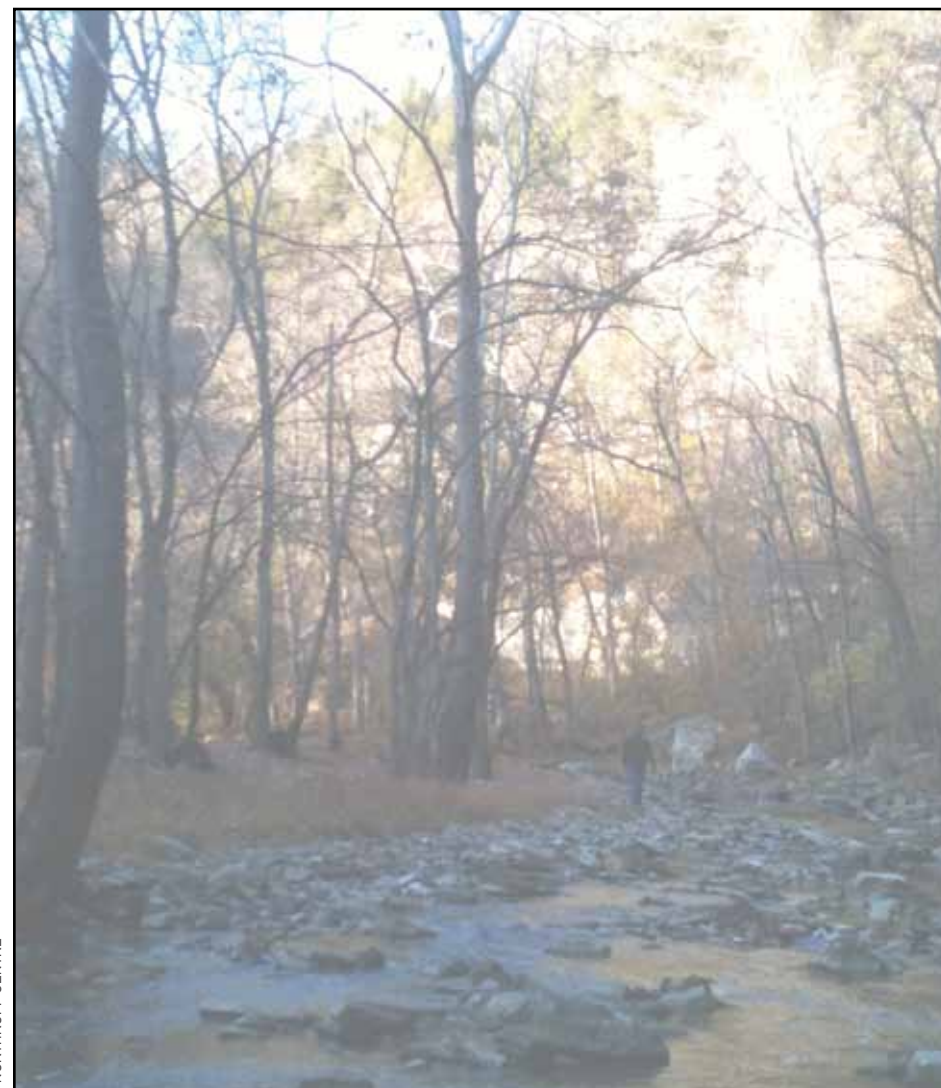
and overgrown river bottoms. Paddling there, one is more likely to see blue herons than people.

Over two hundred years ago, when the area served as the region’s centralized highway system, the river bustled with commerce and people. Early European settlement in Kentucky centered itself around the fertile lands and plentiful water of the inner bluegrass that surrounded the towns of Lexington, Danville and Harrodsburg. Camp Nelson and High Bridge (or more accurately, Hickman Creek and Dix River) were some of the biggest king shit spots on a big king shit river in backwoods America.

Lacking bridges, ferry crossings established trade routes between the newly established towns, allowing business and other connections to pass from one side of the river to the other. Between Camp Nelson and Jessamine Creek, roughly the halfway point on the trip to High Bridge, an early 1800 map of the area shows three river crossings (Hogan’s and Johnson’s Ferry nearby Hickman Creek, and Martin’s Boatyard at the mouth of Jessamine), and in the area around High Bridge, no fewer than four ferries (two owned by the Shakers) competed to ferry supplies and people from Danville and Harrodsburg north to Lexington (and vice versa).

By the end of the eighteenth century, farms along the Kentucky River

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Walking up Jessamine Creek.

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Main Street (cont.)

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spent downtown improves livability for citizens already living throughout Lexington, who get better access to culture, creative jobs, shopping and nightlife. At the same time, it is said that livable cities can better attract the important demographic of globally conscious, creative non-Lexingtonians who are looking to choose a place to live and work. Downtown living is also presented as greener, more aesthetically pleasing and practical—the wave of the future.

The same consensus has maintained that Fayette County's rural countryside equally contributes to Lexington's over-all economic and downtown growth. When the city invests in saving rural acreage from development, speculators and developers are forced to "infill" the city, which contributes to needed downtown development. At the same time, limiting rural growth also allows Lexington residents to maintain an important livability factor: their close proximity to the picturesque inner bluegrass countryside. The unique juxtaposition of city and country that residents have access to also helps nurture an already strong agri-tourism industry, a key pillar in a diversifying Lexington economy.

Scrutiny, debate and development: national maps

I generally agree with the broad contours of the consensus view—investments in the city and its periphery are important and can be mutually beneficial. At the same time, though, I often find myself disagreeing with the actions this consensus often-times enables in Lexington.

Part of my disagreement stems from my reading and understanding of national trends. City leaders have presented the renewed emphasis placed on creating a livable downtown and a picturesque countryside as national trends worthy of exploiting, of capitalizing upon. But in embracing the new urbanist vision, they have left out some key bits of context.

The national push to revive downtowns has evolved at precisely the same time that wealth has shifted away from the suburbs and back into the cities. Over the past 20 years, a similar influx of money has also occurred in formerly rural agricultural lands throughout the U.S. The increased economic power of these places—Jackson Hole, Santa Fe, nearly the entire state of Montana—has developed not through continued agricultural production, but rather through a valuation of the countryside as "picturesque," mostly by a wealthy global clientele who can afford to jet in and out of these vacation spots. (This fact has led Barbara Ehrenreich

to observe that if a place looks truly beautiful, chances are that you cannot afford to live there.)

Cities and their countrysides may be experiencing periods of reinvestment, but it should also be clear that these public investments are disproportionately geared either to attract or mollify the same people as they always have: the wealthier among us who are either moving out of the suburbs or looking for new places to visit and own.

