

Made you look again

Storm drain art revived

NoC News

“This is exactly what this whole project is about: getting a dialogue started about the storm drain system, what it does, where it is. Once you get people talking, they’ll remember—and they’ll talk about it.” —Claudia Michler

Talking, and looking at them, the painted drains that is. So much so that when some of the paint capitulated to the weather (as the artists knew it would) art watchers started to request touch-ups.

Blake Eames and Claudia Michler are the artists responsible for the painted storm sewer drains around downtown, neighborhoods near UK, and the near north side. Made You Look!, their project, won an EcoART grant from the city to help with the storm sewer public education campaign. Eames and Michler have now been granted limited funds to revive some of the painted drains.

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Storm sewer. Photo by Brian Connors Manke.

Hatchling of the Chickasaw

A Kentucky waterways story

By Ed McClanahan

A few months ago, Danny Mayer, the editor of the highly respectable rag you hold in your hand at this moment, told me he’d heard that back in the late 1950s, my friend Wendell Berry and I took a little three-day canoe trip down the Kentucky River, and asked if I’d be interested in writing a piece recollecting the experience for North of Center’s ongoing series about Kentucky waterways.

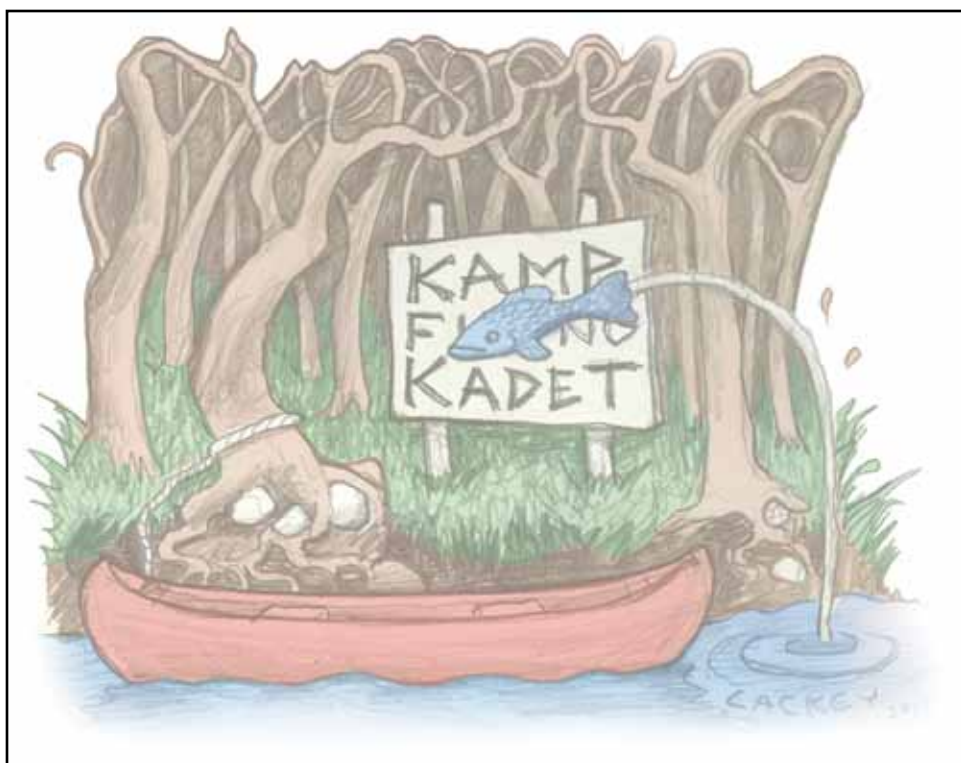
Yeah, sure, sez I, and blithely promised him I’d produce 1500 words for the July issue.

So the deadline is coming down, and I’ve got the 1500 words, all right, but somehow I haven’t even got around to mentioning my trip with Wendell yet. (Our canoe itself does make a cameo appearance, although Wendell is nowhere in sight.) What I’ve found myself writing instead is a far more ambitious undertaking, a meditation about my father and me, the surface of which is barely scratched by my measly 1500-word opening salvo. Clearly, this story wants to become a much more expansive piece of writing, and therefore I’m obliged to do my best to make that happen.

My and Wendell’s canoe trip will still be in it, though, and because my dad eventually became a sort of mini-mogul in the river transportation business, it’s still a Kentucky waterways story too—just not exactly the one I intended to tell.

Anyhow, here’s what I’ve got so far:

By the summer of 1943, my dad, the striving young Standard Oil distributor of rural Bracken County, Kentucky, had recently become a 35-year-old draftee in the United States Army, and my mom, already the Chief Clerk of the Bracken County rationing board, was obliged to take on the stewardship of the little Standard Oil biz as well. With two full-time jobs, what she didn’t need was my pudgy, myopic, probably sulky ten-year-old self underfoot all summer long, which



Kamp Kadet, the shady banks of the Kentucky River, the fabled canoe, a fortuitous fish—and Wendell is nowhere in sight. Illustration by John Lackey.

is how I too came to get drafted—for six delightfully martial weeks of counting cadence at Kamp Kadet, a summer camp near Versailles, KY, operated by a local military academy.

My dad hated the United States Army, and I hated Kamp fucking Kadet—and for the record, our mutual distaste for our respective boot camp ordeals that summer was probably the closest he and I ever came to seeing eye to eye about anything.

Actually, Kamp Kadet itself was a rather nice place: a cluster of four or five modest one-story frame buildings nestled among the willow trees and sycamores on the shady, sandy banks of the Kentucky River, a picturesque, clean (in those days), mostly navigable little stream that has its headwaters down in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky and meanders northward across the state all the way up to Carrollton, where it empties into the Ohio. Behind Kamp Kadet was a broad bottomland meadow

that accommodated a good softball diamond, a running track, and a little archery range. Actually not a bad place at all—if it hadn’t been for Captain fucking Bates.

During the regular school year, Captain Bates was the headmaster of the military academy’s elementary school; in the summertime, he ran the show at Kamp Kadet. I never figured out whether he was a real captain, but he sure knew how to strut around like one, him in his goddamn jodhpurs and riding boots, counting cadence on the noggin of any little boy within reach with the ivory handle of his ever-present riding crop. There wasn’t a horse anywhere on the property, of course; Captain Bates just liked the figure he cut in that get-up. He was a handsome, vain, crew-cut martinet who took a pervert’s ugly delight in dominating and brow-beating and generally smacking around a helpless little troop of pre-adolescent boys, who roundly hated him for these

Jewel City gets shined

Pebbles propels ROCK to 177-51 victory

By Sunny Montgomery

I arrived to Heritage Hall last Saturday a little after six o’clock. The Lexington Rollergirls (ROCK) were warming up, skating graceful laps around the track in preparation for their second home bout of the season against the Jewel City Rollergirls (JCRG) of West Virginia. Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake serenaded overhead.

As I took a front-row seat and opened my notebook, announcer Bill Widener welcomed the audience, introduced himself, and then his co-announcer Mike Trusty, husband to league president and five year ROCK veteran Kitty O’Doom.

Mike gestured to the west-facing wall where a group of little girls leaned, wearing white t-shirts, kneepads and roller skates. These, he announced, were special guests: members of the junior roller derby also known as the Pebbles. The miniature rollergirls made their way onto the track for individual introductions while the crowd cheered in raucous agreement: this was unequivocally adorable.

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attentions. And in company with my fellow unhappy kampers, my distaste for Captain Bates logically extended to Kamp Kadet as well, nice place that it indisputably was.

Well, my dad and I both survived that summer of our mutual discontent and many more besides, and the military summer of ’43 faded into distant memory, no doubt for both of us. I know my dad certainly wasn’t thinking about it when ... but never mind, I’ll get to that in a minute.

A lot changed over the ensuing 14 years, but none of it stopped the clock, so that by the early summer of 1957, I had somehow morphed into a newlywed grad student in English at the University of Kentucky, where I wasn’t doing well—where, as a matter of incontrovertible fact, I had just flunked the Master’s oral exam, and where, alas, I’d have to trudge through yet another tedious academic year before I’d be eligible to try again.

