

Bloomberg bust

By Mary Grace Barry

In late February, this email showed up twice in my inbox:

“Vote Lexington! The Bloomberg Mayors Challenge is nearing the finish line. This is a competition for the best ideas to improve cities. Our idea, CitizenLex.org, created by our citizens for all citizens, is up against ideas from 19 other cities nationwide. Million-dollar prizes are at stake. Starting today, you have the opportunity to Vote Lexington at www.huffingtonpost.com/mayors-challenge. Vote Lexington at the Huffington Post site, now through March 6. Tell your friends, tell your family, use Facebook and Twitter, tell everyone...Vote Lexington!”

(Didn't you get it? Must not be on the city's email blast list. Or, you're not in the right network. Hopefully, we'll have a website to ameliorate that soon.)

The Bloomberg Mayor's Challenge is a contest to spur national innovation through initiatives developed in cities, initiatives that can be replicated in other cities. In other words, it's an attempt at an end run around national governmental programs in a time when the capacity (or will) of federal government to address problems seems to be floundering. Bloomberg Philanthropies will pony up \$9 million to the “five boldest ideas”: \$5 mil to the winner, \$1 mil to the next four runners-up. 305 cities submitted proposals; 20 finalists were chosen; Lexington is in that 20 (hence the email).

When the call went out last year, Lexingtonians got pretty jazzed about the contest; as Mayor Gray writes in his proposal for the contest: “More than 7,000 Lexingtonians participated and we got 440 ideas...one for every 682 citizens!” (Vote Lexington [Exclamation

Point!]) I can attest to the enthusiasm: more than one friend of mine submitted a pitch, and NoC published its own last August.

Evidently, all those good ideas overwhelmed the city because Lexington's proposal turned out to be embarrassingly mundane: CitizenLex.org, which sounds to be a website that gathers data and “empowers” citizens. From the proposal: “CitizenLex helps citizens make the change they want. Rather than just another engagement platform, in which people make suggestions to the city or the city seeks citizen input on pre-selected issues, this platform encourages citizens to do their own problem-solving—with help. And. That. Is. A. Very. Big. Deal.”

Rhetorical flourishes aside, CitizenLex doesn't sound like a very big deal—not if you're already an active participant in the workings of our community. And maybe not even if you're Joe Schmoie Couch Potato who only goes to the grocery store and to buy your gaming equipment at your favorite Big Box Store. It just sounds like more bureaucracy. The “knowledge management system” will create more city officials to coach residents on “problem-solving”: two City Innovation directors, project leaders, and Innovation Mentors.

Show me the money

Anyone thinking, *I thought the biggest challenge facing the city and residents was money for projects, not information about them?* (That's certainly the case in my area.) In the city's initial proposal, the knowledge management system gets a bit under one-third of the \$5 million prize, if Lexington were to take first place. Of the proposal projects

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Town Branch

Reflections on the Fayette commons

By Danny Mayer

In early June, 1775, a tired and exhausted party of white speculators roaming the inner bluegrass sought out a safe and amenable place to camp. The party, which included men holding the now locally iconic surnames Maxwell, Masterson, McConnell, Kenton and Stoner, had been dispatched from a frontier settlement fort at Harrodsburg with instructions to locate, survey and claim any productive land lying beyond the north banks of the Kentucky River. Having crossed the river and with night approaching, the men decided to stop at a clear spring that percolated into a feeder creek debauching into the Elkhorn River's South Fork. Here, according to the historian George Washington Ranck, they established lookouts for marauding Indians, watered their horses, drank from the spring, ate, and otherwise whiled away the night speculating upon the wondrous prospects of the surrounding land.

The party from Harrodsburg was a leading wave of what must have been the greatest real estate bonanza in state history. Called the Great Meadow, the area bounded by the Ohio River to the north and the Cumberland River to the south had no permanent tribes inhabiting it. Instead, the area most immediately

served as public hunting ground and shared common space for Indian tribes extending from present-day Michigan and Pennsylvania on south to Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama. Its only permanent settlement, Eskippakathiki nearby present-day Winchester, underscored the river-pocked land's value as a tribal commons. Until its destruction and abandonment during the French and Indian Wars, the village was home to a diverse collection of tribes whose merchants could count on the north-south running Warrior's Path, which hugged the western spine of the Appalachian Mountains, to offer a steady supply of visitors.

With no single tribe asserting control over the area, colonists living in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina spent the previous decade crafting a series of conflicting land treaties for the purposes of establishing clear ownership. The process was less than successful. Over the years, any number of Indian tribes—Iroquois, Cherokee, Shawnee, Miami, Mingo, Wyandot, among others—had engaged in treaties, deeding the land to any number of colonial governments (British and American), private corporations and individual land speculators. Clear white title to the new property was often sketchy at best.



Daniel, the 24 year old, with Unitarian Universalists at I Love Mountains march in Frankfort on February 17. Photo courtesy of Stacey Stone.

I've been to the mountain

Reflections on attending I Love Mountains day

By Joseph G. Anthony

Daniel, my 24 year old, was happy to be a part of the annual Frankfort “I Love Mountains” rally and march organized by the Kentuckians for the Commonwealth. He wasn't, however, thrilled to be carrying the Methodist sign—the Methodists had more signs than people). He kept trying to hand it off to me as we paraded up to the capitol steps and settled in for a rally. But I'm a well-lapsed Catholic, current Unitarian-Universalist. I need no other religious affiliation.

The U.U.'s and other faiths were well represented. It was a big, enthusiastic crowd. And the February day kept acting like it was early April. All that coal-induced global warming has its pluses. After the marching, we were ready for speeches.

The first one of the day was the old coal miner guy, Carl Shoupe, who's

a regular at this. He got into a nice rhythm chanting that Congressman Hall, Representative Stumbo, Governor Beshear might love coal (corporations, money, lobbyists,) but they sure as hell didn't love coal miners, coal families, or—and this is all of us—coal victims.

“I love coal.” You see it on bumper stickers all over the state. What a slogan. That carbonized rock that's ripping off our mountain-tops, killing our miners, fouling our streams, and choking our air. Who wouldn't love it? One truck weaving in and out of the crowd kept telling us that 60,000+ Kentuckians did indeed love coal.

Probably. Or maybe they just think they do. I thought I loved Cheryl Clark at one time—one year older than me and truly gorgeous. Maybe I did.

But she didn't love me.
Now I love Sol.

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Town Branch emerges from the Rupp Arena lower parking lot. Photo by Danny Mayer.

Leaving Harrodsburg in June for the open land beyond the Kentucky River's north bank, the party encamped at no-name spring on no-name branch of the Elkhorn River may have been hedging bets: led by Dan'l Boone, representatives and employees for the privately owned Transylvania Company had recently chopped a path from the Cumberland Gap to a settlement on the Kentucky River near Otter Creek, naming it Boonesborough. At a weeklong assembly on the Watauga River in North Carolina, Transylvania had signed the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals with a number of Cherokee leaders. The treaty guaranteed the corporation sovereignty over most of Kentucky lying to the

south of the Kentucky River—an area that included the ground upon which the recently erected Harrodsburg fort stood. Settlers, who had floated down the Ohio and up the Kentucky in reaching their settlement, and who had been authorized by the Virginia Colonial government to survey and claim land to satisfy a number of military certificates granting land for services provided in the French and Indian War, may have felt their own claims to be in jeopardy. Though more open to attacks from tribes living across the Ohio River, land north of the Kentucky in 1775 probably appeared to offer less hassle in acquiring

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Street feminism: sticker offensive

Misadventures in the city

By Beth Connors-Manke

In December, I wrote a column about sticking over a sexist images and graffiti that popped up along on my daily commute. In both cases, my resistance was reactive: I was trying to block someone else's message. Since then, more sexist—sometimes virulently and violently sexist—messages have come my way, although not always at street level.

There was the gang rape and eventual death of an Indian physiotherapy student in Delhi in December 2012. I read the details once and then stopped following the story. It's too hard to live in the world with that kind of knowledge. There were protests in India, I know that; I listened to what a friend in Calcutta had to say about the cultural shifts that must happen. Ok, fine, I guess it's heartening to know that the country roiled a bit after the violence, but the young woman's suffering is too hard to look at with being swallowed up with hate that's way bigger than I am.

