North of Center

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Little Sir Puny takes a dip
Hatchling of the Chickasaw

By Ed McClanahan

This is part two of an intermittently serialized memoir by Ed McClanahan that takes as its working title "Hatchling of the Chickasaw: A Kentucky waterways story."

My father, Eddie (Edward Leroy, officially), was born and raised—or, as they liked to say around there, "reared"—on a rocky little hillside tobacco farm in a rural community called Johnsville in Bracken County, Kentucky, about 50 miles east of Cincinnati, within a couple of miles of the Ohio River. As a boy, he swam and fished in the Ohio in the summertime, and even crossed it on the ice a few times, in bad winters. My mother, Jessie Poage, grew up in Brooksville, the county seat. During their courtship, she was a schoolteacher in Neville, Ohio, to which she commuted via the mailman's rowboat. My own earliest clear memory is of moving out of our house in Augusta, a Bracken County town on the Ohio, in the flood of 1937 … in a rowboat. I was five years old, and I had the chickenpox. We three wretched refugees—Eddie and Jessie and this meager, itchy little fellow they called "Sonny"—disembarked at the soonest opportunity and immediately skeedaddled to Brooksville, the highest point in Bracken County, where we stayed for the next ten years, high and dry.

But the Ohio was never far away. Sometime around 1940, my dad and his brother Don and their cousin Charlie McCarty had partnered up with a jackleg carpenter named Punch Vermillion and built a little fishing camp (maybe the world's first timeshare) on the riverbank at Bradford, near Augusta, fifteen miles or so from Brooksville, and my folks and I and the other partners and their families spent great chunks of our summers there during most of the 1940s. It was my favorite place under heaven: a broad river bottom, a sandy riverbank overhung with great, grieving willow trees, a serene river flowing before them like a benediction.

Our camp was a humble three-room board-and-batten ensquatment beneath the lowering canopy of willows. No electricity, no running water; we had a privy out back in the cornfield (during the war, it became a hempfield) and an icebox and a kerosene cookstove and kerosene lamps, and the grown-ups hauled water and ice from town once a day. The building itself was basically just a shell, a big tin-roofed wooden tent on stilts, the riverbank sloping away beneath it. There was a large sleeping room with a couple of iron bedsteads and two or three iron bunkbeds and half a dozen cots (all available on a first-come, first-served basis), a kitchen featuring the aforementioned appliances plus a vast array of cast-iron skillets and cast-off crockery and tableware, and a long screened-in porch that stretched all the way across the front of the building and accommodated a huge, rough-hewn picnic table and two long benches. Each room had its own screendoor (to facilitate access to the privy, whose irresistible appeal kept the screendoors slamming day and night), and all the windows were screened as well, so that, in the sweltering Ohio Valley summertime, our camp

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Revolting! Inc.
The business of revolution

By Patrick O'Dowd

Walking up to the Lexington branch of the Land of Tomorrow gallery, I wasn't sure what to expect. Earlier in the week, I had spoken to ELandF Projects founder Bruce Burris—the instigator behind this performance piece and countless others—and he had made it clear he didn't have the slightest clue what Dakota Shaw and Paul Michael Brown had up their sleeves for the "Design Your Own Revolution" project. Burris even warned that it was well within the performers' rights to not show up at all.

The revolutionaries-turned-startup-business-partners did show—or at least one of them did. Sitting behind a desk in Land of Tomorrow's gallery space was Dakota Shaw. You might know him better from the local band Stoner Creek Boys, but I suspect it's highly unlikely that when performing music Shaw is dressed up in a tie and tucked-in, button-down shirt—which he was today. The sight was some sort of cross between *Office Space* and the Brad Pitt character from that one movie about soap. When asked about the current location of his business associate, Paul Michael Brown, Shaw said he was busy running errands around town. They're a young business on the rocks and certain hands about town had to be greased. Providing affordable revolutions in this day and age isn't easy. It's all about who you know.

The office of Revolting! Inc. was stocked with one table, two chairs, two pencils, a pencil sharpener, one copy machine, and 500 sheets of copy paper. The revolutionary businessmen also had 100 one dollar bills to bootstrap their operation and, like any lean startup, they had to invest wisely. On the wall behind frontman Shaw was a menu of available services that customers could choose from: "Fly The Coop," "The Pink Slip," and "Fuck The Man, Man." Apparently "Fly The Coop" was their most popular item (a chance to burn some familial ties) but, being a discerning consumer, I opted to differentiate myself from the masses. I tried the more exotic options.

I started things off with "The Pink Slip." Shaw provided me with a "snarky resignation letter" (a mad lib-esque form designed by Brown); a tie that could be thrown off in disgust; and a water bottle intended to be used as a projectile against my soon to be ex-employer's person. After completing my letter and reading it aloud, I threw off my tie and joined my revolutionary life consultant in a shot of sparkling grape juice—this juice was one of the upfront costs covered by the dollar bills, along with a pack of cowboy killers intended to scare away parents in option one ("Fly The Coop").

Far from sated by turning my professional life upside down, I moved on to option three. I was looking to disturb the peace, and boy did they have

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The Cleveland case
The familiar Castro

By Beth Connors-Manke

You're looking and looking at something for years. Eyes wide as they can be, waiting for the equation, or picture in the puzzle, or the kaleidoscope pieces to fall into place. So the problem can be resolved, so your life can move on. So that you can look at something else.

***

My husband usually doesn't wake me up for breaking news. But there he was, beside the bed saying things my groggy mind couldn't quite tie together: "Amanda Berry," "Cleveland," "found." Nonetheless, before I went back to sleep, I did register one thing: he felt connected to the story.

All three women held by Ariel Castro disappeared after my husband and I had moved away from Cleveland: Michelle Knight in 2002, Amanda Berry in 2003, and Gina DeJesus in 2004. We were gone, so their disappearances weren't stories that we woke up to every morning in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. But when the news broke on May 6, that didn't seem to matter. My husband is a born Clevelander; he quickly placed the now infamous 2207 Seymour Avenue address; his father had grown up a few blocks away during the 1930s and 40s. The area of the abductions, near West 110th and Lorain Avenue, abutted my old neighborhood, where I walked the streets and took the bus. If nothing else, the geography of the story tied him to the Internet as events unfolded during that first week.

My connection was of a slightly different hue. The tale had all the puzzle pieces I'd been shuffling around for years—public streets, women, human trafficking, imprisonment—thrown together into one horrifying and badly sensationalized news story. My eyes were wide, and I could see the kaleidoscope shift into place, but I knew then that seeing the equation wasn't going to solve anything.

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The politics of paraphernalia
The legal haze over the war on drugs

By Marcus Flores

Ginny Saville had been waiting. Several months passed before Lexington police realized they should probably obey a court order—not the first—requiring them to return tens of thousands of dollars of purloined bongs and rolling papers to The Botany Bay, Saville's eclectic little store. By May 15, according to the store's Facebook page, some of the goods had been returned.

It was a minor victory in a local battle in the national war on drugs. However, Saville cannot breathe a sigh of relief just yet: since this is not her first entanglement with the law, she runs the real risk of felony charges this time around. Understandably, both she and Chris Miller, one of the attorneys representing her, were hesitant to go on the record when I requested an interview.

According to the *Herald-Leader*, The Botany Bay employees allegedly sold synthetic cannabis to undercover officers on an unspecified date before the store was raided in August 2012. According to the warrant, one of the samples was determined to have been "XLR-11," a form of synthetic cannabis whose chemical makeup may determine whether or not Saville ends up in jail.

Because of several recent amendments to the Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) regarding synthetic drugs, the case could wind up more a war of technicalities than a war on drugs. Last spring, an "EMERGENCY DECLARATION"—hyperbole for amendments to the KRS definition of synthetic drugs (see House Bill 481)—was passed to outlaw as many of the newly emerging chemicals as possible.

The problem with banning substances is somewhat similar to the banning of "assault" weapons: one must be able to define what one seeks to ban in the first place. KRS 218A.010 lists several highly technical definitions of synthetic cannabinoids. For example, one definition is "any compound containing a 3-(1-naphthoyl)indole structure with substitution at the nitrogen atom of the indole ring by an alkyl, haloalkyl…" You get the idea. There are six others, and lacking a degree in organic chemistry, I can't tell you if XLR-11 would fit any of the descriptions.

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Town Branch by rheotaxis
On the Fayette Commons, part 3

Don't look to me for virtue, for high-minded feats or elevated speech that flows in a stream of lustrous silver—when cutting is my nature, meandering my path. Find me instead lowdown, landscape in tow as I take the way of least resistance, draining the uplands, purging the slopes. --From "The river issues a statement regarding its watery ethos," by Richard Taylor

The Scape/Landscape Architecture design plan entitled "Reviving Town Branch" presents a compelling vision for a linear downtown urban park. The plan divides Lexington's Town Branch watershed into four design phase/areas: Reveal (Rupp Arena), Clean (Vine Street to CentrePointe), Carve (CentrePoint to Thoroughbread Park), and Connect (the lower East End to Isaac Murphy Park).

The Scape map, indeed all maps of the area, lends itself to a textual reading, one that moves from left to right, which in the case of the Town Branch *hydrological system*, is antithetical to the flow of water. The map's literacy also creates an illogical chronology: Can one "reveal" before "connecting"; "clean" before "carving"?

What follows, in four re-organized phases scattered throughout the paper like spare seed, is what I've been calling "Town Branch by rheotaxis." ~ d

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Coming soon

West Hickman walk

More from Cleveland

ROCK returns

The art of Holler

By Sunny Montgomery

It is no secret. I am Holler Poet's Series' biggest fan. In fact, if Holler handed out superlatives today, I would likely win "Most School Spirit." The monthly series, which is held at Al's Bar, includes an open mic, live music, and featured readings by local literary heavyweights such as Frank X Walker, Ed McClanahan, and Maurice Manning.

