

NORTH OF CENTER

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2011

FREE

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VOLUME III, ISSUE 2

One potato, two potato.

J.T. Dockery and Nick Tosches team up to create dizzying graphic novel

By Captain Comannokers

When pen hits paper, J.T. Dockery isn't using any technologies that were developed since before the Great Depression when it comes to producing his illustrative art. "I'm analog forever," Dockery states, confirming his old-school sensibilities. Steel tube technical pens like the rapidograph, which Dockery uses, hit the market in 1928. He must special order bristol board (illustration paper tough and absorbent enough to handle his intense pen and ink cross hatching), developed in 1893. Even the nibs dipped into the ink were the invention of Joseph Gillott in 1859.

At the same time, though, Dockery's not an anti-technology curmudgeon. If he were, he certainly would not be about to celebrate the release of *Spud Crazy*, his collaboration with author Nick Tosches. Email, that bastard offspring of the Pony Express, was the thing that first brought the two artists together. That, and the late, great Hubert Selby Jr., the son of a Kentucky coal miner who penned masterpieces like *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and *Requiem for a Dream*.

Sometime in the early 2000s, Selby's 75th birthday was approaching and Tosches wanted to pull together a complete Selby bibliography—every article he'd ever written, and every article written about him, and so on—as something to bestow upon his friend as a present. Dockery had interviewed Selby for a piece that ran in *X-Ray Magazine* (the San Francisco-based publication that featured contributions from dudes named Hunter S., Ginsberg and Bukowski). The article led to Dockery receiving an email from Tosches, who was doing his homework and wanted to know a thing or two about this mysterious J.T. fellow who had interviewed one of his idols.

Tosches' correspondence wasn't just a run of the mill entry into Dockery's inbox—it was an unsolicited email from a guy that Dockery nearly worshipped! Tosches was a contributor to *Rolling Stone* and *Creem* before he would go on to pen biographies on Jerry Lee Lewis,

Hall and Oates, Dean Martin, boxer Sonny Liston, the oft-forgotten minstrel singer Emmett Miller, as well as works of fiction and poetry. The film rights to his 2002 novel, *In the Hand of Dante*, have been purchased by Johnny Depp for development.

When Dockery was 18 or 19, he got a book handed to him, *Country: The Twisted Roots of Rock and Roll*, written by Tosches. Dockery absorbed the book. *Country* left an indelible mark on his musical mind; he became an instant Tosches fan.

Does Tosches like comics?

That Selby connection left Dockery and Tosches with the occasional correspondence. In 2007, as MySpace was having its last hurrah as the place to hang out, Tosches asked the Smacks! (the oblitative rock and roll duo of Dockery and collaborator Brian Manley) to be friends.

Dockery wanted to investigate to make sure it was actually Tosches on the other end of the internet and not a fan page. In confirming his identity, Dockery noticed a blog on Tosches' MySpace page about trying to find a particular work by underground comix artist Kim Deitch. Dockery, cyber-maven of the internet that he had become by the year 2007, jumped on *The Comics Journal*, and within hours had all the info that Tosches was searching for and more.

All this led up to the BIG question that Dockery would ask of Tosches: *Have you ever thought of having any of your own work worked into a graphic novel?*

Tosches had. As it turns out, the celebrated author was a fan of Dockery's art. It was game on.

Spud Crazy gets planted

Dockery remembered a bizarre little screenplay in the *Nick Tosches Reader* (a collection of record reviews, articles, short fiction and other efforts). Titled "Spud Crazy," the screenplay is a meditation on potatoes, women's legs/

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Discarded documents

By Kurt Gohde and
Kremena Todorova

Discarded began in the late fall of 2009, a season when discarded furniture abounded on curbs throughout Lexington. Each of us spotted a piece we wanted to photograph: a green plaid sofa precariously poised on a boxy television set, a golden brocaded chair oddly out of place in front of a house known to neighbors as "the hooligans' house." Each of us wondered about the stories connected to these pieces, about the people who had until just recently sat, lounged, or curled up on them. We knew that we could collect some of these stories by asking the owners or their neighbors to sit on the cast-away furniture.

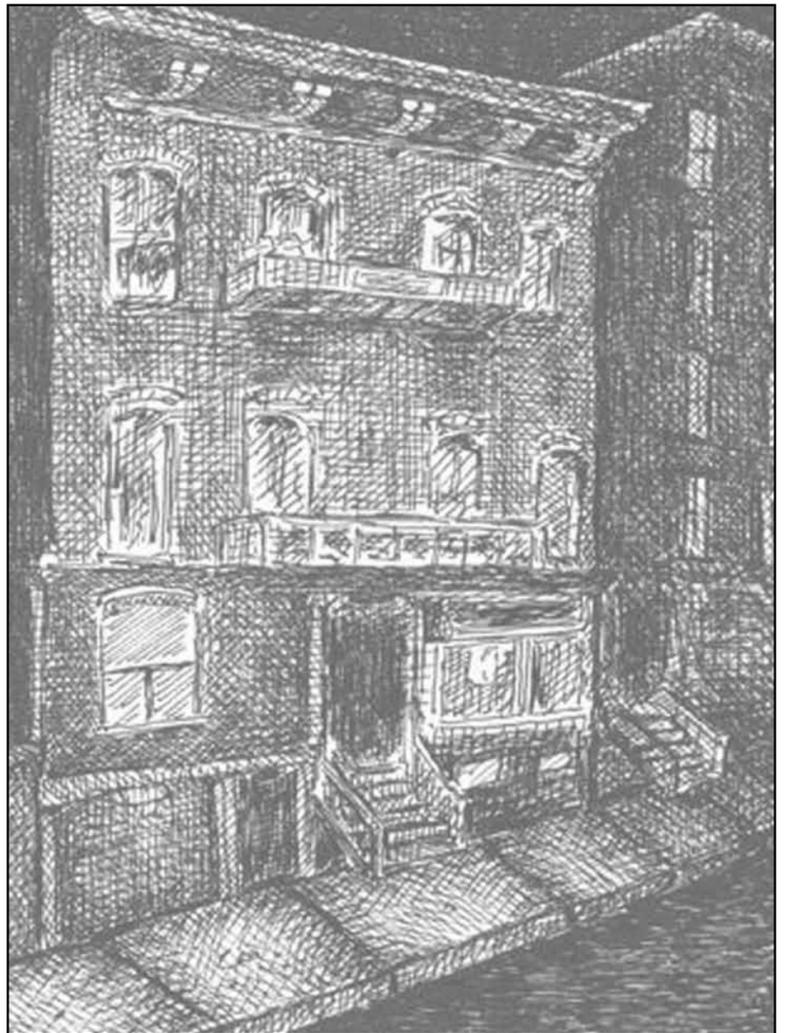
We decided to create portraits of these people, our neighbors, on

the well-worn sofas and chairs. We believed that by doing so we would capture a single moment in the furniture's life.

We took our first photograph on January 8, 2010. Because the temperature had finally climbed above 20 degrees and because the sun was shining, Billy agreed to sit on the sofa he and his girlfriend had dragged out into the snow in anticipation of their new living-room set. Prior to finding Billy and his couch, we had been repeatedly turned away by a houseful of college students who said 15 degrees was too cold to sit on the sofa they had put on the curb.

We began with the intention of capturing the stories that lived within the old pieces of furniture, but we soon

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Detail of a panel from *Spud Crazy*, the new graphic novel by J.T. Dockery and Nick Tosches.

A beaver tale

Night falls on the Jessamine, part II

By Northrup Centre

Ideally, camp set-up is a self-organizing process. Decide upon a spot, disembark, lay out a tarp, unload dry-bags. Grab a drink or snack, set up tents, unpack and organize kitchen. If energetic, or if planning a night womp, empty boat and dump canoe-water. Collect firewood and centralize all trash. Explore singly or as group. Camps need not be neat, but the best have their own intrinsic order and efficiency.

Having paddled many rivers with my friend Gortimer T. Spotts, our camp set-up on Jessamine Creek was nearly impeccable. We had held out, resisted north-facing bottoms and muddy take-outs, twisted our way upstream through a shallow and narrow gravel channel, and then bull-horned through a thick, creek-spanning deadfall to arrive at

our campsite: a rare sandy bank gently rising five feet above the water on an inside bend, the east side, a flat space just large enough for our tent, some gear and a fire.

Gortimer grounded his craft, grabbed a tarp and his bottle of Laphroig Quarter Cask, and made for the sand. By the time I had beached my vessel, my comrade had already laid out the tarp, taken several pulls from the scotch and returned to his boat to retrieve the two dry bags (one red, one blue) that carried our camp kitchen and tent and sleeping bags.

I pulled up next to Gortimer's boat, disembarked, and looked into my canoe. When he had picked me up at the airport, Gortimer neglected to take into account the fact that *my* possessions, in addition to his, would need

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Jessamine Creek in November.

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The Neighborhood

Discarded (cont.)

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realized that our images amounted to something more: a collective portrait of a year in the life of our city. This portrait includes urban hipsters, mechanics, mothers with infants, suburban dwellers, traditionally-defined nuclear families, college students, cousins, brothers, and friends. It includes dogs, tattoos, Mardi Gras beads, empty beer cans, old teddy bears, and all the objects that fill our lives. It includes our neighbors, even those frequently hidden from view by entire neighborhoods labeled as “hooligan.”