Next, a few weeks ago the radio show *Democracy Now* reminded me of the 2010 recording of Yale fraternity pledges chanting "No means yes! Yes means anal!" while they paraded near women's dorms. The context of the story was the documentary *Brave Miss World* directed by Cecilia Peck, which follows Linor Abargil, Miss World 1998. Abargil was abducted and raped weeks before the contest; now she campaigns against sexual violence. I listened to most of the story about the documentary, but

when I stepped on campus to teach my own freshman, some of them pledges in sororities and fraternities, the record in my head was broken: it kept playing "No means yes! Yes means anal!" It's hard to be reminded that some young men are schooled (literally) to deny the dignity of others—that it's their prerogative to interpret what women want.

Around that same time, the third message arrived, although this one was more ambiguous than the first two. I saw male students on campus wearing shirts and buttons that read "I heart female orgasm." I had heard nothing about the sex education event from which these came, so I was both wary and quizzical when the slogan arrived in my classroom.

Please allow me an aside. For the last two semesters, I have taught case studies about human trafficking in my classes. As important as the issue is, I repeatedly cringe at the moment when it's clear that some student or another is actually being titillated by the sex trafficking information. It happens, and there's little way for a teacher to mitigate the reaction if someone is going down that road. These two things—people getting off on sex trafficking and male sponsorship of the phrase "I heart female orgasm"—seem to be on a strange collision course in my class.

So "I heart female orgasm" broadcasted itself in class a few times before someone confronted it. To make a long story short, what ensued was a young man telling several young women about the importance of their own orgasms. I

witnessed this happen more than once after the sex ed event, which was surely well meaning, but turned out, in my purview at least, to result in more male presumption about the female sexual experience. Mix this with the fact that, in class discussion, I had already had to repeatedly stress that *legally* there's no such thing as an "underage prostitute"; a thirteen year old cannot consent to commercial sex. But my message was not being received. The counter-logic circulating in my classroom seemed to go like this: *if she's doing it, she likes it; if she likes it, it's ok to sell her.* Put these two views together, and one can "heart" female orgasm and still have sex with a thirteen year old who's being sold by her pimp. Crash.

But this is a column about the street and the city, so I'll get back to my point. It took me a while to get what was happening: those communiqués from the universe were telling me that reactive

wasn't going to work. Simply sticking over nipples and violent lyrics wasn't enough. Street feminism needed to be offensive. With that in mind, *NoC* is sponsoring a street feminism design contest: send us your designs for an anti-sexism, anti-violence sticker. We'll choose one design, print up a bunch of stickers, and then take them to the street. You'll see them places that have already been marked by sexism; you'll see them places that haven't. Either way, you'll see our message, or rather, your message.

Email digital designs to noceditors@yahoo.com. Be aware that the winning design will have to conform to specific parameters for printing. Design for a round, 3x3 inch sticker; vector art or at least 300 dpi; preferably a .pdf or .jpeg. Can't do that? Send us your design anyways, and we'll run the coolest ones in our print edition. Submissions due by April 1.



Spring break at the LASC

The Living Arts & Science Center is now taking registrations for unique and creative week-long art and science classes for Kindergarten through 8th grade students, during Spring Break, April 1 – 5, 2013. Classes include opportunities to explore, discover, and create your own artwork while working with professional artists and arts educators. Classes include: Cut Paper Stop-Motion Animation; Young Illustrators; Cut, Tear, Adhere...Collage!; Fun with Fractals; Sculpture with Pizazz; Sleuths, Spies, and P.I.s; and Collect, Combine, Create.

Spring Break classes at the Living Arts & Science Center are offered 8:00am – 5:30pm. Students may take one class, a few classes or bring their lunch and stay the whole day!

Each week-long class ranges in price from \$25 to \$90 per student. Some scholarships are available.

Registrations are taken via the phone, fax or mail. Register early as classes fill quickly. The Complete Class schedules and registration forms are available on the LASC Web site: WWW.LASCLEX.org.

Help Wanted: Mourner

The Kentucky Mourning Project

This is a press release/job add from ELandF projects.

The Kentucky Mourning Project will provide compensation for grieving/praying/singing/careful consideration on the thoughtless and detrimental environmental modifications wrought by ourselves within the area known to us today as the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

ElandF is looking for a Mourner to grieve for the loss of relatively undisturbed sanctuary/habitat due to our own uncompromising devotion to consumer culture, to apologize to this earth place for our sad/mad lust for items and profit, and to offer up prayers of healing and forgiveness.

Mourning will take place within the Lexington development known not ironically as Hamburg Place, a place referred to as a "home to 2,000,000 sq. ft. of retail space, 160 acres of professional offices and 1,200 acres of residential development."

Mourner is asked to meditate upon this extreme form of earth alteration and then to articulate our most sincere human apologies and

to model the best intentions and hopes of our species within the Hamburg Place area. Mourning and articulation will last for a period of one half hour and take place during a weekday in April 2013. Date/time at preference of Mourner.

Honorarium: \$50.00

To apply: Please, no more than 100 words on what mourning means to you and why you would like to mourn for the loss of Hamburg Place habitat.

Deadline: March 21 (midnight)

Submissions to: ELandFgallery@yahoo.com



ROCK breaks in the newbies

By Sunny Montgomery

The Rollergirls of Central Kentucky's (ROCK) sixth season is quickly approaching. Recently, I met with the girls during a weekday roller derby practice—or rather "colder-derby" practice, as ROCK's Rainbow Smite calls it since the team is currently practicing in the unheated warehouse space of the Bread Box.

It was quite chilly. I kept my coat buttoned and my scarf tight around my neck as I took a seat against the far wall of the building. A dozen or so rollergirls did laps around the track, occasionally spinning onto the sidelines to do push-ups. I scanned the floor for familiar faces, but I recognized only a couple of the skaters.

When I mentioned this later to ROCK's President, Kitty O'Doom, she told me that she thinks the new faces on the team will be what fans notice most about the upcoming ROCK season, at least at first. So, in preparation for the pending season, let us meet a few of the newbies!

Too Too Much

Too Too Much is a 31 year-old adrenaline-junkie, mother of three. She grew up in a small eastern Tennessee town that lay claim to not much more than a single skating rink.

"Which is where I developed my love of skating," she explains.

Her strengths include fearlessness and a willingness to try anything. "Too Too is a real scrapper," ROCK Public Relations Chairman and ardent roller derby supporter Paco Chaos tells me.

When asked what she loves most about the sport, #222 responded "Where else can you legally knock someone off their feet?" This is an appropriate response, I suppose, for a person who has also received her law degree and is preparing to take the Kentucky bar exam.

Miss Havislam

Miss Havislam is a 28 year-old documentary editor. She recently moved to Kentucky from Indianapolis, where

she began her love affair with the roller derby when she attended her first bout three years ago.

"Being a fan was great," she told me, "but I wanted to see if I could make it as a skater." Last summer she attended ROCK's boot camp and then officially joined the team in August. More recently, she was elected Vice President of ROCK.

"She'll be one to watch," Paco tells me. Her strengths include a feverish commitment to the sport and never being afraid to fail.

"I moved to Kentucky because of a job," says Miss Havislam, "but I stayed because of ROCK."

Beatrich Bombhoeffler

Beatrich Bombhoeffler, #45, is a 32 year old newly-wed. She grew up in Nebraska and insists (without my prompting) that, yes, people do live in Nebraska.

Bombhoeffler's strengths include her speed and positive attitude. A self-proclaimed theology nerd and a full-time congregational minister, she naturally gravitates toward the spiritual side of the sport.

"There's such a strong support and connection among your teammates," Bombhoeffler says, "as well as a real sense of physical, emotional, and intellectual strength." This season will be her first time ever playing for a roller derby team.

...
"So," I ask Paco, "who is the baddest of the new skaters?" But he won't give me an answer. He says he is impressed with them all for different reasons.

If I have learned anything after my two years of writing for ROCK it is that the team, its volunteers and its fans alike are one big family—which might make me something like a step-cousin. I may not be blood but I will proudly claim association until the day I die.

Join the family! ROCK's first home bout is April 20 at Heritage Hall. Doors open at 6pm. Bout begins at 7pm.

“Several East End residents expressed concern about property in the area owned by the Community Ventures Corporation.”

Accomplishments, delays, and absentee neighbors An East End update

By Jesse Fehrenbach

The East End Small Area Plan, the initiative co-created and adopted five years ago by city planners and citizens in Lexington's East End neighborhood, is currently being revisited via a series of open community meetings. At the first meeting we reviewed the Plan, and people were invited to sign up to personally support one of the plan's thirteen Goals.