The influx of wealth into the cities, generally presented in Lexington and elsewhere as positive evidence of urban renewal, has been accompanied by a not-wholly-expected change nationally in urban demographics: in the rush to make the disinvested city appealing to "everyone," those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder often get displaced from the city.

Between the years 1999 and 2009, according to a recent Brookings Institute study, the number of poor living in metro areas increased by 5.5 million people, with two-thirds of that growth occurring in the suburbs. In



Main Street looking east, Summer 2010.

fact by 2009, as the back to the city mantra has taken hold nationally as a model of progressive economic development, the majority of the poor who live in metro areas now reside in the suburbs. According to Brookings, 1.9 million more live in the suburbs than in the city.

At the very moment when we need to be investing in the suburbs, it seems—at a time when the suburbs have become more city-like in their mixture of class, ethnic and racial positions; that is, when they have finally become representative of the public—they have lost the voice of civic leaders and, correspondingly, the interest of the public and its mobilizing capabilities.

Lexington's creative solutions: local maps

Despite claims of Lexington's uniqueness (and world-class creative awesomeness), this city is not much different than other mid-size U.S. cities attempting to re-tool their urban core and promote their rural edges. For the most part, our solutions have been their solutions: make downtown livable. Leverage nearby assets. Do this mainly to better attract individuals (creative types) and corporations into town.

No surprise, then, that we may be on track to replicate, on our own scale, the same national problems that occur when city planning attaches itself to the needs of people who, in aggregate, do not need the extra public investment.

Look where our public money and civic interest have gone these past several years. Despite not committing to annual funds to develop affordable housing, the city has committed to investing regular annual sums of money (the regularity of which better attracts other outside money) in an effort to purchase 50,000 acres of

the tony neighborhoods of inner-ring suburb Chevy Chase.

Think about this for a moment: One of the city's most successful and wealthy neighborhoods—Chevy Chase—has essentially been afforded a direct, and free, bus service to cross-town eating and drinking establishments, all in the name of bolstering downtown business. In contrast to every other LexTran line, Chevy Chase bus-users get to ride in a brand new, environmentally friendly bus, one whose visually distinct appearance distinguishes it from every other (non-free) bus in Lexington used by everyday (read: not wealthy) riders.

In the East End, important black cultural landmarks that have the support of the city like the Lyric Theater and Isaac Murphy Park are found on Third Street—the back part of the city's downtown Horse Mania commercial zone. The city's celebrated investment in reviving the formerly segregated Bluegrass-Aspendale projects has had the byproduct effect of diminishing urban density in the East End area. In trumpeting the "success" of this redevelopment, nobody seems to know where many of the previous residents have relocated to. It seems clear that the subsequent construction of Equestrian Estates on the site has attracted few who previously lived there. City/private developers instead opted to slightly scale up price points to attract a more middle class neighborhood clientele.

I should stop here a second, step back and say, I love all these measures and developments. Shropshire, which runs north through Equestrian Estates, has been a joy to jog down this past year while watching the neighborhood fill in and become vibrant. The city should be putting regular money into the maintenance of county agricultural lands. Using targeted free or discounted public transportation to aid specific communities in moving through the city certainly qualifies as a public good. The Lyric's beneficial work in the East End neighborhood, as a regular hub of entertainment and community empowerment, is already immense—and it is not even 6 months old.

But looked at in aggregate, platted on a map, things seem a little fishy. That's a lot of big city projects in a small space, an area generally about 6 blocks wide and maybe a mile and a half long at the epicenter of the city, and 25,000 acres parceled around the periphery. Also a lot of studies. And media space, money, time, effort.

The community has benefited off those investments in unequal ways. Relative to the rest of the city, the downtown Horse Mania Zone, along with the owners of thoroughbred farms (despite their own problems), are faring comparatively better than the rest of the city. As one among many constituencies, their needs are getting heard, and often met.

Though I personally am faring well (my wife and I are employed), I note very little of the immense downtown investment even reaching into my neighborhood, just off Fourth Street on MLK, only a block outside the Horse Mania zone. Our streets have not been beautified. Downtown jobs do not seem to have had an impact here. Many of my neighbors have no need to visit the bars, restaurants and city offices that now proliferate downtown (and which are cited as evidence of downtown revitalization), so there's not much of a feeling among some of my neighbors of belonging downtown; the Living Arts and Science Center, which helps anchor the block, didn't even merit a Horse Mania horse.

These aren't gripes so much as an observation. I know from personal and professional observation that, among others, Andrea James has worked diligently to harness active neighbors and limited district funds to neighborhood needs. Thankfully, we have the Lyric; this alone qualifies as an immense

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[closing the fresh food gap through the utilization of urban in-fill.]

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Jessamine (cont.)

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and inland were producing plenty of goods for sale, but they lacked ways to bring their products to a larger market. Overland routes could not carry the volume of cargo—pork, beef, flour, tobacco; later coal and timber—produced in the area. With no industrial energy, river power proved more efficient than horse and ox. Led by a crafty and apparently highly persuasive Revolutionary War vet, a General James Wilkerson, Kentuckians pushed to gain access to New Orleans ports, by way of the Kentucky, and then the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Wilkerson's success in persuading the Spanish government of New Orleans to take Kentucky Proud cargo loaded on flat boats—glorified single-wide wooden trailers on water—for sale to European markets drastically increased the Kentucky's importance to the state's economic welfare.

In this story of early Kentucky development, the importance of the Camp Nelson to High Bridge float is perhaps best attested to by the fact that, of the flatboats General Wilkerson commanded during his first commercial trip to New Orleans, nearly all departed from Hickman Creek at Camp Nelson and from the Dix River at High Bridge.

A call for help

In early November, I was occasioned back to the bluegrass by a disconcerting telegram delivered to my hill-side home in the outer suburbs of Rio De Janeiro. From *NoC* editor Danny Mayer, the dispatch read:

“Rupp—you lazy bastard. Must finish promised WEG story. stop. Manuscript is rubbish. Needs massive editing. stop. *NoC* travel funds diminishing. Benton demanding paper \$ to hang with world socialists in Dakar. stop. Losing it. Must come NOW—d.”

Eager to both help a friend and fulfill any contractual obligations to the paper, I immediately canceled my graduate-level journalism ethics class for the month and caught the next flight to Lexington. Unbeknownst to Mayer, I had arranged for Gortimer

T. Spotts to pick me up at the airport. I had phoned my old friend enroute, somewhere over the middle south Atlantic, and together we hastily sketched a quick getaway before I checked into NoC headquarters and set myself to the tedium of revising my WEG manuscript.

I was still hazy on most of the details of our trip when Gortimer picked me up in his white 1968 Thunderbird. In his backseat, an assortment of camping gear, paddles and tarps sat atop a thick loam of empty Ale-8-One and Laphroig bottles, dry yellowed newspapers and crusted Blistex containers. On the Thunderbird's hardtop roof, two one-man canoes were cinched tightly, their bows protruding nearly to the grill.