Over the years, Holler has also provided a truly grassroots opportunity to experience not just great writing, but also great artwork. Since its beginning in May 2008, Holler has relied upon the work of local artists John Lackey and Melissa Carter to help promote the literary gathering. The posters, distributed around town and offered at Holler for a nominal price, relate the time, location, gathering number, and featured presenters (two poets and a musician, normally). Beyond that, though, anything's possible.

"When I was asked to put together a poetry event at Al's, I knew I wanted iconic artwork to accompany the series," Holler Poet's founder, Eric Sutherland, said.

Sutherland found what he was looking for in Lackey, the local painter, sculptor, and proprietor of Homegrown Press who has provided the bulk of the artwork for the series. For years Lackey has been creating posters and artwork for alternative rock band Wilco that showcase his recognizable artistic style, which Sutherland describes as "organic-psychedelic."

"I love poetry and writing, and it sounded like a cool idea," Lackey says. "Then I got carried away."

In the last five years, Lackey has created over 50 Holler posters in just about any medium imaginable—block printing, painting, drawing, photography. Each and every one, he has done gratis, which, he says, allows him room to experiment.

"There is no expectation," said Lackey. "Each time out is a fresh roll of the dice."

One of my personal favorites is the poster Lackey created for Holler 42. It is painted in shades of purple, green, gold, and blue. The top of the image is lined with earth-tone colored squares. Beneath that are lilac-flushed hills bearing tree trunks of similar color but streaked with white. I love it because of its softness. (And perhaps because my name appears on it.)

"If you had to describe your process for creating Holler posters, how would you?" I asked Lackey. His response was simple: "Luckily, I don't have to."

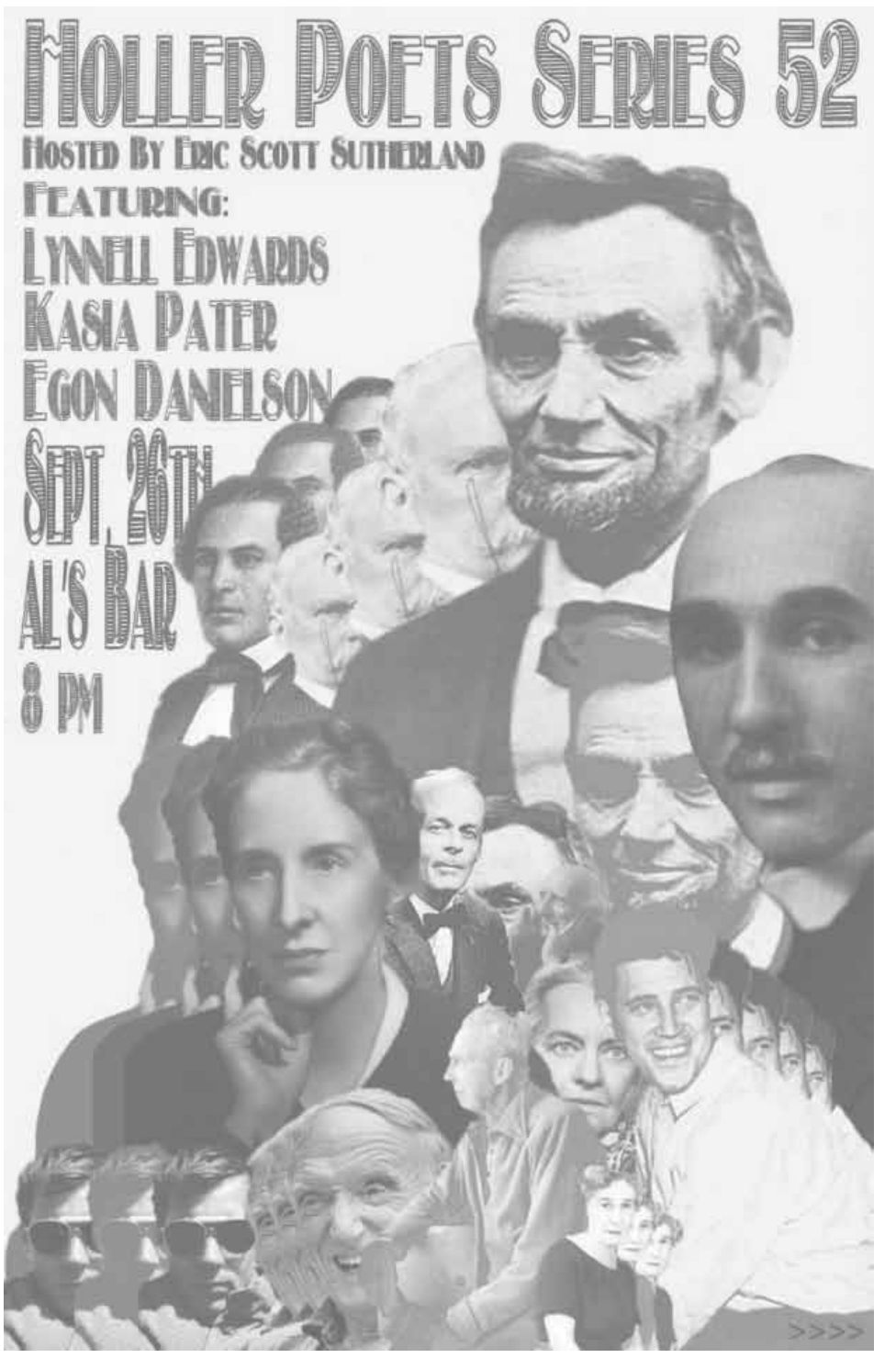
Lackey may be one of the nicest guys around, but he is also one of the busiest. That Lackey has the time at all to create Holler's monthly posters is fairly impressive. He is a full-time Lexington artist and stays busy creating event posters for various local happenings; designing t-shirts for local bands; creating sculpture art for Lexington Art League; block prints for Story Magazine; and even cover art for the late Kentucky author James Still's posthumously published novel *Chinaberry*. Not to mention his epic nature-inspired paintings that portray intricate and swirling scenery, which are on display at his Homegrown Press studio.

Last summer, however, Lackey did decide to take a step back from Holler art, which allowed UK art student and Al's Bar bartendress Melissa Carter to step forward. "I learned that John was relinquishing his position on the Holler throne; naturally, I jumped at the chance to offer an artistic contribution to an event that I hold in high regard," Carter told me.

Carter's style is quite different than Lackey's, but inspired nonetheless. She takes more of a digital approach or, as Carter describes it, "experimental, typographic, and every now and then geometric or historically driven."

One of the first posters she created, for Holler 52, portrays a psychedelic electric blue font against a pale sea foam background. The bulk of the poster is covered with layered photo-shopped images of deceased Kentucky literary figures such as Jesse Stuart, Hunter S. Thompson, and Harriette Simpson Arnow. The poster's focal image, sitting atop the others, is a red-hued Abraham Lincoln.

Carter says this poster is one of her favorites, and I have to agree. Not only because I appreciate its modern yet retro pop art feel but also because I appreciate its appropriateness: Eric Sutherland in profile bears an uncanny resemblance to Lincoln.



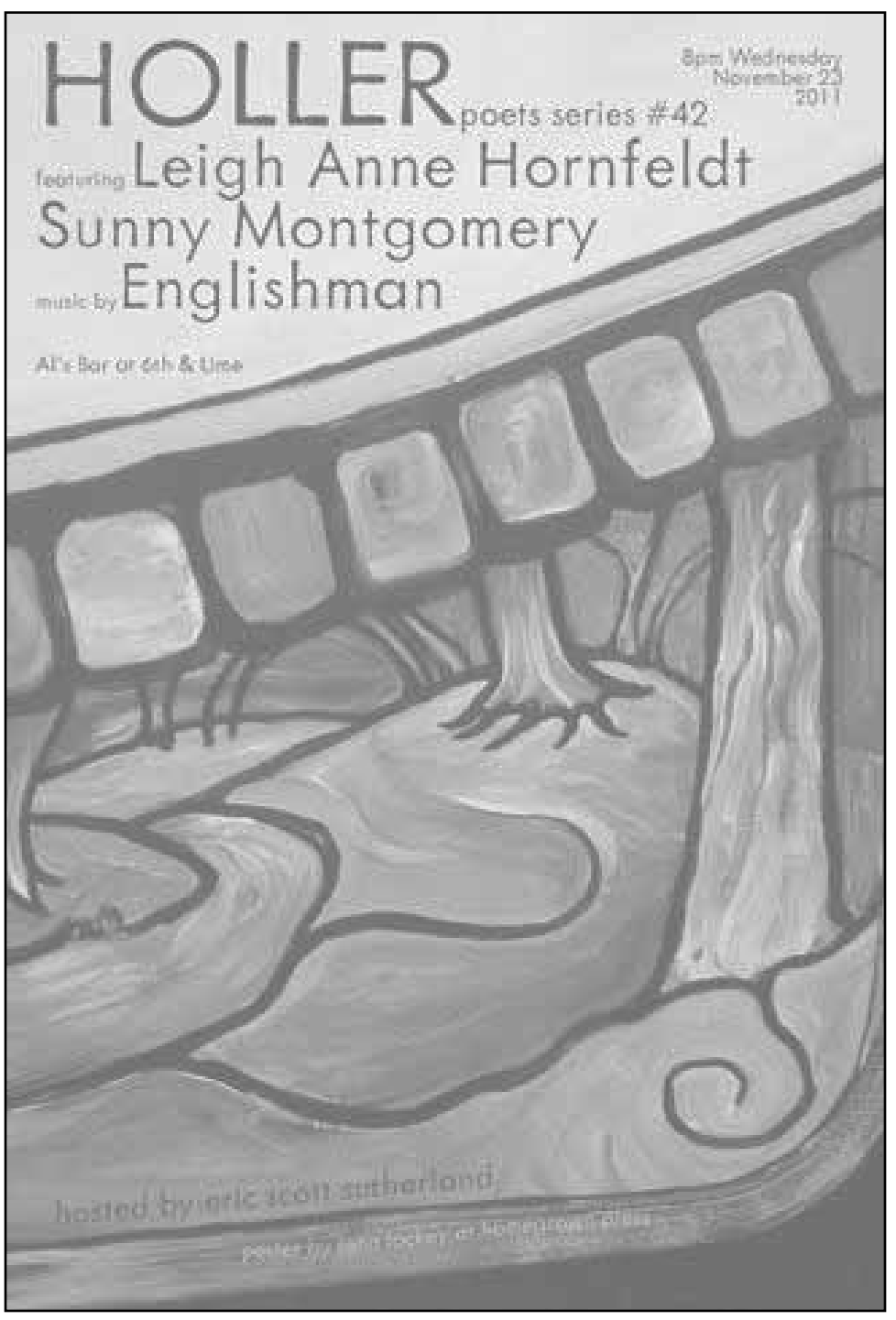
Holler 52. Melissa Carter.

