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The downtown brand wars CVS, ProgressLex and building a dignified city center

By Andrew Battista

“Progress” has always been a slippery concept. It’s difficult to critique an organization that collectively pursues “progress,” just like it’s unpopular to poke holes in a community that wants to valorize its own creativity as a linchpin of social improvement. It’s harder still to define what counts as progressive, especially when what’s at stake with the progress debate is actually the ability of the community in question to enjoy the amenities that most people in Lexington would deem essential.

Recently, a group of well-intentioned public activists have formed ProgressLex, a nonprofit dedicated to social justice and “smart and sustainable economic development” in downtown Lexington. Thus far, ProgressLex has mastered several bailiwicks: the architectural aesthetics of certain downtown buildings, the traffic flow of Lexington’s downtown thoroughfares, and the brand development of Lexington as an epicenter of brainpower and social industry.

If anything, ProgressLex is a testament to the fact that if you rally enough well-connected people who are proficient with Web 2.0 media, you can elevate any personal pet-peeve to the level of community crisis. During the last week, ProgressLex has demanded that the chain drug retailer CVS, which is currently building a unit at the nexus of Main Street and Vine Street, reconsider its decision to construct a suburban-appearing unit that it claims would “be a blight” on Lexington’s



The proposed CVS site, seen from the corner of Vine and Main.

downtown. ProgressLex has managed to cause a significant stir. Over 1000 people thus far have signed an online petition called “Lexington Deserves Better.” Thanks to ProgressLex, WKYT has covered the design controversy on its evening news programming, and the *Lexington Herald-Leader* has treated the issue with front page space and editorial commentary.

My main point of contention with ProgressLex is not its decision to question CVS’s design model, but of its method and prioritization. There are much bigger fish to fry in Lexington. In particular, we currently don’t have a downtown drug store that can serve the people who live here. The subsequent *Herald-Leader* editorial likened Lexington to a dysfunctional family

with a “chronic inability to marshal the discipline to sustain real improvement.” ProgressLex should re-imagine its potential to act in ways that make people’s lives better and not limit themselves to a program that strives for a town that looks nicer. How our downtown should look has taken precedence over discussions of what many people who live in proximity to downtown actually need.

The appearance of mom and pop stores

According to ProgressLex Chair Danial Rowland, the proposed CVS store does not make an effort to fit in with Lexington’s downtown aesthetic.

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Kentucky Theatre Summer Classic Movies Series returns May 26

By Colleen Glenn

Every spring, starting as early as March, Kentucky Theatre General Manager Fred Mills is asked time and time again, “What films are going to be on the schedule for the Summer Classic Movie Series?”

Well, the anticipation is finally over. The Kentucky Theatre is kicking off its eighth season of its popular summer series on Wednesday, May 26.

“I think everybody looks forward to the series,” says Mills. Every year, patrons start giving suggestions for movie titles for the next year’s series before the current one has even finished. “People like to have input,” Mills relates. “We send hundreds and hundreds of suggestions to Larry Thomas, our film booker.”

Thomas then begins the process of selecting and securing the films after the first of the year, contacting distribution companies and archives to see what films are available. It’s not until early May that the list is finalized and the prized print copies of the schedules are available at the theatre.

The Summer of Monty

If last summer could be characterized as “crowd favorites,” peppered generously with new prints of popular classic films, the summer of 2010 series could be dubbed, “The Summer of Monty.” Three of the movies—*Wild River*, *Raintree County* (which was filmed in Danville), and *From Here to Eternity*—star Montgomery Clift.

One of the most talented actors of the mid-century, Clift played complex and sensitive characters in an understated way that makes his performances feel quite modern as we watch them fifty years later. Unlike some of his contemporaries whose performances seem dated by their adherence to the Method School style, Clift seems to transcend his era through his captivating and realistic acting style. Did I mention he is damn good-looking to boot?

The Serial is Back

This summer also features the return of a classic serial that will run before each feature film. The chapter plays (including *Batman* and *The Shadow*) were a big hit when the theatre ran them in previous years, but last year they had difficulty finding the right one to continue the tradition. This year, Thomas tracked down the original 35mm print of the 1936 *Flash Gordon* serial starring Buster Crabbe. The theatre will screen one chapter each Wednesday for the first thirteen weeks of the Classics Series.

“*Flash Gordon* is considered by many to be the apex of the 1930s serials,” explains Bill Widener, movie-guru and host of the Kentucky Theatre Summer Classic Movies Series. According to Widener, unlike many other serials that ran from the 1930s up until the 1970s, *Flash Gordon* enjoyed the perks of a relatively big budget. Based on a popular comic strip of the ‘30s, “*Flash Gordon* was the *Iron Man* or *Spiderman* of its time,” notes Widener.

Once Again, Dr. Jones...

The series kicks off on May 26 with Steven Spielberg’s 1981 popular adventure film, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. “It’s

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Hop Hop Records opens in Lex NK interviews label honcho Ross Compton

By Nick Kidd

On Saturday, May 22, Matt Duncan’s new seven-song EP “Beacon” will be released on Hop Hop Records. An album release party at Cosmic Charlie’s will mark the occasion, featuring performances by Duncan along with the post-Doo Wop pop of Idiot Glee and a special late-night tag-team tribute to Daft Punk from Brocktologist and Louisville’s DJ Figure.

Dropping just 2 months after Idiot Glee’s 7” self-titled EP, “Beacon” marks Hop Hop Records’ second release to date. While it’s still early in their existence, the label has shown great promise, releasing EPs from two of Lexington’s finest local acts. I caught up with one half of Hop Hop records, Ross Compton, to get a better idea of what’s going on with the label.

Nick Kidd: Who’s idea was Hop Hop?

Ross Compton: I guess it was mine. I wasn’t looking to start a record label, but after hearing James Friley’s first Idiot Glee recordings and seeing his early IG live performances, I was awestruck and inspired—it just seemed like the right time and thing to do.

NK: How big is your staff? (That’s not a penis joke unless you want it to be.)

RC: Ha. I guess, officially, two (James and I), though up to this point we’ve gotten a good bit of encouragement and physical support (constructive input and help putting together 7”s)

from friends including Jamie Adkins, Jaime Lazich, Ashley Crawford, Robert Beatty, Kakie Urch, and James’ brother, Ian.

NK: Do you have a central location or an office?

RC: Ha. Well, the address on the back of the 7” is my upstairs apartment in the Candyland Dreamhouse on Loudon Ave (part of the Grifftown properties estate of our buddy Griffin VanMeter). That would make my living



room the office. At least, that’s where we’ve done most of the 7” packing and our occasional brainstorming.

NK: Where does the name Hop Hop come from?

RC: It’s kind of a combination of things. I’ve always loved bunnies, mostly the cartoonish versions—silly drawings, stuffed animals, chocolate Easter candy representations of bunnies. Not sure why—I like cute things, I guess. And I always loved the Hair Police song, “Do You Love Hop Hop.” For some reason, Hop Hop always stuck in my head.

Then I had the idea that, if I ever got involved in running a venue that I’d suggest we call it Hop Hop. So, anyway, about this time last year, Ben Allen and I and a few others were looking to start a DIY music/arts/practice space on N. Limestone, in one of Griffin’s properties. We were close to birthing the baby, then we got word that the space wasn’t, in its current state, structurally sound for holding the number of people we wanted to have shows for.

By that time, the name Hop Hop had already been circulated enough that it stuck to that space. Although happy to see big letters reading “HOP HOP” on a building in my neighborhood, I was a bit bummed that the name that I’d held onto for so long was now attached to something out of my reach. So when James and I talked about naming the label, we decided to take it back.

Other than that, I guess, I’ve always been into the repetition of short simple words. I can’t really explain that either.

NK: Do you have a label logo yet? If so, does it involve a bunny?

RC: Yup! Two bunnies, in fact.

NK: You have Idiot Glee and now Matt Duncan on the label; anyone else?

RC: The plan is that our next release will be a 7” split between The Butchers and The Gudwalls. Our buddy Paul

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The Neighborhood

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

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65-hour fast for DREAM Act

By Michael Dean Benton

In the spirit of the civil rights champion Cesar Chavez a group of students and staff at Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC) organized a Hunger Strike to bring attention to the bipartisan Dream Act 2010 that is currently before Congress.

In April 2010, during a United We Dream meeting in North Carolina at which 80 people from 20 different states participated, Erin Howard, Roy Roman and Alexis Meza, who were representing Kentucky's Dream Coalition, overheard participants from another state discussing their past accomplishments. Their discussion mentioned a hunger strike and how it influenced their state representatives to sit down with them to talk about the Dream Act.

At 7:00 P.M. on Friday, May 14, 2010, 25 Kentucky residents from all across the state began a 65 hour fast in an effort to gain support from Kentucky Congressional Representatives Ben Chandler and Brett Guthrie and Senators Mitch McConnell and Jim Bunning. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 729 / HB. 1751) is a bipartisan proposal which would create a pathway to earned legalization for thousands of young students who were brought to the United States years ago as children. The Dream Act is a practical, fair yet tough solution that upholds the best of our shared American values of equal opportunity, accountability and strong work ethics.