At the second meeting, participants worked in groups according to which goal we had signed up to support. Since the organizational flow of the meeting demanded focus on a particular goal, I signed on to support Goal 13: “Create a green and environmentally acceptable neighborhood through the recognition of the interdependence of environmental, economic, and social equity concerns.” It seemed to fit my interests: I am currently working to help remodel a historic home, incorporating permaculture and sustainable values into a cooperative living project in the neighboring Northside neighborhood. I support the consideration of sustainable and environmentally sound principles for developments all over Lexington.

Each group was invited to discuss which of the actions and initiatives listed under each goal had been accomplished,

which had not (and why), and which we would like to see achieved within the next five years.

At this point in the meeting, some confusion ensued. While it was easy to mention the Lyric Theatre and other projects completed within the past few years, we spent a good deal of time clarifying which tasks were still in progress and which had yet to be addressed before we could talk about what we could hope to accomplish within the next five years.

Sherry Maddock, Vice President of the William Wells Brown Neighborhood Association, took a moment to explain the status of the Issac Murphy Memorial Garden project to our small group. According to Maddock, the project has been slow due to delays in federal funding but is scheduled for completion before the end of 2013.

The meeting was momentarily disrupted when an African-American man burst into the room ranting about where the “real” community was. Even though this series of meetings is free and open to the public, and a multi-media invitation has been sent out to all citizens who would like to get involved, he insisted that residents in the East End were not given an equal opportunity to contribute.

Unfetter the food trucks

By Marcus Flores

In the beginning, Roy Allen made root beer. He initiated the first of many A&W franchises in 1919, which allowed Americans to reside inside their first love—automobiles—while being served curbside. And in 1927, a young Mormon missionary and his wife franchised an A&W stand in Washington, D.C., innovating once again by adding hot foods to the menu. That man was John Willard Marriott, and his is the name now perched atop some 3800 hotels.

Mobility is by now interwoven in American DNA; we crave our fast food and would be unable to do without the hotel chains and modern automobiles that enable access to virtually all of the United States.

Yet U.S. cities—concrete jungles, to use an apt metaphor—are far denser and hence competitive than those of yore. Some entrepreneurs have responded by channeling the innovative spirit that once prevailed among the fast food pioneers. By adding a set of wheels to their operation, they have displeased some brick and mortar restaurants who view the mobile invaders as an encroachment on their business.

Is this a legitimate claim? It's certainly under discussion here in Lexington.

Surely couples seeking a romantic evening at Dudley's will not forego sautéed monkfish for a funnel cake from a street vendor, just as droves of inebriated students will not suddenly flock to Bellini's following last call. The two classes of food service cater to different crowds at different times. But since they operate in a common space, and since food trucks vary in size from the wheelbarrow variety to that of a Fed-Ex truck, there is the additional fear that allowing them to gather in an entirely unregulated fashion would make a lobster tank of downtown Lexington.

Sean Tibbetts of the Bluegrass Food Truck Association (BFTA), however, says that although there are 12 active vendors in his association, there have been zero complaints about cluttering or cacophony. He adds, “To put that into perspective, I would have you look at Chevy Chase or one of the areas downtown where they have two or three beer trucks lined up delivering to four or five restaurants at once.” To be fair, an explosion in food truck popularity would probably result in occasional inconveniences—growing pains, in other words—with parking and related matters. Still, it is doubtful that a few food trucks would outdo those

habitual traffic obstructionists known as UK basketball fans.

Along with sports teams and concerts, restaurants, particularly those with outdoor seating, strive to enliven downtown. That real estate isn't cheap. And lately, financial conditions have not been propitious for, well, much of anything. Tibbetts, a war veteran, tried to get a loan but was told he needed 80 percent collateral, which is 80 percent of a restaurant, which in essence defeats the purpose of a loan. So he turned to mobile vending specifically to *avoid* such expenses. What he got was prickly patch of regulations and bureaucratic labors.

According to Tibbetts, the process begins with a zoning and compliance permit, a certificate of occupancy (price: \$25), and an updated itinerant merchant license to reflect the address of vending (price: a \$500 bond). Then it's out to Newtown Pike to register with the Health Department (price: \$25-30). (And, as if to intentionally complicate matters further, the Health Department interprets “address” as “physical location,” whereas the Zoning Commission uses traditional street addresses.) Hopefully through all this you also remembered to get your statewide mobile vendor license—another \$120. Four hours and \$900 later, the city says you can legally sell hot dogs.

But only in certain areas. Tibbetts cannot sell to third-shift workers at places like Lexmark or Country Boy Brewing because they are industrially zoned. Even if, say, Country Boy gives him permission to vend on their premises, he cannot (so much for private property.) Downtown also has restrictions: there is a buffer area of 200 feet (two-thirds of a football field) one must honor when “near” an established restaurant.

Asked how difficult it is to make up the costs, Tibbetts replied laconically “We don't.” Asked why he endures this odyssey in order to suffer a loss, he was equally concise: “It's the right thing to do.” Is Tibbetts, therefore, Lexington's Sisyphus? Not necessarily. Through repeated meetings with councilmembers, he has been able to influence legislation that aims to dispense with some of the impediments. A new ordinance that has gone before the Economic Development Committee will hopefully alleviate some of the hardships Lexington vendors face.

Good thing. Because with the way things are now, it is difficult to see any J.W. Marriotts or Roy Allens coming out of Lexington.

“He doesn't think any of us actually live here,” said Maddock, shaking her head as facilitator Andrea James firmly requested that he either contribute productively to the meeting or leave. Apparently the man is well-known for popping up and creating these kinds of disruptions. Despite the cultural diversity of the participants in the room, it was a reminder that the histories of racial and economic tensions unique to the East End, both real and imagined, definitely impact this process.

While the Small Area Plan was clearly created by folks who love their community and want to encourage cooperative progress, one evident obstacle is the area's absentee neighbors – property owners who do not live or work in the area and do not necessarily prioritize the maintenance or cooperative development of their property in line with the plan.

Several East End residents expressed concern about property in the area owned by the Community Ventures

Corporation. The CVC, an organization that ironically provides financial education, small business and home loans, has neglected to properly maintain or develop much of the property it owns in the East End according to many neighbors.

The meeting adjourned on positive note, as participants resolved to continue reviewing what progress has been made toward each Goal outlined in the Small Area Plan. The agenda for the March meeting is to identify the next step towards achieving each action outlined in the plan. This will include establishing reasonable timeframes, funding sources, and securing the cooperation and participation of agencies and key property owners in the East End.

Open community meetings will be held at 6:30 pm on the second Tuesday of each month at the Charles Young Community Center on Third Street. Upcoming meetings: March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11.



Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden project has been delayed. Photo by Danny Mayer.

Soul Food Junkies hit Lyric Film Explores African-Americans 'Soul Food' Habit

On Tuesday, March 26, the Lyric Theatre will host a free screening of *Soul Food Junkies* as part of the Good Foods Market and Café Film Series.

Soul food Junkies, which recently won the Best Documentary Award at the prestigious American Black Film Festival in Miami, explores the health advantages and disadvantages of soul food. A quintessential American cuisine with a rich history and an abiding significance to black cultural identity, soul food and its core celebration of all things fried and smothered has had lasting effects on the health of African Americans, both good and bad.

Through a personal focus on his father, filmmaker Byron Hurt looks at the food's past and future: from its roots in Western Africa and incarnation in the American South, to its contribution to modern health crises in communities of color. All the while, the documentary uses soul food as a lens to investigate the dark side of the food industry and the growing food justice movement that has been born in its wake.

All these threads make *Soul Food Junkies* a powerful personal and thought

provoking documentary that can ignite change in the health of our community. While the film is of particular importance to African Americans and soul food cuisine, it has an important message for all citizens of Kentucky!

Soul Food Junkies will show at the Lyric Theatre on Tuesday, March 26, from 6pm-9pm. Admission is free. For more information, visit the SustainLex website, <http://sustainlex.org/>

This announcement paid for through a Community Supported Journalism share.



MARCH 2013

Exuberant spirits

Valley View to Paint Lick, part two

By Wesley Houp

Danny nudges me awake. The fire has relented to a glowing heap. I check my watch. It's 3:43am. "What's that noise?" he whispers. I listen, having momentarily lost my bearings to sleep. At first I hear nothing and look back at Danny's dark and uncertain face. Then I discern a sound issuing from the back of the cave, a deep, raspy chirp sustained over several seconds. Suddenly, the presence of the stranger, Free Willy, comes rushing back. The sensation sends a ripple through my reptilian brain. The chirping ceases, and then the voice follows.

"Don't be alarmed, good fellows. It's just poor Jenkins. He's singing a lamentation. Does it every night. Throw me one of your torches and I'll show you." Danny sits up and tosses his headlamp into the darkness of the cave. The light flicks on, and there is our strange guest, holding the lamp up to a mason jar filled with water glowing like a cathode ray. "Meet Jenkins." He holds the jar up in the light for us to see.