Currently, Carter is finishing her undergraduate work with plans to pursue a Masters of Fine Arts, which will likely take her out of state. Still, she says, she hopes to return to Lexington. "I've had a perpetual love affair with the north side of this town since I moved and began working here over a year ago," she says. "Lexington is a great home base."

I couldn't agree more. In part, it is due to the creative communities established by a long-running series such as Holler. Thanks to great writers, musicians, and artists (did I mention that Lackey frequents the open mic to read his own work?), Holler has transcended a typical poetry reading to become iconic, indeed.

So come and let's get spirited! I'm sure Carter behind the bar can help.

Holler celebrated its five-year anniversary on May 29. Holler 61 is June 26; Holler 62 is July 24. Open mic begins at 8pm at Al's Bar. Posters can be purchased for $5. You can find Lackey's studio, Homegrown Press, a doughnut's throw away at 569 North Limestone.



Holler 42. John Lackey.

Connect/April 17 1779

Town Branch by rheotaxis, part 1

By Danny Mayer

Kentucke, once bloody ground, hunting Eden for native tongues apologetically eliminating buffalo for sustenance. Not sport or profit or pleasure.
--Frank X Walker

In the spring of '79, a pack of colonialists led by Colonel Robert Patterson exited their fort at Harrod's Town, a bleak wooden western outpost incised into the recently formed Fincastle County of post-colonial Virginia, with orders to establish a garrison inside the vast canelands that temptingly rolled north off the palisades that lined the far banks of the Kentucky River.

For the Pennsylvania men exiting Fort Harrod, as for the North Carolinians immigrating to Fort Boonesborough and Saint Asaphs, dominion over the rich north land lying between the Kentucky and Ohio Rivers had proven particularly difficult. Shawnee, Mingo, Miami, and a clutch of other area residents had for some time made homes along several of the south-running Ohio River tributaries that debauched into *La Belle Riviere* from the north. These groups still claimed the commonwealth as a commonland, a hunting and commerce grounds held in usufruct by Indian, some French, and the odd colonial shareholder. Encroachment on the commons by tree-hacking, game-destroying, compass-wielding Pennsylvanians, Virginians, and North Carolinians had met some resistance. For the half decade preceding Patterson's historic northern incursion, a cartographic truce had emerged: to the south of the protective girdle of the Kentucky River, colonists; to the north of the Ohio, Indians; and in between, the canelands.

This is not to say the frontier Colonel was unfamiliar with the territory. He and many of his 25-man party had spent considerable time over the previous five years across the river surveying what, even in April 1779, was still unstable land. Most had entered Kentucky illegally under a Crown rule that, since 1769, had banned development into the western frontier, and they had come in the employment of large corporate land companies who, in claiming tens of thousands of acres for themselves, had illegally negotiated partial and conflicting treaties with the commonwealth's many tribal claimants.

But as Patterson rode away from Fort Harrod that April, he did so under the rule of an altogether different government. This one was located closer, in the rebel colony of Virginia, and within the month it would issue a new land law claiming for itself sovereign title over the land of Kentucky, a legal declaration that created for the coastal American colony an added income source to help fund its war with the British. The law would create a crude and inefficient mechanism for legalizing land claims made on the Kentucky frontier prior to 1778, a window of opportunity for the small population of retired militia, squatters, mad

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"Hey kids! Drinking bourbon is just like eating a Christmas cookie!"

No more feather flags!

By Dave Cooper

In March I wrote an essay for *North of Center* about the excessive amount of outdoor advertising along New Circle Road in northeast Lexington. My little screed, entitled "No more tube dancers!" was fun for me to write because I enjoy spreading awareness about the many insidious manifestations of our society's corporatization.

Tube dancers are an advertising gimmick used by car dealers, check cashing firms, and other retail-oriented companies to attract the attention of motorists. They are tall, brightly-colored, fan-powered "men" that wave and flail their arms as the traffic roars past. I hate those things.

While researching the article, I also learned the advertising industry term for the 12-foot tall flags that are sprouting up around town in front of pawn stores, fast food joints, and muffler/oil change shops—they are called "feather flags."

After my essay and a photo appeared in the March issue of *North of Center*, and a companion op-ed ran in the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, I decided to write my LFUCG Council Representative Kevin Stinnett to ask if anything could be done to reduce the number of feather flags and tube dancers on New Circle Road. Back in February, there were over 100 of them planted in a four-mile stretch of New Circle—so many that they were creating a visual distraction and a traffic hazard.

I assumed sending an email about this to Mr. Stinnett was probably a waste of time: the people in city government generally have much more important things to worry about than advertising clutter. I copied Mayor Gray in my email, hoping that someone would look at the situation. But I didn't have real high hopes.

To my amazement, I received a prompt reply from both my council member and the Mayor, saying that city officials were already aware of the problem and that the city Code Enforcement crews were beginning a crack down on the feather flags, which apparently violate one of the city's sign ordinances.

In March, Code Enforcement officials began visiting all of the businesses along New Circle Road NE that had the illegal flags and the tube dancers. After informing them of the violation of city ordinances, officials gave the businesses 30 days to remove the flags or face fines of up to $500. I forwarded the Mayor's email to Tom Eblen of the *Herald-Leader*, who wrote about the enforcement action in one of his Monday columns in the Business section.

I was out of town for the entire month of March, but when I got back to Lexington I decided to take a little drive around New Circle to see if the city had done what they promised. I was again amazed. All of the illegal feather flags were gone—even the ones in front of The Castle and Dan's Pawn Shop and the mattress store where Kmart used to be.

New Circle Road looks much nicer now. It's almost pleasant to drive. You can see some patches of grass between the drainage ditches and parking lots, and some places where the trees used to be. Patty and I drove around New Circle on a sunny spring day and dared to dream that one day the businesses on our end of town would re-plant those trees and maybe even some shrubs and flowers and other things that add beauty to the roads, instead of ugliness.

We dreamed of living in a town where our senses would not be assaulted by ugliness every time we went out. And we dreamed of a town without any ugly billboards advertising gun shows or trucks or McDonald's sweet tea.

The big picture

I find outdoor advertising to be degrading and offensive. It demeans and cheapens the appearance of our town. And there is just way too much.

When a business is closed for the night, the business owners should not only turn off their inside lights, they should turn off their sign out front. Paris, France just passed this law. We should allow no lighted billboards or lighted signs with moving graphics or messages that change. No cheap placards for cigarettes and beer posted in front of the convenience stores and gas stations. No banners for Pepsi 2-liter bottles strung up between two metal fence posts.

Some people don't understand why I get so irritated about outdoor advertising. Here is one reason why I find it so offensive.

Suppose a cigarette company started buying full page advertising in children's magazines like *Boys Life* or *Sports Illustrated Kids Magazine*, or a beer company began running ads during Sponge Bob cartoons on Saturday morning. Parents and public health and children's advocacy groups would be outraged.

Yet kids on a school bus or in the back of the family minivan can see huge billboards advertising Maker's Mark Bourbon on New Circle Road. There is no filter with outdoor advertising.

Think billboards don't influence you? Don't be naïve. Outdoor advertising works—it's why corporations buy billions of dollars of it every year. They aren't stupid. They know it works, and they know it influences your purchasing decisions.

I remember one billboard for bourbon that I found especially offensive: it was around Christmas time four or five years ago, and the billboard art showed a Christmas cookie shaped like a bottle of bourbon, with a big bite out of it.

Hey kids! Drinking bourbon is just like eating a Christmas cookie!

So let's put an end to offensive outdoor advertising in Lexington. All of the feather flags planted around town violate city ordinances—not just the ones on New Circle Road. Any law-abiding citizen can pull them out of the ground and toss them in the dumpster.

Feather flags, like the tube dancers, can also be easily disabled with a pen knife or box cutter. And when they have a big hole in them, those tube dancers… just don't dance very well.

Revolting! Inc., cont.

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what I needed. The "Fuck The Man, Man" package included a cornucopia of tools with which to bring down your power structure of choice: a DIY paper megaphone to rally the crowds, a smoke bomb, a "stylish" bandana to hide your identity or keep the tear gas at bay, Arab Spring rioting tips translated into English, and a small white flag—not for signaling surrender, but scrawled over with "Bureaucracy" and ready to burn.