We took our last picture on January 20, 2011: another wintery day,

365 days after photographing Billy in the snow.

A small collection of images is currently on exhibit at the Good Foods Co-op on Southland Drive (through February 28). All the images, along with poetry and music inspired by the discarded pieces in them, will soon be on display at Land of Tomorrow (L.O.T.) Gallery, located at 527 E. Third Street (just past the intersection of Race and Third Streets). Please join us for the opening reception on Friday, February 18 at 7 P.M.

Over the next few months, North of Center will feature some of the images and stories captured by Kurt and Kremena.

in-FEED



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

For more information about our programs, email us at nytefist7@aol.com

Jessamine beaver (cont.)

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to make the trip. At our Camp Nelson put-in earlier in the day, I had discovered that Spotts brought no dry bags to hold the contents of my luggage, which meant I would have to paddle with both suitcases protruding out the bow of my boat.

When I pointed out the potential discomfort not having dry bags could ultimately cause me, Gortimer momentarily scratched his head and left to rummage around the seats of his Thunderbird, to see if he could “engineer a solution.” He returned ten minutes later, holding aloft two mostly-untorn, well-used Glad kitchen bags and some jute twine of differing sizes and wear, for me to “cinch things up” around my two pieces of luggage.

Four hours later, sitting beached at the foot of our Jessamine Creek campsite, my luggage stood upright in front of me, wrapped in sliced and diced Glad bags and sitting in the center point of a substantial puddle of canoe-water. I grabbed the two Glad-bagged handles, lifted, waited patiently for the water to drain through several small slits at the bottom, and hauled them up to the tarp.

Our efficient camp went up quickly and with little talk, a fugue of complementary chores. Gortimer set about constructing the tent. I unpacked and organized the kitchen, separating out our dinner ingredients. Gortimer grabbed water and a burner, started some coffee, then drifted off to collect firewood and pick through Ordovician creekside stones. I did a trash pickup, transferred some soggy clothes into the tent and dumped out my canoe before heading off on my own round of wood collecting and area sightseeing.

River Rat stew

Near dark, we reconvene next to a considerable pile of gleaned firewood, base camp, for cups of coffee, a bowl and more Quarter Cask. Around us late fall has set. At our shins, the campfire smokes, snaps, cracks. Beyond the fire a thin layer of hardy leaves continue to resist the November chill and cling to their trees. The palisades lift above us in all directions, at all angles.

Together we set about making some River Rat stew and passing around a bottle of port fished from the camp kitchen. Gortimer cuts the onions, garlic, and purple and yellow fingerlings, and tells me stories of the area’s history. In a large pot hanging

from a tri-pod over the fire, I slow-cook the partially thawed hunk of boston butt, making a beef broth, and ready the black eye peas for dumping into the stew.

Mostly, though, I just listen to Gortimer and consume idly whatever he passes my way. As night falls on the Jessamine, our world quickly shrinks to a smoky perimeter radiating out from the fire. Just below us, now in darkness, the creek courses through a series of riffles, a steady loud pulse.

The tale Gortimer tells this night concerns his ancestor, John Robert (J.R.) Shaw, a British turncoat who in the 1790s arrived to the inner bluegrass from Ohio. Shaw had followed Jessamine Creek downstream through its namesake gorge, both he and the creek on their way to the Kentucky River, he digging wells and turning odd jobs for other newly arrived, newly American, settlers along his way.

According to Spotts family lore, Shaw had designed and constructed the limestone foundation of a mill once in use further up-river from our present camp site. Because of a reputation for the bottle and a propensity for befriending lonely farm girls (and some of their mothers), Shaw was forced to spend most of his nights while working nearby Jessamine Creek at a place my companion referred to only as Fraggie Rock, a cave located atop a waterfall that entered into the creek on river right, not much more than a mile away from where we sat.

By this time in the story, our River Rat stew already eaten and our bowls long since cleaned, Spotts has stood up and opened his weathered copy of Shaw’s Jessamine diaries, a family heirloom passed down since the 1800s from a Garrard County line (bastards all) of Shaw descendants, of which Spotts counts himself a proud member.

“April, 22, 1793,” Spotts read. “Found work quarrying Overstreet mill. Because of kind words from good Scotts’ at millhouse, cannot sleep in Overstreet home when Mrs. O’sreet is nearby....have found good shelter in a cave above a trickling water fall. Full view of valley and downward looks at sycamore crowns growing close upon the creek. No work today. Tonight leaving for Bethel Academy with two bottles to encounter the dames if fever subsides. Night swim in creek shall do us all good.”

By this time, the scotch had amplified Spotts’ voice and encouraged his arms into rhetorical accompaniment.

North Upper Street, 600 block

Donald, Glenn, Brittany and Allie



The red couch ended up on the front lawn when the family ran out of room inside the house after moving a dog kennel from the back to the front room. Though the neighbors across the street had warned us about the four pit bulls living in the house, the one that came out “to say hello” was simply curious about us. Pregnant again, she had already proved a great mother, nursing not only her own pups but also cats, squirrels, and Chihuahuas.

Image and text by Kurt Gobde and Kremena Todorova

Free Community Yoga Class

Lexington Healing Arts Academy

Every 2nd Sunday of the month. Next

class February 13, 4:00 - 5:15 P.M.

www.lexingtonhealingarts.com 859-252-5656

Occasionally, he would interrupt the reading of his ancestor’s narrative with extemporaneous information and encouragement for the long dead tinker—“Atta boy John Robert!” and “John Robert preferred apple whiskey, you know,” and the like. The result was a certain loving gravitas afforded to the tale: Gortimer orating to a gorge full of critters and wandering spirits struck silent.

I was entranced, though not for long. Shaw’s reference to a 207 year old night swim jerked Spotts from his recitation.

“Night womp. It’s time for a night womp. It’s a new moon tonight, the stars will be out on the river. It shall do us all good.”

With that, my bastard friend from Garrard County tossed Shaw’s diary onto the tarp and began looking through the kitchen supplies.

Starry Night

When he returned, Spotts carried in his left hand what appeared to be a handful of thickly bunched asparagus stumps with green leafy tops. “This’ll be good for star viewing,” he said. “It’s all organic. Qat, nature’s amphetamine. I traded some KP for this shit with a group of Yemeni WEGers I met last month at the Games.”

“KP?” I asked.

“Kentucky Proud. Those Yemenis were nuts. They were worried about finding fresh Qat in the states during the Equestrian Games—I know I wouldn’t touch the stuff if it gets to market after 48 hours—so the fuckers just filled part of their jet with potted qat plants. They parked the jet at the airport to harvest as needed. We ended up hitting it off, the Yemenis and I, so before they left, they gave me a couple leftover plants as a parting gift of friendship.”

I had spent much of my time during the Games with Gortimer. His revelation about the Yemeni WEGers explained a number of heretofore inexplicable instances of his disappearance.

“This one’s for you,” he said, offering me the bundle. I cupped the qat in both hands. “Take the leaves, stuff them in your mouth and chew them into a wad. Hold it like you would a chaw in your cheek. They’re bitter, but

jesus, you’ll thank me when we’re on the water.”

Moments later I sit in my boat, a bunch of qat stuffed awkwardly between my legs, trying to feel my way past deadfall and shallow channels. I have been on creeks before at night when I have had to paddle directly into a full moon on the horizon. The feeling is unsettling: the moon’s light, and the light of its reflection off the water, render you functionally blind. I have run into ten-foot tall muddy creek banks without any foreknowledge, solely because I have forgotten to wear sunglasses while on the water at midnight.

Paddling on the Jessamine this night, the picture is the opposite—a seeming absence of moon and light—but the outcome is much the same. Blindness. I drift too far right and ground myself on a shallow bed. Eventually I break into less shallow water and float 10 minutes in complete black silence, letting the current take me to a light at the end of the tunnel, the Kentucky River. When I finally stream into the great river, the temperature, which has dropped steadily all night, stands somewhere around freezing. My mouth bulges with qat wad.

Coming upon the Kentucky from one of its feeder creeks is always an exercise in horizon-raising. On a creek, one quickly becomes used to the intimate feel of shallow twisty beds and over-hanging trees. Flowing into the Kentucky from one of its creeks, one inevitably looks up—at the opened sky, at the opposite banks 150 feet across the river, at the palisades a half-mile in the distance. The feeling coming onto the Kentucky, at least initially, is nearly always freeing.

To come upon the Kentucky on a clear, windless new moon night with a mouthful of qat is something else altogether. I put up my paddles, lean back and stare up at the night sky, the boat drifting slowly to the middle of the river. The world around me has turned light and dark, mostly dark. In the absence of moonlight, the river, its banks and palisades rising above it, have blurred into differing shades of gray and black. The line between palisade and night sky,

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Potatoes (cont.)

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hosiery, and the burden of consciousness. While quite possibly not understanding a word of the damn thing, it all made just about perfect sense to Dockery.

“Nick is a confirmed leg man, as am I,” Dockery says. “Specifically, leg men that are into fully fashioned nylon stockings. I don’t consider it a fetish, I consider it a preference.”

Spud Crazy is “a film noir filled with poetic prose and flashbacks,” Dockery adds. It is a vibe, a David Lynch-like experience where you don’t have to fully grasp it to understand the general tone and feel. “To me, *Spud* becomes an over-arching metaphor for being worn out, or down-and-out...rendered potato like?”