The fast at BCTC was preceded by a community meal in honor of the participants and included song, poetry and prayer. Community members who did not participate showed up to show their support for the student fasters. Throughout the weekend, the bulk of the participants remained on

Bluegrass Community and Technical College's Cooper Campus in an effort to show their dedication to higher education. They were joined by fasters in other parts of KY, including at Berea and Asbury Colleges, and at Kentucky State University.

"I am fasting. I am speaking out for those who have no voice, those whom for so long have been hiding; those who only want a better

their dream of college because they are undocumented. Most people in America, whether they recognize it or not, depend on these undocumented workers whose children have matriculated in the American K-12 educational system and when they graduate they are told they cannot go to college."

BCTC student Roy Roman added: "For the people out there who don't believe what we are doing is correct,



Participants in the fast for the Dream Act.

future, our students," proclaimed Luis Martinez, a DREAM student waiting for an opportunity to go to college to be trained in the medical field. "We don't want amnesty; we aren't asking for welfare checks. We just want a chance to be someone, a chance to make our dreams of higher education come true. We want to serve this country, this society. We want to be doctors, lawyers, teachers; we want to serve in the military forces, we want an opportunity to turn those dreams into reality," he continued.

Iraq War Veteran Alexander Roman added that "everyone participating in the Fast knows family or friends who are unable to pursue

not supporting our youth, our children and destroying their future is essentially destroying the promising future of this country."

The event was being observed and commented on through social media and cell phones by members of the United We Dream, Dream Activists and other supporters across the nation. Throughout the hunger strike the students received words of encouragement from members from California to New York and all points between. Included in the messages were comments of other groups planning to hold future fasts in other parts of the country to support the Dream Act legislation.

Groups challenge final pollution permit on Smith Coal plant

DAQ approved air permit despite financial uncertainty

By Elizabeth Crowe and Wallace McMullin
Winchester, KY

Late Friday, May 7, groups challenged the Kentucky Division for Air Quality's approval of the final air pollution permit for a proposed coal-burning power plant in Clark County. The agency issued the permit despite the fact that East Kentucky Power Cooperative faces severe and systemic financial problems, as a recent management audit uncovered.

"EKPC is in the midst of a perilous financial situation. The best move would be for the co-op to stop wasting taxpayers' and ratepayers' money by withdrawing the permit and reassessing the options," said Billy Edwards, a business owner in Clark County and Clark Energy customer. "We can create affordable and reliable forms of energy that do not require an addition \$1 billion of unnecessary debt to that will ultimately be paid for through higher electricity bills."

Wallace McMullen, chairman of the Sierra Club's Cumberland Chapter Energy Committee, is concerned that the DAQ issued the permit for the proposed Smith plant as a way to skirt new federal air quality protections.

"The agency issued this permit the day before new, protective air quality standards were released by the EPA. Because the permit is based on outdated air standards, it fails to heed best available science to protect health," McMullen said. "This decision is not only a threat to health, it's going to hurt ratepayers, who will have to pick up the cost of non-compliance when this plant fails to meet these new regulations down the road."

At the public hearing for the draft air permit in February, hundreds of citizens - including local residents, students, conservation groups, faith

leaders and health experts - turned out to express their concerns to the DAQ, urging the agency to review less financially and cleaner sources of energy than a billion-dollar coal-burning plant.

"EKPC does have a lowest-cost option, and it's not the Smith Plant," said Elizabeth Crowe, director of the Kentucky Environmental Foundation. "Investments in energy efficiency, weatherization and renewable energies, including hydroelectric generation at existing dams, could offset the energy, while curbing pollution and saving ratepayer dollars.

"The DAQ has a duty to protect public health and ensure all other options have been adequately considered - and they've failed to do this."

According to the air pollution permit, the Smith plant, which would burn coal with outdated technology, would emit thousands of tons of harmful pollutants if built. The pollution permit would allow its smokestacks to emit:

- More than 300 tons of soot, which can cause severe respiratory problems and even death
- Nearly 2,000 tons of sulfur dioxide, the main cause of acid rain
- Nearly 1,900 tons of nitrogen oxides, a key chemical in the formation of ozone pollution, or smog, which harms lungs
- More than 100 pounds of mercury, a potent neurotoxin that can cause learning disabilities in infants and young children.

"Medical research shows clearly that air pollution from coal-burning plants like Smith causes human diseases and death," said Philip Curd, a Jackson County physician and member of the Jackson Energy Co-op. "We

continued on the next page

LFL Music Video Showcase May 29

By Lucy Jones

When the Lexington Film League (LFL) sent out a call for music videos, few could have imagined that the results would be so musically diverse. On Saturday, May 29 the LFL would like to invite both music and film lovers to come and view the results.

The event will be held at Buster's Billiards and Backroom, and prizes will be awarded to the winning videos. An evening of live music, featuring Lucky Pineapple, Englishman, Fanged Robot, and Idiot Glee, follows the screening.

LFL co-producer Kiley Lane is excited about the intersection of music and film that will be on display at the event, and is particularly enthusiastic that some of the bands that are playing also have videos in competition. As she explains, "It's a rarity that one gets to experience music videos on the big screen and even more fun when some of those bands will be playing live after the screening. You may be introduced to some music that you have never heard before and really like."

Submissions poured in from so many musical worlds that will be something for everyone. From electro pop to garage rock, from bluegrass to glam, from death metal to ukulele—hardly a genre isn't represented. And unlike the LFL's previous Do-ers Contest, submissions were solicited nationally. So attendees can anticipate hearing from bands that are geographically, as well as musically, diverse.

The creativity and talent on display during the screening will be equaled by the live show to follow. The LFL is thrilled that such amazing bands have agreed to give their time and energy to participate in the event. LFL co-producer Sarah Wylie VanMeter applauds the reciprocity that exists in local creative communities: "I feel like filmmakers and musicians in Kentucky are similar in that they are extremely resourceful, extremely in

love with their medium, and are supportive rather than competitive—they want to see their peers do well."

Between the screening and the live music, prizes will be rewarded for Best Overall (the Grand Prize), Best Cinematography, Best Song, Best Props & Costume, and Best Narrative. The LFL is endlessly grateful to LexArts and The Louisville Film Society for their partnership in providing the awards. As VanMeter explains, "George Parker, the director of the Louisville Film Society, immediately offered our contest winner a screening spot in the music video category of the Flyover Film Festival in June. Later, LexArts approached us and wanted to offer further incentive for people to enter: \$1,000 to give as cash prizes. For those of you who haven't submitted to video contests, these prizes are awesome purses separately. And in combination...it's huge."

This sort of partnership is the foundation of the LFL's mission, and the event wouldn't be possible without the further assistance of Buster's. As VanMeter remarks, "Jessica, Buster's co-owner, was interested in working with LFL almost as soon as we got off the ground. She really understands that our organization is still a budding one and has made it possible for us to use such a great venue by donating the space." Adds Lane, "Buster's is perfect for such an event, and we are dedicated to building relationships with other organizations around town. We believe such partnerships are vital to the arts community and part of our mission is to deliver programs in alternative space."

The LFL hopes that you will attend the May 29 Buster's event and celebrate the intersection of music and film. As Sarah Wylie promises, the evening will be "too much fun to stand, and nothing like Lexington's seen...in awhile, anyway. Sit back and enjoy the show for the video contest, and get on the dance floor for the music after!"

Brand wars (cont.)

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"In fact, the design reflects a far greater effort to stamp the building with the CVS brand than to respect and respond to the downtown context," Rowland wrote on the ProgressLex blog. "The synthetic stucco arches, for example, have no architectural integrity, make no reference to any architectural idea or form, yet they are dominant elements. Simply put, the arches are CVS signage, without the letters. This may be acceptable in the more vulgar environment of a strip mall, but not in a downtown environment where a higher degree of dignity is expected."

Since when has suburbia been coded as "vulgar" while downtown maintains a "higher degree of dignity?" I guess this distinction depends on which part of downtown one is talking about. The complaint seems to be that CVS, which will pour lots of its own money into this project, wants its building to reflect a singular experience that their customers have come to expect. In other words, ProgressLex wants to establish a protocol where Lexington's downtown architectural cognoscenti, not the private corporations that do business downtown, are allowed to fashion and develop a singular brand image. And that image must conjure an aura of Southern gentility, equine idolatry, and quaint hospitality, not drab suburban predictability.

ProgressLex seems to think that no private interest should impinge upon an as-of-yet unarticulated urban dreamscape without first aligning its business model or design plans with the aesthetic sensibilities of a select few citizens. Indeed, CVS developer Gary Joy told *Herald-Leader* reporters, it's hard to understand what "urban design" means exactly. From what I can tell from reading the Lexington Zoning Ordinance, CVS hasn't violated any design codes in its proposed building. Joy has even made some changes in response to complaints from parties like ProgressLex, but these changes aren't good enough.