After filling out the prewritten form and adding my own calls for organized resistance (taking whatever form necessary!), my consultant led me outside for the flag burning and a second swig of sparkling grape juice. While the DIY revolution startup model is new and unproven, my experience with their project suggests that when the history books are written, partners Shaw and Brown will be heralded for introducing flag burning to the masses. State flags, national flags, corporate flags, nautical flags. Job-creating revolutionaries take note.

Angel investor

Revolting! Inc.'s initial round of angel investment—so to speak—was provided by Lexington performance art incubator ELandF. Started by local artist and Latitude co-founder Bruce Burris in 2006, ELandF was created to provide a support structure for artists in and around Lexington who otherwise may not have the resources or outlet needed to get involved. That kind of support is crucial in a city like Lexington where artists struggle to find a safe haven when not attached to large institutions. As an incubator situated outside those institutions, ELandF projects capitalize on public spaces in order to inject the artists and their performances into the community. In some ways, the gallery space lent by Land of Tomorrow to the "Design Your Own Revolution" project is the exception. Most often, ELandF projects take place in publicly available spaces around the city, whether it's a rented parking spot, the city's sidewalks, or a cab around town.

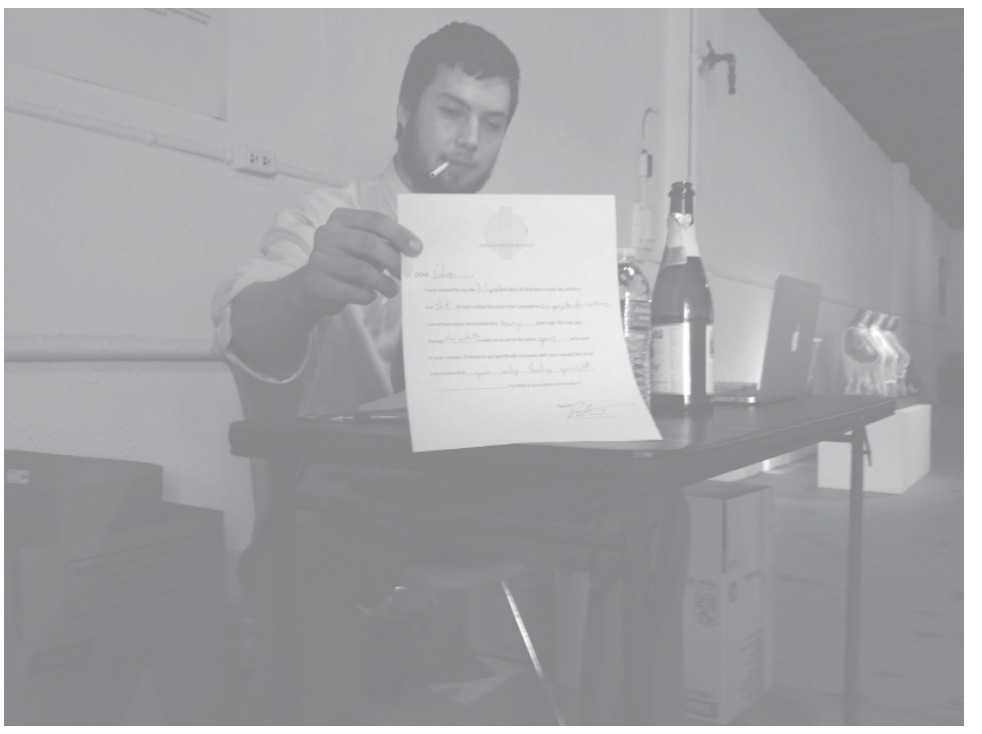
The individual performances themselves begin life as assignments. The DIY revolution project, for instance, started off as a call to the public, "You have been waiting for the perfect moment to design your own revolution. That moment is here... To apply: Please... No more than 50 words on why you wish to design your own revolution by April 25th." That's how Shaw and Brown became involved—simple as that. Before the "Design Your Own Revolution" performance, Burris said that what he really wanted with this project and the others like it "was an opportunity to interact with people and co-create some interactions. Then encourage those people who I was working with to take over portions of it. People still don't feel really comfortable with that, but most of the more recent pieces are really about that—about saying, 'Here, these are the elements of this thing...Beyond that I don't have any expectations for it.'"

In that free-form structure might be the genius of the ELandF projects. There is almost always a perceived barrier in the process of creating art whether it's inspiration, materials, exhibition space, credentials, or a desire for permission. Those barriers grow larger in performance art where the artist is even more intimately involved and exposed.

And that's just for the artist. There are barriers on the participant's end of the spectrum as well. Plenty of people will never find their way into an art gallery, much less to a performance art exhibit. Yet with ELandF, Burris has found a way to bring people around Lexington into direct contact with performative art projects by holding them directly in the public sphere and providing artists with just enough moral and material support to get them involved.

Revolutionary consultant Shaw admitted as much himself: "Performance art really isn't my thing. It's not something I really identify myself with. It's his [Burris'] personality. He just has that effect on people's lives. Setting up situations where there are no expectations; where they [ElandF] appreciate your efforts no matter what. Being very open minded and not saying, 'Well there's this bar you have to reach.' It makes you feel more comfortable because it is putting yourself in an uncomfortable situation. I never wear a tie! He likes putting people in situations."

It seems appropriate then, as Burris is setting to depart Lexington after 25 years, that his last project with ELandF will likely be "Design Your Own Revolution." It seems to one writer that ELandF (as well as his countless other projects—especially Latitude) has been his own sort of answer to the "Design Your Own Revolution" assignment—challenging people to overcome that default position of hestitancy and dropping what they create right into the community's lap.



Dakota Shaw of the Stoner Creek Boys hard at work at his temporary day job as CEO of Revolting! Inc. Photo by Patrick O'Dowd.

New CEOs

It's a further testament to ELandF's success that, despite Burris' departure, we aren't seeing the incubator's end. In fact, it is former ELandF participants, Kremena Todorova and Kurt Gohde, who are taking over what will soon be known as "ELandF East." (Burris will establish ELandF West in his new home of Oregon.) Todorova and Gohde are professors at Transylvania University (you might best know them from "The Lexington Tattoo Project") and have both been involved in ELandF projects in the past. They haven't designed any of the assignments, but upon learning of Burris' departure, they asked if they could help keep ELandF alive in Lexington.

Their new role places them in the position of operating what will be the "new" ELandF while Burris takes the "old" to his new location. But that doesn't mean things are changing. When asked if they had any new plans, both Todorova and Gohde emphasized that they would like the project generator to remain the same. Gohde noted that "Bruce has never really visibly been ELandF. It's never been 'ELandF: a Bruce Burris project.' It's always been this thing that kind of exists relatively quietly and interfaces with people in smaller, more intimate situations which we hope to continue."

It was on one of those more intimate moments that I left Revolting! Inc. after two more customers were treated to their own shots at bureaucratic upheaval. Together we stood with flags extinguished and a day of commodified revolt nearing its end, quietly watching the flags' ashes—the ashes of a revolution—float off into the air. Our revolutionary consultant Shaw spoke the only words, suggesting I use that moment to close my story. An image like that could be good for business.

Carve: 2000-2010

Town Branch by rheotaxis, part 2

By Danny Mayer

The root issue is land.
--Max Rameau

Writing in 1964, the sociologist Ruth Glass created the word "gentrification" to define what she saw at play in many of London's working class neighborhoods. "One by one," she noted, they "have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower." What Glass saw should by now be familiar. Old Victorian homes long since broken into multiple blue collar domiciles begin to get restored to single family. Within months, blocks of shabby homes transform into pretty domiciles with fresh paint. New businesses arrive weekly to serve the needs of new residents. "Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district," Glass observed of these London neighborhoods, "it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed."

In many ways, Glass was writing in 1964 about a topic of marginal interest to an American audience. Though gentrification did occur in select areas of large cities as far back as the 1950s, the general half-century trend that followed World War II here in the non-bombed-out United States was that of suburbanization. The middle class was leaving the city for the unclaimed spaces of newly ripped farmlands, and they were taking the public and private development monies and other side-capital with them. Along with an aging infrastructure, the working class and poor were what remained behind. Only within the last two decades has the trend reversed, with American and global money, and its sitcoms, media space and middle classes all returning to the urban and near-urban core.

One of the first to note this switch was the academic Neil Smith, whose 1996 collection T*he New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city* connects gentrification to the process of eighteenth and nineteenth century frontier land-claiming. For Smith, a geographer by trade whose first-hand observations of the gentrification of New York's Lower East Side provide the framework for his book, both the present urban frontier and the past "western" frontier are economic and cultural things.

Economically, he argues, the olden frontier "was extended westward less by individual pioneers, homesteaders, rugged individualists, than by banks, railways, the state and other collective sources of capital," a process mirrored on the urban gentrification frontier, where "banks, real estate developers, small-scale and large-scale lenders, retail corporations, [and] the state" all generally precede or complement most individual urban pioneering.

Culturally, both frontiers help forge a larger "national spirit" expressed as "boosterism." Where the Indian frontier once allowed men a place to remake themselves anew and a nation to wrap itself in do-gooder mythology, the urban pioneer now utilizes "the [optimistic] language of revitalization, recycling, upgrading and renaissance" that is designed to uplift the spirits (and public coffers) of his/her home city.

More recently, Max Rameau, lead organizer of the Miami-based group Take Back the Land, has added a specifically racialized component to the process of gentrification. In the fall of 2006, Rameau's group seized control of a publicly owned vacant lot and, for six months, constructed what became the Umoja Village Shantytown, a community-based encampment for homeless residents. Like Smith, Rameau recognized the gentrifying work of banks, city and state governments, real estate developers, and the like.