I was also laboring, at the time, under a secret yearning to go in for *la vie Boheme* in some capacity or another. Specifically, I wanted to take off with my new bride to some beatnik pad (those accommodations being the hottest thing going, according to *Life* magazine) in Greenwich Village or San Francisco or maybe even on the Left Bank of the Rue de la Paix in downtown Paris, France, where I would set up shop as a sullen, brooding, existentialist free-lance writer, a trade for which I wouldn’t be needing no piddly-ass MA in English anyhow, thank you very much. This was all a pipedream, of course—I was to a free-lance writer what Captain Bates was to General MacArthur; and for that matter I wasn’t all that sure what “existential” meant, either—, but I had the sullen, brooding part down cold, and that summer I was in no mood to be trifled with.

Now during those same 14 years my father’s circumstances had also changed dramatically, in his case very

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JULY 2012

Drive, bike, walk

Out on the streets, that's where we'll meet

By Captain Comannokers
NoC Transportation Czar

There are a shit ton of people out there who are not very good drivers. I am SO in favor of making it tougher to get a license. You should need a 90 percent or higher on your written test. If you don't know the laws and how they apply to the road, should you be out on it?

Add our modern-world distractions that folks love to tinker with while behind the wheel, and the recipe is like adding sour milk to a rotten egg omelet.

This weekend I was driving on West Sixth Street, heading toward Limestone. I was at a red light at Upper and Sixth, and waiting to proceed straight. An SUV was going in the other direction on Sixth and was looking to turn left onto Upper (toward downtown). The light turns green and I start to move forward; at the same time the SUV cuts directly in front of me to turn onto Upper.

I stop, he stops. He yells at me. I am dumbfounded. He tells me that he has the right of way (in so many words). I am more dumbfounded than before. My comprehension skills are so flummoxed I can't speak—a left hand turn at a light with no arrow trumps through-traffic in WHAT universe?

Aside: I see random acts of driving idiocy like this more often than I'd like to. Even worse (well, maybe—I guess it's of equally idiocy), I'm pretty sure that SUV guy was going to make the left ON red if it wasn't for a couple of cars traveling on Upper impeding that decision. I think "his laws" allowed him to turn onto a one-way street at ANY point. Left had turns be damned. In his world, green means go—straight up, GO. Other drivers can figure out their own shit—it's GREEN.

Enough on that rant. The actual observation that I want to get to is that, in my opinion, being an everyday cyclist makes me a better driver.

As a cyclist, I need to have a keen sense of everything around me. Crappy drivers, crud in the streets (ten-fold more than a driver of a vehicle would need to notice). My peripheral vision needs to be sharp and knowledge of traffic laws (or driver tendencies, as well as pedestrians) can be essential to survival.

Being what I believe is an aware and mostly defensive commuter, I tend to look for potential dangers: cars backing out of driveways or parking spots, hazardous road conditions, problematic traffic patterns/areas. Drivers, especially drivers who don't ever view those same streets from a bike, tend to just put it on daily autopilot. The steel machines just push on through—and when you've got somewhere to get to, well, all bets are off!

Conversely, when I do need to drive, I keep those cycling senses, especially when traveling on the same roads that I traverse on a bike.

Not that I'm trying to sound holier-than-thou—that's not the intent at all. Basically, I just want safer streets for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, and I think having multiple road perspectives helps achieve that goal. If we only trek in one way, yet we are asked to "share the road" with other modes of transportation, how do we fully understand what our fellow travelers experience?

This applies in all directions. If I only biked and never got in a car in my life, I would have a tougher time understanding some of the unique challenges that vehicles face when sharing the road (especially roads that weren't built with "sharing" in mind, but for pushing thousands upon thousands of motorized vehicles in and out of metro areas).

If I never walked anywhere, why would I pay attention to the particular quandaries a pedestrian faces in urban areas. Crosswalks? Here's what some drivers and cyclists seem to think about them: *You can walk through those painted stripes when I've done what I need to do with my vehicle or bike (plus, I'm late, so really don't even think of stepping foot in my path).*

It's like living in a place where knowing three languages is beneficial to communication. You need at least a few basics of the other languages down in order to get along easier. If I only spoke my language and refused to acknowledge that the other languages existed, eventually I'd be digging myself a hole.

Put that shovel down and attempt to speak all the road languages in your community.

This is your captain speaking, over and out.

Peer Pressure

Misadventures in gardening

By Beth Connors-Manke

Three years ago, this Misadventures column began with my hapless gardening at the London Ferrell Community Garden on Third Street. Since I'm better at walking than growing vegetables, it slowly mutated into a column about city pedestrianism. However, because my neighborhood seems to be the community gardening version of Silicon Valley (it's a veritable who's who of dirt-dusted urban farmers), it was only matter of time before I'd have to return to my misadventures in gardening.

Our house, when we bought it, had a ready-made garden area: great sun, tucked behind the garage, already fenced in. The previous owners seemed to have been growing food there (I hear it was a dog pen before that). After living in house for three growing seasons, though, it seems that my husband and I are especially skilled at letting land lie fallow—meaning we're really good at letting weeds (and nothing else) grow there. That little parcel of land has sported lanky weeds that resisted removal by any means other than hacking.

Nonetheless, this spring neighbors kept giving me vegetable plants: first cabbage and broccoli, then some varieties of tomatoes. The cabbage and broccoli refused to die of neglect, so when the tomatoes came, I gave in and planted them all in pots. I had to tuck them next to our back door in order to keep them away from the bunnies that had settled on our back forty. As nature would have it, the bunnies were put off, but the white moths were not; they ate their way through the foliage on the cabbage and broccoli. I kept watering to see if the plants could outlast the moth munchies, because now I was, well, *attached* to the plants and their fascinating growth.

I became convinced that they could beat the moths, and every day was also buoyed by the fact that the tomatoes were progressing, showing their little green spheres that hung heavier each

day. Surely the tomatoes would encourage the cabbage and broccoli, both of which had the tenacity to survive their earlier month of dark exile in my garage.

And then more wildlife took my back door to be its habitat. Wasps began building twin nests on the underside of our 1950s era aluminum awning. Generous (i.e. lazy) as we are, my husband and I let the nests widen their geometry until one night, after dinner, I pushed Brian out the door with the wasp spray. Beth inside the kitchen window, Brian outside, we talked through our strategy (trajectory, distance, etc.) and then Brian did the deed as I went back to washing the dishes. Our approach was successful: by dusk the next day I could brush away the nests without fear of wasp reprisal. And then this conversation happened:

BCM1: "So, seems like the spray strategy worked. Were the vegetables clear?"

BCM2: "Where are the vegetables?"

BCM1: (thinking: *my bad, I should have moved those.*) "Next to the door, where they've been for a month."

BCM2: (sheepishly) "You told me to spray the wasps, and I sprayed the wasps."

Long story short, the vegetables may or may not have been coated by poisonous wasp spray. Knowing that I should have thought to move the vegetables myself, and knowing that I wasn't going to risk eating vegetables poisoned by our own hand, I stopped watering them. I watched all the plants slowly wilt and wilt. Those little green tomato globes hung on until the very end, when I finally dumped all the pots into the Lenny. I was sad. It's hard to bury your plants.

As I see it, there's one main moral to this story: neighbors should not force the gardeningly dysfunctional to grow their own vegetables, as it could result in either poisoning or grief. Thanks a lot, Jonathan and Patrick.

Move Your A**

Come to Free Yoga in Castlewood Park

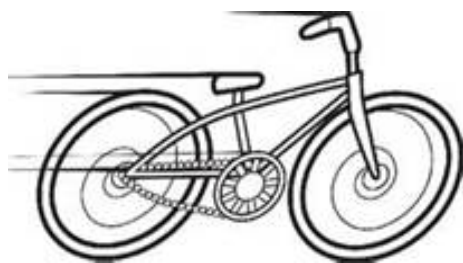
Summer Saturdays, 8:30am, in front of the Loudoun House

Apology: The Bad Father
Hibernation Front
(a haiku)

"Practice erection"

my wife pleads as I nod off.

Rejuvenation.