Dockery quickly went to work illustrating Tosches’ screenplay, tackling the first 15 pages. “I thought it was geared well toward illustrating it for a comic. In effect, I became the film director and visualized it.”

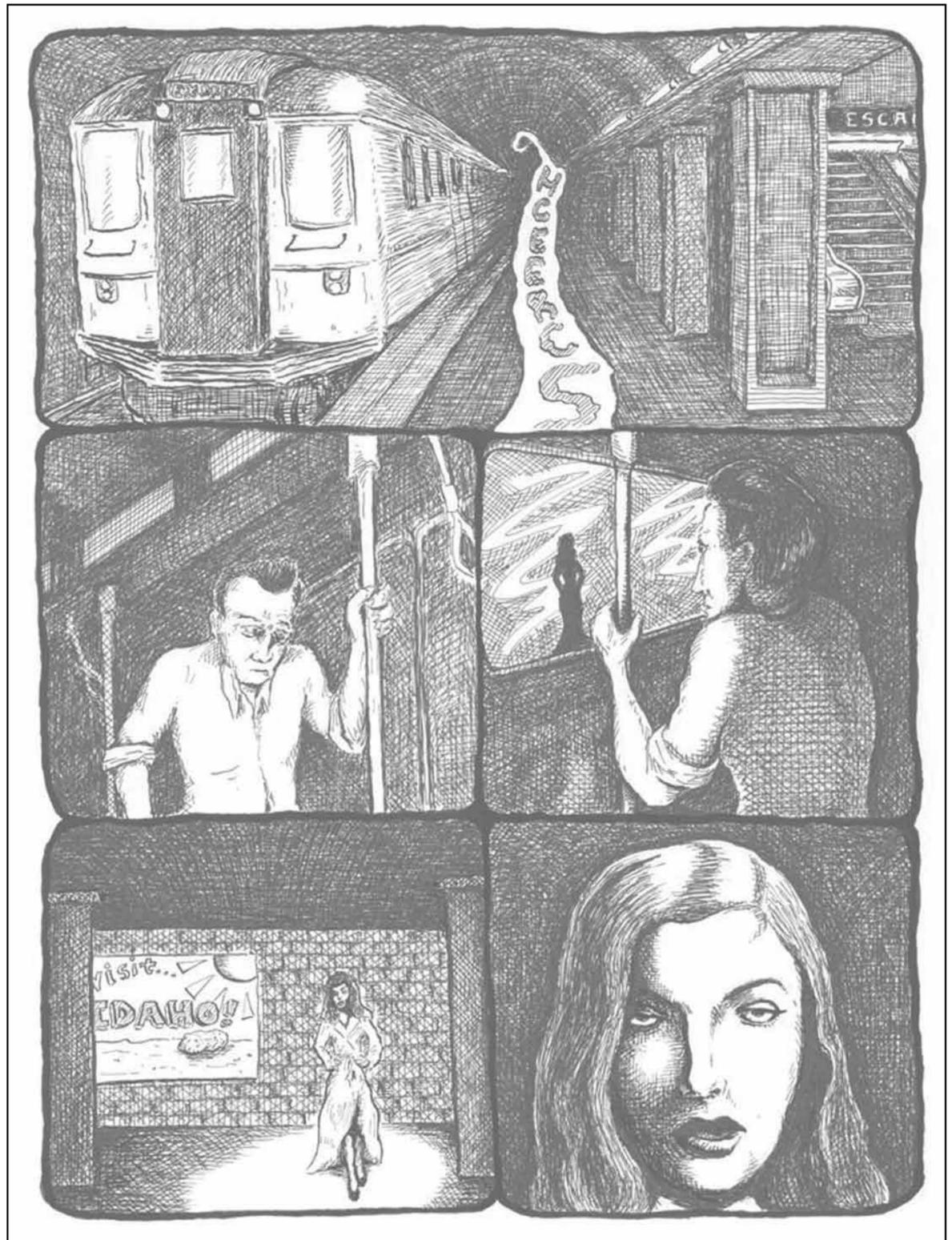
The two then began to shop the collaborative work around to different publishers. They got some polite interest down a few avenues; down others, they dishearteningly heard the sound of crickets. Dockery soldiered on and added the next 15 pages to form the 30-page book it is now. If the entire *Spud Crazy* story were to be finished at some point down the line, it would likely reach 60 or 70 pages.

Cross-hatch influences

Of those existing 30 pages, “It’s not like reading issue #73 of the new Hulk comic. It’s going to take you awhile to read,” Dockery says of the density of information packed inside, highlighted most of all by his detail-oriented, cross-hatch style of illustration.

“It calms me,” he explains of his style. “It’s an act like knitting and I get very obsessive about it. I’ll try to restrain myself, but even as I try I can’t stop. Although, I don’t think that’s a bad place for an artist. If there is something you are compelled to do and can’t stop, that’s not a bad direction to go in—unless you want to make a commercial living.” To better illustrate his point, Dockery mentions the time involved in creating each strip: if all the pistons are popping, the artist notes, he could finish one page of *Spud Crazy* in somewhere between eight and 16 hours.

Dockery tries to give a quick road map of his influences. He starts with post expressionist and other detail-oriented artists like Otto Dix and George Grosz. From there he



A page from Spud Crazy.

says that the contemporary painter Joe Coleman was a game-changer. Coleman started off doing comics and did a particularly dense, intense piece called “Mystery of Wolverine Woo-Bait.” (“Sometimes in my head,” Dockery muses, “I want to go into comics where Joe Coleman left off.”) Marvel and DC comic artist Bernie Wrightson, who illustrated the original *Swamp Thing*, is also mentioned as an important figure in Dockery’s formative years. So, too is Robert Crumb

and *Mad Magazine*’s master of the grotesque, Basil Wolverton.

The common thread they all share? Detail, painstaking detail.

Potato harvests: Institute 193, Hell, Levin and the Spud Imperials

As 2010 arrived, Dockery and Tosches were still digging for someone to cultivate this potato of theirs. They found that local gardener, Phillip March Jones at Institute 193, who expressed interest in helping the project. Jones also contributed to the book by doing a note on Dockery’s art and his collaboration with Institute 193.

Local ties firmly in place, Dockery turned to his trusty medium of email to round out the luminaries involved with *Spud Crazy*.

“Sending flattering emails is not a bad way to go,” Dockery says about his relationships with the additional contributors.

First up, native Lexingtonian Richard Hell, the frontman of the early punk rock band Richard Hell & The Voidoids, and an accomplished novelist himself, wrote the introduction. Dockery had made an email connection with him a number of years back, and he knew of their shared affinity for Tosches’ work. In fact, Hell used to run a small press of his own in the 90s and published a book of Tosches’. Without any prodding, Hell was in. (His introduction focuses on Tosches’ words and deconstructing the madness of the text.)

Bob Levin, a highly-respected, authoritative figure on comics agreed to do an essay born out of a friendship formed after Dockery simply told him he enjoyed one of his pieces in *The Comics Journal* from a few years back.

Levin’s essay balances the entire work, discussing both Dockery’s art and Tosches’ words.

At that rate, Dockery should have just emailed Ennio Morricone and the composer would have gladly scored the music for the screenplay turned graphic novel. Alas, he didn’t need to be that bold as the *Spud Imperials* (Dockery, Manley, Robert Beatty and Justin Eslinger) put together the music that completes the package (see the *NoC* music section for some related info).

Dockery and Manley had pondered the idea of writing music to a couple of their collaborative projects (like *North of Center*’s “Creekwater” comic) outside of the ruckus they make as the *Smacks!*, because, as Dockery wonders, “How long can we keep doing that? Making fools out of ourselves—well, maybe forever? But the soundtracks are a jumping off point for us to explore new ideas,” he says.

“At first I thought it might be a cutesy thing to have,” Dockery observes of his *Spud Imperials* music. “But listening back to it I think it sounds like an album. Something I would be proud of independent from the book.”

After numerous health setbacks over a number of years, Dockery was happy that he was able to simply get behind the drum kit and help create the sounds of potatoes being stuffed into stockings, or whatever other frazzled clamor tubers and hosiery make when the two intertwine. Some may think it sounds like a free jazz version of The Doors’ “L.A. Woman,” but that’s a story for another time. What it does sound like is, well, crazy—spud crazy to say the least.

Kids’ Cafe, around the block

LuQuann, Paul, Kiev, Asia, Delilah, Crystal, Janeim, Timmy, Montas, & Jakel



After being turned down by neighbors a few times, we made our way to the Kids’ Café, an afterschool community center located at the corner of Elm Tree Lane and Seventh Street. We knew Crystal from working with her and the kids at the Café through a class we taught at Transylvania the previous winter. As it turned out, we also knew one of the kids at the community center that afternoon, Montas. We had photographed him for *DISCARDED* a few months earlier. Montas, more than Crystal, became our gatekeeper, his excitement encouraging the other kids to participate. We learned that the furniture belonged to a Hispanic family who had lived nearby for about 8 months. The neighbors suspected that the family left so abruptly because they were undocumented immigrants and had to go.