"Jenkins is a...singing water-bug?" I ask. The creature in the jar looks to be four or five inches long and hovers, suspended in the liquid, with grooved axial lobes, like an oversized sow bug.

"No, Jenkins is a trilobite, and if you weren't aware, trilobites were a marine arthropod, extinct now for about 225 million years." He raps the jar with the end of the lamp, and the jar rings a fair bell tone, causing Jenkins to curl into a tight ball.

"Just like a sow bug." Neither Danny nor I can take our eyes of the pale blue liquid. "What's the deal with the water? It seems to glow."

"Ah, yes," Free Willy replies, "the water... Would you believe this is pure, unadulterated comet-water from a subterranean cave deep beneath Kamchatka. Took me years to find it. Seems it's the only water capable of transmitting poor Jenkins' singing at decibels loud enough to discern." Jenkins unrolls himself and erupts in a long chirping cadence.

Focusing on the song, Danny asks, "why do you call him 'poor Jenkins?'"

"Fair enough. Jenkins used to be my photographer back in the day when I rambled around topside. He climbed many a precarious perch and never once failed to capture this or that geologic curio for posterity. He was, in short, a much-trusted, much-valued companion. But post mortem transmogrification is a cruel joke. Seems after death was through with him, he came to the other side as, well, this trilobite.

On one occasion, back in '21, I had crawled out on a particularly inaccessible ledge above this very river and discovered the most exquisite set of trilobite fossils. I called for Jenkins to come with his camera, and as he crawled across the narrow pass, he dropped his bag and all his gear. Everything was smashed to pieces on the rocks below. Jenkins let out an awful yelp, turned, and yelled, "You and your cursed dino-bugs!" This is the only time I can recall poor Jenkins losing his wits, but I'm by no means certain this episode played any role in his... present condition. However it happened, I've felt obligated to keep him company all these years.

"There, there, old boy." Free Willy clicks off the lamp and returns to jar to his inside pocket. I recline back into my sleeping bag, the darkness complete once more. As I fade back to sleep, I hear a low voice singing from the recess:

*"Twas on a dark and stormy night,
I heard and saw an awful sight,
The lightning flashed, the thunder roared
Around my dark benighted soul.*

*I saw a gulf far down below
Where all poor dying things must go.
My woeful thoughts no tongue can tell.
Is this my doom a trilobite hell?"*

When I wake up, the ash-pit is cold. Danny is just fluttering to. I turn to scan the back of the cave. No sign of the visitor. The sun hasn't breached the opposing palisade, so our cave-haunt rests in magnificent pale, blue, Ordovician light. I emerge from my bag and blunder about for a few minutes.

"Did you see him leave?" I ask before Danny emerges from his bag. He leans up on one elbow and looks around on the ground for his boots.

"What? Did I see what?"

"Free Willy. Did you see him leave? When I nodded off, he was singing some dreary ballad." Danny stares with a perplexed look, as if I speak in tongues.

"Free Willy? What the hell are you talking about?" He stands up, stretches, and steps into his boots.

"Real funny, Dano. I'm serious."

"I'm serious, too. You must've had a vivid dream. I did hear you mumbling in your sleep a few times." He walks out to the dead weeds along the edge of the cave mouth and takes a leak. There is no way, I think to myself, that was a dream. No way. I scan the cave floor where our visitor had been sitting. I can find no trace of his weight, no disturbance in the lime. So I pull my head-



On the way to Paint Lick. Photo by Wesley Houp.

lamp from my coat and check the back of the cave. Surely he left a print in the soft, moist earth around the narrow opening. I find prints, but they're my own, from our arrival the night before.

"I don't believe it. If that was a dream, then..." I remember the spare bowl from Danny's mess kit. "What about your spare bowl?"

"My what? Bowl? What about it?" He walks back over to his pile of gear and produces his mess kit. "It's right here."

"Has it been used? Is it dirty?"

"Nope. Clean as a pin." He holds it up, displaying the inside. "Nothing here but clean."

"Un-fucking-believable." I sit back on a large bolder and rub my head. "I don't know what to say, other than that was the craziest, most lucid dream I've ever had. Like I was awake."

"Well, I want to hear all about it, but save it for later. It's time to skedaddle. I've got oranges, bread, and cheese for breakfast. We can eat on the water." We pack up all the gear in less than fifteen minutes, and just as we're loading our arms, the sun pierces the tree-line, bathing the cave-mouth in warm, yellow light. The high cliff above the cave catches fire, too, its sudden heat melting the light frost on the leaf-strewn slope. We descend slowly and find the parallel path up river, back to Mary Baker Hollow and the boats.

"The river, then, is the carpenter of its own edifice"

We push off, the sunlight still hanging high on the palisades. The valley is shrouded in thin, cold mist, and the river, even with a current, is smooth as glass. We idle together midstream and

divvy up breakfast. Our final destination is Paint Lick Creek, a mere nine-mile paddle, but we plan to explore the environs of Silver Creek by midday. Silver debouches five miles below Devil's Pulpit, on the downstream side and out-bow of Renfro and Silver Creek Bars.

From Mary Baker Hollow, the river bends due south for a mile, then turns to the southeast in a near three-mile straightaway, passing the mouths of four small creeks: Sea Lion Branch to the west, Boones Run, Christopher Run, and Marble Yard Branch to the east. None are enticing to a paddler but promise the quintessential palisade experience for anyone willing to hoof it: steep, hidden gorges, and cool rivulets cascading down moss-covered limestone talus. The faulting along this particular stretch of river is evident even to the geologic greenhorn. The limestone ledges along the western bank all exhibit the down-throw typical of fault lines. As we pass, Danny makes note. "If you squint your eyes and focus on the bank, you get the sensation of paddling uphill." The ledges slide into the river, one on top of the other, at a 30° angle to the water.

I can't help but think of last night's

flow out in all directions: those flowing east eventually feed Station Camp Creek which joins the Kentucky to the northeast at Irvine; those flowing north find Silver and Paint Lick Creeks which join the Kentucky to the northwest; those flowing south join the Rockcastle River (which eventually finds the Cumberland); and those flowing to the west embolden the upper Dix River, a major tributary of the Kentucky, which debouches its waters many miles to the northwest at High Bridge. The Silver's two forks join forces at the edge of Berea and soon take in the waters of Brushy Fork to form Silver Creek proper. From here, it flows due north for several miles towards the city of Richmond before assuming a northwesterly meander through picturesque hill-and-valley farmland toward its terminus at the Kentucky.

We make it only 300 yards around the first bend before encountering shoal water. Danny banks on the southern side, flanked by rough slope and limestone outcroppings and billy-goats a dry run 200 feet to a broad ledge beneath the first steep bluff. I opt for a less strenuous examination and hound the rubble-strewn lower slope for fossils.

"You coming up? The view's spectacular." He yells down from his promontory.

"I think I'll stick to the lowland. What can you see?" After a long pause filled with riffing water, Danny appears at the edge of the bluff.

"God's green acre. I think I see mountains in the distance. The view, the warmth of the sun, the intoxicating aroma of loamy decay... makes me feel connected, like the Earth really wants me." I freeze in my tracks and look up with a jerk.

"What did you say?"

He responds, surprised even that I'd been listening. "God's green acre?"

"No, the part after that."

"The sun, the smell...?"

The image of Free Willy emerging from the cave flashes in my mind. What did he say? That he brought good news? I pause to recall, holding a thick slab of Ordovician with fine Brachiopods layered in stasis.

"No, the part about the earth wanting you." I get no response. In a few minutes I hear the rustle of leaves, the crack of deadfall, and Danny appears above me at the head of the dry run.

"You ready?" He calls down.

"Let's push off." Our destination is another four and a half miles downstream. We settle in our boats, idle for a moment in the cool, aerated eddy below the riffle, and then dig in for the last leg.

Paint Lick Exuberance

We pass the rocky shoreline just downstream from Silver's mouth, enter the sharp bend at Upper Hunters Bar, where Hunters Run meets the mainstem, and in less than a mile pass the mouth of Sawmill Run at Lower Hunters Bar. The river jogs back to the southwest for a long mile, takes in Wildhorse Branch, and turns due south for a half-mile. Paint Lick, one of the largest streams in the palisades stretch, debouches from the east just as the river cuts back to the west and rounds Teeters Turnhole Bend. Two boat ramps provide access, the first and newest one on the Jessamine County side, built and operated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the other much older one on the Garrard County shore parallel the mouth of Paint Lick. As we approach the ramp, set back amid Paint Lick Bar, we spy my 1993 Nissan pickup, apparently unmolested by hand of nature or man, conveniently waiting just across the river from our final bivouac.