Dylan and Tesla, 223 Kentucky Avenue



DYLAN AND TESLA / 223 KENTUCKY AVENUE

8.8.10 / 6:50 PM / 82° F

We approached Dylan and Tesla as they were coming out to smoke a cigarette on the porch of their friend's house. It didn't take long to convince them to sit on the orange sectional across the street. They were headed to a concert in Berea where Dylan's band was going to play as well.

Image and text by Kremena Todorova and Kurt Gohde, Discarded project.

“Ultimately, however, the roller derby is about teamwork.”

Relocations, roundabouts and right-of-ways Plans to 2-way Lexington

By David Shattuck

The \$465,000 “Traffic Movement & Revitalization Study” is now underway. LFUCG gave final approval to the contract with Santec (formerly Entran) in mid-May. According to its contract, the Santec study will “assess the ability of the Downtown Lexington street system to accommodate current and future year traffic conditions with all existing one-way streets converted to two-way operation.” More specifically, “The study will help to determine if two-way conversion can reduce driver confusion, increase accessibility to downtown businesses, and moderate vehicle speeds for improved safety.”

One word that can’t be found in the contract for the “Traffic Movement & Revitalization Study” is “revitalization.” Indeed, an oft-repeated word in the contract is “mitigation”—a lessening, moderation—as in mitigating the traffic congestion caused by converting our downtown one-way streets to two-way traffic. Other “r” words, however, are repeated throughout the contract: roundabouts, right-of-way purchases, and a relocation of the Transit Center.

The Traffic Movement & Revitalization Study

The current study is designed in part to answer the central question I’ve asked planners for over a decade: if 2-way conversion does occur, where will all the traffic go? As Palmer Engineering, one of the 5 firms which responded to the Request for Proposals, wrote:

“The distinguishing feature of the Lexington conversion project, however, is the fact that traffic counts on primary arteries will significantly change as the result of converting the one-way streets to two-way operation. This fact leads to an important observation: The single most important traffic modeling activity on this project is to accurately predict how driver behavior and traffic counts will change during peak periods as the result of the street conversions.”

Significantly, Palmer cautions that the traffic model currently in use by Lexington’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) “does not contain sufficient detail in the downtown area for the needs of this study. Without

modification, this model would not accurately predict the diversions that will result from the street conversions.” Accordingly, Santec promises that the “travel demand model will be updated by the KYTC concurrent with this study.”

To minimize the traffic congestion that will ensue in the event that down-



Will Triangle Park become Triangle Circle? Photo by Danny Mayer.

town’s one-way streets are converted to two-way traffic, planners apparently are relying on three “Rs”: relocation, rotaries (or roundabouts), and right-of-way access purchases. Relocation refers to the Transit Center, since a 2007 Santec-authored Traffic Study concluded that conversion of Vine isn’t really feasible unless the Center is moved. Roundabouts, or rotaries, appear to be the plan for connecting Main and Vine at both ends of downtown, “hot spots”—or areas where peak traffic congestion would be unacceptable—according to the 2007 Study. Purchasing right-of-way access at other hot spots is the third way planners hope to make conversion work. Let’s briefly analyze each of these strategies.

Relocation: the Transit Center

The 2007 study demonstrated that conversion of Vine isn’t feasible unless the Transit Center is relocated; yet nobody had suggested relocating the Transit Center prior to the conclusion of that study. In its response to the Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for the \$465,000 study it will soon begin, Santec asserts: “There is growing sentiment that the transit center should be relocated from

its current location on Vine Street. While opinions vary on where the new location should be, the current location is not considered very accessible or safe, particularly for pedestrians.” This assertion is disingenuous.

That the Center is “not considered very accessible” would be considered surprising news by the planners that chose

to locate the Center on Vine in the dead center of a now-growing downtown. The truth is that there is no “growing sentiment” for removal. It never dawned on anyone in this town that the Transit Center isn’t perfectly located.

I’ve followed events closely since 2001 when planners suggested closing the Vine Street curve, and there has been absolutely no public discussion (say, in local media) about relocating the Transit Center. In response to an open records request in May 2009, LexTran advised

me that it was unaware of any plans to relocate the Transit Center. It’s difficult to fathom that sentiment for relocating the center has moved from non-existent in mid-2009 to “growing” by the end of 2011, despite virtually no public discussion on the matter. The tactic is similar to what 2-way conversion proponents did in 2001 during their last attempt at street conversion. Now, as back then, the so-called “growing sentiment” has been created by and confined to a few movers and shakers, who somehow sold planners on these “sentiments.”

One would think, for example, that such growing sentiment would have made it into the Downtown Master Plan, released in 2006. The Master Plan has served as the basis for all discussions relating to street conversion since its release. Yet it makes no mention of needing to move the Center. It wasn’t until release of the 2007 traffic study, months after the Master Plan was completed, that it occurred to anyone that the Transit Center should be relocated. Since the 2007 traffic study has received little reportage and merited little public discussion, any “growing sentiment” seems necessarily confined to those planners and big shots who seem determined to monkey with our streets.

Where planners might want to relocate the Transit Center, and at what cost, nobody has yet bothered to share with the public. All we know is that in 2009 Lexington requested \$20 million in federal stimulus funds for the

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ROCK (cont.)

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Size matters

A few minutes to seven, the refs and score-keepers took their places on center track. The roller girls positioned themselves and I noticed that the JCRG were smaller in stature than ROCK. Although the roller derby has much to do with resilience and strategy, size advantage can make all the difference—as demonstrated by last April’s 172-71 beatdown by the impressive Black N’ Bluegrass.

The whistle blew and the bout began. Immediately, JCRG’s long-limbed jammer pushed through the pack. Seconds before the ref could

Lessons for Pebbles

ROCK may have had a slight size advantage, but still, the Jewel City skaters were fierce. In particular, JCRG’s Smooth Operator was perhaps the most aggressive skater I’d seen: combative and vengeful. If an opponent knocked her down, Smooth Operator would scramble upright, scream at the refs, then chase the offender around the track. Once caught up, she would unleash a relentless onslaught of shoulder-slams until, frequently, she knocked herself back to the floor.

It was incredible and slightly terrifying. I found myself disappointed each time she was sent to the penalty box.



ROCK’s Sugar Shock fights her way to lead jammer. Photo by Lewis Gardner.

declare her lead jammer, though, she skidded and spun out, allowing ROCK’s Sugar Shock to hurtle into lead position and confirm what the back of her pink and black shorts proudly proclaimed: I GET AROUND.

Again and again, ROCK got lead jammer. Smokin Okie even took a moment to showboat. She pumped her fists in the air, encouraging the crowd to get loud, which they did. Fifteen minutes into the bout, ROCK was already ahead 47 points.

Ultimately, however, the roller derby is about teamwork.

“Our current roster of girls is very tight,” ROCK’s Ragdoll Ruby told me. “We are living and fighting for each other in so many ways.” So it was no surprise that in the end, ROCK won the bout, arm in arm: 177 to 51.

ROCK’s next home bout is July 14 at Heritage Hall. Doors open at 6. Bout begins at 7. Come enjoy the fun. For more information on the Pebbles email wenturner@gmail.com.

Beastie Boys Tribute Al’s Bar, July 27

By Clay Shields

On May 4 this year, after almost three years battling cancer, Adam “MCA” Yauch passed away—a sad day not only for B-Boys, but for all of music.

MCA was a founding member of the musical powerhouse the Beastie Boys, as well as the Milarepa Foundation, a non-profit responsible for the international, decade-long Tibetan Freedom Concert series, the biggest, US-based musical benefit since 1985’s Live Aid.

In 1986, MCA, Michael “Mike D” Diamond, and Adam “Ad-Rock” Horowitz—the three emcee’s behind such genre-bending classics as “Fight for Your Right (To Party)” and “Sabotage”—cut their debut full-length album, *Licensed to Ill*, the first hip hop album to top the *Billboard* charts. Over twenty-five years later, the Beastie Boys were still touring and had produced seven platinum or better albums by April 2012, when they were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (just a month before MCA’s passing).