Image and text by Kurt Gobde and Kremena Todorova

Spud Crazy

By Nick Tosches and J.T. Dockery
Introduction by Richard Hell
Essay by Bob Levin
Music from the Spud Imperials

Presented by Institute 193

Exhibit opens Thursday,
February 3 at 6:00

193 N. Limestone St.

FEBRUARY 2, 2011

Music

Music you need to hear: 2/3 - 2/13

Thursday, February 3

Umphrey's McGee *with* Orchard Lounge
Buster's, 8:30 P.M.

I wouldn't even list this show, except to point out that not just one...

Friday, February 4

Bawn in the Mash
Cosmic Charlie's, 9:00 P.M.

...not just two, even...

Friday, February 11

KFTC Benefit / I Love Mountains
Bluegrass Showcase
Al's Bar, 7 P.M.

Look, those "I heart mountains" bumper stickers are nearly as obnoxious as those Euro-wannabe decals bearing the initials of some hoity-toity resort (HH, MV, etc.) you and I can't afford to visit, invariably plastered on the rear window of some earth-destroying SUV you and I can't afford to buy, and which we can only hope is one day driven straight off the bridge at Chappaquiddick. And anyway, who doesn't love mountains, or at

least tolerate their existence? I've never met the mountain-hater: "None of that damned elevation for me! It's good, flat land or I'll be six feet under it!"

On the other hand, however grievous the sins of the Land Rover set, they pale in comparison to those of the mine operators to our east, so intent on leveling the central Appalachian range that one day we should be able to roll basketballs straight downhill from Rupp Arena straight into the Atlantic.

Don't like that? Then go to Al's Bar and spend the money you were saving for your next trip to Aspen on something worthwhile. Mountain-saving activities continue through Wednesday, so no excuses for not doing your part, you self-absorbed shit.

Sunday, February 13

Yonder Mountain String Band
Buster's, 8:30 P.M.

...there are THREE prominent jammie

hippie frat-type bands playing prominent Lexington venues within two weeks of one another. This raises some questions: are these venues deliberately courting the jammie hippie frat-type crowd in Lexington, or are they trying to beat the rest of us into submission? And in either case, who's really behind these shows and what's the agenda? If we smoke enough pot and listen to enough forty-seven minute multi-organic medleys will we forget our cares and ignore what the government is doing behind our backs? Is it only a coincidence that these shows take place so soon after Jim Gray took office?

When I Look At The World: Christian Themes in Alternative Music
New Hope Church, 10:00 A.M.

During this weekly lecture series Professor Robert Lodder explores the development of religious themes in modern mainstream rock through analyses of particular songs. Previous

installments include U2's "When I Look at the World" (Irish, Messiah complex—smart choice), Zep's "Stairway to Heaven" (too obvious, but I guess you gotta do it), and "Sleep Now in the Fire," by Rage Against the Machine (the m****f*****g apocalypse, son!). You bet. I'm with you.

But on the second Sunday after we go to press, Dr. Lodder is discussing...not Sabbath, not Tool, but the GOO GOO DOLLS. It doesn't matter which song—how do you include the Goo Goo Dolls in an ongoing scholarly conversation that includes U2, Zeppelin, and RATM? I don't care if in four neat stanzas Johnny Rzeznik managed to grapple with the great questions confronting humanity in an era of declining faith; it's still the cotdang Goo Goo Dolls.

Coldplay the week after puts the series on more solid ground, but lapses such as the Goo..G...I can't type that name anymore... —Buck Edwards

If a spud splats in a creek does it make a sound?

By Captain Comannokers

J.T. Dockery and Brine Manley have been making some kind of noise together for almost 15 years, in their band the Smacks!, over the airwaves of WRFL as DJs, and in print pieces. Really, however, they could get words and sounds heard to anyone who will listen.

In *North of Center* the two have combined to deliver the comic "Creekwater," which features Dockery's illustrations and (mostly) Manley's words, takes much inspiration from the music they enjoy, and like all their work, features countless references to their musical influences. Recently they sat down to discuss those influences and how they translate to the printed page.

Dockery: The start of this was really going to SPX (Small Press Expo, a comics convention that focuses on independent artists/publishers). That was the start of the process in 2009. With Brine travelling with me and splitting costs, it made sense to do something together, to make and publish a short comic that Brine would write and I would illustrate to take with us and have something new to sell.

I told him realistically the amount of pages I could draw in the time allotted, and then a discussion of, oddly, of our love for Sergio Leone's "Once Upon a Time in the West" and our love for fishing/the Muppet character who would throw fish, gave Brine the framework that resulted in the first chapter, and we knew we wanted it set in Kentucky. I had no idea of where the story was going after that. We were thinking of calling the work "Once Upon a Time in Kentucky" but then we both saw the movie "Inglorious Basterds" that starts with the line "Once Upon a Time in Germany" so we felt screwed that readers would react that we'd just seen that...so we called it "Fishtowne."

We get to SPX and these folks from PA kept asking us if it anything to do with Fishtown, PA, which neither of us had heard of. Then, I find out that at that SPX there was a brand new graphic novel called "Fishtown," so we decided we had to change the title. The bottle of whiskey we brought with us we were referring to as "creekwater," as in, "Brine, we got any of that creekwater left? Pour me another glass of that creekwater, etc." And there you have the title.

Manley: The first chapter was a lot of influences and discussions colliding. The man at the stream was definitely based completely, in my head, on Charles Bronson's Harmonica Man character from "Once Upon a Time in the West." I wanted something set near

a stream, and Todd's right, referencing fishing and Kentucky, with a noir-ish feeling to it. (Lew Zealand was the fish-thrower on the Muppets, just to give him some credit.)

I also have to credit a good amount of heartbreak I was going through at the time for some heavy inspiration. We weren't sure how or when we would continue it, but once we decided to march forward with it, I realized a thicker storyline needed to be developed. It wasn't long before I developed a link to Hector Berlioz's "Le Damnation de Faust," which has been a source of inspiration since, and inspires me in a lot of other fiction I write. But then, there aren't too many stories in Western fiction that aren't influenced, at some point, by Goethe's

I think the first one you picked up on was Queensryche's "I Remember Now" from "Operation: Mindcrime," a reference I never expected anyone reading a comic in *NoC* to notice.

From there, songs that I felt were connected to the story, or even random songs I was listening to that day were starting to show up, planned or not—from Kris Kristofferson, to Steelheart, to Wings, to Albert Ammons, to Archers of Loaf, with Berlioz smeared over top of it. This doesn't mean all of the dialogue is from lyrics, but if I'm thoroughly inspired by something and feel like it fits, I'll paint it in. The collaborative process has been worked out so that basically I write it like a screenplay, and have learned how much direction to give Todd as far as what I

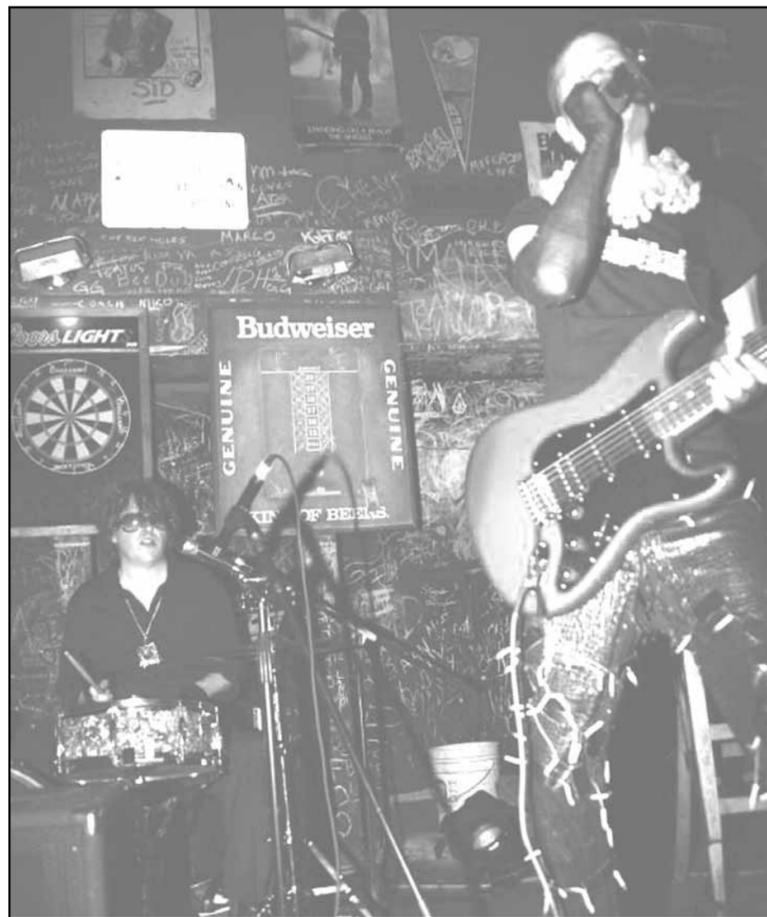
music ever any different really anyway? It comes from within and goes outward...or something like that...?

Dockery: First of all, it's worth a mention that when the "Creekwater" yarn is fully spun, and we're ready to collect it into a single volume, it will have a music soundtrack as well. Well, I asked Brine, Robert Beatty, and Justin Eslinger to collaborate with me on making the soundtrack, so everyone involved participated in it.