Historically, the mouths of the Kentucky's larger tributaries represented the potential for serious navigational hazard, as most, like Paint Lick, deposit significant materials, organic

visitors and Free Willy's recitation of river knowledge. Could it really have all been a dream? Is Danny, a man of common sense praxis, just afraid to admit to himself that something crawled out of the earth and spent the better part of last night talking about...crazy shit? Crazy shit? As I try to replay last night's event from the beginning, the wind picks up. For the next mile, we sit low and paddle hard, and soon the river begins to bend toward the southwest. With Stony Fork entering the mainstream on our left and Renfro Bar to our right, the long, low bottom at the mouth of Silver Creek opens up dead ahead as the river bends radically to the west. Before we pass the mouth, the Kentucky has completed a perfect U-turn. At Silver Creek Bar, we're traveling due north. Seen from above, Silver Creek debouches between two interlocking "hooks"—the river twisting in a westerly-oriented and backwards "S" curve. No sooner do the waters of Silver meet the Kentucky, flowing due north, than the Kentucky bends once more due west for less than a half-mile, and then again southwest. The abrupt shifting evidences an ancient stream breaking over one fault to get at the next.

Silver Creek diversion

We paddle into the mouth of Silver, the water changing from murky to emerald green. Silver Creek is a long, meandering stream, originating in the knobs just southeast of Berea in Madison County. The East Fork drains the western slope of Pinnacle Knob and the West Fork the slopes of Bear Mountain. From this region of high knobs forming the Mississippian escarpment (Muldraugh's Hill), the creeks

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“We move slowly in the morning chill, no resolve to advance on the day.”

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Paint Lick, cont.

Continued from page 4

and otherwise, in and around the channel. Prior to the construction of locks and dams above Frankfort, navigation this far upriver was possible only during high water in the winter and spring. As Johnson and Parrish recount, the *Monterey*, a steamer, hit a snag at the mouth of Paint Lick Creek (River Mile 146) in December of 1848 and sank in less than ten feet of water. Paint Lick Bar, directly opposite the creek, had to be dredged of its snags, sand, and large debris on a yearly basis. During the era of routine river-maintenance, the mouth of Paint Lick received careful attention from the Corps' repair fleet, including snagboats like the *Kentucky*, the *Orlando M. Pope*, and the *Ward*, the first Corps-operated dredge to ply the Kentucky River beginning in 1880. Later, the *Willie* (1890), *Frankfort*, and *Carrollton* replaced these early models. By the twentieth century, the Kentucky fleet had grown to include the snagboat, *Kentucky No. 2*, the towboats *Gregory*, *Chenoka* (built on the Kentucky at Frankfort by the Corps' crackerjack team of craftsmen), *Burnett*, and *Lucien Johnson*, and the smaller launches *Pearl* and *Monroe*, all of which saw ample action in this particular stretch, with its heavy-flow tributaries and sudden, tight, fault-induced zigzagging bends.

Paint Lick forms the entire boundary between Garrard and Madison Counties, winding in a steady southeast to northwest course from the vicinity of Berea in southwest Madison County to the Kentucky River. Its capillaries rise on the north slopes of Muldraugh's Hill, pick up the waters of Walnut Meadow Branch from the east and White Lick Creek from the south, forming a broad and meandering stream near the community of Paint Lick on the Garrard-Madison border. Like so many creeks, Paint Lick's character changes with seasons. In the summer and fall you might find a dry limestone bed, in the winter and spring a rushing torrent.

The afternoon sun works its magic in the valley; with little to no wind the temperature rises to 40°. We paddle into the mouth, stripped of hats and coats and the dormancy of spirit winter tries to impose. Five tom turkeys sail from the high, wooded ground of Madison County across the creek and disappear in strikingly green winter wheat along the bottomland on the Garrard County bank. Danny whistles a jaunty tune. Though the nominals change through the flood of time, the auxiliary of river syntax is ever predicated on exuberance: to exuberate, to overflow. Even in times

of drought and stagnation, rivers overflow experience. To be on or near the river is to be exuberant—thoughts, visions, dreams humbled and filled by sheer awe of geologic time. Morphologically, rivers follow a path of minimum variance, but their influence on form of thought is always radical. They live the history of the earth, and on them we feel life that outlives our lives. “A reach of river,” as Luna Leopold observes, “is a transportation machine.” It connects us to what was, is, and will be.

We make camp a half-mile upstream on level bank, the steep, wooded and mossy talus of Madison County to our backs, and before the sun dips below the hills we've gathered enough dry box elder to stack an impressive pyre. As the sun sets and the fire rises with the growing dark, I swallow back the cud of questions I've ruminated on the better part of a day with sips of honey and thistle tea, contented with thoughts, speechless to visions, dumb to explanation of dreams as a lowly isopod in full possession of the Earth.

For dinner, misfit stew: two orphaned potatoes, a ragamuffin carrot, a lost generation of kale, a disfigured and friendless onion, the dregs of Danny's chicken leftovers, and a wayward spicy chorizo we've been holding out for the last meal. In the bottom of my food bag, I find a heaping handful of hobo black-eyed peas and round out a fine, river rat cassoulet. The pyre, constructed in Lincoln Log fashion, demands constant attention, but fortunately, we have a ready supply of box elder. We're cozy, the fire deflecting through our tarp-camp, and after a few medicinal rounds of Svetka and healing herbs, we slump off to bed, the falling waters of Paint Lick supplying ambient sound ample enough to make the sandman loose the full nine yards.

Sleep, Dream, Trichopteran

The new moon dark is absolute. Even if stars were near enough to provide light, I doubt they would. The valley has turned cold, freezing cold. Not an ember winks in the ash-heap. The tarp rustles in the wind, throwing off



Tarp camping on Paint Lick. Photo by Wesley Houp.

the rime as quickly as it forms. I go from sleep to wakefulness and have no recollection of any transition. I'm standing beside the creek without coat or hat, watching as a dark form moves methodically through the shoalwater, crossing neither this way nor that, but moving against the current, stopping, stooping, standing. I strain to see a face and am relieved to recognize my father. He's collecting caddisfly larvae and motions for me to join him. I step into the icy water and realize that I'm barefooted. I balance on a flat rock, the water breaking around my foot, take another step, feel nothing below, and losing balance, plunge into the current. And fall and keep falling in dark water. I hear the voice of my father calling down through the rush of water, “Trichopteran! Trichopteran!” The wooden handle of a kick-net appears above me, just out of reach. I fall away struggling in complete darkness, and when I hit the bottom, I hear another voice: “Wake up.” It's Danny. He has reached over and hit me on the shoulder. “Sounded like you were having a hard time breathing.”

“It was just a dream,” I say aloud, reassuring myself more than Danny.

In the morning we linger in our bags beneath the blue tarp until the sun

I love mountains, cont.

Continued from page 1

Carl Shoupe had survived a mining accident about ten months into being a miner. Barely survived it. That was underground. If he had been able to continue the job, he would have had to endure some of the *other* hazards that go with underground mining. Like the dust. He didn't breathe enough of it himself to do serious harm but he talked of friends fighting for their breath while simultaneously fighting the coal companies for the money they were promised so that they could continue to fight for their breath.

We all breathed deeply in sympathy. But here's a problem we in the anti-mountain-top removal crowd have: we don't want to be seen as anti-miner. We say let's go back to underground mines. But if I'm honest, I'm not just against mountain-top removal, though that's what I'm most against.

I'm agin all coal-mining.

I hate coal.

Silas House's speech fit my mood exactly—the sunshine and the crowd couldn't keep a note of discouragement out of his voice. The novelist who could imagine *Clay's Quilt*, *The Coal Tattoo*, and *Eli the Good* was having a hard time imagining that this rally would make a difference. But when he referenced his own discouragement, it was as a warning against depression, against giving up. He detailed a story of visiting his parents in eastern Kentucky and having the house shake with a huge blast. But what shocked him, what saddened him, was how matter-of-fact his parents treated the event, how they and the local newscasters (it was such a big blast it made the news) all were determined to treat the explosion as a non-event, as if the

breaks over the eastern rim of the swale. Frost covers every surface and vaporizes as sunlight advances. Turkeys yelp in the woods above us and shortly fly off their roosts in groups of three, four, five. Within minutes, the wheat field opposite our camp springs to life with contented purrs of foraging birds. We move slowly in the morning chill, no resolve to advance on the day. We sit in the sun, rebuild the fire, and watch the turkeys crisscross the field; the rush of water and counterpoint of wind high among branches suggest no urgent purposes; a belted kingfisher lends its blue to a sycamore branch; a fox squirrel rustles through leaf-littered talus. Inside the passage of time, a voice from the past:

*“The Fashioner of Things
has no original intentions
Mountains and rivers
are spirit, condensed.”*

Sound and motion are evanescent. Time gets away from us, too, and we have no choice but to let it go. But ghosts and dreams are indelible. We break camp at noon, float to the mouth, turn against the river's current and cross over.

destruction all around them wasn't happening.