But the honors and homage aren’t stopping there (“You can’t, you won’t, and you don’t stop”). On Friday July 27, Al’s Bar (Sixth and Limestone) will play host to “Sheisty Khrist & Sundog Revival present *The Beastie Boys: A Tribute*”—an event which will be equal parts hip hop extravaganza, ‘80s (dress-up) dance party, and charitable benefit concert.

The show will boast many local musical acts—Miss Cass (“Miss Cassette” for the evening), DJ So Free, Tommy Miller (DJ of Club Dub)—and will center around the main event, a live performance of *Licensed to Ill*, starring Hendrick Floyd (“Sheisty Khrist”) as Ad-Rock, Carlos Villanueva (aka “Fidel Hasflo”) as Mike D, and Justin Long as MCA (topped off with a full-band backup courtesy of Sundog Revival, no less).

And it’s all for a good cause! In the activist spirit of MCA, Long and Floyd partnered with the Markey Cancer Center to ensure that every cent made by the event will go directly toward the medical expenses of two families in need.

It’s all about having a good time while honoring a legacy and positively effecting someone’s life directly—“Hip hop is gonna do that...and hip hop from the ‘80s is gonna do that, which is even cooler,” as Floyd put it.

So, this is what you need to do: save up a little cash, bust out the high-top sneakers, and listen to *Licensed to Ill* every night until your July 27 trek to Al’s Bar, where you will be welcomed by *The Beastie Boys: A Tribute*. And I’m serious about jamming *Licensed* every night until then. “We want people to *learn* this album before the show...so they can be rockin’ with us,” Long and Floyd insist with a smile.

“Rotaries *might keep* traffic flowing, so long as no pedestrians attempted to cross any of these streets.”

JULY 2012



Blake Eames and Claudia Michler are hard at work repainting storm sewer art. Photo by Brian Connors Manke.

Made you look: Hard at work

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began examining Lexington's sewer systems in 2003. Tasked with making sure municipalities complied with

the Clean Water Act of 1972, the EPA found what the city had already known: the antiquated and overwhelmed sewer system was an environmental and health hazard. In certain parts of the city, heavy rains brought nightmares for residents and public works: sewage would back up into basements and overflow into the stormwater system. Storms also brought raw sewage flowing out of pump stations and manholes. The net result was that untreated sewage from sanitary sewers (the ones that take waste from your house) ended up in our waterways.

The Made You Look! project reminds Lexingtonians that paying attention to our storm sewers is essential. Don't dump oil, paint, trash, or yard debris into the sewers because it exacerbates the storm sewer problems and pollutes our local watersheds.

Mayer apologizes to Mayor

Requests better Cheapside locales for local papers

The following public appeal has been revised from a June 25 private email sent to area papers, council reps and county Mayor. The author would like to apologize publicly for the part in the private email where he called the Mayor a pimp when "you marketed yourself well" could have sufficed. He promises to attempt to learn from the experience.

Dear Jim,

In the past two years since *North of Center* has had a presence at Cheapside Pavilion, the city has moved our distribution rack no less than four times. In each instance, these relocations have further removed *NoC* from the central "Pavilion" area that the city has spent money to redevelop. And my publication

is not alone: *Chevy Chaser*, *Ace* and a number of other publications have also been relocated. Currently, we are so far removed from the Pavilion area—on the other side of the Courthouse on a portion of Upper that has little pedestrian traffic—that tourists and residents alike would have no idea from visiting the block that the city has a vibrant print culture. Even the bustling Saturday Farmer's Market rarely extends out to where we've been put.

And the results have been clear: since the latest move, our circulation in the area has dropped 50%.

The slow removal of publications from the Cheapside Pavilion is a queer choice. The area has been celebrated by you and others as a public place, a hub

of downtown activity, a place where people can celebrate the wonders of our city life. And yet, removed from view are the very publications whose writers, staff and owners work diligently to do just this.

Not only does this seem like a cal- lous slap in the face—a devaluing—of what we do and contribute to our county and its downtown area, it also works against your visions for "selling" the city. Which is more efficient for downtown-goers filing through Cheapside looking for something to do or for "unique" facets of the city: check the LFUCG website

or pick up a number of free publications sitting right in front of them?

Take, for example, our paper. For over three years *NoC* has centered its coverage on the county in which you

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Current location of periodicals at Cheapside. Photo taken at 11:00 on market day, at the start of PRIDE festival, June 30. Photo by Danny Mayer.

Relocations (cont.)

Continued from page 3

purpose of relocating the Center. How the \$20 million was calculated is anyone's guess. When I first learned of this in early 2009 I contacted the Transit Center authorities and was advised that the Center itself had no such plans. The story is murky, but so far this has been clear: when planners mention the cost of street conversion, they fail to include the cost of relocating the Transit Center.

Santec appears to be privy to information that has never been made public. Its forthcoming study promises that its "evaluation of alternatives will include the identification of future projects and developments that will affect traffic flow . . . these will include renovations to Rupp Arena and the Lexington Center, the Centre Pointe Development, relocation of the Transit Center *and potential construction of towers in the current location*, and other downtown developments" (italics mine). Towers??? Not cell-phone towers, but more likely high-rise condos.

Roundabouts: CVS & Triangle Circle

The contract, as well as responses to the Request for Proposals, suggest that roundabouts, or rotaries, will be suggested to connect Main and Vine at the east and west ends. Technically a roundabout involves a slight elevation to slow traffic before the circle, while a rotary does not. Imagine a large circle across from the *Herald-Leader* building where

traffic approaches from the west and east (Richmond and Winchester Roads) and meets traffic approaching from Main and Vine Streets in the other directions. Similarly, at the west end Triangle Park might serve as a (triangular) rotary connecting Main, Vine and Broadway.

Rotaries *might keep* traffic flowing, so long as no pedestrians attempted to cross any of these streets. For when pedestrians enter the picture, so do traffic signals, and traffic backs up in all directions, particularly during peak hours and special events. In any event, even with a rotary recall, conversions away from one-way streets result in a substantial reductions in traffic capacity. So it is unclear how an honest simulation model would forecast significant reduction in traffic congestion via rotaries connecting Main and Vine (and the other streets) at the east and west ends.

Right-of-ways: bye-bye foodtruck central

Even if a rotary was a feasible way of joining streets on the east end (Main, Vine, Winchester), LFUCG would have to purchase the right-of-way that is currently the vacant lot there. A sign boasts that this lot represents prime commercial space, a gateway to downtown. The site was purchased in 2008 by Main and Vine Partners, LLC for either \$1 million or \$2.8 million (both sales are listed on the Fayette County PVA site on the date



Phil Holoubek has land for lease on potential site of potential city roundabout. Photo by Danny Mayer.

January 15, 2008). The group promptly tore down the structure on the lot to attract retail investment.

Recall that CVS wanted to put a drugstore there, but LFUCG decreed that the entrance to our downtown should be something other than a big box. CVS then proposed a design that LFUCG typically would approve if located elsewhere; still LFUCG turned CVS away. Currently, the empty lot's taxable value is listed as \$895,000. Perhaps LFUCG turned away CVS hoping that it could acquire the property in order to connect Main and Vine as part of the Master Plan's call for conversion of all downtown streets to two-way traffic.

One must wonder, how much would it cost to acquire this newly cleared precious piece of property?

When conversion proponents talk about the cost of conversion (I've heard estimates of \$25 million) they typically de-emphasize or omit entirely things like the cost to acquire rights-of-way. The responses to the RFP indicate, however, that conversion cannot possibly work without major right-of-way purchases at all of the "hot spots" identified in the 2007 Traffic Study.

Santec will deliver a final report next May. Stay tuned. In a future column Dave will propose an alternative to street conversion to help revitalize downtown.

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Whippoorwill Festival

Homegrown Hideaways in Berea, KY

By Dave Cooper

Are you worried about how peak oil and climate change will affect your life? Do you want to live a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle? Do you want to spend less time stuck in traffic and more time stuck in the garden?

The Whippoorwill Festival is a four day festival in mid-July near Berea, Kentucky (just south of Lexington off Interstate 75) that seeks to promote sustainable living by sharing earth-friendly living skills with one another in a positive, healthy, family-friendly atmosphere.