Citing space issues, Gortimer secured my two pieces of luggage to the tops of the canoes. “I guess we're going paddling,” I said.

“Get in,” Gortimer replied. “I've taken care of everything. We're heading to Camp Nelson for a night on the river, Jessamine Creek.”

Send off from Camp Nelson

An hour later, the car unloaded and the canoes packed, we shove off from the boat ramp at the Camp Nelson Trailer Park, not far from the spot where Hogan's Ferry once operated.

In the 220 years since General Wilkerson departed Hickman Creek with goods bound for New Orleans,

commercial and human traffic on the river has all but left. All the action has moved up, about 400 vertical feet up, to overland road systems that in the early 1800s had yet to support significant trade. As we take our first eager strokes, above us vehicles travel across the Highway 27 bridge at speeds between 50 and 70 miles per hour, their size and pace knowable by the muted pitches thrown from their engines, which filter down to us on the water.

Turning our attention down river, a sudden burst of paddling takes us to Johnson's Ferry, long since vanished and replaced by a low slung bridge that connects the two river bottoms. A relic of the old Lancaster-Nicholasville Turnpike (Highway 27), which since Johnson Ferry was in operation had crossed the Kentucky here, the bridge once connected the small bottom communities that had sprung up on both the Jessamine and Garrard County sides of the river. Decommissioned, it now mostly functions as a footbridge for amorous trailer park guests and the residents of the several houses lining the Jessamine County side, their very own Ponte Vecchio on the Kentucky.

We muddle past, fight the stiff headwind, and bend left with the river, finally out of view of all bridges, ghost ferries and the trailer park. We will not see another house on the water for 18 miles, until coming upon the edges of High Bridge downriver, just before the Dix. To celebrate our official evacuation from the chaotic commercial world above, Gortimer and I alternate pulls from a bottle of Laphroig Quarter Cask and a bowl of Kentucky Damn Proud home grown. We have paddled a half mile.

A diverting story: J.R. Shaw

Like most things in this state, the Kentucky travels a very great distance to go a very short way. The limestone palisades here prove tough buggers. The river must wind a circuitous route through and around them: in total, in 2 days we paddle 3 bends and 20 miles to travel maybe 6.

Taking our time, we spend the day rounding Polly's Bend, on our way to Jessamine Creek. As we alternate floating and paddling, Gortimer drinks liberally from the Quarter Cask, occasionally passing some my way. The day passes pleasantly, with Gortimer unfolding to me his story of the river here, much of which I've detailed earlier. Often as we paddle, he points out key landmarks from the stories along the banks or upon the palisades. A native of Garrard County, Gortimer has roots in the area that reach back to the days of General Wilkerson; his ancestor, a John Robert (J.R.) Shaw, arrived in Kentucky in the early 1790s.

Though he came to the bluegrass from the greater Cincinnati area, J.R. Shaw, originally, was from England. He arrived in America during the 1770s to quell the revolution as a member of the King's army. Captured by the insurgents in Carolina, J.R. later escaped imprisonment in Pennsylvania, a British subject in colonial America. After kicking around the state and working odd jobs, Shaw saw the light, signed up for the rebel army and, forthwith, was dispatched along with a Colonel Harmar and a

General St. Clair, to Fort Hamilton near Cincinnati. Here he became a digger of wells (a well digger).

“He dug Cincinnati's first!”

Spotts was insistent on this point. By this time in the story, Spotts was halfway through the Laphroig, and I had smoked most of my allotment of Local First harvest. Spotts had stopped paddling and pulled out a leather-bound booklet. I couldn't understand why. He began to wave the book around, as evidence apparently, to some point he was trying to make.

“Goddam it...I'm telling you the truth...It's in here, all of it.” He tossed the book over four feet of dark river water, landing it snug in my lap. I didn't know what to look for. I opened the rotting diary and began to read.

Sure enough, the journal front page read, “Property of J.R. Shaw.” Stoned, I lost myself in the story and followed idly behind Spotts, thumbing through the faded pages.

Shaw spent his first Kentucky years here on the river as a jack of trades, a digger of wells, a quarrier of stone, a burner of lime and a blower of many mill seats. Eventually, J.R. moved on to quasi-respectability in Lexington, where he continued work as a tinker until his death, losing one (1) eye, four (4) fingers, one (1) thumb and seven (7) toes in the process.

I found much of this out later, as the diary only covered Shaw's Hickman Creek years, stopping at the exact time Shaw left the river bottom for Lexington. From the at-times wildly fantastic scrawlings, I managed to jot down some passages from the diary, most of which concerned Shaw's earliest days at Camp Nelson and Hickman Creek:

After crossing Steel's Ferry, I traveled along the north side of the Kentucky River until I came to Joseph M'Lains, where I blew some rocks for him...I proceeded to the mouth of Hickman...Mr. Ballenger the ferryman, observing my intoxication, would not admit me into the boat, consequently, returned to ferry house where I spent the remainder of my hard-earned money; the result of which was a violent attack of the bottle fever.

After recovering from my indisposition I commenced digging a well for John Biswell, four miles back to the ferry; a storm coming on prevented me from progressing, therefore turned to my old trade of frolicking, the result as usual (the bottle fever). Afflicted with it, I was one night lying in the tavern before the fire, when I was disturbed by a parcel of ruffians, consisting of major Mastin Clay, Lieutenant Spence, and a—

“We're here.”

“We're where?” I looked up at Gortimer from J.R.'s life.

“Jessamine Creek. We'll set up camp, then a hike to Fraggie Rock.”

I followed behind Spotts. Together we entered the Jessamine cutting right, then quickly angled back left. Jessamine's overgrown bottoms inched in on us, swallowing slowly the open spaces of the Kentucky behind us.

To be continued...

Dear readers, Since I was forced to rely upon my flimsy memory of Gortimer's narratives about the river and some hastily scribbled and nearly indecipherable notes, and since I was participating in events that would lead me, too, to catch a bad case of the bottle fever, I hope you can excuse my reliance on outside research. In doing such research (to verify Gortimer's claims), I came across a wonderful book, Billy Jackson Brewer's Rails, Rivers, Roads and early years in Jessamine County, Kentucky (available at Morris Book Shop), which told much the same story as Gortimer recounted to me.

In places where Gortimer's story did not hold up, I used Brewer's account, though to be honest, who's to say who's version is correct? To tell the story as I experienced it, I did not distinguish between the two accounts. I hope you will grant me this leeway in “fact” for the sake of the storyline. Sincerely, Northrupp.



Polly's Bend, facing Jessamine County.

Main Street (cont.)