Somebody once said—this was back when New York City seemed to be falling apart—that the worst thing about New Yorkers was their power of adjustment. New Yorkers adjusted to jumping over prostrate homeless people on practically every corner; it was just part of daily life after a while. Having your house shift on its foundations and watching your streams dry up is just part of the coal economy.

You want that cheap electricity, don't you?

I hate coal. But coal is so big and powerful, it seems futile to fight it, a losing proposition.

But Silas House says we can't give up though we might want to. Silas said he had to keep fighting—for his daughters. For all the children. For the future. We have to be able to imagine an economy separate from coal where Appalachian “hillbillies” would have both their hills and their culture. Silas, our imaginative novelist, finally helped us imagine that future, too. He urged us further: force our leaders to imagine that life, too.

I should have carried Daniel's Methodist banner for a while. If Silas can envision such a hopeful future, I can, too. I'd be willing, for a while at least, even to be a Methodist to be able to dream that dream. Wishing won't make it happen, Silas said. Maybe the thousand or so people in Frankfort won't make it happen, either. But we have to keep marching. We can't adjust to what we have gotten used to seeing: the daily destruction of our beautiful state. Martin Luther King said he'd been to the mountain. He didn't see an open pit when he got there.



Paint Lick. Photo by Wesley Houp.

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Texas first state to execute a corporation

The leek: a satirical take

By Horace Heller
Hedley, IV

Breaking new ground in the movement to give corporations the same rights as people, the state of Texas has become the first to impose the death penalty on a corporation. On midnight of February 1, Lone Star Diesel and Fixins' had its Articles of Incorporation blown to pieces by shotgun fire, in the first known state-sanctioned execution of a non-human entity.

The execution took place in a specially prepared section of Big Ted's Gun Shop and Firing Range in Austin.

In what eyewitnesses described as an awe-inspiring scene, officials of the Texas Department of Treasury proceeded into the execution chamber bearing Lone Star's Articles of Incorporation. The paper human silhouette 20 yards down-range was removed, and Lone Star's Articles suspended in its place by what appeared to be a gold-plated clothespin. A minister held a microphone in front of the document, asking if it wished to exercise its right of free speech through any last words.

Next, five state accountants silently filed into the execution chamber, wearing matching grey business suits and carrying police-issued Remington 870 shotguns. Wails were heard in the chamber as the Associate Director for Business Revenue Compliance intoned, "Ready...Aim...Fire!" Instantly the Articles exploded into paper shards, pulverized from close range by four

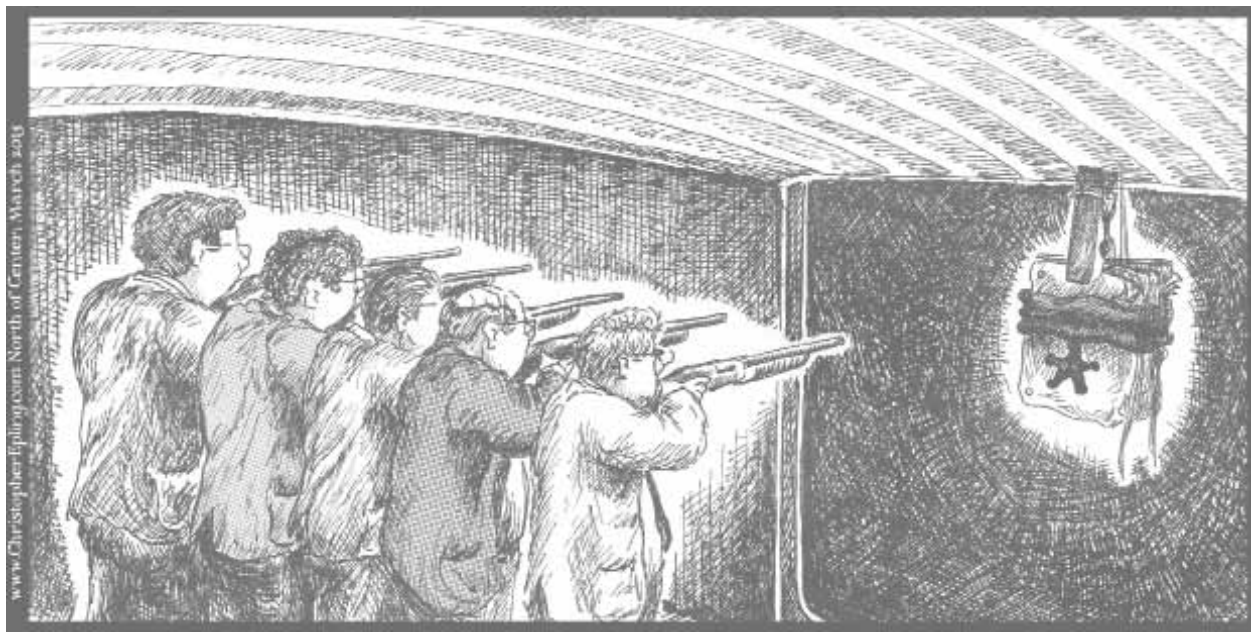


Illustration by Christopher Epling.

12-gauge shells. One shooter appeared to lose control of his weapon and fired into the ceiling, sending onlookers diving to the floor as pellets ricocheted around the small chamber. No injuries were reported.

"I just couldn't believe they would go through with this," said a visibly shaken Ike Eisenberger, former CEO of Lone Star, shortly after the execution of his company. "My last quarterly filing was only three weeks late, and that was because they had somehow sent the form to a chicken farm out in Lubbock. The Texas Supreme Court refused to grant me a stay. Lone Star had a difficult childhood—its parent corporations had a very traumatic divorce when it was young, and its tax compliance staff never really recovered. Yes, its sloppy paperwork has wrecked a lot of lives... but it had such a good heart underneath! Why can't they see that!"

The move to authorize the corporate

death penalty in Texas breaks new ground in the national trend towards granting corporations the rights of persons. In its 2010 *Citizens United* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that corporations could contribute unlimited sums to political campaigns. The Court reasoned that political contributions were a form of free speech protected by the First Amendment, and that corporations enjoy the same free speech rights as people.

At a campaign stop in Iowa during the 2012 presidential campaign, Mitt Romney added momentum to this movement, remarking, "Corporations are people, my friend!" It has since been revealed that Mr. Romney was actually addressing this remark to his close friend Des Moines Financial Services, Limited, who was in attendance at the campaign event. Romney is also said to be on intimate terms with Wells Fargo and Archer Daniels Midland, and has

been spotted dining in public with his particular friend UnitedHealth Group.

Texas is expanding its initiative to grant the rights of personhood to corporations. The Defense of Corporate Matrimony Act (DOCMA) was recently signed into law by Governor Rick Perry. "DOCMA allows any unwed corporation in the state to marry the firm, partnership, proprietorship, or consortium that it loves," said Governor Perry at the signing ceremony.

Since DOCMA prohibits same-sex corporate unions, the statute creates a commission for determining

the gender of each corporation in the state. The guidelines are complex, but appear to determine corporate gender based on conventional community standards. For example, technology companies, investment houses, and manufacturing firms are male; day care centers, hair styling salons, and interior decorator concerns are female. No provision is made for sex change procedures.

DOCMA has stimulated a great deal of speculation on the Texas financial scene. In the weeks since DOCMA passed, Marathon Oil has proposed to J.C. Penney, and ConocoPhillips is rumored to be dating Kimberly-Clark.

The state may be considering taking the corporate rights movement one step further by allowing corporations to run for public office. Texas Instruments is said to be considering a bid for governor in 2014.

Town Branch, cont.

Continued from page 1

outright ownership; if established, any new settlement could offer market space to service the growing number of settlers searching for good deals on land who had begun to flow south into the Meadow from Fort Pitt and other points along the Ohio River.