Both with the collaboration with Nick Tosches and Brine on the page with comics—there is a parallel to collaborating in music, whether it's free form or more structured. For me, personally, working together with others on music, is still using the same parts of my brain, in a different but equal way, as illustrating the stories of other people. But the difference between, say, working on the Smacks! with Brine, it's a rock and roll thing where we're using music more towards the performance, with a theatrical element, whereas working on a soundtrack gets to be more about internalizing the source material and then invoking a sound structure to compliment it. In that way, soundtrack work is a bit more "quiet" of a process, like writing/drawing, whereas rock n roll has theatrics/performance element. But all of these elements are related to each other, kissing cousins so to speak.

Manley: For me, I'm a fan of soundtracks and scores, and have always wanted to work in an instrumental format that references that, so just as a musician to make instrumental music based on a visual medium is exciting. I knew a lot of the art Todd had created for *Spud Crazy* and tried to approach it with an Ennio Morricone meets Tom Waits' score for "Night on Earth" frame of mind.

I enjoy taking that loose idea for myself and then slamming it into whatever the other musicians bring with them and seeing what happens at the end. Todd and I have that timing connection since we've played together for so long. I've played with Justin for years now, as well, but never in this style or context, and I always like to see where he'll go with things. I had never played with Robert and had no idea what he would bring, but respected and knew him enough to know it would be interesting and, well, awesome. I have fantasies about playing in a jazz ensemble someday; this might be the closest experience I've ever had to that, where everyone gets their chance to deconstruct the melody of whatever piece is being performed. I've played in several loose groups before, but this was one of the most fun. Different leads, different directions, different faces, diversity: these are good things.



The Smacks! at Buster's.

"Faust." Temptation, desire, ideas of love and evil, jealousy, etc. "Faust" has it all, plus the devil.

I started running with that and feel like, at this point, I have enough material with these characters to go for years. The story got real big real fast for me and represents a lot of aspects of life I want and like to explore. As far as the music references: I never expected anyone to pick up on them. I listen to a lot of different music when I write fiction sometimes, and that seeps through into the dialogue and the plot. As much as I'm addicted to literature, I'm addicted to music, also.

see in my head. He translates that and it works. I know his style and he knows where I'm coming from, so it's worked out in the end every time.

We've compared our roles to me being the screenwriter and him the director, or I'm the director and he's the cinematographer, or maybe I'm the plumber and he's the horticulturalist, or he's the balloonist and I'm the elephant trainer...I don't know. I lost track.

Captain: Talk about the musical soundtrack that goes along with "Spud Crazy"—how it differs (working with other folks?) or any other way? Or is

Film & Media

FEBRUARY 2, 2011

The Last of the Pagan Babies

New documentary nears completion with the help of Kickstarter

By Lucy Jones

Anyone who followed Institute 193's successful financing campaign for Guy Mendes' gorgeous new book *40/40: Forty Years, Forty Portraits* knows the power of Kickstarter. Thanks to contributions raised on the nearly two year old website, Institute 193 was able to publish the book, individual financiers were able to count themselves as an important part of the process whilst simultaneously reaping tangible rewards, and the community as a whole benefitted from a project that documents some of the most interesting people and moments in Kentucky's recent history.

Another project of local interest promises to do the same. Filmmaker Jean Donohue has been working on the documentary film *The Last of the Pagan Babies* since 2006. The film, which chronicles the rich cultural legacy of Lexington's gay underground, is in the final stretch of completion. In an effort to cover the costs of final filming and post-production, Donohue has turned to the increasingly effective site. As she explains, "Fundraising is always the drag. Filmmaking is 90% fundraising, and grants for this project have not materialized. We've gotten this far with funds from a fundraiser we had three summers ago. The Kickstarter campaign has been a real shot in the arm."

Donohue conceived the project in 2006 following a chance reunion with artist Robert Morgan. While reminiscing about the vibrant arts and cultural scene that existed in Lexington in the 1970s and early 1980s, much of which had been buoyed by the gay community, the two realized that many of the key players of that period had since passed away or otherwise disappeared. Donohue decided that there was a story

to be told, and felt a sense of urgency to tell that story now.

The name of the film refers to an arts collective that emerged during that time and ultimately came to be known as the Pagan Babies. Morgan, one of the group's pioneers, describes the Pagan Babies as "a loose confederation of young, wild gay kids and artists who dressed in drag and performed guerrilla street theater." Their look and demeanor was met with stern disapproval by the comparatively staid members of Lexington's Old Guard gay community. "All the drag queens absolutely hated it," says Morgan. "Here we were—shirtless."

The aims of the Pagan Babies, however, went far beyond aesthetics. "A lot of us were political young gay kids. We emulated what we saw in the underground press," explains Morgan. Their sphere of influence widened as people made the move from Kentucky to urban centers like New York City and San Francisco but kept their local ethos intact. "Lexington had a direct link to a lot of scenes in art, theater, and politics during that time."

The exploits of the Pagan Babies were documented by photographer John Ashley in a series of shoots which featured Morgan and other Lexington luminaries such as Bradley Picklesimer. Photos were compiled for a book with an introduction by Tennessee Williams, but the book was never published.

Donohue's goal in making the film is "to tell a unique story about Southern history and its intersection with gay culture and underground art. Having lived in Boston for several years, and Cincinnati for that matter, when I described what my own coming of age in Lexington was like they couldn't believe it. Some



Artist Robert Morgan in one of the shots from John Ashley's unpublished book "The Pagan Babies"

in the Northeast don't believe there could be a rich counterculture of art, music, sexual camp, drag, and gay life. So, in a way, my goal is to share the local underground mythos and...counter perceptions that gay culture didn't exist in Kentucky or the South."

The film strives not only to document the Pagan Babies and their influence on arts in Lexington, but to explore what came before them. Morgan cites Lexington's legendary Sweet Evening Breeze as an example of the intergenerational links that have informed the town's identity. Born in

the late 1800s, "Miss Sweets" lived until 1983 and spent most of that time living openly as a cross dresser. "She was the transvestite mascot of Lexington in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s." Morgan recalls sitting with an elderly Sweets at Brezing's Bar watching a young first time punk band perform. "She was part of this odd, unusual continuum of sexual outlaws who made contact with the next generation."

Donohue hopes to maintain this cultural continuum by documenting it. To help her achieve her goal, visit kickstarter.com and search for "The Last of the Pagan Babies."

Bluegrass Film Society: 2011 schedule

By Michael Dean Benton

The Bluegrass Film Society is celebrating its sixth year by joining with Ondine Quinn of the Kentuckians for the Commonwealth to initiate a Social Documentary Series and by extending our audience range through a new Family Film Series (suggested by BCTC Librarian Meagan Brock) that will provide films suitable for all ages. Additionally, in April we will screen and discuss Charles Ferguson's *Inside Job*, an important documentary about the financial crisis, for the BCTC Peace and Earth Justice Spring 2011 Speaker Series (organized by BCTC Geography professor Rebecca Glasscock).

Below are the dates for our 2011 Spring Semester screenings. All films are shown in the Oswald Building Auditorium on the campus of Bluegrass Community and Technical College at 7:30 P.M. unless otherwise specified. All screenings are free of charge and open to the public. By the time this article hits the streets we already will have screened *Terribly Happy* (Denmark: Henrik Ruben Genz, 2008) and *Lorna's Silence* (Belgium: The Dardenne Brothers, 2008), so we will forgo a caption description and encourage readers to check these films out on their own.

2/2: *Demonlover* (France: Olivier Assayas, 2002: 129 mins): Olivier Assayas merges a soundtrack by Sonic Youth with the diegetic sounds of this thriller. At times the non-diegetic and the diegetic sounds merge and intertwine, causing us to question what is being presented and what is the reality of the story. An exploration of perception buried in a thriller about corporate intrigues, personal vendettas, and the global spectacle. A film guaranteed to divide audiences.

2/9: *Slither* (Canada/USA: James Gunn, 2006: 95 mins): Part of the Cult

Film Series at Al's Bar on 6th and Limestone. Making a horror or comedy film must be difficult as evidenced by the onslaught of terrible films from the two genres that are released each year. It is a pleasant surprise then to come across a film that combines both genres in an enjoyable, yet trashy film. Perfect for a bar atmosphere!

2/10: *Deep Down: A Story From the Heart of Coal Country* (USA: Jennifer Gilomen and Sally Rubin, 57 mins): Part of the KFTC Social Documentary Series. This relevant documentary examines the interests and divisions of two lifelong neighbors in the struggle over coal mining and mountaintop removal in Eastern Kentucky. The film will be followed by a discussion led by KFTC members.

2/16: *Dogtooth* (Greece: Giorgos Lanthimos, 2009: 94 mins) Lanthimos's film has caused a sensation for its vivid, emotional and brutal science fictional/ surreal exploration of the structures of family and society. Just as shocking as the film's subject matter was its nomination for Best Foreign Language Film by the normally conservative Oscar judges.

2/23: *The Cove* (USA: Louie Psihoyos, 2009: 92 mins): This 2010 Oscar winning documentary is a hard hitting expose of an annual hidden massive roundup and slaughter of dolphins in a Japanese cove. This is activist filmmaking in action and is one of the most intense documentaries ever made, a thrilling narrative of environmental activism against political corruption and ecological destruction. The film is devastating in its horrific reality and absolutely necessary viewing.