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fringe benefit. But then again, we're located one block off the Horse Mania zone. New money (me and probably you) is pouring into this area. Returns on the public's large investment downtown, I would presume, decrease the farther one is located from it (and me).

Whether intended or not, city-wide, most residents have only benefited indirectly from the many consecutive years of downtown and rural investment, though they are often invoked collectively as direct beneficiaries to justify public expenditures; meanwhile, those who most visibly and directly benefit from remaking Lexington into an urban showcase seem to be the types of people who, from the outset, were already generally well off.

In other words, new times and new schemes, new developments and new markets, new rhetoric and new aesthetics. Same old winners.

Off the map: suburbs as solution

I always chuckle when reading the many assessment reports that relate to the city. They all say the same thing. Lexington has world-class scenery and a small but vibrant urban core with lots of potential. City leaders should position themselves to maximize these strengths.

There's always a chapter on the horse industry and the countryside. There's always one on downtown's potential, and another outlining city strengths (usually accompanied by a sober reminder that all competitive global cities of tomorrow promote x, y and z in their city in order to attract talent). From there, things vary a bit, but this part is nearly all the same. Bourbon is often mentioned.

I laugh because I think, *has the person authoring this study actually lived in Lexington, or even spent time here?* Whatever else Lexington is, it is a city of suburbs. Most of us live in a diverse mix of suburban developments, and unless ridiculous amounts of new urban housing stock get built real quick, most of us will remain living in them.

The solutions come from some rigid urban utopia: Though your city has a very small urban footprint relative to other older cities because you did not industrialize as much during the 20th century, you should be like Austin (population 1,000,000). You should urbanize like Pittsburgh (whose downtown first spit out 400,000 residents over a 30 year period before settling at a population still larger than Lexington). World class cities! World class countrysides! Development in a box! It all seems so narrow, topographically speaking, a narrow range of creative solutions.

In most studies, the suburbs are understood as the problem, not as a potential solution. This should not surprise us. Like cities forty years ago during the era of white flight, the suburbs are now just a place experts tell us we're supposed to fly through, turning our nose up at the ugly aesthetics, on our way to the re-branded city or country (or to the airport). This is unfortunate because, in *this* city at least, such thinking dismisses a very real potential strength. It also completely fails to engage most of the public on their home turf.

Bike your suburbs, know your suburbs. Read Steve Austin's Bluegrass ReVisions blog for some good inner-New Circle suburban routes. Drop in for lunch. Throw rounds of disc. Roll in the dirt. Be meddlesome. Wear a helmet. Explore.

JANUARY 19, 2011

Music

Sunday Valley: the NoC interview

By Robert Simpson

There's a holler echoing down the streets of central Kentucky. It has the kick of Grandpa's shotgun and the memory of a proud people tucked high in the mountains of Appalachia. We trace the ghost to Third Street Dive, a small bar in Louisville, KY, where leather jackets come standard and British punk rock blasts from the corner jukebox.

Tonight, the Lexington boys in Sunday Valley are introducing their heart wrenching, high octane outlaw country to an eager new audience. If the locals are too punk to appreciate the bluegrass, Appalachian inspired holler music, tonight, they're not showing it.

After the nearly two-hour set I caught up with lead singer & songwriter

Sturgill Simpson to discuss the band's new album, *To the Wind and On to Heaven*, and their future plans.

RS: I think that five years ago it was easy for people to classify you as a country band. That seems to have changed.

STU: Yeah, for lack of knowing what to really call us. I think with our music, our core unit had a lot of different influences...but I couldn't help but sound like a hick when I sing and a lot of my influences are from country groups from the '80s.

RS: It seems like in the last few years it's become OK to like country again where it once was a something of a stigma.

STU: Yeah, especially on the local level. I grew up listening to traditional

folk and country music and a lot of traditional Appalachian holler music. That's where my heart is so it's natural that these songs are coming out like this. I feel that it's a lot more true to the spirit of country music than most stuff coming out of the Nashville pop scene right now.

RS: Do you feel that it takes a lot of courage and sacrifice to play music as a career?

STU: Well, about a year ago I gave up my job on the railroad making fifty grand a year, sold pretty much everything I own and came back to KY just to make one record. One record—knowing full well that it's probably a curse and I'd never make a dime on it. To be honest, there was times when I needed to step back from this lifestyle. Times I needed

perspective on what is true and real, and I realize time and time again this is what I want. I think to be an artist, you have to have the courage to sometimes be a loser and experience failure. You have to be able to allow yourself to be vulnerable.

RS: Vulnerability seems to be a real emotion in the new record. You recorded it with a rock producer Duane Lundy at Shangri-la studios in Lexington. I think most people expected you to record in Nashville...

STU: I'm telling you, you can't record a real country record in Nashville anymore (laughs). It's hard to find people of integrity there. I love Duane and Shangri-la. He's very open; I can go into that studio and

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Film & Media

JANUARY 19, 2011

Local film happenings

Bluegrass Film Society announces its Spring Screening Series

The Bluegrass Film Society will launch its 2011 Spring Series with a screening of *Terribly Happy*, a 2008 Danish thriller about a Copenhagen cop who moves to a small town following a nervous breakdown. The film will be shown on Wednesday, January 19 at 7:30 P.M. in the Oswald Building at BCTC.

The second screening in the series will be the acclaimed 2008 Belgian film *Lorna's Silence*. That film will be shown on January 26 at 7:30 P.M. in the same location. All screenings in the series are free and open to the public. For more information, please visit

the Bluegrass Film Society's Facebook page.

KET's Community Cinema at the Lexington Public Library

KET will host this month's installment of the Community Cinema Series on Thursday, January 20 at 6 P.M. with a screening of *For Once In My Life*. The hour-long documentary follows a 28 person band whose members are challenged by disability, yet who display rare genius in their musical abilities.

The film explores the struggles and triumphs of band members, how they challenge the perceptions of those around them, and how they use music



to heal themselves. As always, the film will be shown at the downtown branch of the Lexington Public Library and is free of charge. Be prepared to stick around for a discussion to follow. For more information, please visit www.ket.org/communitycinema.

Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life* at the UK Student Center

The United Sister Circle Alliance has announced the formation of a new film society and series entitled Through OUR Lens: Women & Film. The group will host a screening of the 1959 classic *Imitation of Life* in the Student Center Ballroom at UK on Friday, February 4 at 7:00 P.M. The film will be followed by discussion, potential talking points of which can be found at: <http://www.united-sister.org/filmsociety.html>. Refreshments and popcorn will be served, and the organization suggests arriving early as seats are limited. For more information please visit www.united-sister.org.

Black Swan: black yawn

By Colleen Glenn

What I am about to say will be unpopular and may very well result in rescinded dinner invitations and nasty Facebook posts, but here is the Truth: *Black Swan* is possibly the most over-rated film of the year.

Before you hang me in effigy, let me explain.