Running Thursday July 12 through Sunday July 15, Whippoorwill celebrates Kentucky's Appalachian heritage while helping prepare our minds and bodies for a future world of climate change and a diminished supply of fossil fuels. The festival is a low-cost event (\$20 per person per day) with simultaneous workshops, tent camping, healthy and home-cooked meals, guest speakers, plus old-time and mountain music, dancing, and story-telling in the evenings.

Many Whippoorwill workshops are led by experts with years of skills and knowledge in fields such as cob construction, forest ecology and wild mushroom identification. In order to encourage leadership development in Appalachia, other workshops such as hide tanning, primitive nutrition, fermentation, and

salamanders are led by young people and relative novices. Discussion groups on topics such as voluntary simplicity, deep ecology and quantum physics allow participants to share their thoughts and experiences with each other in an informal atmosphere.

In addition, local craft workers, sustainable businesses, and non-profit organizations will have booths and tables at the festival to promote their issues and their earth-friendly businesses.

Berea has a long and strong tradition of Appalachian craftsmanship that is well known in Kentucky, but the Whippoorwill Festival broadens the market for these craftspeople by attracting attendees from Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, Ohio, and West Virginia.

In the spirit of the book *Last Child in the Woods*, the festival encourages kids at the festival to play outdoors. In fact, children 16 and under are free. The facility for the festival, HomeGrown HideAways, has a nice clean creek with woods and trails on the property. Unstructured activities for children, such as playing in the creek, building dams, and climbing trees are encouraged. There is also a lake nearby.

In the evening, the Reel World String Band will play acoustic and mountain favorites from their 30 years together. Other bands include Cincinnati's terrific young trio The



"Raising Backyard Chickens" is one of 65 workshops offered at the Whippoorwill Festival - Skills for Earth-Friendly Living. Photo by Jessa Turner.

Tillers, Berea's favorite harmonizing threesome Sugar Tree, and an excellent singer/songwriter from Knoxville, Jack Herranen. Louisville's Appalatin, a fusion of Latin and Appalachian folk music from the band member's homelands in Central America, the Andes and Appalachia, will also take the Whippoorwill stage.

Food for the festival will be prepared by the Knoxville chapter Food Not Bombs, a national volunteer collective

that prepares dishes using donated and surplus food. There is no cost for meals but donations to Food Not Bombs are gratefully accepted.

The event is co-sponsored by the Bluegrass Sierra Club, Kentucky Heartwood, Mountain Justice, Sustainable Berea, and the Berea Festival of Learnshops. A complete schedule for the festival can be found at the website. We hope to see you there!

<http://www.whippoorwillfest.com/>

How much is art worth?

Occupy Art

By Clay Waincott

How much is art worth? This is really a bunch of questions, and sorting them out should make any one of them easier to answer. What art is worth in the market might not be what it's worth to you, and really only the second has real relevance. The prices we hear about occasionally on the evening news are astronomical and, like the price of an extremely rare baseball card, have everything to do with competitive speculation and almost nothing to do with art.

The gigantic prices, for one thing, aren't real. Chunks of wealth are moved around to satisfy tax accountants and using trademarked art like poker chips provides cover. The art part has suffered unless you like polka dots filled in by grad student apprentices — "no two exactly alike." Except for the sensational prices there isn't much to be excited about.

Art galleries one might visit when in a major city use a modified version of this consensus-mimicking mechanism we all succumb to in some degree — wired in you might say. When a prospective client seems to show an interest in a particular piece of art, he or she will be informed in friendly conversational tones concerning prior acceptance by important competitions and famous collectors, and that's the reason, after all, we want so much for it. In order to buy a piece of art it's formally necessary to listen attentively to four pounds of fluff recited like statistics in a racing form, and there are some who won't hold still for it. Markets have their own imperatives, and still the most effective argument for buying a lightning rod for the barn is because your neighbor across the road just bought three, but it gets old.

Art might have real value to you, but chances are you'll find it in the frame and

not in its pedigree. Consider the art from your own neighborhood first of all. For a golden time, just as it's beginning to gain acceptance, acquiring local art can be a bargain. Having passed through an era of neglect, some local art still exudes the authenticity of having not been made primarily for money. Art produced at genuine personal sacrifice, like the innocence of youth, expresses a sincerity difficult to fake, and that's something usually lost to commercial success.

Price is another consideration. Art is traditionally handmade, and the value of a unique item from the hand of one individual is hard to gage, representing as it does an individual spirit and years of practice. When you do get to a major city check the prices in the galleries you visit and then try to assess your own reaction to a particular piece of art you find appealing. When you get home find something you like as well and check the

price. There are some worldly folk who don't take local art seriously because the prices are so low. They're even better if you deal with the artist directly.

Buying a piece of art from a local artist could well be worth your hard earned cash. For one thing with your support they'll have a chance to get better, and if they stay around you can watch their career develop. You'll have an early piece. They make their art from the same general world you live in, and if you hang their art in your house you might find connections with others who like the work too. There's also more of a chance you'll see something by the same artist in someone else's home, and it's another reason to be friends. In any case, any original piece of art you buy now has every chance of attaining a personal worth to you over the years, so that if it becomes fantastically valuable someday, you wouldn't sell it.

Hatchling (Cont.)

Continued from page 1

much for the better. His Standard Oil business had expanded to include the adjoining county, and we had moved to Maysville, a bustling, prosperous Ohio River town 20 miles to the east. In 1948, a Standard Oil Company towboat pushing a tow of petroleum-product barges on the Ohio caught fire and sank, stranding the mighty Standard Oil Company of Kentucky's river transportation system high and dry. (A towboat, for some obscure nautical reason, does not tow barges, it pushes them; and by the same peculiar logic, the string of barges that the towboat pushes is called ... a tow!) My father, who had an exceptionally sharp eye for the main chance, quickly partnered up with another sharp-eyed Standard Oil agent named Pete, and together they scoured the Ohio River dockyards until they turned up an antiquated but sturdy little out-of-work sternwheeler named the *Chickasaw*. They took in another partner, formed a little company of their own—Triangle Towing—, leased the *Chickasaw* on the cheap, rounded up a pilot and a crew, and started moving product between Pittsburgh and Paducah for Standard Oil.

The *Chickasaw* soon proved herself up to the task, and the Triangle partners prospered accordingly. (And I must say I'm damned glad they did, considering that this hatchling of the *Chickasaw*—namely me— has lived for many years mostly on the proceeds of a trust fund which had its inception in the earnings of that unlovely but lovable old tub, bless her heart.) When they'd raised sufficient cash, the partners bought the hard-working old gal outright, and for the next five years or so she paddled tirelessly back and forth in their service, pushing tows of six or eight petroleum-product barges—immense floating steel vaults, each with a deck the size of a high school basketball court—, plying the Ohio between Pittsburgh and Paducah. Triangle, meanwhile, began accumulating a little string of barges unto itself, which the partners leased to Standard Oil—whose executives they simultaneously showered with country hams, cases of Old Charter, tweed sportcoats, football tickets, and similar wampum, in return for which those wily eminences generously condescended to include Triangle's barges in the *Chickasaw*'s tow—meaning that the Standard Oil Company, unbeknownst to its oblivious stockholders, would be paying the

Triangle Towing Company untold thousands for moving its—Triangle's!—own barges!

Which, judging from today's headlines about Wall Street chicanery, is more or less how most big and wanna-git-big bidness is conducted to this very day ... and always has been. But I digress.

So by dint of this and many similar stratagems over the years, my dad and his partners did very well indeed. Eventually, they replaced the *Chickasaw* with a larger, more up-to-date towboat, the fortuitously-named *City of Maysville*, and then they added the even larger *Elisha Wood* and a couple more barges to their burgeoning little navy, and began working for Ashland Oil and Gulf Oil as well as for Standard. Somewhere along the way, my dad bought a summer cottage on a remote local lake, and the purchase included a big red wooden canoe, another addition to the fleet.

Then, in the early summer of 1957, he ponied up big-time for his own personal flagship, a brand-new, ostentatiously bulky, embarrassingly overpowered houseboat, for which he proposed to stage a gala launching party at—all the spots he could have chosen on all the countless miles of riverbanks

and lakeshores in the whole state of Kentucky, my father decided to have his launching party at ... Kamp fucking Kadet!