I suspect that when ProgressLex objects to CVS's branding, they actually object to CVS itself. Herein lies the problem with branding: it's the modus operandi of a corporate culture whose profit motive is usually antithetical to the values of a community. Corporate culture has so radically transformed the landscape of the United States that we can no longer imagine a retail economy that isn't dominated by multinational machines.



Exterior sketches of the most current proposed design.

for maximum profit. Ted's Montana Grill looks like an old western saloon, or at least what we imagine an old western saloon might look like; the Pub near Fayette mall does for British taverns what CVS does for drug-stores. It would be more accurate for ProgressLex to say that CVS is out of place not because of what its proposed store design looks like, but for what the store itself represents.

Corporate branding and downtown landscapes

ProgressLex's argument might have more credence if Lexington had previously proven itself to be a town that refuses to let corporate interest the ways. But Lexington has always allowed the interests of a wealthy minority to dictate how its space is used.

Unfortunately, the ProgressLex architectural critique is inconsistent. We daily and freely subject ourselves to corporate advertising and branding by watching television shows, listening to radio programs (yes, even NPR), and attending (or teaching) university classes that could not take place without the revenue generated by advertising. Advertising isn't ideal, but it's currently the de facto system, a series of quid pro quo agreements, in which we participate every day to be informed, entertained, or invigorated. But when a company decides to build a building and advertise itself on that building, ProgressLex speaks up with pious outrage?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not arguing that Lexington should let corporations run roughshod over its citizens. But if corporate-financed infrastructure can improve the quality and sustainability of life in our community,

example is the newly-minted Fifth Third Pavilion that occupies the street adjacent to Cheapside. No structure in downtown comes close to resembling the cold, industrial steel buttresses that uphold the pavilion's glass overhangs. I'd be curious to hear ProgressLex's interpretation of this architectural wonder.

The Fifth Third logo that has been placed prominently at the head of the pavilion also might seem to be gratuitous advertising, but I think over time we'll realize that this structure will make the Farmer's Market better and allow it to last longer. The pavilion will host festivals, fairs, concerts, and other events that otherwise wouldn't have been possible, or at least wouldn't have been as enjoyable for everyone. And the pavilion certainly wouldn't have been built without the \$750,000 donation from Fifth Third Bank.

My point is that we need to entertain the reality that private enterprises can provide benefits and services to a community that public organizations have been unwilling or unable to accomplish. This is the neoliberal dream. At the least, I'd like to see a consistent attitude toward branding from Lexington's creative class.

Building on history: the East corridor's racialized landscapes

One of the reasons why ProgressLex thinks we "deserve better" than what CVS has pitched is because the nexus of Vine and Main Street has been a particularly contested space for at least 25 years in Lexington. As the aforementioned WKYT news story suggests, what gets built on this corner is important because it visually sets the tone for people as they drive into downtown Lexington. It's a prime space to inflect Lexington's brand and communicate our core values.

The folks at ProgressLex might already know that the space across the street has already been branded. Twenty years ago, the Triangle Foundation, a private group of wealthy philanthropists (yesterday's rendition of ProgressLex) saw the journey into downtown via Main Street as a way to permanently associate Lexington with horse racing and the bucolic ideal of thoroughbred culture. Ignoring public sentiment or input of any kind, the Triangle Foundation designed and privately funded Thoroughbred Park, a striking paean to the equine industry and Kentucky's rolling bluegrass hills.

Permit challenge (cont.)

continued from the previous page

could prevent a lot of disease and death by building fewer coal-fired plants and putting more resources into renewable energy and energy conservation."

The audit, which was ordered by the Kentucky Public Service Commission and released late last month, detailed deep and disturbing financial problems throughout EKPC. It also found that one of the main obstacles to the electric cooperative becoming more stable was EKPC's inexplicable fixation on the proposed Smith plant and the nearly billion

Rich Schein, a Professor of Geography at the University of Kentucky, has argued that while Thoroughbred Park is a deliberate attempt to beautify Lexington, it advances a brand that depicts a highly selective picture of downtown Lexington's past and future. The park is what he calls a racialized landscape because it promotes an idealized civic image that has been built upon Lexington's racial inequalities. The horses and artificial bluegrass hills literally sequester the poor, historically black East End neighborhood, hiding it from view as people look out their car windows as they drive down the Main Street corridor.

What people don't see when they drive into downtown, thanks to Thoroughbred Park, is a neighborhood that needs access to a drug store. The four or five blocks that stretch out directly behind the artificial hills comprise a community, the William Wells Brown Neighborhood Association, whose mean annual income as of the 2000 census was \$14,570, or less than one-third of the mean annual income of all other areas in Fayette County (I expect that when the 2010 census data becomes available, we'll discover that this ratio of income disparity will be roughly the same). In the East End, almost half (45 percent) of all homes are in substandard or worse condition.

Many people who live in the downtown area have no private transportation; locating medicine and getting groceries require a ride across town. As someone who lives 0.4 miles away from the new CVS, I'll have no problem walking or biking there to pick up supplies. And I know that many other people who live near me, behind Thoroughbred Park, will also walk or bike there as well.

My charge to ProgressLex is that the group avoid succumbing to the prediction offered by the *Herald-Leader* editors. They are right to point out that human capital is finite: "burnout is inevitable for all but a few. Volunteers have lives to live and they wear out when they feel they are fighting the same battles over and over." Perhaps aesthetics should take a back seat to other progressive concerns, like going after absentee and apathetic landlords, who collect rent from the East End and let houses there languish in substandard conditions. These people deserve better.

Andrew Battista blogs at <http://thewell-wroughturn.wordpress.com>.

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When ProgressLex yearns for a consistent urban design standard that adheres to the historical texture of surrounding neighborhoods, it wistfully wants to recall a kinder, gentler era. The decorative arches on the CVS storefront "reek of a tepid attempt to introduce quaintness," says ProgressLex. Yet this quaint era is exactly what CVS and other suburban outfits seek to conjure through their architecture. CVS wants to evoke a nostalgic experience, shopping for medicine at the local mom-and-pop store. But Hutchinson's Drug Store is gone, as is a pharmaceutical industry that is ethical and responsible.

Suburban architecture a la CVS is a simulacrum, a copy of a thing that never existed. It simply reproduces what we imagine it would be like to patronize an authentic establishment, and then it reproduces this experience

we might want to consider seriously the place of the buildings they produce in our eclectic, stable downtown landscape that serves many interests and increases the functionality of many peoples' lives.

An example is the gaudy, bright red bench behind the Thomas and King downtown offices (off Short Street). The bench says "Wow," which reflects the company promise to "wow" its customers. It looks like something you'd see at an amusement park, and it's clear to me that the bench serves a dual purpose. It is first and foremost shameless advertising for Lexington's most annoying restaurant company, but the bench is also intended for public beneficence; it provides people with a place to sit and enjoy downtown where no place had existed before.

A better and more obvious

Review: *Iron Man 2*

By Colleen Glenn

Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) is back and as charming and sardonic as ever in the next installment of the Iron Man Marvel comic series, *Iron Man 2*.

Iron Man 2 picks up a few months after where the first film left off, with Stark having caused a tremendous media frenzy by revealing himself to be the Iron Man, the international peace-keeping/ass-whooping superhero in a suit. Stark has, by now, news coverage shows us, made several successful interventions around the globe and has used his armor to pressure the major superpowers of the world into negotiating a peace treaty. He has essentially become a one-man nuclear deterrent. As Stark himself puts it at the Senate Hearing, he has “successfully privatized world peace,” and refuses to relinquish his invention to the U.S. government.

Stark’s unwillingness to cooperate with the government results in a race by others, notably his evil weapons-manufacturer rival, Justin Hammer (Sam Rockwell), to copy the technology of the Iron Man suit. Not only is the U.S. military frantic to get their hands on the technology, but so is the rest of the world. Footage shows Hammer, who also provides weapons for the U.S. military, testing out prototypes in Afghanistan, an illustration of Hammer’s shady dealings and shameless self-interest.

Despite Stark’s witty bravado in the face of the press and the politicians, we quickly learn that he has discovered that the palladium in the arc reactor that keeps his heart beating has begun to poison his body. He is slowly dying, and is unable to find an alternative element to feed the reactor. Frightened and weak, he appoints his long-time assistant Pepper Potts (Gwyneth Paltrow) CEO of Stark Industries, and hires Natalie Rushman (Scarlett Johansson), who is actually

an undercover S.H.I.E.L.D. agent (not that he knows this), to be his new assistant.

Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Stark, a man halfway around the world is dedicating all of his energy and resources into plotting Stark’s demise. Fueled by a mad desire for revenge, Russian Ivan Vanko (Mickey Rourke) has developed an arc reactor of his own, adding whips that attach to his arms that channel the deadly elec-



Critical acclaim is great, but it doesn’t put gas in the Bentley. Gwyneth Paltrow and Robert Downey Jr. star in *Iron Man 2*.

trical energy. Tony eventually learns that Ivan is the son of a physicist who collaborated with Tony’s father on the original technology for the arc reactor years ago, but who never received proper credit. While Tony grew up a billionaire, Ivan grew up in poverty, watching his disgraced father drink himself to death.

When Hammer witnesses Vanko’s near-successful attempt to destroy Stark at the Monaco Grand Prix, he acts quickly to secure Vanko’s incredible technological expertise for his own purposes. But Vanko has plans

of his own, and develops an army of superdrones that are under his control, much to Hammer’s surprise and disappointment when he unveils them at the Stark Expo. The drones and Vanko, in a super-weaponized version of the Iron Man suit, set out to fulfill their mission, to destroy Tony Stark forever.

Stark and long-time buddy, Lt. Col. James Rhodes, now War Machine (he has a suit of his own), destroy the drones and finally Vanko using the

best of all possible weapons: teamwork. Stark races to rescue Pepper, and in the least romantic ending of an action film, kisses her for the first time as his best friend looks on. Informed by S.H.I.E.L.D. that he is unsuitable for service, Stark is invited by Nick Fury (Samuel L. Jackson) to be a consultant on the “Avengers Initiative.” By now, thankfully, Stark has discovered a substitute for the poisonous palladium, sporting a new triangle in his chest rather than the circular arc reactor. One can only hope that the more powerful reactor might enhance his and Pepper’s love life.

Director Jon Favreau assembled a truly solid cast of actors for *Iron Man 2*. But he failed to use them to their potential. Rourke as Ivan is captivating and interesting villain, one who is as smart as Stark but with nothing to lose, rendering him extremely dangerous. But the character is undeveloped and rather flat; the film misses its opportunity to capitalize on the acting chops of Rourke. Surprisingly, Rourke and Downey Jr. share little screen time, another missed opportunity in which we could have witnessed two heavyweight actors (with similar career paths, I might add)

go head to head and bring out the best in each other’s performances.

Scarlett Johansson’s character also fails to elicit interest, other than amazement at how she fit into the black suit. She’s smokin’, but completely undeveloped (her character, that is). The same goes for Paltrow’s Pepper Potts, who was quite charming and spunky in *Iron Man*. Here, she has somehow strangely been robbed of any sex appeal, making Stark’s matter-of-fact love for her about as thrilling as the thought of two senior citizens getting handsy at Sunday night bingo.

Don Cheadle just doesn’t work in this role as Lt. Col. James Rhodes, aka War Machine. Though Cheadle is a terrific actor, the role seems unfit for him, prompting one to question why they thought it necessary to replace Terrence Howard, who played the role, quite well, in my opinion, in the first installment. Cheadle is rather dull in the role, to be blunt. Rumors abound that Howard was difficult to work with or didn’t meet Favreau’s expectations, but internet gossip aside, it’s hard to imagine that they found Cheadle to be a better Rhodes than Howard. Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury is, well, Samuel L. Jackson.

Sam Rockwell stole the show, delivering a fantastic performance as the slimy and pompous weapons entrepreneur. And long-time comedic actor Garry Shandling is simply perfect as Senator Stern, the disgruntled and snarky politician who interrogates Stark at the hearing and who is later forced to publicly thank Stark for his heroic achievements.

Though it’s not as good as *Iron Man*, *Iron Man 2* still delivers as a fun summer action flick. Go see it, and stay until the VERY end, even after the credits roll: the good news for Marvel comic fans is that more installments are coming.

One word: Thor.

Kentucky Theater series (cont.)

continued from page 1

excellent that we’re starting off with *Raiders* because the Indiana Jones films are an homage to the action series of the 1930s,” says Widener. Therefore, *Raiders* offers a kind of perfect symmetry to kick off the summer in which the *Flash Gordon* serial is screened.

One of my personal all-time favorite movies, the first of the *Indiana Jones* trilogy features the dashing archeologist in a race against the Nazis for control of Ark of the Covenant, the holy vessel in which the Jews transported the Ten Commandments. At every turn, his rival, Belloq, who is cooperating with the Nazis to procure holy treasures at Hitler’s command, thwarts Indy’s attempts to rescue the Ark from the Third Reich. Karen Allen shines in the role of Marion Ravenwood, the lively and beautiful woman who wins Indy’s heart. Even if you have seen *Raiders* before, chances are you’ve never seen it on a big screen—or it’s been years since you have.

Indeed, that is one of most appealing aspects to the series: As Mills remarks, “You really can’t see these films hardly anywhere, especially on a big screen.” Seeing them in an old theatre, a movie palace, as the Kentucky was called when it was built in the 1920s, adds to the thrill of viewing a classic film.

Highlights of the Schedule

This year’s program offers a nice variety of genres from several different eras, and, like last year, offers the opportunity to see several new or restored prints. From popular musicals (*The Wizard of Oz*, *The Music Man*, *Mary Poppins*) to romances (*Roman Holiday*, *Raintree County*), to silent classics (*Sunrise*) and campy sci-fi flicks (*Creature from the Black Lagoon*, *It Came from Outer Space*) the summer 2010 schedule promises something for

everyone.

Below are the films I won’t miss, and suggest you don’t either. For a complete summer schedule, visit www.kentuckytheater.com, or better yet, stop by in person to pick up a print copy of the program.

June 2: *Rebecca* (1940)

Adapted from the Daphne du Maurier novel, this classic mystery directed by Alfred Hitchcock film stars the excellent Laurence Olivier and gorgeous Joan Fontaine. Bring someone to hold your hand. The film will make you think twice before marrying a widower, even if he is as handsome as Olivier.

June 9: *The Graduate* (1967)

Sure, you’ve probably seen it. But don’t miss this chance to see Dustin Hoffman squirm awkwardly in a new 35mm CinemaScope print. Co-starring Anne Bancroft and Katherine Ross, and featuring a soundtrack by Simon and Garfunkel, *The Graduate* captures the end of an era and the end of innocence in a sublime way.

June 23: *Laura* (1944)

Before the 1950s came along, women enjoyed some of the most powerful and complex roles onscreen. This “women’s noir” by edgy director Otto Preminger is full of eerie and sexual undercurrents. The picture stars Gene Tierney and Dana Andrews in a dark romance. Vincent Price co-stars. This is a “don’t miss” if you like film noir.

June 30: *Wild River* (1960)

This is the film I am most excited about. Considered to be one of Elia Kazan’s top three films, this tale of the beginnings of the Tennessee Valley Authority during the Depression is both visually and dramatically stunning. Montgomery Clift, Lee Remick, Jo Van Fleet, and a young, uncredited

Bruce Dern star. This is a new, restored 35mm CinemaScope print.

July 14: *Roman Holiday* (1953)

William Wyler’s lovely romantic comedy starring the charming Audrey Hepburn as a European princess who falls for an American writer, played by Gregory Peck. Hepburn’s only Oscar is for this role. Fall in love with Rome and two beauties in less than two hours.

July 21: *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954) & *It Came From Outer Space* (1958)

3D. It’s the buzz of Hollywood, with directors like James Cameron lauding it as the wave of the future, and traditionalists, like Francis Ford Coppola and Roger Ebert, arguing it detracts from the visual art of cinema. No matter where you stand on the issue, these two sci-fi features are relics from the early days of 3D technology and are sure to please with their campy sensibility. (Word is that the glasses are a fashion must-have this summer.)

August 11: *In a Lonely Place* (1950)

Humphrey Bogart is at his best in this Nicholas Ray movie about a screenwriter accused of murder. This classic noir film co-stars the intoxicating blonde Gloria Grahame, and promises a surprise ending that will keep you glued to your seats until the credits roll.

August 25: *From Here to Eternity* (1953)

Set in Hawaii on the brink of America’s decision to enter World War II, this adaptation of James Jones’ novel captures the unrest, strife, love and lust in the barracks just before the Japanese attack Pearl Harbor. Fred Zinneman directs the heavyweight, talented cast, including Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Deborah Kerr, Donna Reed, and Frank Sinatra. Both Reed and Sinatra won Oscars for their performances. If

you thought Lancaster and Kerr were hot before, see the new digitally remastered print.

September 8: *Five Easy Pieces* (1970)

An exciting aberration for the summer series, *Five Easy Pieces* is a rather edgy road film from an era when films were just beginning to truly drop the restrictions of the antiquated and draconian Hayes Code. Jack Nicholson, restless, selfish and angry, tries to come to terms with his blue-blood past. This is one of the films that put Nicholson on the map and defined his screen persona. One of Karen Black’s best performances. New, digitally remastered print.