It's an entertaining psychological thriller; I will give it that. *Black Swan* will keep you on the edge of your seat and make you squirm. It may even keep you up at night. Great nuanced performances by several actors (particularly Barbara Hershey, Mila Kunis, and Vincent Cassel) combine to form a captivating cast. Director Darren Aronofsky paces the film well, building suspense slowly as the narrative evolves toward the denouement. Finally, superb set and costume design create an imaginative landscape that teeters on the edge of reality.

But, anyone who saw its precursor, *The Wrestler*, knew exactly where this plot was headed. The titillation of Aronofsky's thriller felt considerably diluted (and bombastic) due to the predictability of the narrative.

What saved *The Wrestler* from becoming melodramatic schmaltz was the incredible performance of

Mickey Rourke who took a script full of clichés and fused them into a powerful drama through his ability to develop a fully human and tragic character.

Natalie Portman, as Nina the ballerina, nails the driven, perfectionist component of her character (major props to her for learning ballet, by the way), but ignores all other potential dimensions of the woman she inhabits. The result is a protagonist who is flat and rather boring to watch. That is, until the last five minutes when she transforms...just exactly as we knew she would.

Even the infamous sex scene between Portman and Kunis was underwhelming and safely lodged in fantasy. Making it even less audacious, there was little chemistry between the leading women. Since Kunis rivals Prince for sexy mojo (Macauly Culkin, really?!), the problem, again, seems to be Portman.

But don't expect the Oscars to reflect this critic's opinion. Portman will likely win an Academy Award for her performance. So, *Swan* fans, relax and feel confident that your film will get the recognition you feel it deserves.

If you need me, I'll be at home, eating dinner by myself.



Mila Kunis and Natalie Portman star in *Black Swan*.

Crossing Mulholland (cont.)

continued from page 1

As it turns out, music was actually 84-year-old Kentucky native Stanton's first love. As Thurman explains, "he's been playing music longer than he's been acting, and he's been acting a long time." Perhaps not surprisingly, Stanton's voice sounds about the way his face looks—soulful, earnest, and just a little bit sad. *Crossing Mulholland* Associate Producer Sara O'Keefe had the opportunity to sit in on a musical session during the course of filming, and states "when you see Harry sing, you can tell it is coming from a very special place in his heart. His voice is honest and full of emotion."

Indeed, some of the most touching moments of the documentary involve Thurman taking his cameras into Stanton's home and filming a series of songs performed by Stanton alongside actress/singer Michelle Phillips. "Anyone with a Netflix account can see a Harry Dean Stanton movie," says Thurman. "But how many people get invited to a private concert within his living room?" This is the access that *Crossing Mulholland* provides, and the experience is not to be missed.

An equally emotional moment of the film comes in the form of a 2003 duet of "Sunday Morning Coming Down" between Stanton and longtime friend and co-star (and the narrator of *Crossing Mulholland*) Kris Kristofferson. Thurman had filmed the two men as part of a 2004 documentary on Sam Peckinpah. In fact, all of the early interviews of Stanton

that appear in *Crossing Mulholland* were originally filmed in support of other projects. Thurman began interviewing Stanton in 1992 for his documentary on Warren Oates. Over the years, he accumulated a good amount of footage as Stanton weighed in on everyone from Ben Johnson to Hunter S. Thompson. It wasn't until early summer of last year that Thurman, with the support of KET, decided to embark on a project centered on Stanton himself.

Harry Dean Stanton: Crossing Mulholland is the latest installment in KET's Kentucky Muse programming series. Kentucky Muse was begun in 2008 as a means to, as KET Producer Teresa Day explains, "reflect the diversity of creativity of Kentucky and Kentuckians in a non-formulaic way." This is the fourth season of the series which has profiled a wide range of Kentucky artists, musicians, and writers.

Thurman's idea to do a documentary on Stanton was a perfect fit for the series. As Day explains, "Harry Dean is an amazing actor with an incredible body of work—anyone who's been paying any attention to American film and TV since the '60s knows his face, but many may not know that he was born in West Irvine and went to UK. So even though he's been away from Kentucky for a long time, his story and his work have Kentucky roots." Thurman concurs, "when you look at that face you know you are looking at someone from the area. He wears it and he wears it well."

A significant portion of *Crossing Mulholland* is devoted to exploring Stanton as a specifically Southern actor. Thurman was able to procure a number of photos from Stanton's West Irvine childhood, as well as images from his years at Lafayette and the University of Kentucky. Via a series of interviews, cousins tell tales of hijinks with names that any Lexington viewer would recognize.

It is because of this local connection that the Lexington Film League has decided to launch a film festival in Stanton's honor. Entitled (simply enough) Harry Dean Stanton Fest, the festival will run from Wednesday, February 2 until Friday, February 4, 2011. The festival will kick off with the world premiere of Thurman's documentary. The Lexington Film League and KET are cohosting the event with the sponsorship of the Kentucky Theatre. The evening will begin with a reception at 6:30, and the screening of *Harry*

Dean Stanton: Crossing Mulholland will begin at 7. Following the film, Tom Thurman will conduct a Q&A session that will be opened to the audience. This is a free event, and concessions will be provided.

The second day of the festival will feature a rare screening of the Wim Wenders classic *Paris, Texas*. Mr. Stanton's co-star in the film, Hunter Carson, will be on hand to answer questions following the film. The screening starts at 7 P.M. and, like the other festival screenings, will be held at the Kentucky Theatre. The event costs \$10, and all proceeds will benefit the LFL in order to support future screenings.

The closing day of the festival will feature a 1:30 P.M. matinee of *Cool Hand Luke* and a midnight screening of the 1984 punk classic *Repo Man*. Both screenings are \$5.

For more information, visit www.lexingtonfilmleague.org, and www.ket.org/muse.

Sunday Valley (cont.)

continued from the previous page

do whatever I want and Duane doesn't answer to anybody. He can say, your shit sucks and I don't want to work with you, and he would do that. But he didn't with us, he took a chance. He had never heard us and we had never met, but he was able to offer such a fresh perspective on the record that really helped and I absolutely loved it.

RS: What's going to happen with the record?

STU: Well, we're gonna shop it to a few labels. They're gonna put us to fuck off because they can't put it in a box, they can't label it... But it's a Kentucky record. Maybe that will confuse some people, but we're extremely happy.

For more info on *Sunday Valley*, check www.reverbnation.com/sundayvalley.

JANUARY 19, 2011

Knot lessons for the bitter cold

Shootin' n Snaggin' with the Frugal Fisherman

I'd be lying if I said I have been fishing here in the last few months. Much like everyone else I have been hunkering down, layering up and lying low, all in an attempt to beat what seems to be a permanent state of frigid-ity throughout the Bluegrass. For more than eight weeks now I have spent all but an hour or two a week inside. The lack of nature in my life has started to take its toll.