2/24: *An Unfinished Dream* (USA: Andrea Ortega and Margarita Reyes, 2010: 58 mins): Part of the KFTC

Social Documentary Film Series this film will be followed by a discussion led by DREAM ACT advocate Erin Howard. The film examines the issues surrounding the DREAM Act and the struggles of the students who are fighting for its passage.

3/2: *Howl's Moving Castle* (Japan: Hayao Miyazaki, 2004: 119 mins):

continued on page 8

Local film happenings

Harry Dean Stanton Fest arrives at the Kentucky Theatre

From Wednesday, February 2 until Friday, February 4 the Kentucky Theatre will play host to three days of Harry Dean Stanton films sponsored by the Lexington Film League and KET. The festival features the world premiere of Tom Thurman's Kentucky Muse documentary *Harry Dean Stanton: Crossing Mulholland* as well as rare screenings of *Paris, Texas*, *Cool Hand Luke*, and *Repo Man*. For more information including showtimes and ticket prices, see www.lexingtonfilmleague.org/harry-dean-stanton-fest.html.

Imitation of Life screening at the UK Student Center

Douglas Sirk's classic 1959 melodrama will be screened at the Student Center Ballroom as part of the United Sister Circle Alliance's new film series "Through OUR Lens: Women & Film." The screening will be held on Friday, February 4 at 7:00 P.M. and will be followed by a discussion. If you'd like more information, including possible talking points for the discussion, please visit www.united-sister.org/filmsociety.html.

One World Film Festival announces its 2011 line-up

The One World Film Festival

Part of the BCTC Family Film Series (we will have a showing later in the Spring of the animated film *Despicable Me*). Miyazaki is a master of animated films and they can be equally enjoyed by adults as they are by children. Miyazaki continues to hand draw his cells rather than rely

celebrates its 13th year of providing Lexington with films and speakers who encourage discussion and understanding in issues of race, culture, and ethnicity. This year's festival kicks off on Sunday, February 13 and will continue with ten films at the Kentucky Theatre and the Lexington Public Library Central Library Theater until Thursday, March 17. For a full list of films, as well as their locations and showtimes, go to www.oneworldfilmfestival.org/films.html.

Lexington Film League extends the submission deadline for its 2nd Do-ers Video Contest

The LFL will continue to accept submissions until February 11, 2011 for this year's Do-ers Contest. The organization is looking for short videos that, in under five minutes, tell the story of how an individual, business, or non-profit is making a difference in Kentucky. LexArts' Creative Ventures Fund is sponsoring cash prizes for winning videos, including a \$400 prize for first place, a \$300 prize for People's Choice, and a \$100 prize for Best Student Video. For more information on submissions, as well as news on the March 8 event at Natasha's where prizes will be awarded and People's Choice votes will be tabulated, see www.lexingtonfilmleague.org/doers-video-contest.html.

FEBRUARY 2, 2011

Slide and Glide II lives up to its name

Snow blankets disc golf courses

NoC Sports Desk

If there's anything that could possibly make playing disc golf more fun, it's got to be playing disc golf in snow. The aptly named Lawrenceburg Disc Golf Association's (LDGA) Slide and Glide II used mother nature's slippery elixir to do just that on January 22. Of the 32 golfers who participated in this year's event at the Anderson County Community Park, no one came away with anything less than fond memories.

"Everyone had a great time," said event organizer and LDGA Vice President Ricky Spalding, adding that "despite the extreme weather the event went very smooth with no back ups."

Each golfer was given Star Discs for entering the 36-hole tournament. A portion of their \$15 registration fee went to the Anderson County High School Disc Golf Team, he said. Any leftover monies went towards the tourney's ace pool, which was set at a whopping \$150, a \$100 of which was offered up front as a bounty.

"Since there were no aces, the \$100 bounty was forfeited and the original ace pool of roughly \$50 was offered," said Spalding. "Randall Roseman won the ace pool in a throw off."

In addition to the registration fee golfers could purchase mulligans: three



Some of the 32 disc golfers who enjoyed the sun and snow on Jan. 22.

for \$5. And a closest to the pin (CTP) competition was offered for each of the tourney's five divisions. CTP winners received additional discs for their sharp shooting efforts—none colored white, for obvious reasons.

CTP winners for each division were: Zack Skees (Hole #4) - Advanced, Dan Skees (Hole #2) - Intermediate, Cameron Harris (Hole #1) - Intermediate, Lara Panayotoff (Hole #3) - Women's and Tanner Kirkpatrick (Hole #3) - Junior.

Division winners

Of this year's 32 entrants, two were women. The women's division ended with Panayotoff besting Lisa Hicks. Panayotoff's final score was a 154 (77-77) compared to Hicks 178 (89-89).

The other four division's top three finishers were as follows:

Advanced

102 (50 - 52) Zack Skees
108 (55 - 53) Kevin Hall
111 (56 - 55) James Robinson

Intermediate

114 (55 - 59) Dan Skees
117 (58 - 59) Kevin Harris
118 (60 - 58) Ricky Spaulding

Recreational

118 (58 - 60) Cameron Harris
130 (62 - 68) Matthew Pinkston
133 (65 - 68) Allen Miller

Junior

145 (72 - 73) Lee Kenyon
171 (87 - 84) Tanner Kirkpatrick

Up next

Up next for frisbee golf in the area is the Bluegrass Disc Golf Association's (BDGA) annual Ice Bowl on Feb. 5. This year marks the fifth occasion the event will be held. The tournament is sanctioned by the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) and will consist of 36 holes to be played at Shillito and Veteran's Parks.

Anyone interested in participating or registering for the tourney should visit the BDGA's website at www.bdga.org. In addition, the PDGA's website (www.pdga.com) has a link for registering and also has lots of information for learning more about the sport.

A little rod and reel maintenance

Shootin' n' snaggin with the Frugal Fisherman

If you are anything like me, you wake up one morning, you catch the weather, and somewhere between your first and fourth cups of coffee, you decide today would be a great day to go fishing. You grab your tackle box, a couple rods n reels and some water. You fling the kayak on top the car and you are off.

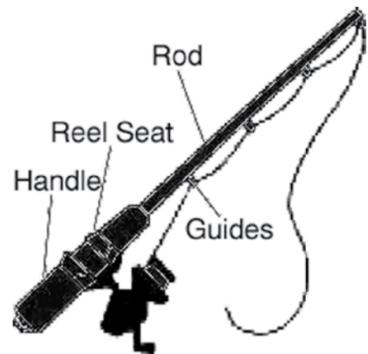
At least that is how many a fishing outing begins at my house, which isn't to say I have always had success with such spontaneity. In fact, I've had many a D'oh moment that could have easily been prevented with the slightest bit of planning and attention to detail.

One such quick and easy facet in making sure your first and subsequent fishing experiences go off without a hitch is to check your equipment. I am not just talking about organizing your tackle box; I'm referring to going over your rod n reel from tip to butt.

Beyond the actual fishing lure and knot, no two factors are more integral in actually hooking and retrieving a fish then your rod n reel. (Well, you do have to locate and target a fish, but that is a story for another day.)

Today let's talk about your rod specifically. The modern fishing rod comes in all kinds of lengths, styles and variations. Besides the cane pole, though, all rods share the same construction characteristics: a handle, reel seat, guides and the actual rod itself.

I'm assuming if you've read this far you at the very least know what I mean by the above terms, if not refer to the simple diagram below.



To ensure your rod is working properly, follow these six quick and easy steps:

Clean your fishing rod. Many freshwater fishermen fail to realize that algae and silt from ponds, lakes and rivers can harm the rod's guides and handle. Dampen a cloth with tap water

and wipe the rod over completely from top to bottom. Make sure to clean each guide thoroughly.

Check your cork. If your rod has a cork handle make sure the cork isn't cracked, dry rotted or damaged. Wipe the cork thoroughly with water and apply a simple conditioner like U-40. For synthetic handles simply clean with a damp cloth and dry.

Check guides for cracks or irregularities. Make sure each guide feels smooth inside each circle. Look at the base of each guide to make sure that each is tightly fitted to the pole and there are no cracks in the fiberglass coating or epoxy attaching the guide to the rod. If a guide is broken, irregular or isn't smooth you can replace it. The tip is easier to replace than the line guides. But neither is very tough or time consuming.

Replacement guides can be purchased at most any tackle or fishing purveyor. Each replacement guide usually comes with everything you need to finish the job, such as windings and epoxy. If the guide cannot be replaced or the guide has damaged the rod as well, you will need to buy a new rod altogether or have a specialist fix the problem.

Clean the reel seat. When it comes to the reel seat, detach the reel from the pole and inspect the pole underneath as well as the mechanics used to attach the reel itself. Wipe the reel seat clean with tap water and a damp cloth and make sure there are no easily discerned cracks or loose parts.

Reattach the reel and make sure it feels snug and secure to the handle. If for any reason it doesn't, make sure you have tightened the handle properly. If in fact it is tight and the reel still seems loose, this could be a clear sign the pole has been damaged. Consult a specialist if the pole is of value, or else simply buy a new rod.

The pole itself. Now that the handle, reel seat and guides have been inspected it's time to go over every inch of the pole itself. Look at connection areas such as between the handle and pole's butt. Make sure nothing feels loose or irregular. Look for any damage such as cracks or stress fractures along the poles length.