September 15: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953)

Howard Hawks’ delivers up a hilarious musical comedy starring the brunette and blonde bombshells of the fifties, Jane Russell and Marilyn Monroe. The two lounge singers work their way to Paris on a trans-Atlantic cruise and enjoy the men they meet along the way. Another digitally restored print, this flick offers easy laughs and health-sized eye candy.

When, Where, How Much?

As in previous years, the series runs on Wednesdays, with a 1:30 P.M. matinee option in addition to the primary 7:15 P.M. screening. Still only \$4.00 a ticket, the Kentucky Theater Summer Classic Movies Series continues to offer the lowest prices in town, both at the box office and at the concession stand. The summer series will run a few weeks longer than usual this year, going all the way until September 22, offering you even more opportunities to take in a classic film at Lexington’s oldest theater.

My advice: get to the theater early: the theater fills very quickly on the Summer Classic Movie nights.

Music

Live music you need to know about

NK's music staff breaks down the next two weeks

Saturday, May 22

Mastodon w/ Between the Buried & Me, Baroness, and Valient Thorr
Buster's. \$25. Doors @ 6 P.M., show @ 6:30 P.M. 18+

Buster's has been listening to the prayers of the black-t-shirt-clad crowd, and it has responded with prehistoric might. Arguably the second-biggest metal band in the world (and that's under the assumption that Metallica can still be classified as metal), Mastodon bring their never-ending world tour to Lexington in support of their psychedelic, prog-infused fourth album, *Crack the Skye*. The 2009 full-length continues the band's propensity for the thematic, focusing on astral projection, wormholes, and Rasputin.

Opening the show will be North Carolina calculating shred machine Between the Buried & Me (I promise you have never seen human hands move on a guitar neck like this), fellow Georgia natives Baroness (making their second Lexington appearance, their first being a little-known WRFL on-air performance a few years ago), and the revved up classic-style sleaze of Chapel Hill's Valient Thorr.

Lexington's big venue is one of the smaller stops on this particular leg of Mastodon's quest to play every corner of the globe, so take the opportunity to see the band in person and not on a JumboTron in the nosebleeds of some stadium.

—Mike Lunsford

Thursday, May 27th

Of Montreal w/ Noot d'Noot
Buster's. \$25. Doors @ 8 P.M., show @ 9 P.M. 18+

Of Montreal's front man Kevin Barnes plays shirtless, sings effeminately, wears makeup and glitter, cross-dresses, and rolls around onstage pelvis-writhing. He's equal parts Prince and Ziggy Stardust, the driving force behind a band caught between the psychedelia of The Beatles' "Strawberry Fields" and the glam rock of Sparks.

Impressively, much of Of Montreal's output transcends its self-indulgence and delivers a rush of power pop bliss—if you can stomach all the sugar. Their last LP, 2008's *Skeletal Lamping*, was their most indulgent foray yet, incorporating funk and R&B into a concept album in which Barnes' alter-ego ("a black she-male," according to the lyrics) took over to lead the band. This foray produced Of Montreal's most experimental and forceful music yet and was either exciting new terrain or incoherent rubbish, depending on your taste.



Whitey Morgan.

But Of Montreal's solid back-catalog affords them the freedom to grow and persevere with impunity. They've become a benchmark act for Elephant 6-style neo-psychedelia, a style that relies on poppy consciousness expansion as its M.O. While there is something mythical about their reputation as live performers, most anyone who's ever been to an Of Montreal concert will confirm that theirs is one of the most gratifying live sets around. A new Jon Brion produced LP, *False Priest*, hits shelves later this year, so expect to hear lots of new tunes at this performance.

—Nick Kidd

Sunday, May 30

"Honkey-Tonk Hunker Down" featuring Whitey Morgan and the 78's w/ Texas Paul Sutherland, Coralee & The Townies, and Fifth on the Floor.
The Green Lantern. \$10. Doors @ 7 P.M. 21+

Country music...from Detroit? With a voice eerily similar to Waylon Jennings, Whitey Morgan (real name Eric Allen) and crew are dispelling geographic notions about country music by making a Motor City blend more authentic than the Nashville standard. How is that possible? Whitey and the 78's snicker at what passes for country on the radio these days (check out the song "If It Ain't Broke") and opt for old-time honkytonk blues, mining country's rich past like a pack of street-smart outlaws doing country for kicks.

Even though their past recordings possess a classic country sound, Whitey and crew keep a little Detroit rock in the tank for their live sets and give their old-time stompers a dirtier, more menacing edge. They still keep a setlist chock with classic country in the style of George Jones, Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard, but when they rattle off covers like Van Halen's "Flirting With the Devil" it feels like they were meant to be country songs all along. And it's about damned time somebody wrestled away that Devil imagery from the arena antics of David Lee Roth and put it back in the barroom where it belongs. To paraphrase Waylon, I'm sure Hank done it this way.

—NK

Saturday June 5

Clutch w/ Bakerton Group, Lionize & Never Got Caught
Buster's. \$20 in advance, \$25 day of show.
Doors @ 8 P.M., show @ 9 P.M. 18+

Clutch, Maryland's hardest rocking mountain men, return to Lexington

continued on page 8



Metal giants Mastodon at Buster's on May 22.

Musical notes around town

By Nick Kidd

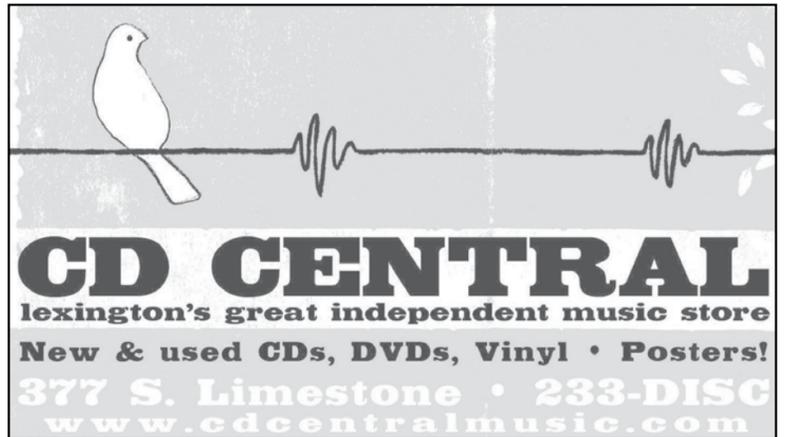
Willie Eames plays for free at Sidebar every Wednesday. Did you read that? Read it again. Free. Willie.

You might recognize Eames as the frontman of The Tall Boys (who play free sets at Lynagh's every Sunday) and Club Dub, but his solo sets are more concerned with delta blues and classic rock covers. These subdued solo gigs are strikingly wonderful, especially if you're able to a) shut up and b) listen, while c) drinking. Okay, "c" is optional. But if you're heading to Sidebar just to socialize on a Wednesday, show some respect for the man and pipe down.

Crucial Fun Fest. This is the 5th year of this festival and I have to admit, I've never been. In fact, I've never heard of any of the bands that are playing this year, just like last year, and the year before, and the year before...Hell, I've never spoken with anyone who's ever been to CFF. It's quite a mystery to me, which speaks to the diversity of music in this city. Here's the schedule:

May 28 Delay, The Sidekicks, Dead Dogs, Timeshares, and Sundials
May 29: Andrew Jackson Jihad, The Two Funerals, Pink Houses, and others.

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Hop Hop (cont.)

continued from page 1

Eldred plays in both bands, so we're tentatively calling it "The Paul Eldred EP." We'll see if that sticks. Other than that, we've talked about working with a bunch of our other favorite Lexington bands—Tiny Fights, Bigger Boys, Attempt, and others—but haven't really committed to anything.

NK: Where do your artists record?

RC: For these first two releases, James and Matt recorded everything at home or other folks' homes, which, to me—considering the richness of the sound—is amazing. We haven't discussed things in any substantial way, but we'd love to work with our friend Paul Puckett, who's in the process of building a full studio in the basement of his house, on some of our future releases.

NK: Are you pressing vinyl or sticking with CDs and cassettes? And why?

RC: Well, James and I both love the idea of vinyl, as an interactive listening activity and for its tangible aesthetic quality. So, we did the *Idiot Glee* EP that way (of course, it's accompanied with free digital downloads, and we set it up so you could buy the digital files of the EP separately).

When we pitched the idea to Matt of releasing his EP on Hop Hop, he had already been slaving away and obsessing about it for nearly two years. In that time, he'd done the homework and laid the groundwork to release it

as a CD. He wanted to go that path, and we didn't want to let personal dogmatic notions get in the way of being a part of releasing music we really care about. So, I think, most of our releases will have a vinyl component, but we're not gonna be silly and stubborn about the format. We want to get music out and make folks (both artists and listeners) happy in the process.

NK: Does anyone running Hop Hop have prior experience with running a record label? Or are you learning on the fly?