But he placed the thrust of the gentrification process within the strictly racialized narrative of civil rights. "In many ways," he writes in T*ake Back the Land: Land, Gentrification & the Umoja Village Shantytown*, "gentrification in the 2000s is the functional equivalent of segregation in the 1950s and 60s…In both instances, rich whites make money off of the backs of poor blacks; the government is used to enforce the geopolitical objectives of the larger white community, particularly the wealthier whites who covet the inexpensive and strategically situated black neighborhoods; and black families have little real power to determine, on their own, where they will live. In segregation, we were forced into one area and in gentrification, we are forced out of one area."

Since 1790, the United States Federal Government has issued a national census of inhabitants living within its territories. Though its numbers make no formal argument for forced and free movement, its data does capture statistical snapshots of stories in motion at all levels of society.

In Lexington, one story that a comparison of the 2000 and 2010 census tells is statistically similar to that of Remeau and Smith. During the first decade of the millennium, the city's downtown core, census tract 101 running between Maxwell and Third Streets from Thoroughbred Park to Broadway, lost 13.1 percent of its population. Even if one includes the Booze District west of Broadway, census tract 102, which increased in population 15 percent, the downtown core in aggregate has still leaked people during its proclaimed boom times. To the core's immediate north, three census tracts (2, 3 and 4) that span from Newtown Pike to Winchester Road reveal a similar emigration of residents. These booming urban north-side tracts—Jefferson Street (tract 2, 7 percent decrease), North Limestone (#3, losing 5.5 percent), and the East End (#4, down 47 percent)—have all lost population. To a lesser extent, the same holds for southern core neighborhoods Chevy Chase (tracts #5 and #6, down 6 percent and 4.6 percent, respectively) and Woodland (tracts 801 and 802), off close to 2.5 percent from its 2000 census population.

The only areas contiguous to the city core showing growth appear in the west end. In the northwest, a largely hispanic influx (and subsequent white flight) around Georgetown Street have transformed tract 11 (11 percent growth) into one of only three majority black tracts. (How many times does one

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Little Sir Puny, cont.

Continued from page 1

had the best air-conditioning in Bracken County.

There were always lots of kids to run with; cousins and second cousins abounded, in company with the numerous spawn of the prolific Punch Vermillion. The cousins were mostly okay, but older, and pretty much inclined to ignore me. I tended to be puny anyhow, so that left me easy prey for the Vermillions, a pack of bloodthirsty little urchins who terrorized me for most of the first couple of summers we went camping there. Sometimes I brought along one or another of my small-fry Brooksville homies, in the vain hope that they'd stand with me against the teeming Vermillions, but the treacherous little ingrates all too often went over to the enemy. Which meant, unhappily, that the ranks of the punies were usually reduced to one, namely me, Little Sir Puny, and also that even though I was at My Favorite Place Under Heaven, I was often in utter, abject misery.

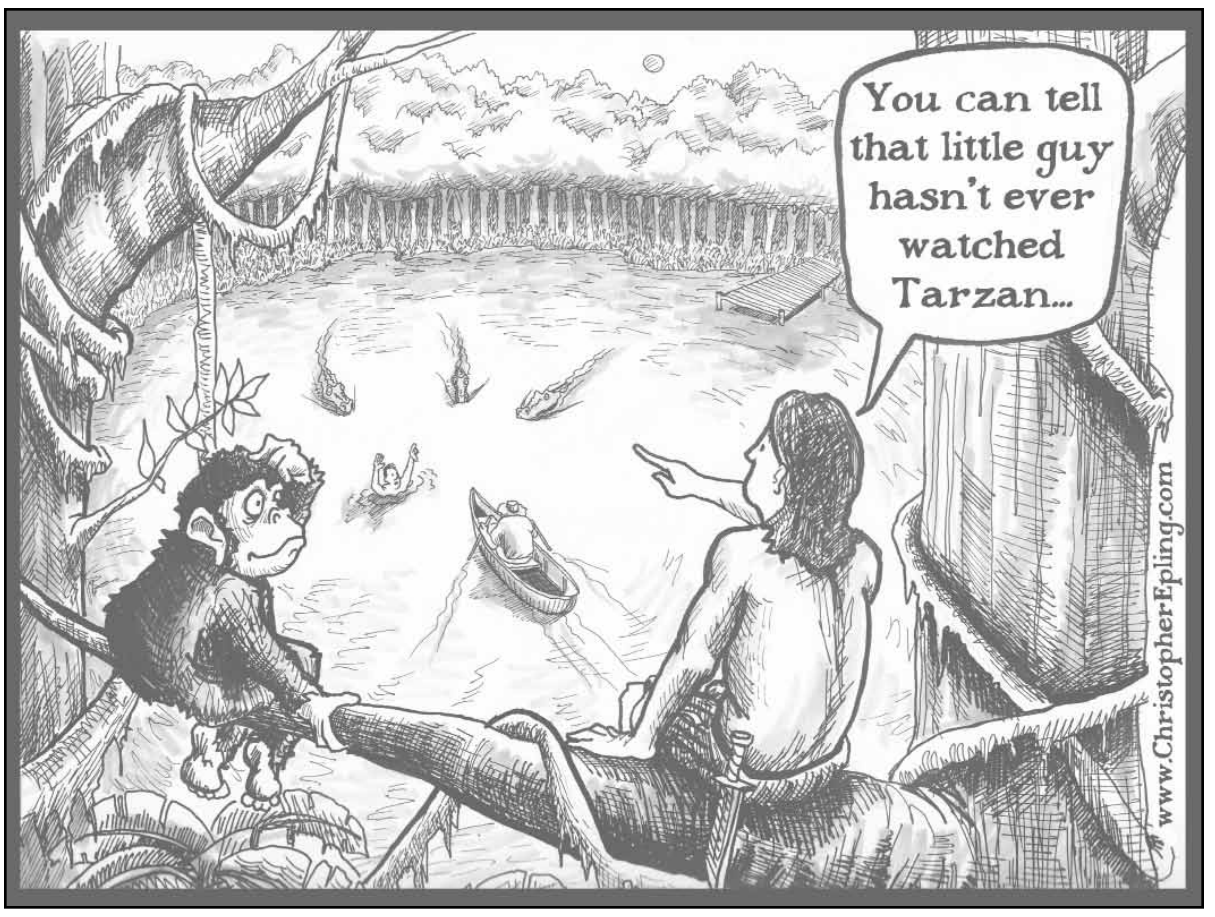


Illustration by Christopher Epling.

That all changed the summer I was eight—1941—when I learned to swim there, the hard way: my dad took me out in a rowboat and pitched me in the river. Tough love, sink-or-swim variety. I resented the hell out of it at the time, and I still do. Nonetheless I did make it to shore, sputtering and bawling, and, *mirabile dictu*, from that day forward I could swim! I was no Johnny Weissmuller, granted, but I never drowned once.

Now here's an odd but salient fact about country kids in those days: By and large, we couldn't swim. Girls hardly ever even tried (it wasn't quite proper), and for most farm and small-town boys the only waterholes available were shallow creeks and ponds, fine for paddling around in but not so good for actual swimming. From Brooksville, the nearest swimming pool was in the next county, twenty miles away. (My mother and her seven siblings all grew up in Brooksville, and none of them could swim a lick, although one of my heftier aunts could float like an empty rainbarrel.) Unless you lived near the Ohio, you'd have had to jump down a cistern or stick your head in a horse trough to find water in Bracken County deep enough to drown in. Wading and dogpaddling were the aquatic engines of choice.

Although I don't suppose my father ever saw a Tarzan movie in his life—he didn't have much use for movies—his swimming style surely owed something to Johnny Weissmuller. Alone among the men his age of my acquaintance, my dad employed an overarm stroke and a flutter kick; a crawl. He gently rolled his shoulders with each stroke, and elegantly flicked his hands—feathered his oars, so to speak—instead of flailing at the water like a human paddlewheel. Unlike Tarzan, he steadfastly kept his face above the surface, rigidly fixed on the immediate future, as though he were his own figurehead. (I regarded this little idiosyncrasy as my father's personal refinement of Tarzan's technique, and marveled that Johnny Weissmuller hadn't adopted it himself, if only just to guarantee that he wouldn't run head-on into a crocodile.) I have no idea where my dad learned to swim that way—his older brother Don was a wader all his life—but locally the style was very distinctive, and he was widely (if, as we shall see, not quite correctly) regarded thereabouts as an excellent swimmer.

Intuitively, I understood these developments perfectly well even before my dad pitched me in the river. Okay, I'm cheating here a little bit: in fact, he gave me a couple of rudimentary swimming lessons and concluded that it was time for me to try it on my own—and *then* he pitched me in the river. Anyhow, by the time I sputtered ashore, mad as a wet hatchling, I had already determined that since I was now, albeit reluctantly, forevermore a swimmer, I was by god gonna swim like Johnny fucking Weissmuller … and my goddamn daddy.

(All this bad language, needless to say, is strictly retroactive. But had I been a more accomplished blasphemer at the time, those are among the milder terms with which I might've expressed myself.)

Well, it took a few days, but eventually I got the overarm-and-flutter-kick business down pretty good, and I could put my face in the water too, although I never did quite figure out the breathing thing. Obviously, Johnny and my dad had each developed his own individual breathing technique, so I simply did likewise—which is to say I held my breath and shut my eyes and launched myself forward, facedown, as blindly purposeful as a torpedo, for as many highly stylized Tarzanian strokes as I could squeeze into a single breath, meanwhile flutter-kicking like a demented horizontal ballerina; I surfaced when I absolutely had to, gasped aloud as though I were drowning, then shut my eyes again and plunged ahead, crocodiles be damned.

Nonetheless, unorthodox though it was, my new mastery of the aquatic arts rendered me, as it had my father before me, the best swimmer in my age group at the McClanacamp, and elevated my status amongst my juvenile campmates to unprecedented heights. Vermillions? Let the vicious little tadpoles perish in my wake!