And give the rod a good bend or two. Be sure to listen for any cracking



or popping sounds. If you hear anything at all it probably means the rod is shot. Once again if the pole is of value consult a specialist; otherwise it's time to grab the wallet and make a purchase.

Storage is key. At this point the rod should be ready for another season of fishing. But in addition to maintenance here are some suggestions for storing your poles. Try not to carry your rods in bundles. This can cause wear and excessive rubbing, which weakens the rod's construction. Remove hooks or lures after each fishing outing. Hooks are prone to damaging and scratching guides.

Avoid permanent bows or bends in your rods. A bowed pole that sits

over winter can start to lose its elasticity, thereby affecting the rod's action. Lastly, avoid storing your poles in direct sunlight or in extremely hot temperatures. Heat and sunlight causes everything from dried out handles to fading and dry rotting.

I'll be the first to say I don't always maintain my poles as I should. But at the very least give your poles a good cleaning and inspection at the beginning of each season. It just might save yourself some pain and suffering when you hook into that big one.

Stay tuned for part 2 of this series where I'll go over reel maintenance. If you have any questions, concerns or advice please contact me at frugalfisherman1@gmail.com.

ROCK 2011 Season Schedule

The Rollergirls of Central Kentucky (ROCK) are currently preparing for their upcoming 2011 season with weekly practices and scrimmages. If you are interested in joining the league or learning more about ROCK please visit www.rocknrollergirls.com.

4/23 — HOME vs. Lil City Rollergirls

5/14 — Away v. Glass City Rollers

6/4 — HOME v. Vette City Vixens

7/2 — HOME v. Blue Ridge Rollergirls

7/30 — HOME v. Chemical Valley Rollergirls

8/13 — Away v. Circle City Derby Girls

9/3 — HOME v. Hard Knox Roller Girls

9/17 — Away v. Vette City Vixens

10/1 — HOME v. TBA

12/10 — Away v. Lil City Rollergirls

All home bouts will be played at the Lexington Convention Center. Doors open at 6 PM and the action starts at 7. Admission is \$10 for adults and children 12 and under get in free.



Jessamine (cont.)

continued from page 2

between earth, water and air, is nearly indistinguishable.

I drift quietly on the river's dark emptiness and note Orion's Belt climb a distant palisade, pointing its way to Taurus and Pleiades, the Seven Sisters. Without a paddle in the water, I become completely detached from the world. For a long while I feel as if I am planing along the surface of the universe, unable to discern whether I am traveling at 2 knots per hour on the Kentucky River, or at 2 light years per second on a particularly clean belt of interstellar dust.

Ambush

As it turns out, I am probably traveling at speeds less than 2 knots per hour. In the time it takes me to chew, spit out, and reload an entire mouthful of qat (a time I approximate at 2 hours), the weather has dropped five degrees and I have drifted maybe 70 yards. This turns out to be 20 yards farther than Gortimer makes it.

Once reunited with my paddling partner, we toast our good fortune and begin slowly making way back to Jessamine Creek. With no light, little current and minimal shoreline visibility, we paddle blind. Our two-hour detours into the universe have returned us to the Kentucky disoriented.

After some trouble, Gortimer locates Jessamine's mouth, and with him in the lead, we enter. The bright, open-spaced darkness of the Kentucky soon gives way to Jessamine's tight quarters. The wind has picked up, stirring slightly the leaves falling across the bottoms above us. Whispwhispwhisp.

In front of me, Gortimer emerges suddenly out of the darkness. He has stopped paddling, his boat drifting forward only slightly. His eyes stand fixed, like a hound, on a spot in the

distance. I pass him slowly, unable to make out the words he urgently whispers to me. Slowing my pace, I travel 10 feet ahead and then hear what had made Gortimer stop.

Ker-Ploosbbb.

And then:

Whispwhispwhisp. Whispwhispwhisp.

Whispwhispwhisp.

I begin a slow back-stroke, still facing upriver, trying to locate the bank where the object had been thrown from. I see nothing. Nothing moves except the leaves.

Gortimer still has not moved, and I slowly pass him again, on my back-stroke. I again miss his urgent whispers, though I catch his gesture to a light, perhaps a car-light, some indeterminate amount in the distance beyond the left bank, in the seeming direction of the splashes.

As I quietly drift backwards another one comes, this one behind me in the direction of the Kentucky River.

Ker-Ploosbbb.

And then the silence. *Whispwhispwhisp. Whispwhispwhisp.*

Gortimer shrieks three times, "John Robert, you'll not get me this night!"

Whispwhispwhisp.

I am worried more about human visitors than historical ones, the car lights along the way. The bastards have us surrounded, are standing on higher ground, with more mobility and with a greater arsenal of rocks. We are fucked. I continue to peer into the darkness and count shadows. I contemplate a desperate run to the wide open freedom of the Kentucky River because I am too chicken.

Ker-Ploosh. In front of me. *Whispwhispwhisp.*

And then a light. On the water, traveling up-creek from the Kentucky. I clench and await my fate, hoping for the best.

Earning the Beaver Lock Badge

It is the Frugal Fisherman. Out for a night patrol, Frugal has heard Gortimer's cries to John Robert and tracked us to Jessamine.

"What's the matter here?" Frugal asks, coming up to my boat. "What's got Gortimer so upset?"

I attempt to get Frugal to quiet down and indicate that I think some locals are out fucking with us, throwing rocks our way. I point vaguely up on the banks along a wide 60 yard arc. Then behind us toward the Kentucky, as if on cue, another *Ker-Ploosh.*

By this time, our two boats have tracked into Gortimer's. Frugal shines his light into the canoe and sighs. Gortimer lay sitting in his boat, snoring heavily, drool oozing down his chin from the thick wad of qat in his mouth. His hand hangs to the side, lightly gripping the Quarter Cask bottle.

Frugal leans in and rifles quickly through the chain mail of metal lock badges that Gortimer has attached to the left breast pocket of his paddling shirt. Finding the right one, Frugal jerks the badge away with a flick of the wrist and deposits it in a box in his kayak.

Turning his attention to me, Frugal asks patiently, "Does it seem reasonable to you, Northrup, that someone or some gang walked down here to ambush you at 2:00 in the morning?"

"Well no, but—"

Frugal catches my eyes drifting toward the car lights." Did you expect we Kentuckians to banish all roads from your scenic creek views? Do you expect total wilderness and seclusion? Do you even know how far that road is away from you, how long it would take local ruffians to get down here to harass you?"

"Well, you have to admit—"

"And does it seem likely that someone would have the strength," Frugal

continued, "to heave boulders of such size as to make the *Ker-Ploosh* you have been hearing? These would be heavy stones and require much lift to travel any distance into the river. Are these hooligans also super-human?" Frugal has by now grabbed a rope lying around Gortimer's boat and begun tying a clove hitch knot around my his bow.

"Again no, but—"

"And the temperature. Why would hooligans want to sit outside in 24 degree weather. That seems like nonsense to me." Still using Gortimer's rope, Frugal reaches around my stern and makes another clove hitch, connecting Gortimer and me.

"Look Northrup, that *Ker-Ploosh* you heard was beavers. They're splashing their tales because you've paddled near their homes, and they are defending it. If you're gonna be on the Kentucky River, you might as well get used to damns and damn builders of all sorts, beginning with the industrious beaver."

With that, Frugal reached into his pocket and handed me a medal. "Now I'm gonna give you this Beaver Lock Badge, because I think you've earned it, but I'm gonna hold off on the Community Trust Lock Badge." He handed me the rest of Gortimer's rope and gave me a quick pat on the shoulder. "You're growing, Northrup. Now go on and tug Gortimer back to camp."

When I turned around to thank him, Frugal had already disappeared into the gathering mist.

Cold, wet and defeated, I gathered Gortimer and headed up-creek back to camp, fully prepared for the morning onslaught of the bottle fever and our final 10-mile float to High Bridge past Handy's Bend and the Dix.

Since that weekend, I have seen studies by professors of Western Kentucky that claim Beavers show no aggression in their beaver colonies. I am, of course, not a doctor of biology, that I am merely an occasional paddler of the Kentucky River. But I can say without a doubt that beavers, at least the ones paddling around Jessamine Creek, are some of the most cunning, vicious—smart—suckers you will ever come across.

Northrup Center holds the Hunter S. Thompson/Charles Kuralt endowed chair of journalism at the Open University of Rio de Janeiro (OURdJ). He splits his time between there and Lexington, KY.

Letters to the editor

Reform campaign money

I thank the individuals who wrote after the election still supporting my campaign for Council at Large. I also want to thank all that voted for and supported my election—19,400 or so.

I still hope the principles I stood for become policy. However, I fear the financially "selected ones" now holding office do not have the intellect, courage or desire to change elections, or much else, for the general public's benefit.

I spent only \$950 on my campaign for city office. Candidates should not "buy" elected office regardless of their sources! We must change our campaign methods with publicly financed elections.

Restrict money going directly to the candidates by :

1) Voter Guides to ALL voters with equal information from all the candidates, and references to more election information. These should be sent to all voters before elections.

2) Publicly financed web pages for candidates to answer important questions from the general public, and from organizations and groups that currently send questions (whose web pages often get limited attention.)