At the bubbling spring that next morning, in accordance with standard Commonwealth procedure and aided by the rest of the Harrodsburg exploration party, the surveyor and explorer William McConnell constructed a crude cabin designed more for symbolic than actual habitation, planted a row of Potemkin Indian corn, named the area Lexington in honor of the opening battle of the Revolutionary War—and promptly left. For this specific series of acts, the surveyor was awarded sole ownership of more than 400 acres of land in the Great Meadow, including the spring that would bear his name.

McConnell, who typified the "cabiner" approach to claiming frontier property, was simultaneously the city's titular founder and its first absentee land owner; it would take another four years, 1779, for the city to become re-inhabited, this time along a spring several miles to the east of McConnell's and on the other side of the body of water soon to be named the Town Branch of the South Fork of the Elkhorn River, roughly at present-day Main and Mill Streets in downtown Lexington.

The Town Branch Commons

Nearly a quarter of a millennium later, the Town Branch watershed has emerged once again as a central focus of Lexington real estate development.

The intervening years have not been kind. As the city grew beyond it and into six other watersheds, the west-flowing creek's fortunes dwindled. First, the Main Street commercial district that developed with its back to the banks deposited effluent directly into it; later, down-stream and along the city's west edge nearby McConnell's homestead, heavy industry clusters added

their own intoxicating pollution to the flow. Ostensibly due to over-flooding, but also to accommodate greater capacity for railroads to enter town, city leaders finally decided to bury the thing by building rail lines atop it. And when the railroads left, car travel along Vine and Water Streets, along with the 1970s construction of Rupp Arena, assured the creek's continued containment in culverts that run, even still, beneath the rivers of concrete and asphalt.

In early February, the Lexington Downtown Development Board unveiled plans for returning much of the creek to the surface. The "Town Branch Commons" project is an outgrowth of the city's big plans for the Rupp Arena Arts and Entertainment District. The design itself stems from the Rupp Task Force-sponsored Gary Bates Master Plan, which re-imagined Lexington as a horizontally-oriented city rather than a vertical one. The name used at the February project unveiling, Town Branch Commons, comes directly from one of Bates's power point topics detailing the early historical existence of a Lexington commons that stretched along the south banks of Town Branch.

The winning plan by SCAPE landscape/architects imagines a linear urban park centered in the lower surface parking lot at Rupp Arena and following the Town Branch upstream down Vine Street and onto Midland Avenue toward its headwaters and the planned Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden. (The park's western terminus will filter into the Town Branch Trailhead, a planned six-mile loop trail whose outer edges reach toward the signature countryside that crisscross Old Frankfort Pike.) The creek is completely revealed below Rupp; on Vine and further up, water rises to the surface in pools and short runs. In total, the project is divided into four interlocking but discrete panels of work to allow for segments to be completed piecemeal.



Farmer's Market held on Vine Street, ca. 2005. Notice trees on street. Trees were cut during WEG planning. Photo by Julie Mayer.

While the design and vision are beyond extraordinary, that hardly seems the point. When McConnell planted his patch of corn to harvest himself 400 acres in absentia, he set in motion a series of events: closures, wastings, development plugs. Returning to Lexington in 1799, Patterson would skip McConnell's spring and seek out open land at a different spring on a different trunk of the Town Branch. This choice then begat the town plat orientation off the Town Branch flow. The water's regular if unspectacular flow attracted industry downriver (pollution always going downriver), which restricted nearby heavy residential development. Coupled with the placement of the Lexington Cemetery, the Town

Branch watershed corridor lay mostly forgotten. As Lexington grew, it did so along its east axis and its north and south poles. Today, the Town Branch trunk appears as if awaiting development.

And here we arrive at the real reason downtown developers have begun to re-orient the city along its "historical" horizontal axis. The Rupp Opportunity Zone, Distillery District and Town Branch trailhead all reside in some of the least dense parts of the city. At 950 people per square mile, the Distillery District is practically barren. This may be celebrated as creating a seamless urban/rural corridor, it might as well be a suburban development for all the land and emptiness it encompasses.

Opinion

The case for Fayette Urban County

A Creatives for Common Sense position paper

Writing in the February 22 *Lexington Herald Leader*, columnist Tom Eblen called attention to the clunky Lexington Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) moniker employed since the 1970s merger of the city and county. “[D]epending on how you say it,” Tom observes of the abbreviated term, it “sounds either like alphabet soup or an obscenity...How did the government of such a beautiful place end up with such a bureaucratic name?” (What about L-Fudge? Seems plausible, relatively un-bureaucratic, and wonderfully tasty.)

In the article and in another follow-up piece, Tom suggests the city get rid of the FUCG (Fudge, or perhaps FUCK-G or Fuckage) and start referring to ourselves simply as “Lexington.” Following former mayor Foster Pettit, Tom concedes that “Community of Lexington” might also be an acceptable long-form version of the city name.

As it so happens, the Creatives for Common Sense (CfCS) have been studying this very issue. Over the past two years, the group has been identifying the potential brand opportunities and pitfalls of the term “Lexington” while also seeking out new local-first brand identities. Based on our own studies, we agree with Lexington Forum president Winn

Stephens, cited in Tom’s follow-up article, that “[n]obody with any marketing or public relations savvy would come up with a moniker like LFUCG.”

We diverge from both Tom and Winn (and Foster and everyone else cited in Tom’s column), however, on the natural, preferable—even marketable—use of the term Lexington to describe ourselves. A better option, indeed the best one, would be for us to identify as Fayette Urban County. Here’s why:

As a term, Lexington runs against a number of brand headwinds. For one, “Lexington” does not exactly roll off the tongue. To self identify as a “Lexingtonian” requires even more work, a whopping five syllables. On top of that, the “x,” the “ing,” and the “ian” associate our home with a three-pack of unavoidable grating glottals. Can you say the word “Lexingtonian” without coming off as (a) having an uptight puckered asshole, and/or (b) a snob? We couldn’t either, which is why maybe it’s not so good to have an entire region of people shout it from the horse pastures.

In addition to Lexington’s rhythmic and syllabic problems, though, identifying as a Lexingtonian unnecessarily limits our political brand coverage. The government has openly championed the marketing potentials of investing in a vibrant downtown city core and the rural countryside lying at most of its edges.

This is fine so far as it goes, but as a political brand it does not cover, or even pretend to represent, the suburban reality that defines most of days.

In fact, the threads of un-reality that claim to uphold the Lexington brand are ultimately what doomed it in our studies. We’ll offer one example: Tom suggests that a Lexington identity based in connecting the city to the country may mark us, brand-wise, as more a green city than blue, but the reality is that we have one of the largest carbon footprints per capita. Or that while the city/country brand identities may suggest a city of adventuresome urban-pastoral trail riders, the reality is that, in aggregate, we are an obese population. Eventually, holes in the facade damages more than just the image. What seeps out gets into all of us.

In brand Lexington’s place, we suggest the more encompassing term “Fayette Urban County.” Phonetically, the three-word triple iambic “Fayette, Urban, County” really rolls off the tongue, and the abbreviation is sure to be a noticeable brand. Geographically, it brands the entire citizenry, and it does so by creating a state-centric identity



Fayette Urban County brand logo by Christian Epling

field (counties) that—with the exception of a generic “Bourbon County” appearing recently in several beer names—is a virtually untapped brand frontier. Most importantly, in terms of our actual living identities, it allows us to be represented as the fluid FUCers we are: a little bit urban, a little but county—and everything going on in between.

Bloomberg, cont.

Continued from page 1

that cover the initial three years, \$1.3 million would go into the website and personnel for the project; a group of health projects would garner \$1 million; educational projects \$750,000; a governmental efficiency training \$100,000; and future projects to be culled from CitizenLex.org would lasso the remaining \$1.85 million of the prize.

The health and education programs slated for funding in that original proposal, while important, aren’t necessarily new for the city. The Better Bites food program will be extended from city parks to schools, and more bike lanes and walking trails will be constructed. In terms of education, the Fayette County Schools Delivery-to-Diploma program will be expanded for underserved students. This let’s-create-a-big-system-for-what-we deem-to-be-small-scale projects approach can be interpreted several ways.

First, it can be seen as representative of the scale of our city; citizens submitted projects that, according to the mayor, “needed only modest funding and had short timelines.” In my opinion, this scale issue is one of Lexington’s strengths: there are lots of residents engaged in micro-projects that enhance our quality of life.