There are only so many movies and books a man can enjoy before he starts to go stir crazy. Before his home starts to feel like a prison. And if you are anything like me the pictures on

have applications for fishing. And neither of the two knots I knew how to tie was listed. So I decided rather than die from boredom and vitamin D3 deficiency, I'd learn as many knots as I could starting with the two I knew—the palomar and the splice.

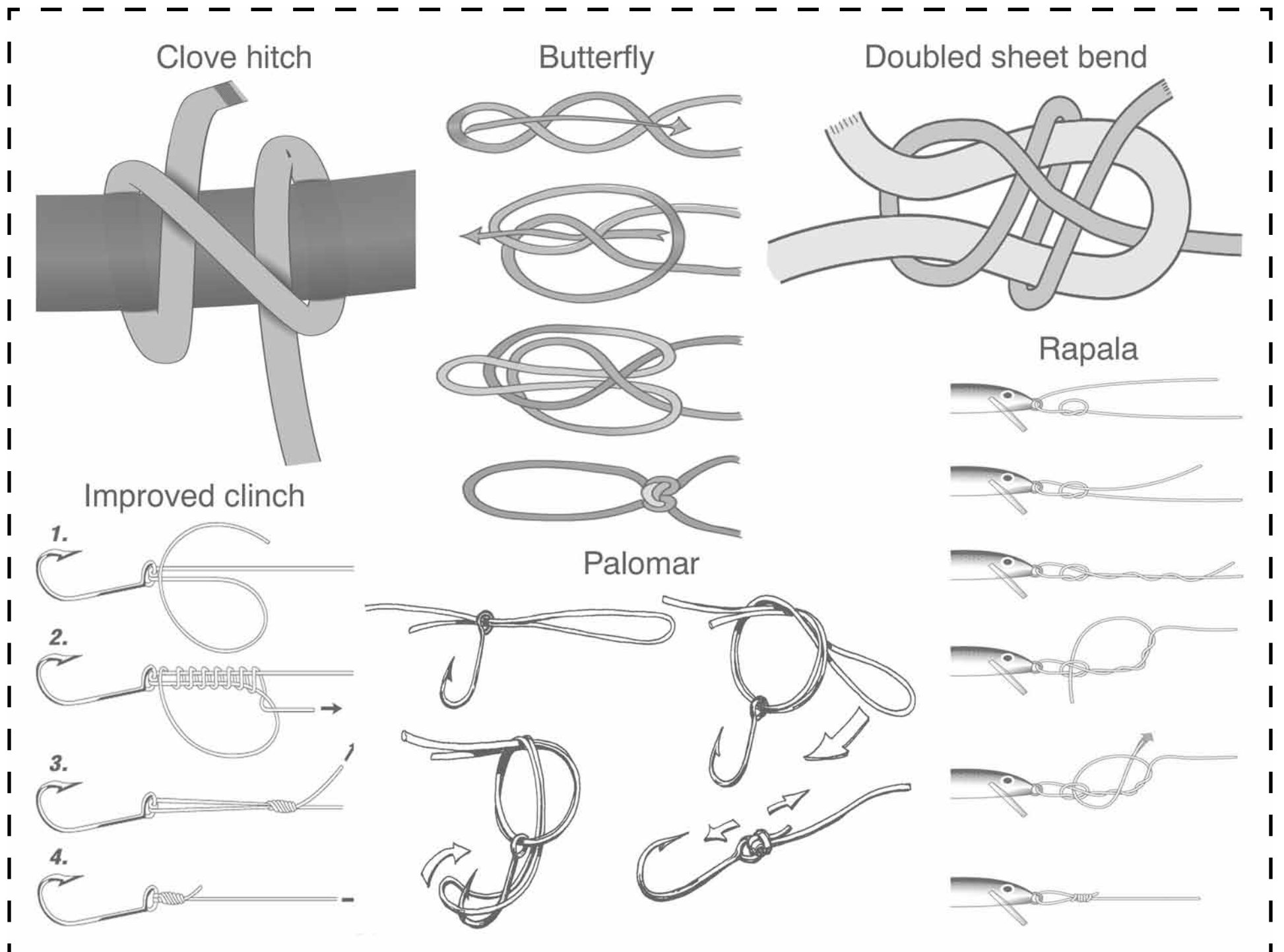
Much to my surprise I quickly learned what I thought was the palomar was the improved clinch and the splice turned out to be the double fisherman. The improved clinch is an awesome knot for tying most any hook or lure to your line. It seldom fails and holds up under the most demanding circumstances. And for the most part

would hang up on debris I'd lose my lead weight as well as my hook and bait. Now I know to tie the butterfly knot. It forms a loop anywhere you want in a line. I like to use because it's easy to attach a lead weight to the loop and if your weight hangs it will usually break the loop only, leaving you the ability to retrieve your hook and bait. Be sure to retie once retrieved because the broken butterfly knot will slip under any serious future pressure.

For Rapala and crank bait lures I'm going to start using the Rapala knot. After tying it a few times I realized it allows the bait to work properly in the

kayak to a tree or post. I've always tied the standard overhand knot which works great but can be tricky to undo once over tightened. A better alternative is the clove hitch. It's super fast and quickly releases. And its simple design is all but foolproof.

There are literally hundreds of knots available depending upon usage. Many of which are specific to certain sports or applications. I hope to some day learn them all. But for now the three or four knots I've discovered will definitely go a long way to making for a better fishing season ahead. And if you're on the brink of insan-



your walls are talking, the spoons dancing and the furniture moving from kitchen to bath and back again as you come ever closer to loosing your mind.

Somewhere after my fifth Laphroaig late last week I found myself wandering around once again like some deranged hallucinogenic toreador. It was about that time I staggered into my office. Disoriented and bored to death I rifled through box after box of unpacked junk when all of a sudden there it was—my old *Boy Scout Handbook* from 1982. As I thumbed through the worn and mildewed pages I happened across the section on knots and it hit me: I used to love to tie knots.

My scout's manual listed six knots: square, bowline, sheet bend, clove hitch, two half hitches and the trucker's knot. All of these are very useful for tying down a tent or hanging cargo in a tree, but none really

is easy to tie. The same goes for the palomar knot, but I prefer the improved clinch because it doesn't come below the hook's eye and interfere with plastics like grubs or worms.

When I'm trout fishing I often use a lighter lead line in super clear water. Most of the time I'm tying 2 lb. to 6 or 8 lb. test, which can be tricky considering the extreme differences in diameters between the two. For years I had always used what I now know is the double fisherman. It's an extremely easy and quick knot to tie. But it slips from time to time. I now know why. The 2 lb. test is so thin it struggles to build friction when combined with the thicker 6 or 8 lb. tests. To solve this problem use the double sheet bend. It's so strong it can even be used to tie slippery ropes like nylons and plastics.