Except for roller skating (I was destined to become, in the prime of my adolescence, a devilish fine roller skater), learning to swim would remain my proudest athletic accomplishment until the day, years later, when I threw an egg through the wind-wing of a moving car. But that's another story, one I've told too many times already.

"'The fort fast became a crossroads for south-scurrying Pennsylvanians floating down the Ohio, and for north-tromping Virginians angling through the Cumberland Gap. "

Connect, cont.

Continued from page 2

farmers, game hunters, and adventurous second sons of European wealth who had entered the commonlands between 1769 and 1779. The law allowed them all to log 400-acre claims on the territory so long as they could provide a legitimate survey and evidence of first improvement over the land. It would also grant them access to another 1000 acres of contiguous land, sold like the original allotments at dirt-rate government prices. (Any land left unclaimed by '78 would revert to Virginia, which would sell it in hunks to individuals or be used as pension for soldiers fighting the revolution.)

Perhaps sensing the coming change, after Patterson's party crossed the river, most likely at calcite-rich Shawnee Run, it made haste to an area surrounding the headwaters of a small fork in the greater Elkhorn River watershed in present day Fayette County, on ambiguous territory close-by land claims previously registered by the Colonel and some others, including William McConnell, John Maxwell, John Todd, and James Masterson.

Patterson ordered encampment two miles east of the McConnell claim at a series of springs "whose grateful waters," the dependably florid local historian G.W. Ranck records in 1872, "in an unusual volume emptied into a stream nearby, whose green banks were gemmed with the brightest flowers." The next morning, April 17, the men set to improving the immediate area. In defense of the red man, wild panther, and cold weather, they hacked down bur oak, blue ash, and pignut. The astors and trillium were sacrificed without notice to dragged logs, pastured hogs, a few channeled pikes. Within the week, the local historian Lewis Collins would observe in 1848, the men had constructed "a solitary blockhouse, with some adjacent defences, the forlorn hope of advancing civilization."

Settlers from the fort at Boonesborough, North Carolinians, had cut a second outpost, Bryan's Station, further north into the wilderness, which buttressed Fort Lexington from native attacks. "Though the discipline about the fort is said never to have been very rigid, nor the stockade kept in strict order," Ranck writes of Lexington's foundational settlement, it "escaped any serious danger from Indian attack." Its new residents would spend the historically cold winter of 1779-80—a winter that would find General George Washington and his army of barefooted rebels plotting a mountain range away at Valley Forge, and, considerably closer, Dan'l and Rebecca Boone sugaring together along the bottoms of the Fayette County creek currently bearing their name—flaccidly commanding the fort's springs from Indian attacks, hunting, and otherwise asserting territorial weight.

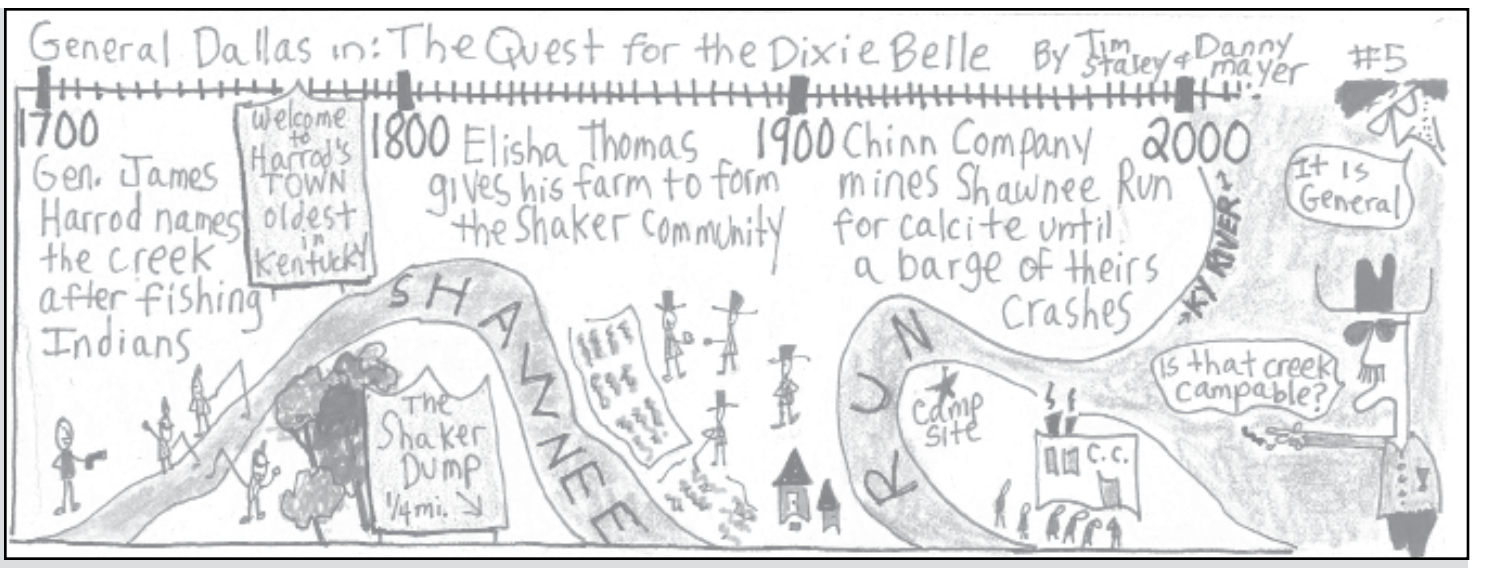
Ultimately the new land law would lead, Collins argues in *Historical Sketches of Kentucky*, to "a flood of immigration" and a radical transformation of the area. "The hunters of the elk and buffalo were now succeeded by the more ravenous hunters of land; in the pursuit, they fearlessly braved the hatchet of the Indian and the privations of the forest. The surveyor's chain and compass were seen in the woods as frequently as the rifle; and during the years 1779-80-81, the great and all-absorbing object in Kentucky was to enter, survey, and obtain a patent, for the richest sections of land."

"Indian hostilities were rife during the whole of this period," Collins concludes, "but these only formed episodes in the great drama."

Chief among its early peers, Lexington prospered from the great drama. The fort fast became a crossroads for south-scurrying Pennsylvanians floating down the Ohio, and for north-tromping Virginians angling through the Cumberland Gap. Within two years of its founding as a fort in unmarked territory, May 6, 1781, Lexington was granted a city charter by the powers vested in the fledgling state of Virginia. The Charter carved 640 public acres for city streets and a number of city lots for resale to immigrants from a handful of shingled private land-claims. Seven men, Robert Patterson, John Todd, and William McConnell included, were granted fee simple rights to an additional 70 acres apiece of land immediately surrounding the Lexington 640.

In what might go down as the second largest all-time bummer deal in county history, the Charter traded an entire county of commonlands in exchange for civilization, roads, and a two acre commons located just outside the original fort walls.

The Lexington springs, meanwhile, didn't fare much better. Once free-flowing, they were immediately damned and fortified as a first act of Lexington development. As the settlement grew and the fort was removed, Ranck writes, "the [fort] spring was deepened and walled up for the benefit of the whole town, a large tank for horses was made to receive its surplus water, and for many years, under the familiar name, 'the public spring,' it was known far and wide." Eventually, though, like the rest of the springs in the area, building construction along Main Street swallowed it, though presumably, under even those private constructions, the once public spring flows still.



Shawnee Run, probable crossing point for Robert Patterson's Lexington incursion. Illustration by Tim Staley, part of the "General Dallas" comic strip.

Cleveland case, cont.

Continued from page 1

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You may not remember, but just after the girls were found and before the media was sure that only Castro was involved, there was mention of human trafficking. Some news outlets relayed that Nancy Ruiz, Gina DeJesus' mother, initially believed (in 2004) that her daughter had been sold into sex trafficking. When I heard this, I thought to myself: even if this wasn't legally human trafficking (which specifies that commercial gain is involved), surely it's part of the same structure of thinking and acting. Stealing girls off the street and forcing them into captivity is, no doubt, a cousin to stealing girls off the street and "selling" them into captivity.

However, after Castro was arrested and basic information about the abductions was released, discussion about any structural causes fell quiet. No more human trafficking; very little mention of domestic violence. The Cleveland case was limned as an astonishing narrative of kidnapping, captivity, and rape. We had the daring Amanda Berry; the kooky hero, Charles Ramsey; and, of course, the villain, Ariel Castro.

It is Castro's characterization that is the most dangerous to us. Castro, seen as the moral monster whose ability to live among decent folk yet go undetected rattles those who knew him. As National Public Radio (NPR) reported: "Many neighbors here say they're frustrated and perplexed, some even ashamed that they never figured out that the missing women were being held here all along." Maria Davila, a neighbor, told NPR: "It's embarrassing for the community to have to deal with such a travesty. Like, such a monster, he was just out in public, and everyone saw him. We all knew him. And then all of a sudden, you know, we find out this." This out-of-the-blue monster idea is the part of the story that obscures a bigger cultural economy that, at it's worst, ends in the ten-year captivity and torture of women in a boarded up house in the middle of a city.

But isn't Castro a monster? I don't know—maybe. That's a psychological question, and one that isolates his case, one that doesn't leave us anywhere to go. If Castro is an inhuman monster, a creature outside our ken, then this is just a big, bizarre, highly tragic story. If we only indulge in the melodrama and ignore the broader structural factors then, as scholar Carol Vance argues, we "[misdirect] the eye from complexity and contradiction," satisfied instead with "a simplified and emotionally gripping substitute." In other words, we're along for the sensational ride, but we're not really seeing the equation, which is about privatization and removal of individuals from the public sphere. (More on privatization later.)