Well, it's a start. Future installments, regrettably, are liable to be slow in coming. ("Writing," as I'm notoriously fond of saying, "is like performing brain surgery on yourself. It's not something you want to hurry with.") In any event, I'm profoundly grateful to Danny for prompting me to begin the story, and if North of Center and I both manage to hang around long enough, NoC is where I'll finish it.

Perhaps I should mention here that Wendell disputes my assertion that the launching party took place in 1957; he says it was 1958, sure as hell. I'll keep trying to nail down the correct answer, but I'm sticking with '57 until the evidence proves me wrong.

One last thing: I must precede myself just long enough to say that, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, this is not going to be another ingrate-child-bites-hand-that-fed-him story. In this story, my churlish, resentful attitude toward my dad reaches its nadir on the day of the launching party, begins improving incrementally from that day forward, and does so for the rest of his life, and for all the days thereafter.

JULY 2012

Dissecting the dishonorable

Marriage amendments

By Marcus Flores

North Carolina put to vote a heterosexual marriage referendum in early May of this year. Given the state's rural demographics, perhaps the result was an unsurprising one. Yet it was not the first (and probably will not be the last) state to do so; in 2004 Kentucky adopted a similar such amendment from a resolution that cited the *Lawrence v. Texas* Supreme Court case, which, the resolution said, "may undermine the foundation of marriage as the fundamental union between a man and a woman." Strange.

Lawrence v. Texas concerned "deviate sexual intercourse"—sodomy—between consenting adults. In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court axed Texas's sodomy laws and ipso facto those of all states. The decision had about as much to do with marriage as did Kentucky's 1992 Supreme Court Case that also shot down the state's sodomy laws.

In *Kentucky v. Wasson*, the male defendant, Jeffrey Wasson, was charged for soliciting sex from an undercover police officer (this was apparently not uncommon). The arguments of the case refer to the "moving stream," an analogy for the accumulation of precedents in which 25 states had recently rescinded their own sodomy laws. In short, the occasion was ripe for Kentucky to undam itself.

It strikes many a citizen to learn that their own state had or still has sodomy laws, and the question as to their origin, at least in the United States, is likewise curious. Since the term itself etymologically begins with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, it must follow from religious condemnation of dishonorable desires, which Henry VIII codified following a split with the Catholic Church. American colonists, often romantically described as seeking a haven for religious freedoms, imported these same restrictions. In 1683, Pennsylvania law categorized sodomy as an "unnatural sin." (Mind you, there was no official separation of church and state.)

Among the other provisions of Kentucky's marriage resolution, which petitioned "the United States Congress to propose an amendment to the Constitution of the United States," are the following selections:

*That "marriage is both a solemn civil and *religious* ceremony."

*That marriage is "the highest and most *blessed* of relationships."

*That the state recognize the "*sacrament* of marriage as the union of a man and a woman."

*That "the union of man and woman in marriage has been recognized as the foundation of society since the beginning of time." (All italics mine)

In other words, the resolution is replete with religious confetti and undergirded by the premise that heterosexual marriage confers special benefits upon its participants. Moreover, it celebrates the "merger of two sentiment [sic] beings into one." This none-too-subtle approach is not the language of legislature but rather the solicitation of scripture where it is not permitted.

A ceremony ought not be *both* civil and religious because it would necessarily entangle the two. The bill's further reasoning builds on this blurring of spheres: pompous platitudes elevate the act of marriage to a symbol of superiority, and a religious one to boot. (May I also ask when it was that sacraments were admitted to a supposedly secular code of laws?) If *that* fails to give some secularists cardiovascular trouble, then this fourth and final provision certainly will not.

The endorsement of a specific religion in the bill is as subtle as it is dangerous. Don't see it? Look again. Only in certain religious worldviews do time and society begin simultaneously. Secular knowledge—what should form the very kernel of legislation—indicates that dinosaurs existed long before marriage.

The Kentucky referendum was approved by over 70 percent. Section 233A of the Kentucky Constitution now reads: "Only a marriage between

one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Kentucky. A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized."

Meanwhile, around 10 other states have gone on to legalize homosexual marriage, and some even permit civil unions (any hope for the latter was also sunk by 233A). Still, the alarmingly high number of states that have marriage definition amendments in their constitutions suggests a response to the burgeoning marriage equity movement. It is an effort to slow the stream that will ultimately flow freely.

Though it took until 2003 for consensual sex among homosexuals to be entirely legal, a wild card may accelerate the process for marriage. Contrary to president Obama's belief, same sex marriage is not simply a states' rights issue. If a New York gay couple relocates to Kentucky, what happens to their rights? According to KRS 402.040, they dissolve.

Given enough disputes, the U. S. Supreme Court will have to intervene. And in a few years, when same sex marriage prohibition seems as distant Henry VIII, Thomas Paine's sage words will be most relevant: time makes more converts than reason.

What we'd do: 2.5 million from the state

With LFUCG approving \$2.5 million of local funds for the Rupp Entertainment Zone, the state now will contribute a matching amount to the project. Combined, the \$5 million will purchase real estate; pay salaries for a project manager (Frank Butler, \$260,000/year) and administration; some project studies and site surveys; and a little design work. Total costs for Rupp Zone redevelopment range between \$600 million and \$1 billion. Here's what we'd do with the first \$2.5 million down payment from the state.

Unfortunately, we are limited. The state has limited the scope of its development funds to the Rupp Arena structure only—and not to any of the other 40 acres included in the Rupp Zone.

One million dollars will build upon our proposal to support the agricultural Fayette Proud products grown on park land, marketed to the region, and sold at

weekly county markets. Of this, \$100,000 will pay the rent on the Fayette County Proud ag offices, which to utilize state money, will be located at Rupp. \$700,000 will route into LexTran to design and staff daily free bus routes that leave from Rupp and travel to the Fayette Proud markets. Essentially, this is an expansion of service LexTran successfully offered during the WEG. Remaining money will pay for daily "events" at the Rupp shuttle drop-off site to provide a "cap" experience at the other end of the daily market.

With the rest of the state money, \$1.5 million, we will heed the advice of Gary Bates, Rupp Zone Master Planner: slow cook. We will invest into several local first investment portfolios, including Fayette Proud, and save rather than spend.

We have two chief reason for slow-cooking the Rupp Zone. First, the task force convened to study Rupp redevelopment issued a poor report that, incredibly,

makes no reference to the very serious risks cities and their populace take on when they partner in arena construction. Chilling the fuck out and surveying honestly both benefits and costs seems in order here.

This is especially important considering the fraught nature of contemporary sports capitalism and arena entertainment. As funding models change, as "the game" gets further from the grasp of ordinary fans, it is not a slam dunk that a brand new arena, with little new seating capacity, can pay off the high costs of coaching, recruiting, infrastructure, scheduling, etc. necessary to retain the UK basketball gold standard. We could be ending up with a gigantic, costly, 20th century dinosaur anchoring down our 21st century downtown.

Vatican hires new director of excommunications

The leek: a satirical take

By Horace Heller Hedley, IV

Following its recent hiring of Fox News correspondent Greg Burke as official media consultant, the Vatican has continued its public outreach by establishing a new Office of Excommunications. The incoming director, Fr. Bartomeo Taccahaicca, has pledged to streamline the process of excommunication, currently bogged down by confused regulations, antiquated administrative procedures, and skyrocketing demand.

The Vatican has been scrambling to update its excommunication methods—little has changed since the Middle Ages—in the face of a steep increase in requests for excommunication in recent years. "In past centuries most excommunications were involuntary," explained Roberto Delvecchio of the Pontifical Institute. "The demand for voluntary excommunication in the past few years has caught the Church off guard. The administrative structure is completely log-jammed."

While the involuntary excommunication rate remains flat, with no excommunications of priests from the sexual abuse scandal, and none expected from the recent investigations of U.S. nuns or

the Girl Scouts of America, voluntary excommunications continue to grow apace. However, those Catholics seeking to formally renounce ties with an organization that they consider authoritarian, opposed to free thought, misogynist, supportive of governmental policies harmful to the most vulnerable citizens, and guilty of concealing thousands of cases of child sexual abuse, have found that organization maddeningly unresponsive.