RC: Eh, James and I both have limited experience. In the early '00s, Tony Manuel and I had a one-release label called Vulture Vinyl. We released The Elephants' full length, "Carver/The Rose Attic." And James has a cassette label called Itslips with great releases by Trailblazer, The Butchers, and Idiot Glee.

But I think that, mostly, we're just learning on the fly. With that said, I think we've learned a lot about labels, releasing records, and promoting releases through our time DJ'ing and working at WRFL.

NK: Where do you see the label in 2 years?

RC: On top of the mountain...or of the (trash) heap. We're just gonna try to have fun and spread around music we like...and bunny-shaped baked goods.

ROCK not so rosy against ROSI

By Troy Lyle
Evansville, Indiana

Normally there's a rhythm, a cadence, a flow to a roller derby bout. So much so that one can sense how a bout will likely end just by feeling the early vibrations. Such was the case for the Rollergirls of Central Kentucky's (ROCK) latest effort on May 8. One could tell the outcome wouldn't be pretty from the subtle changes in

came over to stretch out and chat it up. A laugh here. A how have things been there. It's almost as if ROSI was wooing ROCK into a false sense of security. Like playing nice now was to mask playing rough later.

Those vacillations...they begin to gain in intensity.

Throughout team introductions the air progressively thickened in the Swonder Ice Center on the outskirts of Evansville, Indiana. Fueled by an inept

sweat pored. It didn't take a rocket scientist to see that this was a war that wouldn't end pretty.

Ryder Die and Ellie Slay managed to push ROCK ahead by one early on. ROCK was working its patented tightly packed wall made up of Sissy Bug, Ragdoll Ruby and Sharon Moonshine to perfection.

ROCK 13, ROSI 12

What in reality were two minute jams seemed like an eternity, as the two teams' game plans—beat'em up and box'em out—mirrored each other.

After a short deliberation by the zebras over a penalty, Sugar Shock roared off the line using her catlike reflexes to weave her way through ROSI's line. It wasn't easy, but eventually Sugar broke through and gained lead jammer. When the whistle blew ROCK had scored another 3 points and things were looking up.

ROCK 16, ROSI 12

Donut went to work again for ROSI. In a slick move she faked to the inside and speed skated around ROCK's wall, netting the days first grand slam and posting 5 points.

Die countered and posted 4 points of her own as Slay, Rainbow Smite and Kitty O'Doom reeked havoc on ROSI's Killyn Time. Though not gaining ground, ROCK was holding its own.

Then the zebras went to shit. For some reason they felt compelled to ruin a perfectly good derby bout with a string of senseless calls.

ROCK 20, ROSI 17

Ragman, ROCK's coach, had all he could stand by this point. After calling a timeout the Rock coach approached the zebs wanting to know why ROCK seemed to be mounting penalty time at twice the pace of ROSI. And more importantly, he wanted to know why certain penalties weren't being enforced and others were.

Bout Results

Rollergirls of Central KY - 71
Rollergirls of So. Indiana - 98

Saturday, May 8, at the Swonder Ice Center in Evansville, Indiana

ROCK best jammer: Ryder Die
ROSI best jammer: Hurtz Donut

ROCK best blocker: Kitty O'Doom
ROSI best blocker: Sammich

ROCK MVP: Sissy Bug
ROSI MVP: Hurtz Donut



RICHEL WIREMAN

Two Key Terror and Ellie Slay wreak havoc on ROSI's front line.

atmosphere...from that gut feeling that loomed in the air during the bout's inception.

Ever so subtle these barometric fluctuations were, but omnipresent none the less.

Team warm-ups started like they always do with each respective team skating the track to get their bearings, turn their wheels and heat the blood. Most of the girls use this time to settle their nerves and focus on the task ahead, which is more or less how the pregame transpired this Saturday.

But then something altogether peculiar happened. During ROCK's post skate and cool down, the Rollergirls of Southern Indiana (ROSI)

announcer and hands down the worst introduction to roller derby ever, the crowd seemed disoriented and antsy, as if they didn't know whether to cheer or keep quite.

The vibe was strengthening. Something wicked this way was coming.

Round 1

Hurtz Donut scored first for ROSI in a rough and tumble opening jam as both teams tried to bruise and bang the other into oblivion. When the smoke cleared ROSI had sent their message loud and clear: "This is our turf."

The next few jams followed suit as bodies banged, wheels screeched and

Layland, Miller win soggy 12th Lex. Open

Wease takes women's rec division; Varner leads all juniors

NoC Sports

Jeff Layland of Bowling Green took low score honors at the 12th annual Lexington Open, held at Shillito and Veteran's Parks May 14-15. Layland recorded a score of 192 over the four rounds of the tournament, despite the challenging conditions presented by the steady rain that fell for much of the weekend.

With two second place finishes this year, at the Kentucky State Championships and the Louisville Classic, Layland was an Open Division contender entering the tournament, and he did not disappoint. His 24-under-par performance in the professional-level Open Division bested second-place finisher Eric Galluser, of Louisville, by 10 throws. Just behind Galluser, at 13 under par, hometown product Landon Williams placed third

in his first tournament as a competitor in the Open Division.

While the Open Division featured a total of 7 disc golfers completing their four rounds under par, several other divisions saw players also scoring below par. Competing in the Advanced Division (the highest amateur division), Drew Miller of Independence actually recorded the second lowest weekend score with a 17 under par 199. Miller bested second place Advanced finisher Jeremy Cordy of Shepherdsville by 4 throws. In addition, James McCormick of Louisville (-10) and Tim McGee of Georgetown (-3) won their respective divisions, Advanced Masters and Intermediate, with sub-par scores.

In total 143 disc golfers, including 68 Open and Advanced division competitors, entered this year's tournament, which has steadily grown in national prominence and number of entrants since its inception. High finishers in all divisions took home a share of more than \$10,000 in discs, bags, clothing, and cash.

Women's participation has also risen noticeably, as the tournament featured nine entrants in the Recreational Women's Division. Meagan Wease bested the field by 21 throws despite a second-round hiccup. Over in Advanced Women, Karen Farrell tossed a 249.

There was plenty of action in the Recreational and Novice Divisions as well. Charlie Cavalier threw 3 over par to hold off fast-charging Lexingtonian Michael Reynolds (+5) to come out on top in the 26-person Men's Recreational Division.

In the hotly contested Novice Division, Ross Taylor took home low score honors with a 4 over par in what

was his first tournament. His four-day total included two rounds of 53.

In the junior divisions, Winchester's Jacob Varner took home the under-13 Boys title, a division which included three of the top 20 under-13 players in the world. Meanwhile, Corey Ellis finished

first in the under-16 field, and Derek Waldrige won the under-19 crown.

For complete tournament results go to www.pdga.com. News and discussion of Lexington area disc golf is found at the Bluegrass Disc Golf Association's web site, www.bdga.org.



KEITH HALLADAY

Women's rec division winner Megan Wease accept her prizes from tournament director Lewis Willan.



KEITH HALLADAY

Michigan's Kiralyn Brakel drives from the 17th tee at Shillito Park.



Post-game shenanigans at Al's

Roller Derby Terminology

Zebra (Zeb): referee

Suicide Seats: seating on the floor just off the derby track's edge. This seating is "at your own risk" due to its proximity to the action and the likelihood of a skate in the face, side or stomach.

Panty: a stretchy helmet cover that is used to designate the jammer (with a star) or a pivot (with a stripe).

Opinion

Bad jokes and presidential power

By Joe Anthony

Perhaps presidents should avoid White House correspondents' dinners. I know. We need to smile at our foibles, lighten up. And laughter can bring a certain comfort. Who hasn't laughed, laughed hard sometimes, at a funeral? Still, the skit where W. Bush searched all over—under tables, behind doors—looking for those pesky Weapons of Mass Destruction left me cold. And the moment when President Obama threatened tween idols the Jonas brothers with predator drones if they went over the line with his daughters went over the line with me. I don't mean I was put off by the clichéd humor of the overbearing father; I mean the realization came to me as he said it: Wait: real boys are being killed, real little girls, too. By predator drones. It may be militarily necessary to get at those terrorists. I don't know. But this man is ordering these attacks. Is it something to joke about at a dinner?

Back when Cheney and company kept building up the power of the presidency until it loomed like Gibraltar over the rest of us, I often wondered: do they think the Republicans will always occupy the White House? Don't they worry that all this power will one day be in the hands of a Democrat? The wheel will turn. Now we have a Democrat as president, a man I admire and support. But I have to ask myself and my fellow progressives the same question I put to the Republicans. Is the presidency too powerful? Is this power a threat to our freedoms?

In his new book, *Bomb Power: The Modern Presidency and the National Security State*, Garry Wills argues that the threat of nuclear annihilation has allowed presidents to accumulate tremendous powers. Certainly, the Iraq war was the latest example. When Condoleezza Rice evoked mushroom clouds, very few of our politicians—or our news outlets—could withstand the pressure. Give the president the power he wanted, they argued. He might know best.