However, there was evidence here and there in the early reportage that makes Castro's character a more familiar figure—someone bad, but not completely horrifying. According to an Associated Press story, after his first child was born, Castro began severely beating his common-law wife Grimilda Figueroa and eventually took to cutting off his wife and children from family and friends (not uncommon patterns in domestic violence). This included imprisoning them in the house (again, not uncommon in domestic violence). Figueroa lodged legal complaints, "accusing Castro of threatening many times to kill her and her daughters. She charged that he frequently abducted the children and kept them from her, even though she had full custody, with no visitation rights for Castro."

The actions of this type of figure—a guy with "problems," but still considered the guy next door who is allowed to drive a school bus—actually garner a reaction opposite of what happened after May 6 when the girls were found. With severe domestic violence, often friends, family, and neighbors look away, or make excuses for him, or blame her, or are scared enough that they do nothing. They don't throw down their hamburgers and rush to break open a door. They mind their own business.

So maybe Castro isn't as much of a psychological mystery as he seemed in our shock after hearing about the girls. Maybe he thinks the way some other people think. He was just bolder in translating thought into action.

For our own collective good, we have to continue to look at Castro, to make him familiar for two reasons. First, his type is already around us; we have to be able to imagine him in our public sphere and understand that he circulates in public spaces. Second, he's representative of a structure of thought and action that we have to contend with, not just demonize. It's a structure of thought that extends from human trafficking to the penal system to upper middle class neighborhood enclaves.

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Knight, Berry, and DeJesus have been restored to their homes and are being shielded from media glare. They're off stage again—for the moment at least. And Castro, he's out of our view, except in the photos that have him hiding his face in the collar of his jumpsuit. But where are we? What do we now see?

In part two of her essay, Beth will try to discern how the privatization of spaces equates to the privatization of people. She'll try to get a wider glimpse of the picture.

Get apocalyptic!
Why radical is the new normal

By Robert Jensen

Feeling anxious about life in a broken-down society on a stressed-out planet? That's hardly surprising: Life as we know it is almost over. While the dominant culture encourages dysfunctional denial—pop a pill, go shopping, find your bliss—there's a more sensible approach: accept the anxiety, embrace the deeper anguish—and then get apocalyptic.

We are staring down multiple cascading ecological crises, struggling with political and economic institutions that are unable even to acknowledge, let alone cope with, the threats to the human family and the larger living world. We are intensifying an assault on the ecosystems in which we live, undermining the ability of that living world to sustain a large-scale human presence into the future. When all the world darkens, looking on the bright side is not a virtue but a sign of irrationality.

In these circumstances, anxiety is rational and anguish is healthy, signs not of weakness but of courage. A deep grief over what we are losing—and have already lost, perhaps never to be recovered—is appropriate. Instead of repressing these emotions we can confront them, not as isolated individuals but collectively, not only for our own mental health but to increase the effectiveness of our organizing for the social justice and ecological sustainability still within our grasp. Once we've sorted through those reactions, we can get apocalyptic and get down to our real work.

Perhaps that sounds odd, since we are routinely advised to overcome our fears and not give in to despair. Endorsing apocalypticism seems even stranger, given associations with "end-timer" religious reactionaries and "doomer" secular survivalists. People with critical sensibilities, those concerned about justice and sustainability, think of ourselves as realistic and less likely to fall for either theological or science-fiction fantasies.

Many associate "apocalypse" with the rapture-ranting that grows out of some interpretations of the Christian Book of Revelation (aka, the Apocalypse of John), but it's helpful to remember that the word's original meaning is not "end of the world." "Revelation" from Latin and "apocalypse" from Greek both mean a lifting of the veil, a disclosure of something hidden, a coming to clarity. Speaking apocalyptically, in this sense, can deepen our understanding of the crises and help us see through the many illusions that powerful people and institutions create.

But there is an ending we have to confront. Once we've honestly faced the crises, then we can deal with what is ending—not all the world, but the systems that currently structure our lives. Life as we know it is, indeed, coming to an end.

Let's start with the illusions: some stories we have told ourselves—claims by white people, men, or U.S. citizens that domination is natural and appropriate—are relatively easy to debunk (though many cling to them). Other delusional assertions—such as the claim that capitalism is compatible with basic moral principles, meaningful democracy, and ecological sustainability—require more effort to take apart (perhaps because there seems to be no alternative).

But toughest to dislodge may be the central illusion of the industrial world's extractive economy: that we can maintain indefinitely a large-scale human presence on the earth at something like current First-World levels of consumption. The task for those with critical sensibilities is not just to resist oppressive social norms and illegitimate authority, but to speak a simple truth that almost no one wants to acknowledge: The high-energy/high-technology life of affluent societies is a dead end. We can't predict with precision how resource competition and ecological degradation will play out in the coming decades, but it is ecocidal to treat the planet as nothing more than a mine from which we extract and a landfill into which we dump.

We cannot know for sure what time the party will end, but the party's over.

Does that seem histrionic? Excessively alarmist? Look at any crucial measure of the health of the ecosphere in which we live—groundwater depletion, topsoil loss, chemical contamination, increased toxicity in our own bodies, the number and size of "dead zones" in the oceans, accelerating extinction of species, and reduction of biodiversity—and ask a simple question: where are we heading?

Remember also that we live in an oil-based world that is rapidly depleting the cheap and easily accessible oil, which means we face a major reconfiguration of the infrastructure that undergirds daily life. Meanwhile, the desperation to avoid that reconfiguration has brought us to the era of "extreme energy," using ever more dangerous and destructive technologies (hydrofracturing, deep-water drilling, mountaintop coal removal, tar sands extraction).

Oh, did I forget to mention the undeniable trajectory of global warming/climate change/climate disruption?

Scientists these days are talking about tipping points and planetary boundaries, about how human activity is pushing Earth beyond its limits. Recently 22 top scientists warned that humans likely are forcing a planetary-scale critical transition "with the potential to transform Earth rapidly and irreversibly into a state unknown in human experience," which means that "the biological resources we take for granted at present may be subject to rapid and unpredictable transformations within a few human generations."

That conclusion is the product of science and common sense, not supernatural beliefs or conspiracy theories. The political/social implications are clear: there are no solutions to our problems if we insist on maintaining the high-energy/high-technology existence lived in much of the industrialized world (and desired by many currently excluded from it). Many tough-minded folk who are willing to challenge other oppressive systems hold on tightly to this lifestyle. The critic Fredric Jameson has written, "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism," but that's only part of the problem—for some, it may be easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of air conditioning. We do live in end-times, of a sort. Not the end of the world—the planet will carry on with or without us—but the end of the human systems that structure our politics, economics, and social life. "Apocalypse" need not involve heavenly rescue fantasies or tough-guy survival talk; to get apocalyptic means seeing clearly and recommitting to core values.

First, we must affirm the value of our work for justice and sustainability, even though there is no guarantee we can change the disastrous course of contemporary society. We take on projects that we know may fail because it's the right thing to do, and by doing so we create new possibilities for ourselves and the world. Just as we all know that someday we will die and yet still get out of bed every day, an honest account of planetary reality need not paralyze us.

Then let's abandon worn-out clichés such as, "The American people will do the right thing if they know the truth," or "Past social movements prove the impossible can happen."

There is no evidence that awareness of injustice will automatically lead U.S. citizens, or anyone else, to correct it. When people believe injustice is necessary to maintain their material comfort, some accept those conditions without complaint.

Social movements around race, gender, and sexuality have been successful in changing oppressive laws and practices, and to a lesser degree in shifting deeply held beliefs. But the movements we most often celebrate, such as the post-World War II civil rights struggle, operated in a culture that assumed continuing economic expansion. We now live in a time

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Carve, cont.

Continued from page 4

hear city leaders tout this area as symbol of multicultural Lexington success?) At the other end, to the southwest, the undergraduate growth of lily-white UK has stimulated the development of a supra-majority white tract (#9) along the South Broadway corridor.

Sitting between these two west-end growth areas is the Distillery District/Town Branch Trail tract, a demographic mixed bag. Booze Branch, tract 1, experienced 35 percent growth, yet at 1,500 urban people it is still so underpopulated that its density (a paltry 900 humans/square mile) more closely resembles horse country (census tract 3701, 109.5 people per square mile) and sparsely covered suburban boom space Jacobson Park (#3913, 1808.7, mostly white) than the 2,500-7,000 people/mile density that stands as the norm throughout most of the living city.

A closer look at the census does locate growth demographics—winners and losers, as it were. Downtown, things track Town Branch.

Headwaters: After closure and redevelopment of the Bluegrass Aspendale housing projects in the middle 2000s, nearly half of that tract's population exited during the decade of urban renaissance taking place several blocks away downtown. The East End also experienced a precipitous 60 percent drop in black population.

Town Branch northern tributaries: 19 percent of the black population left in my MLK neighborhood; 17 percent less blacks now live along the Broadway/Jefferson Street corridor.

Town Branch mainstem: 32 percent of the black population left downtown census tract 101.

What has been visible in Lexington's celebrated urban renaissance, whitey, my demographic, have thus far achieved demographic victory by attrition. During the previous decade of population decline in both the city core and most contiguous neighborhoods, we emerged 10 percent stronger in MLK; we broke even along Jefferson; and we only experienced a 3 percent net loss—by far the smallest among all demographics—inside the hollowing central downtown core.

Census data taken from New York Times "Mapping the 2010 U.S. Census."