"I had no idea that getting excommunicated would be such a damned runaround!" fumed Jennifer Hobson of Falls River, VA. "I spent the whole morning getting bounced around this phone tree, with all the messages in Latin, before I got to a person. That was two months ago, and I still haven't gotten my parchment. So am I in, or out? It's a whole lot easier to get out of Facebook."

While analysts hailed the Vatican's new commitment to a more responsive management style as an important step forward, some questioned whether it goes far enough. "This new investment in customer service is a positive signal to the marketplace and the shareholders," said Milton Battersby, senior partner of The Global Faith Finance Forecasting Group. "But I can't see it reversing the long trend of erosion in the Church's

customer base, or the catastrophic loss of market share to their evangelical competitors. After all, getting customers out the door is relatively easy—the hard part is getting them in."

Still, streamlining cumbersome excommunication procedures would serve the interests of both disgruntled would-be former Catholics and the Vatican itself. Pope Benedict XVI has expressed his preference for a "smaller, purer church" and a "winnowing" of persons he does not consider fully Catholic. It will be difficult for the Church to meet that goal without much more user-friendly excommunication procedures.

It is widely believed that Father Taccahaicca was chosen as Director of Excommunications because of his unusually rich experience in the secular business world. A late vocation to the priesthood, Fr. Taccahaicca was formerly Vice President for Customer Care at Anthem Blue Cross / Blue Shield. He is expected to implement a sweeping modernization of the excommunication apparatus, including the delivery of excommunication documents by fax and in PDF formats, and via an interactive option offered on the new website anathema.com.

Yet it will take far more than a procedural overhaul to help the Church clear away the deadwood among its faithful. Church regulations are so arcane that even religious professionals disagree over what constitutes true excommunication.

For example, when Donna Rogeux was ordained a priest in an unsanctioned ceremony in Lexington, KY, Church officials commented that, by the act of accepting ordination, she had "excommunicated herself." Such *latæ sententiae*, or automatic excommunication, supported by canon law, is occasionally applied to Catholic politicians who oppose Church policy—most recently, presidential candidate John Kerry.

This position, however, ruffles excommunication hard-liners, like Monseigneur James Kirkland. "Hogwash. Self-excommunication is a myth—a convenient theological fiction concocted as a cost-cutting measure, like the U-Scan at Kroger. The believer is excommunicated when we say he is. Period."

The new Vatican department, dubbed by some critics "Office of the Holy See You Later," is scheduled to begin operations next Advent.

NoC Says...
Hike on good Christian!



Christian Torp is hiking the Appalachian Trail to raise awareness about the deplorable practice of Mountain Top Removal. In hiking 2,200 miles from GA to Maine, he hopes to raise money to help support Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.

Follow Christian's blog:
<http://appalachianvoyage.wordpress.com/>

Donate to KFTC on his behalf:
<http://www.razoo.com/story/Appalachian-Voyage>

“My education has shaped *my life*, not just my career.”

JULY 2012

Raise taxes for public ed

Will pay for public education

By **Beth Connors-Manke**

On April 5, 2012, *The Herald-Leader* ran an opinion piece by Whitney Tilson, a hedge fund manager and a member of Patriotic Millionaires for Fiscal Strength. Following Warren Buffet’s lead, Tilson came out of the closet as a person who cares about more things than just his own bank account.

Tilson began his article, which originally ran in the *Washington Post*, with a statement that surely caused angina, if not outright cardiac arrest, in the R. Paul family:

“I am part of the 1 percent of the 1 percent. By that I mean that I am fortunate to be a wealthy American and I say, ‘It’s okay to raise my taxes.’”

Gasp, sputter.

Inspired by rich people who display that philanthropic spirit also known as paying equitable taxes, I’ll offer my own public plea:

“I am part of the 99 percent. I am fortunate to have had access to a good American education and I say, ‘It’s okay to raise my taxes to support public education.’”

Public and private privilege

I am not a product of public education, though. My parents sacrificed and scrapped to send me to Catholic schools through high school; after that, I earned a scholarship to a small private liberal arts college. I have never questioned the

value of my education, even during those rough post-college years when finding a decent job was hard (and this was during a fairly strong economy). My education has shaped *my life*, not just my “career.”

Let me give an example: in college a dynamic English professor showed me how a Toni Morrison novel could shape my response to poverty and otherness. Dr. Barbour had no agenda per se, except to teach novels that made us consider the world more deeply. Lest you dismiss social ethics as paltry and unnecessary in “the real world,” let me tell you those moments, discussing that novel, inform my street interactions with the homeless downtown; they shape how I give money in my community; they shape how I vote.

Or here’s another example: My senior year of high school, I took Calculus, which is designed to break your soul. After a 69 percent on my first Calc test, which was a big failure for me, Mrs. Alhand taught me how to stick with difficulty without being flustered. I can’t tell you how many times I’ve need that determination in “the real world.”

I wouldn’t say that, just because I went to private schools, I was “privileged.” Many of my siblings attended public schools and have done very well in their lives—in part because they had great public schools. In other words, private schools are only a place of “privilege” when their public school equivalents are left in shambles by lackluster public investment or downright hostility to public education by

political ideologues. (I’m sure I don’t have to name names here—just pay attention to the news.)

Public becomes private

In my decade as a teacher, I have only worked at public universities, those big scary places that would have overwhelmed me as an 18 year old. From this side of time and experience, I see public universities and community colleges as rich and dynamic resources that have the power, because they are public, to serve our community in ways different from small private institutions. Flagship state universities can stretch their arms across their state, bringing knowledge of science, agriculture, history, and literature to people; they can preserve forests as learning labs; community colleges can teach entrepreneurship and business ethics in places dominated by Wal-mart.

There are multiple layers of what it means to qualify as a public educational institution, and right now those layers are being pried apart. We’re seeing “public” divided into a least two parts: governmental control and governmental financial support. To paint with broad strokes, control seems to be increasing as financial support decreases. Being “public” apparently means being controlled by legislatures and governmental agencies rather than functioning as a common good substantially supported by public funds.

The nationwide increases in tuition, along with the governmental

disinvestment in public education, are effectively making public higher education a private enterprise. The money has begun to come less from our collective commitment to education, than from families’ pockets and from private industries that partner with colleges. This shift will, in practice, create some pretty solid stratifications in socio-economic class. Eventually, enough students and their families will bail out. They’ll stop coming to school and racking up the debt. In the worst-case scenario, only those whose parents are affluent enough to front the money will have access to higher education. There will be the rich kids and then a few scholarship kids. See where this is going?

I’ll openly make the argument here that I’ve been making in private conversations for years: tax me—and make education about education, not politics, not sports, not industry. I care that the kids in my northside neighborhood have good K-12 schools and get to go to college. I care that kids in Eastern Kentucky get an education. I care that my niece won’t be shackled by debt so she can choose a vocation rather than just a career (and that her parents won’t have to bleed dry their retirement funds in order to put her through school). I care that smart whippersnapper twenty-somethings can start their own businesses or non-profits because they aren’t awash in loans.

Sure, I learned this care in an English class in a private school, but it’s a public value.

Letters to the editor

Hate crimes

I appreciate your raising the question “was this [killing of Trayvon Martin] a hate crime?” (“Was this a hate crime?” June 2012), but in my opinion your editorial is as skewed as you portray the media to be. From the many inaccuracies and misstatements in your piece, here are a couple of the most critical ones that I hope will cause you to take a second look at your analysis of the Trayvon Martin case.

First, you put quotes around the words “profiled and stalked” as if Zimmerman did not actually profile or stalk Martin. We know for a fact that he profiled Martin as a suspicious person, in his words “up to no good,” who Zimmerman thought may have been high (refer to the 911 recording). We know that Martin was stalked because Zimmerman got out of his car, told the dispatcher that Martin was running, and finally caught up with Martin several yards away.