But, the decision to pitch a data project, even if it’s under the guise of an incubator for citizen engagement, can also be construed a second way: an inability to see how smaller projects (healthier foods, walking trails, educational projects) are part of larger vision for Lexington, for the Bluegrass, for Kentucky as a whole. In other words, surely the city (and by “city” here I mean the government and citizens) could figure out how to spend an *entire* \$5 million on health and health-oriented infrastructure. Ditto for education. These are huge problems for our state. The Bloomberg Mayors Challenge gave Lexington the opportunity to think big about these issues without thinking “state funds” or “federal government.” And the city chose not to.

There’s a third way to interpret the project choice: as a symptom of Lexington’s issue with shallow branding and genuine identity. Choosing a data system, rather than a program that speaks to the conditions and needs of our city—in other words, to the character of our city—is an indicator of Lexington’s on-going vacuous sense of identity.

Data junkies

To be fair, Lexington isn’t the only finalist to uncritically trumpet data collection as the panacea for urban woes or the lynchpin for urban progress. Boston, for example, wants to scale down the big data model so that parents can share their children’s “data” with schools, coaches, daycare facilities, neighbors, and liaisons (which may mean police). Information like grades and attendance can be disseminated through a data locker parents keep on their children. To me, this sounds like Boston wants to subject youth to Big Brother, or rather Big Parent, in which data consumed by adults will be used to haunt and control kids lives. What used to be a bad reputation will now be bad data. Good luck, kids.

Or, good luck pregnant moms. Cincinnati, which has an alarming infant mortality rate (more than twice the national average), wants to track all pregnant women in a “secure database that follows [a mother] through the pregnancy and measures the interventions she receives.” The city has already deduced that most of the infant mortalities occur in five counties; in the tried-and-true do-it-to-poor-folks-first method, five years ago the city began implementing this tracking program with low-income mothers. Now the city wants to move on to all pregnant women. Of course we all want a low infant mortality rate for every socioeconomic class, but a governmental program that gathers women’s reproductive data and health care plans violates a woman’s right to privacy. More. Big. Brother.

Other cities, like Chicago and Hillsboro, OR, also stress data, although not to such creepy ends. In a jargon of meaninglessness, Chicago wants to implement the “first open-source predictive analytics platform that will help leaders make smarter, faster decisions in real-time to help address and prevent problems before they develop.” If you can’t figure out what that means in concrete terms, think “proactive solutions.” If you aren’t sure what that vague and redundant phrase means, consider what Mayor Rahm Emanuel suggests it means: “Chicago’s SmartData platform turns ‘thinking’ into ‘doing.’ It turns ‘react’ into ‘anticipate.’” (Yep, you’re right, it means nothing more than a newer information system.)

I’ll pause here to concede a few points: 1) cities need information for planning, maintenance, and quick responses to urgent needs; 2) that data needs to be organized and accessible across all branches of local government; 3) cities need money to update such large systems. I’ll also grant you that many city officials and staff members do really want to improve their cities—I’ve met many of them here in Lexington. I will not concede, though, that governmental versions of big data are either innovative or prize-worthy. Let me give an anecdote that has soured me on this notion of self-perpetuating data collection.

My neighborhood has a very responsive councilmember and legislative aid. With them, we have been pursuing remedies for violence and infrastructure deterioration in our neighborhood for the last several years. At a recent meeting, our councilmember recruited a new city official who specializes in our types of problems. In this face-to-face conversation, we laid out the same issues we’ve been articulating for at least three years.

This new official, after we had outlined the problem, said, “What we’ll need to do next is lay out all the issues.” My response: (clearly annoyed tone) “That’s what I thought we were doing right now.” He had listened (I assume, his eyes were open at least), but had not taken one note. Evidently, he wanted us to, again, write out all the problems occurring. He was sitting in the room with 80 percent of the stakeholders—residents, the district councilmember, the sector’s police commander, himself (a commissioner)—and still he couldn’t pull the “data” together enough to offer a provisional plan. I have a hard time believing more analytics are going to help this official nudge forward the change we need.

But, you say, that is just one example. Ok, true. Then let’s talk about how many times the city council has “studied” (often with a price tag) the benefits of an affordable housing trust fund, or how long the completion of the Legacy Trail has been languishing—and the list could go on. These very worthy projects aren’t blocked because of lack of data. They’ve stagnated because of money.

In part two, Mary Grace will air her thoughts on why blemishes help constitute a city’s character and why methods of data collection don’t.

North of Center is a periodical, a place, and a perspective.

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I'm not from here

Kenn Minter



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Letters to the editor

Good art piece

Like the ink ("he could resist," Feb 2012), bro.
 Wesley Houp, online

Nice piece.
 Michael Marchman, online

One proud FUCer

As a transplant from California I'm wondering what it will take for native FUCers ("Divest from brand Lexington," June 2012) to accept me as a FUCer?
 Michael, online

Editor responds:

FUCers are less parochial than the hoity-toity Lexingtonian set, so feel free to identify as one of us even though you are not "from" here. Maybe, since you are from California, you could be a sun-FUCer.

Wesley Houp responds:

Michael, parochial twits might refer to you as a West Coast FUCer, a Migrant FUCer, or Internally Displaced FUCer, or even a Fly-Over State FUCer. To me, you're just a FUCer, plain and simple.

Eastern State Hospital Cemetery

I had a grand father, Richard Carroll, who was at Eastern State Hospital. Last known of in the 1970s ("Tomb of the unknowns," December 10, 2010). If anyone knows any info about him or

grave site please reply... thanks.
 Stephanie, online

Author responds:

Stephanie,
 He likely isn't buried at ESH, the last burial we know of was in 1952. According to the SSDI, he died in 1973 but doesn't state where he is buried. You can obtain a copy of the death certificate to get the place of burial or attempt to contact the hospital to start the process of getting copies of his records.

Paper placement

The Loudoun House, Al's Bar, Minton's at 760, Kroger at Bryan Station, North Lime Coffee & Donuts, Salvation Army, Lexmark, BCTC Leestown Campus...
 Christina Zavos, Facebook

Editor responds:

Thanks Christina. Al's Bar, the Loudoun House, Minton's and North Lime Coffee now have NoC circulation. We'll work on BCTC and the Salvation Army.

Letter to Bill O'Reilly

Dear Mr. Orielly:
 After watching your show Tuesday night I was going to write you and ask you to be a little more fair and balanced when you speak about income distribution, but in visiting your FOX News website I realized you have an audience who is so uninformed on basic issues that perhaps you need to put on your teacher's hat for a few weeks or possibly months.
 Here follows a possible analogy to

explain Wealth Distribution to your audience:

There has never been a more unequal distribution of wealth in our country than there is right now. Today (February 19, 2013) the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above 14,000 for I believe the first time. Today there are more millionaires and billionaires in the U.S. than ever before.

What does this mean for the rest of us? In terms that might make it easier to understand what this means for the future, imagine a poker game where you are using 100 chips and a double deck of cards, but you throw away four twos from one of the decks. So now you have 100 chips and 100 cards to deal out. There are 100 players in the "imaginary" poker game. Shuffle the deck at least seven times to assure a random assortment of the cards. Each player is dealt the number of chips and cards that correspond to their share of our country's wealth. The wealthiest player in the game is dealt 37 chips and 37 cards. That's right, one person in the game (the "one percent" you hear so much about) is dealt 37 chips and 37 cards. It is "fair" since the wealthiest 1% of our population own 37% of our country's wealth. So there he/she is with their 37 chips and 37 cards. The next player gets a corresponding number of cards based on their wealth.

The result is that, of the total 100 cards, the first 20 players are dealt out 88 chips and 88 cards amongst them. The remaining 80 players now essentially have to share 12 chips and 12 individual cards amongst groups of them. By the last card, 30 or more people have to share 1 chip and 1 card.

Now answer another question: do any of those 80 players even have a chance of winning this game?

Maybe a few, but precious few at that. Not knowing any better, one might venture to say that the game is rigged.

When I hear someone say we are waging class warfare against the wealthy and that it is somehow wrong, I just remember the poker game they expect us to "play."

There are numerous ways to restore some sanity and a little fairness to what has happened and what will happen. The big question for us though, is whether we are willing to take the medicine necessary to cure this ill?

What is that medicine? Recognition is I think the first, most important thing, widespread recognition that there has been gross unfairness for sometime in how profits and opportunities have been distributed in our country.

Second I think we need Discussion about issues. Wide-ranging discussions that result in a gathering of ideas to change the future. The status quo can not be allowed to continue.

Third, we need to look at testing the results of different policies - or if they have already been studied, then let's do some of what makes sense, is economic and possible.

Sorry this turned into such a treatise of sorts, but this has been building up in me for a long, long time.

Sincerely,
 Charles A. Bowsler
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