Another new knot I learned to tie is the butterfly knot. For years I've simply secured lead weights directly inline with my hook. But when the weight

water without restricting its movement. The knot is a much better alternative to the palomar and improved clinch, both of which have bound my lipped baits from time to time or caused my shallow running cranks to veer off to the left or right.

In addition to the above I also learned a great new knot for tying my

ity like myself from all this snow, sit back and try tying a few knots. You would be surprised just how relaxing and fun the experience can be on a dull day.

For more information on various knots and how to tie them go to www.netknots.com or www.animatedknots.com.

Bluegrass Disc Golf begins Ice Bowl season

The Bluegrass Disc Golf Association's (BDGA) 2011 Ice Bowl season is just around the corner. Here are the dates and locations of tournaments.

1/22: Lawrenceburg Slide and Glide II (45 player limit)

2/5: PDGA Lexington Ice Bowl X at Veteran's and Shillito Parks (180 player limit)

2/19: PDGA Winchester WCCPR Frozen Iron Ice Bowl II at Ironworks Hills (90 player limit)

3/19: Mackville (Washington County) Camp Calvary tournament to support the Pinkston's adoption (90 player limit)

If you would like to register for any of the tournaments or learn more about disc golf visit www.bdga.org or www.pdga.com.



Opinion

SB 6 is racist

This editorial first appeared in the December 20 issue of La Voz, before the Kentucky state Senate formally passed SB 6.

To speak plainly, the initiative by the Republican party and their state senators to introduce in Kentucky a law similar to Arizona's is racist in origin, intention and in intended effect.

We feel certain that the real motivation of this initiative is fundamentally based on feelings of racism and opportunism. Racist, because there do not exist any economic or demographic reasons to justify the implementation

of policies that focus on the racial identity of their future victims.

Kentucky is not experiencing a massive immigration that is deteriorating the quality of life in the Bluegrass. Any deterioration has been the cause of larger economic forces. In fact, Kentucky only considers two percent of its population to be immigrants and of that two percent 34 percent naturalized by 2008.

The pride felt by the ultra-right sector of the population has so increased their greed for power that they have overlooked the need for any political responsibility on the part of the

Republicans in assuring the economic well being of the state and the future.

So blinded are these individuals by the ignorance created by this type of racism that they fail to see that passage of a law of this kind would mean an economic loss of 30 million dollars in sales tax per year, a loss of 1.7 billion dollars annually in the economy, 756.8 million dollars in gross internal product revenue and the loss of approximately 12,059 jobs, according to the Perryman Group.

We wonder, where is this group of irresponsible politicians going to get the 2.1 billion dollars that Latinos generated for the economy in 2009?

There's been enough right-wing populist rhetoric. There's been enough taking aim at the dignity of other human beings and at the Constitution. There's been enough intolerance and racism (which is the only thing you can call this). There's been enough uncontrolled hate turned into violence. There's been enough deterioration of the intrinsic societal values of the United States. It's time to say: Enough!

For good coverage of SB 6, follow La Voz on the web at lavozky.com, or pick one up from a newsstand around town.

Stories from Eastern State Cemetery

In our last issue, Bruce Burris's article "Tomb of the Unknowns," which detailed the struggle to access cemetery records at Eastern State Hospital, generated a lot of reader response. We here reproduce some of these responses. Many detail the frustrating efforts to generate information about deceased loved ones who may (or may not) be buried on the site of Eastern State.

God bless Bruce Burris and Mary Hatton and all connected to this project. I have tried since 1984 to retrieve my Grandfather's records who died in 1907 and have been told I will never find the records as the hospital does not want people to know how patients were buried there!

Anna Morgan

I pray that you are able to get those records released. I contacted the hospital a couple of years ago and was told it would take at least three or more months to locate the records. That's as far as I got. I have been trying to obtain the records of a relative named Nannie E. Larkin who died in 1937. Census records show she lived at the East State Hospital. Thank you for all of your work!

Linda Heinlein

My uncle died at ESH and was buried there in 1931. I found his death certificate at the state Archives. We can't undo the disgraceful handling of human remains at the hospital, but it would seem appropriate for the state to erect a memorial for the unknowns who are buried there with the names and dates of those who are known. New names could be added when identified and verified.

Jimmy Helton

While researching the ancestors of my half sister I was told her grandfather disappeared in 1910, and was never heard from again. I found my sisters grandfather listed in the 1913 deaths at Eastern State Hospital. He was buried there as well.

The children of this man never knew what happened to their father. They were told by their mother that he left to find a job and would return to get them. As days turned to weeks and weeks to months, his small children couldn't understand why their father never returned. Did he become ill or die along the steep mountainous roads? did he not want them, is that why he never returned? These questions remained unanswered for the life span of each child.

Corrections

We neglected to attribute the image accompanying Captain Comannokers' article "Riding with your ears" (December 8, 2010). The artist responsible for the drawing was Noah Adler. (Noah's done all of the drawings for the Captaain's transportation column, "Out on the streets, that's where we'll meet.")

In "Looking backward: undergraduate education" (December 8, 2010), a math error suggested incorrectly that the percentage of out-of-state undergraduates at UK during the 1990s was "around 85%." The correct percentage of out-of-state students during this time was 15%.

In Bruce Burris' article "Tomb of the unknowns" (December 8, 2010), a photo of Phil Tkacz was incorrectly identified as a photo taken by him. The correct attribution should read: "Phil Tkacz in ESH cemetery with grid showing where 4,000 bodies were reburied. Photo by Bruce Burris."

The grandchildren of this man would like to visit his grave and in some way try to make amends for the lost years and lies.

Sadly, this can not happen as burial records will not be released and another generation is left to deal with the questions of, where is he? what happened to him?

Jan Fugate

My Mother knew nothing much of her father that left the family due to circumstances. Her father Thomas Poff Jr. was never talked about because he died in an insane asylum. I got his death certificate & it says he died of Pellagra in 1917 & was buried on the grounds of Eastern State Hospital.

I asked a cousin in Lexington to take a picture of the grounds so I would at least be able to see them. She wrote back & sent articles about them destroying the graves when they put the road through.

My poor Grandfather was misunderstood in life then sent to an insane asylum because of a medical problem, and finally wasn't able to "rest in peace" thanks to Bureaucracy.

I was floored when I learned that after all that was done to these poor souls they couldn't even keep the grass mowed, and I thought that was the final disgrace. But not to allow you to go through the records compounds the indignities.

My thanks to ALL of you in this group who are fighting the good fight for those like my Grandfather. A special thanks to Mary Hatton who helped me get the scant paperwork of his stay there.