But I would argue that our presidents have been accumulating and abusing power long before the bomb became a reality—or even when it wasn't in the picture.

Consider our wars and how we entered them. President Polk lied us into the Mexican war in 1846. Fifty two years later, President McKinley let the yellow press hysteric us into remembering a Maine that never was for the Spanish American War. And the war that followed, the one that crushed the Filipino liberation struggle, involved another series of lies. The Gulf of Tonkin, the official reason for our entry into the Vietnam War, never happened but the secret bombing of Cambodia did. Placed within this history, our missing weapons of mass destruction have a long, inglorious prelude.

Presidents have often sought to curtail our freedom. John Adams' Sedition Act was widely condemned and may have led to his reelection defeat—as it should have since it seriously curtailed freedom of the press. But that act pales next to the Espionage Act of 1917. A progressive president, Woodrow Wilson, a president who enacted many wonderful changes from child labor laws to anti-trust legislation, initiated this law. His Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer prosecuted it with all the zeal of a Torquemada and with some of the same anti-Semitism, zeroing in especially on Jewish radicals such as Emma Goldman. His anti-Semitism didn't lead him to neglect native-born radicals such as Protestant Eugene Debbs, who was sentenced to ten years simply for criticizing the Espionage Act. Palmer's assistant, J. Edgar Hoover, carried on the same secret-police methods into the 70's.

Placing the term "progressive" in front of the name of president is simply not protection enough. Another progressive hero of mine, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, imprisoned tens of thousands of Japanese-Americans without hearing or trial. So now we have one more progressive president. I believe his heart is in the right place, but he has too much power. He has too much power and his successor, whose heart might not be in the right place, will have too much power. That power leads Obama into the same secrecies, the same sense of entitlement that it has led all our presidents. I was proud that our latest would-be-terrorist was given his Miranda rights. But in the face of Republican criticism, Obama's Attorney General, Eric Holder, is talking about modifying that right for accused terrorists, American citizen or not. No, I thought. Say that this right, this information that we can remain silent and consult a lawyer, is basic and not to be modified.

But then I wondered: is he bending before Republican attacks or are he and Obama thinking, yes, that Miranda right is an inconvenience. All our rights are inconvenient to those whose power it impedes. Our founding fathers, imperfect human beings that they were, knew better than to trust any one man or institution. Perhaps they were looking at each other and not just power-mad George III. Lord Acton was talking about popes, not presidents or kings, when he spoke about power corrupting. Popes, presidents, kings. They need to be checked. If the president does it, Nixon infamously said, it is legal. Is it such a stretch to worry about this accumulating power? Too Tea Party-ish?

It isn't just Obama's bad joke about predator drones that disturbed me. It was the realization that this president, or any president, could take just about anyone out whom he deemed a national security risk. Anyone. With nary a Miranda in sight.

not in support of destructive behavior. As I stood in the dark with the crowd of kids, someone spotted the fireball rising above the Student Center. The rest of the night was a surreal mix of fire, smoke, police officers, and students all in the street in front of the ROTC building.

The rest of the experience which resulted gave me, then a young man, an up close demonstration of the magnitude of power that lies in wait to smash all protest, even legitimate ones.

William Munson

Thank you for these articles. So much history, especially the local history of the University's protests, is in danger of being lost. Your essays are wonderfully succinct and informative.

CamdenBoy

Taking back homes from the bank

Exercising the human right to housing

By Bill Quigley

May has seen an upsurge in local organizations exercising their human rights to housing. Most people recognize that international human rights guarantee all humans a right to housing. With the millions of homeless living in our communities and the millions of empty foreclosed houses all across our communities, groups have decided to put them together.

Organizations across the US are engaging in "housing liberation" and "housing defense" to exercise their human rights to housing. Here are a few examples.

Madison

In Madison, Wisconsin, the grassroots organization Operation Welcome Home helped Desiree Wilson, 24, a mother with small children, move into a vacant house, hook up utilities and change the locks, according to nbc15.com in Madison. The home was vacant due to foreclosure. Bank of America owns the home now. "It's not against the law," said Ms. Wilson. "This is above the law. It's just so much bigger than me. Housing is a human right."

Operation Welcome Home held a press conference criticizing the billions of dollars in bailouts to mortgage lenders. "We're asking them to turn over the property to the community whose tax dollars are funding what they are doing." One of the spokespersons for the group, Z!Haukness, reminded people that "housing is a human right, no matter what income, no matter what rental history." The group plans more "liberations" of other vacant property.

A local land trust, Madison Area Community Land Trust, says if the activists convince the bank to donate the home the trust can find the resources to turn it into affordable housing. Taking over the vacant foreclosed property is "a brave move," says Michael Carlson of the Madison trust. Carlson told the Madison Cap Times, "They're compelling the citizens of Dane County to confront the very real contradictions in the way we provide housing - massive surpluses in the market that led to a collapse in credit and simultaneously people without shelter and permanent affordable housing."

Toledo

A Toledo, Ohio, factory worker, Keith Sadler, lost his home of 20 years at a foreclosure sale for \$33,000. When it came time to be evicted, Keith had had enough. According to toledoblade.com, he and 6 friends barricaded the house up to resist the foreclosure eviction. All were all members of the Toledo Foreclosure Defense League. After 5 days the house was raided by the local SWAT team and all were arrested on misdemeanor charges and released.

I picked up Vol. II, Issue 8 (Wed., Apr. 21, 2010) at the UK Library. I am a 1973 grad of UK and remember quite vividly the events of May 1970 ("National Guard swarms student protesters"). I still have a copy of the blue-tail fly picture of Ed McClanahan in his "Cap'n Kentucky" get-up. I still possess the advertisement from a Fall 1970 issue for a t-shirt with a bull's-eye and logo reading National Guard Target. The caption and copy reads "Stand behind your Student Government President." It featured Steve Bright in the t-shirt with several folks lined-up bowling pin-style behind him in the same shirt. Your periodical reminds me of that great, late rag.

I look forward to following your efforts and keeping up with the Lexington scene. Be sure to tell your

Portland

In Portland, Oregon, a local group, Right 2 Survive, seized control of vacant land in front of an abandoned school. They set up tents for the un-housed. "This is a celebration because we are taking our rights back," Julie McCurdy told Take Back the Land. "What we're doing is coming up with the solutions tailored for our community. We are tired of waiting for city hall to come up with revised plans and rehashed ordinances that do not meet the needs of un-housed Portlanders."

Sacramento, Philadelphia, Chicago, Atlanta

A faith-based group has been moving families into vacant homes in Sacramento. The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign moved a family into a vacant home in Philadelphia. The Chicago Anti-eviction Campaign marched to protect a family from eviction and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement protested auctions of family homes on the county courthouse steps of Atlanta. Other community actions across the country are expected during the rest of May.

Housing as a Human Right

Housing is a human right recognized by a number of international human rights laws. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted after the Second World War, promised "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood."

Still, the National Coalition for the Homeless estimates of the number of homeless people in the US range from 1.6 to 3.5 million.

Foreclosures are soaring. Some housing experts say 4 million foreclosures are possible in 2010. There were 3.4 million homes which got foreclosure notices, auction sale notices or bank repossessions in 2009. In the first quarter of 2010, RealtyTrac reported there were 932,000 foreclosures. Auctions were scheduled on 369,000 homes in the same time. Banks repossessed 257,000 homes during that time.

Organizations working to exercise peoples' human rights to housing include Take Back the Land and the US Human Rights Network. Both are working with local community organizations to support their campaigns.

Bill is legal director of the Center for Constitutional Rights and a law professor at Loyola University New Orleans. You can reach him at Quigley77@gmail.com or visit his blog site at http://www.smirk-ingchimp.com/author/bill_quigley.

Letters to the editor

We are kicking ass

Hola NoC,

You guys are kicking ass. Keep up the good work. I appreciate the product that comes from writing for the sake of being heard.

Tim Staley
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Kent State at UK

Thank you so much for your articles on the Kent State protests at UK. I was one of the crowd at Buell Armory the night the ROTC building burned.