3) Publicly financed web pages providing candidate biographies and endorsements.

4) Implement Instant Runoff Voting. (I have leaflets on this method and its benefits.)

5) Voting by mail to increase public participation and cut down on costs. (Oregon already does this).

6) Cut off all donations to

candidates two weeks before the election date, with a listing of all contributions available immediately for the public via the media or the internet.

7) Printed material of the above (where applicable) to read at public places (libraries, court houses, schools, etc.) for those that are not internet active.

8) Televised forums/debates and radio shows of candidates available for free on public access channels as well as purchased on commercial TV for regional campaigns.

Let's be leaders in the state and/or nation, and internationally, to prove democracy is participatory and NOT bought by corporations or the rich.

Don Pratt

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Props for Main Street

Finally someone articulates ("Propping up Main Street," January 19) the misguided policy decisions our city has been pursuing since Scotty Baesler was mayor. A well-written, thoughtful piece.

Name Withheld

Racist foreigners

Our lone response to our publication of the La Voz editorial, "SB 6 is racist."—Ed.

It is called nipping it in the bud before it can bloom into a problem. When I was kid\teenager just 35 years ago you never saw a Mexican,Oriental,whatever in this once great state in my area anyway and every "Real American" citizen that would work had a good job. Now these illegal Mexicans just pour North at an ever increasing pace and they take away jobs at a lower cost from real

American people. It is an outrage and I think the Founding Fathers would agree and they would not put up with all the bullshit that goes on in this country nowadays fro a minute!

It is time to deport Mexicans, Middle Eastern people, etc and any other foreign group that does not want to adopt the rules of this country and our way of life as it has been for 200 plus years. That includes adjusting our Constitution however we must to allow it to happen before the "Real American" citizens have their very existence threatened in their own country by these people who don't really belong here. Freedom of religion also needs to be revised and a clause added to ban anything Muslim in this country and the mosques could then be torn down and eliminated across the continent. SB 6 is a good thing a a good start to get the ball rolling in that direction. I support it 100%.

Mike Brown

The NoC editorial staff drew straws; Keith won and was allowed to respond on behalf of the paper:

Some questions for you, Mike:

1. Exactly how long, in years, does a person's family have to have resided in this country before you consider him/her a "Real American?"

2. What if "Mexicans, Middle Eastern people, etc" DO want to adopt the rules of this country? Do we deport them anyway? Or just the ones who don't want our way of life?

3. How should the Constitution be adjusted to protect our existence?

4. Should we ban any other religions, or just Islam? What about Jews? None of the founding fathers were Jewish, to my knowledge. In fact, none were Baptist either, so what about getting rid of them too?

Your responses are appreciated.

Keith Halladay

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

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Corrections

The Black Swan photo that ran last week alongside Colleen Glenn's review showed not Mila Kunis, as the caption suggested, but Barbara Hershey instead. Can someone please Twitter our heartfelt apology to both actors' publicity reps?

FEBRUARY 2, 2011

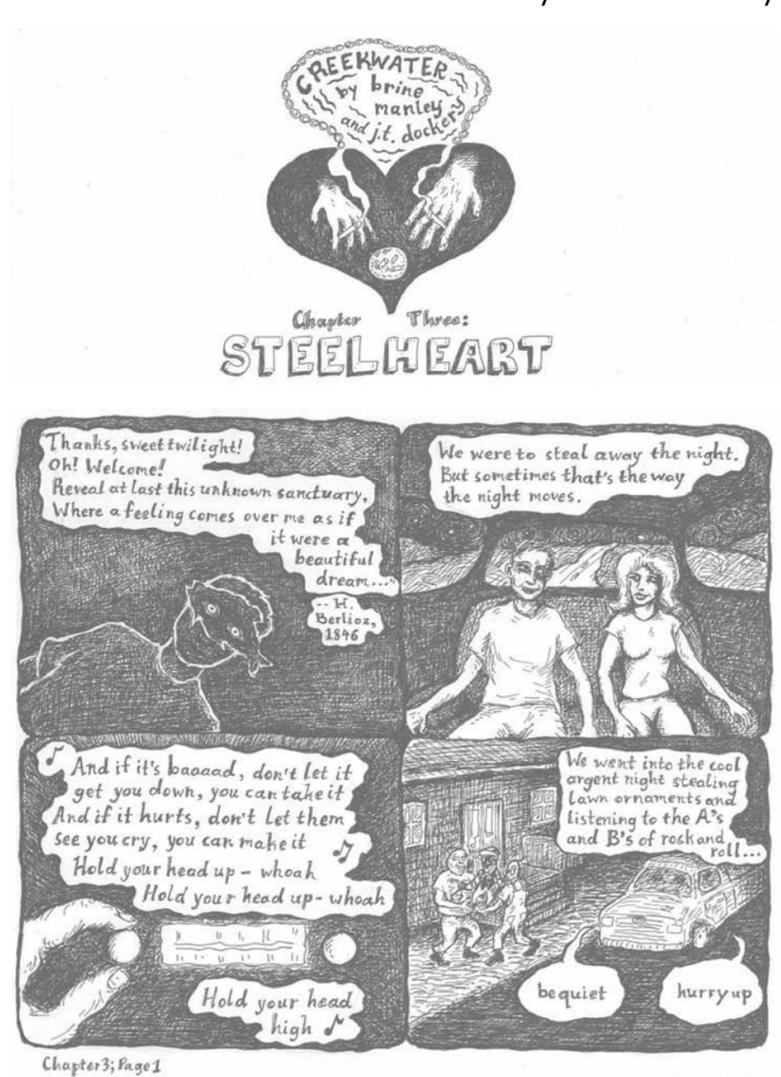
Comics

FIERCE COMPANY (Part 2) by Kenn Minter



Creekwater

Brine Manley & J.T. Dockery



GENERAL DALLAS: THE HEART OF DARKNESS



Film Society schedule (cont.)

continued from page 5

on computers and the lush colors of his films are matched by the vivid complex narratives. Miyazaki is not only a master of animated filmmaking, he also should be considered as ranked amongst the world's best fantasy storytellers.

3/9: *Valhalla Rising* (Denmark: Nicholas Winding Refn, 2009: 93 mins): Just as winter hopefully leaves Lexington, we will screen a dark brutal tale of an enigmatic warrior from the frozen wastelands. Refn upped the ante with his previous bombastic 2008 bio-pic of England's notorious prisoner Bronson. Now he dials it down for this imagistic, although at times even more brutal, tone poem ala Jodorowsky acid westerns. If you expect non-stop action based upon the movie's poster and its trailer, you will be disappointed (although the first 15 minutes has more battles than most films), but if you are open to stunning imagery, Mads Mikkelsen's enigmatic portrayal of One-Eye, and open-ended storytelling, then this will be your cup of tea!

3/10: *Toilet Training* (USA: Tara Mateik, 2004: 30 mins) Part of the KFTC Social Documentary Series. A look at the difficulties transgendered people have in using gender segregated public toilets and the fight to bring awareness to this issue. Film will be followed by a discussion led by KFTC members.

3/23: *Mother* (South Korea: Bong Joon-Ho, 2009: 128 mins): Bong Joon-Ho is the celebrated director of *Memories of Murder* (2003) and *The Host* (2006). With *Mother* he continues to build his reputation as one of the best directors coming out of South Korea. *Mother* follows the struggles of a devoted mother whose son has been charged with the murder of a young woman. He claims he had nothing to do with it and she sets out on a journey through the underside of Korean society. As is typical with many of the new wave of Korean films released in the US, this film artfully blends genres, provides lush colors and images, and provides laughs as well as chills.

3/30: *The Trap* (Serbia: Srdan Golubovic, 2007: 106 mins): How much is a life worth? Can we compare the value of a life to another life when one of those lives means everything to us and the other is a stranger? What would you be willing to do to save the life of someone you love? One father and husband must answer this question in Post-Milosevic Serbia as he is pressed by the demands of the cold realities of a privatized healthcare system and the opportunities of a sinister possible benefactor who asks of him only one favor in return for his monetary help.

4/13: *Inside Job* (USA: Charles Ferguson, 2010: 120 mins): Special 2 P.M. showing and discussion for the BCTC

Peace and Earth Justice Spring Speaker Series. Charles Ferguson, the director of the superb Iraq War documentary *No End in Sight* (2007), turns to an examination of the causes of the Great Financial Crisis of 2008 (and onwards) in *Inside Job*.

Ferguson is uniquely qualified to tell this story. He has a B.A. in Mathematics (UC Berkeley 1978), a Ph.D. in Political Science (MIT 1989), worked at the Brookings Institute, is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, was a consultant for various high-tech companies, and founded Vermeer Technologies where he created the Front-Page software. Ferguson is also a critical researcher and relentless interviewer, and in this film these skills are put to good use as he maps out the root causes of our current economic crisis.

4/20: *Still Walking* (Japan: Hirokazu Koreeda, 2008: 114 mins): A beautiful, subtle exploration of a family coming together to heal in the long aftermath of a tragedy. Koreeda, the director of *Afterlife* (1998) and *Nobody Knows* (2004), provides a rich literary experience that examines all of the intricacies, heartbreak and joy of family without sliding into mawkish melodrama. It is celebrated as a masterpiece and was released on DVD by Criterion Collection in a high-quality transfer.



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