Next, you mention only two pieces of physical evidence recovered from the crime scene. You fail to notice the the bullet lodged in Martin’s chest is a piece of physical evidence- in fact, the most important one. The last error I will point out, is the point at which you contradict your own viewpoint (where you believe there is no solid evidence in anyone’s favor) by introducing a “possible scenario.” Here, the words you choose make a solid case for Zimmerman having committed murder. By saying that Martin was “confronted” by a “follower” (another word for stalker), you create a scenario where Zimmerman was the aggressor and that Martin was rightly defending himself. This is no doubt a case of murder (in the second degree). Whether or not it is a hate crime depends on how you interpret Zimmerman’s comment to the dispatcher “they always get away.”

Sean McElroy, website

Author responds:

I appreciate the criticism of the piece, though I think you have misread a few points. My use of quotes for “profiled and stalked” is not to excuse Zimmerman for following Martin, but the events immediately after the 911 call are subject to witness testimony which has changed several times, (See my link in the piece.) Zimmerman was indeed

reckless to disregard the 911 dispatcher. However, “profiled and stalked” suggests far more predatory behavior than investigating/following a person who looks “up to no good,” which is why I compared Martin’s death to Anderson’s hate-murder (a wholly malicious crime not in the least concerned with stopping a potential criminal).

I only mention the two pieces of evidence relative to my editorial. I did not think it necessary to mention the bullet since no one has disputed that Zimmerman killed Martin with a pistol. The key question is this: to what extent was the killing self defense and by how much, if any, will those circumstances ameliorate Zimmerman’s sentence? I included the physical wounds to show that Zimmerman may have been injured in one of two ways: 1) he may have been assaulted by Martin and fired in “self defense” or 2) he may have assaulted Martin, was on the losing end of a fight he chose, and so fired in “self defense.” The latter will carry a far heavier sentence than the former.

My goal with the piece was to challenge the idea of this killing as a “hate crime.” I would say no sane observer believes Zimmerman is wholly innocent. But when you suggest that I contradict my own viewpoint, I am using the unknown exchange between Zimmerman and Martin to impugn the idea of interpreting this killing as somehow racially motivated. We don’t know what was said or what happened between them. (I also never once questioned the idea of this as a case of second degree murder.) Lastly, I find it rather difficult to take seriously your idea that interpretation of Zimmerman’s comment (“they always get away”) carries the weight of a hate crime. If Zimmerman believed Martin was a burglar, then his statement that “they always get away” is overwhelmingly true—the FBI claims that roughly 1 in 10 burglaries are ever solved. Either way, “they always get away” is not in any way slanderous to any race and therefore not indicative of a racial killing.

Wealth Distribution

Many of the “Occupy Groups” are decry for their claimed “Wealth Redistribution” aims. Most who decry them don’t really have an idea what the actual wealth distribution is in the

United States. Answer this question before you read further. How much wealth (meaning money, land and assets) are controlled by the wealthiest 20% in our nation? If you guessed 50%, you are too low. If you guessed 80% you are still too low. It is actually 88%!

We live on a limited resource in the middle of nowhere. Sustainability, living sustainably, is the most direct, simplest behavior that we can enact to assure the near term survival of the human species. Make no mistake, we are at risk. This is in essence what the majority of participants in the various “Occupy” movements recognize.

Charles A. Bowsler
Southbend Drive

FUC Proud

You didn’t even mention the lameness of “Big Blue,” that UK blue colored horse that is supposed to be our mascot or something (“Divest from brand Lexington,” June 2012). And in the long list of embarrassing historical mentions you left out the bluegrass conspiracy. Everybody knows about Henry Clay and Jefferson Davis, but what mention do you see of Cassius Clay (the original)? Maybe there is a historical marker somewhere, but this dude ought to have a statue!

Dan, website

College sport citizens

Hard to add any meaningful words to this well-written, prize worthy article (“What citizens does college sports produce?” June 2012).

Crane Station,
Smirking Chimp blog

You have it absolutely correct. The booster of a brand, the kind of citizen who, even if he becomes politically aware or engaged, goes no further than putting on a team jersey and cheering for “his side”---no matter what “his side” is actually doing. Civil liberties can be gutted, for example and the practitioners of such politics are outraged--if it isn’t their team doing it, but when it is, they cheer for their team/party, leader/coach, make excuses, and keep shut.

The kind of citizen who can become a cheap hooligan at a moment’s notice. Hardly the kind of citizen Thomas Jefferson hoped the republic would have. MizzGrizz, Smirking Chimp blog

Correction

Michael Marchman, our man in Amsterdam, dropped a line to let us know of some corrections to his June 2012 interview with Joao Romao:

“1. Romao is not exactly an “amateur filmmaker” as the article suggests. He has, in fact, worked in journalism for many years although this is his first documentary film.

2. The article implies that the film was made on a very small budget. In fact, Romao was supported/funded (in part) by Portuguese public television, which has aired the film.

Apologies to Romao for these mischaracterizations.”

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

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I'm not from here

Kenn Minter

Lexington Public

Stacey Earley

I'm not from here by Kenn Minter



notfromherecomic.blogspot.com



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CROCK'S
Kenwick
Exchange

Tuesday nights, 6-8
Kenwick Park

Mayer apologizes (cont.)

Continued from page 4

and I both live. We have previewed music shows at our local venues and reviewed new albums by local artists. We have covered community-based sports like bike polo, disc golf and roller derby, and introduced readers to the wonders and importance of our local Kentucky River watershed. Our comics page and editorial cartoons have offered local artists regular outlets to work on their craft, develop their visions and showcase their work. Our stories regularly mention places like Sunrise Bakery, Al's Bar, Sidebar and the like, not to mention public parks like Shilito, Castlewood, Veterans, and River Hill.

We have engaged with downtown development imperatives and attempted to offer a voice on behalf of the city's homeless population. We have supported alternative forms of transportation like walking, biking and bussing; showcased a number of urban agricultural initiatives and groups; and otherwise provided an outlet for large groups of citizens to have their voice heard. In short, our paper has been a place local residents and tourists alike can visit to learn more about—and engage with—the city of Lexington and its surrounding region. (Heck, we even have a foreign correspondent, our man, who reports from Amsterdam.)

Faith Feeds (groups we've featured many times over the years) appreciate having coverage of them circulated in what is one of the more subsidized and active public places in this city. Same goes for the writers who donate their time and energy and expertise to write the articles.

And that's just us. *Ace*, which has expended over twenty years of capital and energy covering the city, the *Lexington Herald Leader* (chained to scattered far-corners of the block), and the many publications from Local First bulwarks Smiley Pete Publications, also lose out when you segregate our print publications covering the city from downtown-goers at Cheapside. And to the extent that each of these papers have different and diverse readerships, the big losers are all those different types of Cheapside visitors who converge together there. They—we—lose out.

In closing, I would like to make a demand, an offer and a request.

First, to paraphrase our great local resource Don Pratt, find space NOW under or immediately nearby the



One possible location for paper racks, on the wall by the Author's stand at the Lexington Farmer's Market, would create an artistic "clustering" effect. Photo by Danny Mayer.

but even they only use the area for 1 day, 8 months out of the year. Print publications like ours have a 24/7 commitment and presence to that space for the entire 12 months. Moving us closer to people will show that you value us and what we contribute to the county you lead.

Second, if you do that, I will offer to work with other local publications to locate donated material and labor to construct a basic structure to house permanently these print publications. Many successful cities like Athens, Georgia, have done just this. This can be done cheaply, without rapacious banks "sponsoring" the activity and inflating its costs. We don't even have to name it.

Third, I would request an explanation for why our publications have been ignored—actually, further removed from view—during your administration's redevelopment of Cheapside as a public square. I will publish your response on our Facebook page. If it's profound enough, it might even work its way into our print publication.

Sincerely,

Danny Mayer
Teacher, BCTC
Editor, *North of Center*
CROCK FUCer

CC: Tom Martin, Robbie Clarke, Andres Cruz, Tom Eblen, Beth Connors Manke, Steve Kay, Chris Ford, Diane Lawless, Tom Blues

Pavilion to place *Chevy Chaser*, the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, *Ace*, *La Voz*, *Key Journal*, *NoC*, *BizLex* and any other print publications contributing to the area's collective well-being. I value institutions like the Farmer's Market who make use of our city's public space,