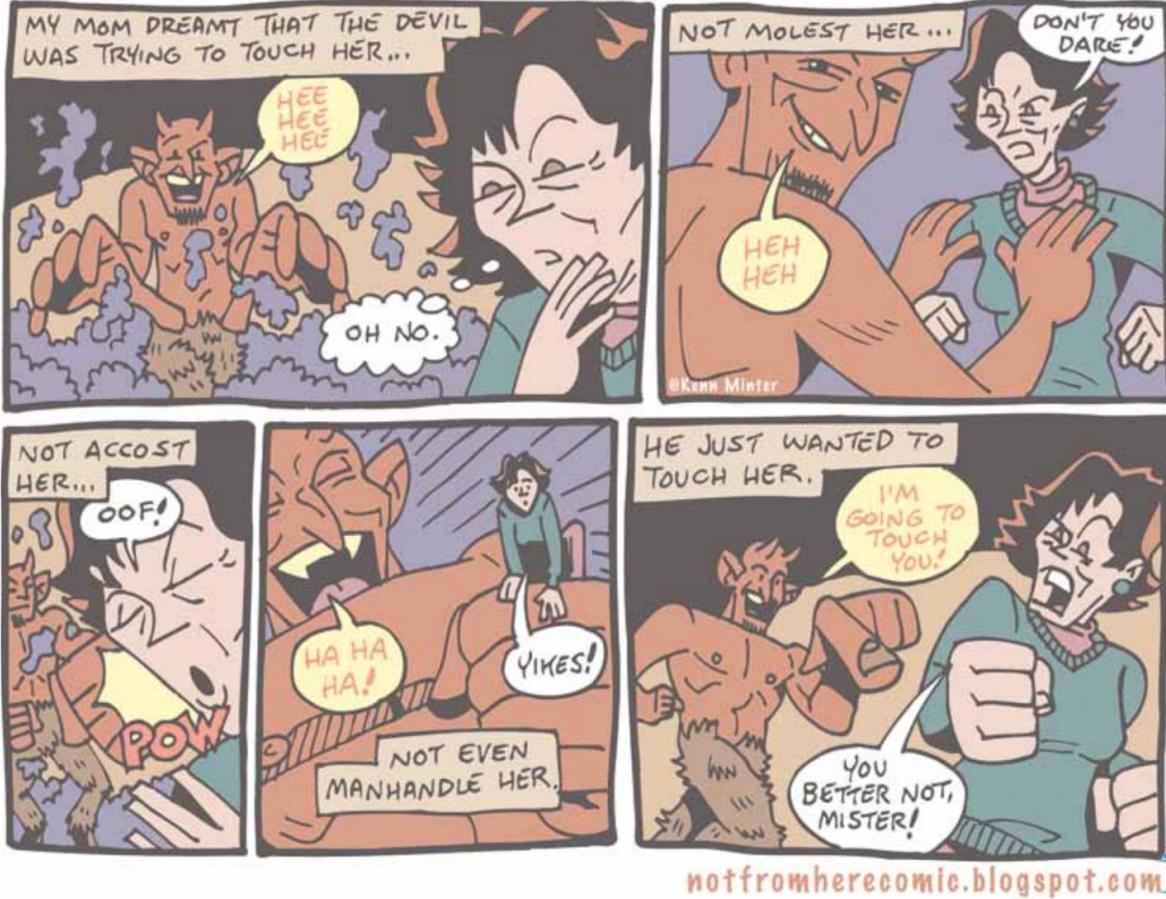
The group of students assembled at Buell Armory were committed to non-violent behavior. When someone broke out an Armory window, the group response was, without doubt,

advertisers that their messages are reaching outside LA (Lexington Area) and readers are encouraging others to access NOC as a source of history, information, and entertainment concerning UK/Lexington/et al.

Edward Ellis



I'm not from here by Kenn Minter



notfromherecomic.blogspot.com

Music notes (cont.)

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May 30: The Max Leving Ensemble, The Wild, Mischief Brew, and others.

I tracked down a musician who performed at a past CFF for the scoop. He described CFF bands as folk 'punk' (he used air-quotes for punk) and says "Mischief Brew represent the best that wasteland of a genre has to offer." Okay then!

The City play May 29 at Natasha's Bistro, and if you don't know by now, the Lexington octet, with the frequent addition of backing vocals courtesy of the Agape Theater Troupe, plays sold-out gigs and donates all proceeds to causes such as the Lexington Humane Society, Military Missions, Doctors Without Borders, and the Lyric Theater restoration. It's good music for good causes, plain and simple.

On the 29th they'll play to support the Lexington Area Music Alliance, an organization dedicated to the growth and development of local music and entertainment. Check out the cause at lexmusic.org, and browse to the City's web site at thecityband.com.

ROCK falls to ROSI (cont.)

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ROCK 20, ROSI 21

If the bout wasn't physical enough already, the lack of control by the zebs only served to infuriate ROCK's skaters, upping the brutal nature of their attack.

Bodies began flying off the track and into the suicide seats outlining the rink's exterior. Shouts grew, sweat poured and deep moans filled the air, silencing the more than 300 patrons in attendance. The scene only amplified as elbows flailed and panties began flying off helmets. It wasn't a pretty setting, more like a boxing match than a bout.

ROCK 37, ROSI 32

On the wheels of The Virgin Cherry, Donut, Killyn Time, O. Snap and Suffragette Kitty, ROSI scored and scored behind their all but impassable wall made up of Andre'a The Giant, Grave Digga, Sammich and Ingrid Inhumane.

But ROCK wasn't done. They fought and clawed between every whistle, inflicting pain and battling to stay close. One could tell there was too much pride at stake to let the zebs get the best of this seasoned derby squad.

ROCK 39, ROSI 60

Round 2

In most sports a 21-point lead is all but insurmountable. Not so in roller derby. Jammers routinely rip off 15 and 20 plus point jams, especially when the opposing team's jammer is sent for some butt time in the penalty box. That slight chance was all the motivation Slay needed for her halftime speech. After slapping the girls around a bit, Slay and company reentered the Swonder Ice Center with a new sense of purpose -- get even, or die trying. After a halftime percussive assault by The Boom Squad, a local dance, drum and flag ensemble, both teams exited their respective lockers and made their way to center court. One could tell by the look on ROCK's faces they weren't at all pleased with the way the first half transpired. ROSI, with smiles and laughter, looked to be right where they wanted to be—in control.

After a quick warm up skate the action resumed. Unfortunately the plan went awry after an early phantom penalty call on Sugar for back blocking. To make matters worse the two points Slay scored prior to being penalized failed to be awarded by the zebs. Yet another slap in the face for ROCK.

By this time ROCK had had enough. The bout was out of reach, but not the battle. With looks that kill ROCK went about damaging every ROSI skater that dared enter their

domain. No jammer or blocker was safe from the anguish, punishment and agony ROCK unleashed, none more punishing than a blow administered by Sissy Bug midway through the second half. Bug managed to blast the panty off of Cherry's helmet and send her flailing into the air and flat on her back. It was asily the hardest hit registered that afternoon.

ROCK 51, ROSI 79

Bruising ROSI wasn't the only objective for ROCK in the later part of the second. Newcomers Mericle Whip and Pamm Demic got some much needed track time. Whip skated in a couple of jams, showing serious promise for ROCK's future as she glided around the track. Pamm Demic got her derby feet wet as she landed a solid hit on ROSI's Donut, sending her off the track and out of Bitty Bast'rd's way. Bast'rd seized the opportunity and took lead jammer to score 6 points.

ROCK 62, ROSI 92

The zebs were up to their nonsense once again in the next to last jam of the day. Clearly after the jam started and the blockers left the line, Major Beef decided to whistle the action dead and allow a timeout for ROSI.

"What the hell?" That and many other expletives came flying from the ROCK bench.

"You can't call a timeout between jams," Drawer yelled. "You refs are really screwing the pooch today." Smite echoed the sentiment. "It's not ROSI's fault," she said. "It's a ref problem."

Smite was right, at least judging by the discrepancy in penalties. ROCK finished with 31 minors and 6 majors; ROSI, by comparison, finished with 16 minors and 3 majors.

Maybe the rant of a random ROCK fan summed it up best when he yelled, "You guys [zebs] suck. This is the most blatant case of home cooking I've ever seen."

When all was said and done ROSI finished with 98 points to ROCK's 71.

Up Next

Rock hopes to shake off this defeat and take its 2 and 2 record into a much needed break before heading to Toledo, Ohio on June 5. There they will be part of the Midwest Derby Girl Summit—a four team mini-tournament sponsored by the Glass City Rollers. Other teams scheduled to participate include Team Unicorn of the Mad Rollin' Dolls and the Mid-Michigan Derby Girls.

For more information about the Midwest Derby Girl Summit go to www.glasscityrollers.com. If you'd like to learn more about ROCK, its skaters or its upcoming events go to www.rocknrollergirls.com.

Music calendar (cont.)

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June 5th for another rousing show of riff-heavy blues influenced rock and roll. This marks the third time Clutch has come to our fair town in the last decade or so, and they have established a solid reputation for consistent hard rock quality. In late 2009 the group released their newest full-length, *Strange Cousins From the West*, on their own Weathermaker record label featuring a new crop of melodic hard rock with lots of classic rock and blues influences. They have also just released a new double

DVD consisting of a live show from the 9:30 Club where they cover their entire self-titled album in sequence. Get ready for some groovy stoner metal riffs coming from their older work, which they commonly revive in live performance. After nearly two decades of releases and incessant touring, Clutch are pros at giving a great show and this one should be no exception.

Get there early to catch Clutch as their own opening act alter-ego, the Bakerton Group, playing jazz-based rock jams.

—Matt Gibson