Dusty Pilgrim

My story with ESH is a little different from most.

Both my g-g-g-grandmother, Alice (Hunt) Kaut, and her brother, Howard Hunt, were both committed to ESH at different times in the late 1800s and both died there. We believe they both suffered from melancholia/depression.

When Alice died in 1909 and was buried at ESH, her children had a headstone placed and covered her grave in concrete with the knowledge that they would not be able to visit Lexington to care for her grave (her children lived in Greenup County, KY). They took a photo of her grave and this image was passed down through the generations along with the simple story that our Alice was buried at the asylum in Lexington.

My mother, Patricia (Boyle) Hoke was conducting family research in the early 1980s and knew Alice was buried

at ESH. When she visited, she was told there wasn't a cemetery on the property. She showed the representative the photo of Alice's grave and representative continued to insist there was no cemetery on the grounds. Mom knew that wasn't the case and never gave up trying to find our dear Alice.

In 1984, Mom finally located Alice's grave when land was sold to IBM. IBM paid to have Alice (Hunt) Kaut's remains relocated which included a new coffin, flowers and a hearse. My mother assembled our family and on a cold November day we brought Alice home to rest next to her daughter's grave in our family cemetery.

We have never been able to locate Alice's brother's grave (Howard Hunt) and we haven't given up hope that we will be able to bring him home to rest, too.

I've heard that patients' bodies were donated to local schools for medical teaching/studies. What has happened to Howard Hunt? I want to know where his final resting place is with certainty, to be able to place flowers and honor his memory.

I've taken the steps to become the administratrix of Alice's estate in an attempt to locate her patient records. I'm particularly interested in these records for our family's health, but also for our family's history.

After all of these years, I have STILL not been able to obtain Alice's records, but I'll never give up.

I've never met Alice (she died in 1909) or been able to find a photo of her, but she is as real to me as any person. I've heard and researched her life for many years. In a way, Alice and Howard have haunted me – I feel that telling their story is a way to honor their memories and ease the suffering. As a descendant, I feel a responsibility to understand and preserve their history. Alice and Howard were someone's children, someone's parents, someone's spouses and siblings to one another... they meant something very deeply to many people, including me.

My family's history should not be kept from me. They MATTER to me and their lives are no less important than any other. I will always stand up for my family.

Who has the right to keep their stories hidden or charge their descendants for family information that is their birthright?

I've kept close watch for information on ESH and the Cemetery Preservation Project over the years. I cannot thank this group (and Mary Hatton in particular) for their diligence.

Kayt Schaefer

The horrific treatment of these poor souls breaks my heart. I was visiting a relative of a friend at the EKH in the early 1970s and even then it was heartbreaking seeing how the numerous patients were put in a small room together with hardly enough chairs to accommodate them all.

The 1940 census will be out in a year or two. The hospital patients should be listed hopefully. More leads?

Your goal is very important and not going unnoticed. When and if you

come to Frankfort to dig for records I'd be honored to help. I don't have any pull at the Ky Dept of Libraries and Archives but I'll be behind you all the way.

Lynda Combs Gipson

I recently found my husband's g g grandfather on the 1870 census. He was a patient there. He died bet 1870 – 1880 I believe. We never knew he was there. His name was Jessie Staples. I cannot go further until I can locate his records. I wish I knew what to do next if they will not help us. Thanks for all you are doing. This is a disgrace how they were treated. The least they could do now is to give info so the families know what happened.

Sue Brown

I applaud Mary, Bruce and Phil for all their efforts to restore "peace and dignity" to these many individuals who "because of an illness" that "no one wanted to talk about" ~ were forgotten!

I have several family members with severe mental illness, (SMI) diagnoses. It is unimaginable that only a few decades ago, they would have been locked away in a place where medical providers would recommend I not visit. Even today, medical providers often counsel family members to set up healthy boundaries and abandon their loved ones ~ since due to a KY law, they are allowed to become so ill the family is often at a loss on how to help their sick loved ones who suffer with these serious brain diseases.

continued on page 8

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

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GENERAL DALLAS AND THE CALL OF THE WILD BY LAURA ZABILKA



Cemetery stories (cont.)

continued from page 7

We often hear that Kentucky is a leading the country in the treatment of heart disease and cancer ~ but when it comes to serious mental illness ~ we are on the bottom side of the US!

I have admired Bruce Burris' crusade to not only locate the names of the dead at Eastern State Hospital, but also for his passion to embrace "all individuals" with disabilities. He has dedicated his life to helping individuals less fortunate, accel to their full potential. Our world would be a better place if we had "more individuals" like Bruce, Mary and Phil!

For all that feel pain for the souls society failed in the past 186 years—please be aware that "society" in Kentucky is still failing this population of people! For more information on how you can "also" help "the living" or so people with SMI can have timely accessibility to treatment, supportive services and housing, please educate yourself on how your tax dollars are being used. In 2010, due to our "least restricted mental health laws" too many with SMI are now homeless or live in our jails/prisons. Too often, state funding in directed into the Department of Corrections where it cost the state approximately \$30,000 a year to house a person with SMI. Often these individuals are NOT violent criminals, but become a victim of their own illness—called the "revolving door!" Too often they end up in prison because they are not able

to access treatment much less abide by rules/regulations of their probation or parole.

Essentially, the laws in Kentucky make a person who has no use of their legs, "run a marathon" to access a wheelchair—in terms how we expect a person with a serious brain disease to wade through a chaotic maze to receive the bare bones of something that resembles treatment.

I wish I could help Bruce's efforts more, but someone needs to advocate for amendments to KY law, so those with SMI receive treatment while they are alive. We failed them in the late 1800s, early 1900s and yet even with all the modern advancement in science and technology we are still failing this population.

GG Burns

I should point out this is a problem with other state hospitals in Ky. Western State Hospital & the former Central State Hospital property. The cemeteries for those hospitals are also mostly unmarked & they refuse to give records to those that request them. The cemetery at the old Kentucky State Hospital has headstones, but I haven't been there to confirm that, it's now the Northpoint prison. The state hospitals as a whole in Kentucky have a horrible track record sadly. Although our group is Eastern State Hospital Cemetery Preservation Project, we plan on taking on all state hospital cemeteries.

Phil Tkacz

So school...why?

BY MCKENNA DU FREAK

I am a flower power freak that has a mind of a rebel, and yet I live in a world of people who feel as if they have to act like every other mother fucking "normal" person. But you know what I think about that? Bullshit! Why can't we all just be freaks?



School is like a helmet that protects you from being a freak. So why do I hate it? if you can't answer that question then maybe you have been wearing that helmet a little too long! I hope you hate my comic because then you will have read it and learned.

Did I mention I am only 13?

"you were born original, so don't die a copy". my comics represent abnormal people (if you couldn't tell).