Clean/2009
Town Branch by rheotaxis, part 3

By Danny Mayer

Reveal, Clean, Carve, Connect is a strategy that ties the nuances of Lexington's rich substrata to development potentials on its surface.
--From *Reviving Town Branch*, Scape/Landscape Architecture Team

In February, 2009, the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority (KEDFA) delivered preliminary approval for the creation of two Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts in downtown Lexington: the 14.25 acre Phoenix Park development and the 25 acre Distillery District. Combined, the two developments project to cost their developers $490 million to complete, of which the state will now rebate up to $135 million of that cost, or about $3.4 million per downtown acre, in "tax increment"-based tax breaks that will be spread out over a 20-30 year period. Such is the cost, we are told, for creating necessary infrastructure that is public in nature. In the case of what is officially "the Urban County Government's plan for public improvements around the CentrePointe project in downtown Lexington," such publicly funded improvements included at one time a tunnel from the proposed high rise development across Limestone to Phoenix Park, a pedway to the Financial Center garage, and a 331-space underground Phoenix Park garage, among other improvements.

While the twinned KEDFA approvals were a first for Lexington, TIF hit the state two years earlier when state leaders went looking for creative ways to greenline the construction of downtown Louisville's YUM! Center, home of the Louisville Cardinals. At its base, TIF provides developers with tax breaks that allow them to recoup up to 20% of total costs of a project. It does this through what's known as the "tax increment," which is a fancy word for saying, the difference in local and state tax footprint between now and some point decades in the future. Has your property value increased? Do you pay more in sales tax? Personal income risen over the last three decades? How about your small business? Project to pay more corporate income taxes in a quarter century? Good! Your tax increment projects to be positive.

Just don't go looking to the state for handouts. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is designed only to allow wealthy developers, those who can put together projects that exceed the TIF's $10 million minimum threshold, to leverage their tax increment projections. They benefit in two chief ways. First, TIFs create a separate tax district within the city in which 80-100% of any increased tax activity (the tax increments)—state and local property, income (individual and corporate) and sales taxes that would otherwise flow into general funds—gets diverted back to the developer to pay for district improvements. Second, TIFs provide publicly-underwritten financial leverage for the project itself. Developers may finance the source project with some of their own money, but the projects are mostly underwritten by public tax commitments that are often based on hazy, mostly optimistic, twenty-year projections of large tax increment increases.

As a quintessential exemplar of American millennialist economics, TIF is brilliantly distilled: it's a high-cost generational robbing of our wee Peters' tomorrows so as to pay our old, white Pauls' today for land their spiritual white forefathers fucked with yesterday.

Continued on page 8

Opinion

Reveal/September 28, 2011
Town Branch by rheotaxis, part 4

By Danny Mayer

"You remain north & south."
--Frank X Walker

There is a spot tucked between the Fifth Third building and an adjacent parking garage where one can sit and listen still to the waters of the Town Branch run. Though I may have visited it earlier, the spot first enters my recorded history in a September 28, 2011 notebook entry, a hastily scribbled entry that appears as a spare line to my field notes for the day's walk: "Town Branch heard under 5/3. A sonic sculpture, the creek below is mic'ed! Take Josie."

For a variety of reasons, both that walk and that space have only taken on greater meaning as the months move into years. I had set out that fall morning to interview a new sitting council member about the Rupp Arena Task Force that, on the eve of the UK men's basketball team's first final four appearance in 12 years, Lexington Mayor Jim Gray had formed six months earlier. As it happened, my schedule freed and I had an hour to kill before my meeting at City Hall on Main Street. I decided to hike Rupp, to get the lay of the land.

After leaving the sonic sculpture of Town Branch, I stumbled onto Vine and into a throng of beat down suits, waiting patiently at the Broadway Vine stoplights, some with fags in their mouths, all on their way to a self-help seminar featuring John Calipari, Laura Bush, Colin Powell, and a host of celebrity personalities, whose confident and successful visages would be piped into the far reaching cheap seats of the coliseum.

Turning away from Rupp, I humped across Maxwell, past a Tubby's Clubhouse community center, and down past the homeless encampment tucked into an acre of honeysuckle overgrowth along DeRoode as it backs up to The Lex, the new student apartments fronting Broadway. Unbeknownst to all but the most diehard of fans, the week of my walk would unofficially mark the beginning of the UK men's march to the 2012 NCAA Tournament Championshipnational championship, a week when fans converge upon a plaque of Adolph Rupp that fronts Memorial Coliseum, create a tent city, and patiently wait in line for days for tickets to Midnight Madness, the season's first open practice, a glorified scrimmage held in a packed Rupp Arena.

As I entered City Hall about to hear my city council member speak on prospects for Rupp Arena and the other exciting developments taking place downtown, I couldn't know that I would end the very next night, September 29, 2011, just across the street, on the north side of Main, in solidarity with Day 1 of Occupy Lexington's four-month encampment upon the rough-pebble concrete surrounding the JP Morgan Chase Bank building, the largest of the surrounding communal uprisings that had sprung like chickweed in the late fall from an initial pack of several-hundred dedicated occupiers who a month earlier had taken over Wall Street's Zucotti Park. I signed up for Monday night duty in the occupation, 11p to 7a on the Main Street commons, a duty that required hearing honks, slapping backs, ditching General Assemblies, avoding occu-cough, and generally shooting the shit on the street-corner with people from all over the region and nation who had, Field of Dreams-like, just felt compelled to appear here and jabber, maybe hold a sign.

Because it was so close, I found myself returning to the sonic Town Branch often—I did take Josie there, and I played some guerilla bocce upon the beds that line the artscape's walkway. But I returned to it most in the cold still of the deep night, the time of night when you've about given up hope on the sun's rise, for brief periods of reflection and listening. In many ways, it is where my thoughts on the downtown commons were formed, between the frigid fans packing Rupp Arena to watch a four million dollar coach, and the 10-20 occupiers, most without jobs, struggling to even get their city mayor, their councilmembers and other leaders, to just sit down and join with them for a while.

War on drugs, cont.

Continued from page 1

But a catch-all final definition reads "any other synthetic cannabinoid or piperazine which is not approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration or, if approved, which is not dispensed or possessed in accordance with state and federal law." So for the purposes of the Kentucky Revised Statues, a "synthetic cannabinoid" is also any other synthetic cannabinoid NOT listed among the seven technical definitions. This is the very act of defining a word by using the same word in the definition.

I would rather not know how many of my tax dollars will be spent on arguing out these semantic gymnastics in a court of law. Yet as I wrote last year, some synthetic drugs have caused bizarre and occasionally dangerous reactions in otherwise healthy individuals. So perhaps The Botany Bay should have known better and kept the synthetics off its shelves. Nevertheless, police left The Botany Bay with way more than just fake weed. Tens of thousands of dollars of pipes and papers were seized. Why?

Like chemicals, pipes and papers represent another ambiguous element in the war on drugs. NORML, a group established in the 1970s to reform marijuana laws, notes that a tobacco pipe is a tobacco pipe unless it is used for cannabis, in which case it undergoes a legal transformation and becomes "paraphernalia." A recent case in Hudson, WI, demonstrates the sheer silliness of criminalizing glassware. Several employees of a sex shop were fined $6000 each for possessing unused pipes and bongs. Ultimately, the question for Hudson is whether or not said bongs or pipes are "paraphernalia" even if they have never been used to ingest illegal drugs.

But if they are, wouldn't that mean essentially any household item (say, a spare PVC pipe) could be considered paraphernalia? What about a diabetic's empty syringe?

What's worse is that laws have been modified with the purpose of interfering with small businesses such as The Botany Bay. A bizarre 2010 "Bong Bill" passed in Florida required stores to generate at least 75 percent of their profits from tobacco products and accessories in order to sell from a "long list" of smoking devices. Alternatively, if less than 25 percent of the store's income comes from pipes and bongs, then the store can also legally vend them.

In other words, you can try to sell pipes and bongs, but just not too many. (Head shops beware the curse of being too successful.) Or you are first forced to vend tons of tobacco. And if you go out of business, well, too bad; some established tobacco outlet will benefit. Evidently, the logic goes: if the war on drugs hasn't stopped people from smoking cannabis, then surely a bong or head shop scarcity will do the trick.

Is all this nonsense really preferable to legalizing real cannabis? Or at the very least, should we continue to pollute the court systems with people who possessed or sold questionable glassware? The only people these asinine laws seem to benefit are attorneys who, like mercenaries, make a profession of warring over minutiae.

Apocalyptic!, cont.

Continued from page 6

of permanent contraction—there will be less, not more, of everything. Pressuring a dominant group to surrender some privileges when there is an expectation of endless bounty is a very different project than when there is intensified competition for resources. That doesn't mean nothing can be done to advance justice and sustainability, only that we should not be glib about the inevitability of it.

Here's another cliché to jettison: Necessity is the mother of invention. During the industrial era, humans exploiting new supplies of concentrated energy have generated unprecedented technological innovation in a brief time. But there is no guarantee that there are technological fixes to all our problems; we live in a system that has physical limits, and the evidence suggests we are close to those limits. Technological fundamentalism—the quasi-religious belief that the use of advanced technology is always appropriate, and that any problems caused by the unintended consequences can be remedied by more technology—is as empty a promise as other fundamentalisms.

If all this seems like more than one can bear, it's because it is. We are facing new, more expansive challenges. Never in human history have potential catastrophes been so global; never have social and ecological crises of this scale threatened at the same time; never have we had so much information about the threats we must come to terms with.

It's easy to cover up our inability to face this by projecting it onto others. When someone tells me "I agree with your assessment, but people can't handle it," I assume what that person really means is, "I can't handle it." But handling it is, in the end, the only sensible choice.

Mainstream politicians will continue to protect existing systems of power, corporate executives will continue to maximize profit without concern, and the majority of people will continue to avoid these questions. It's the job of people with critical sensibilities—those who consistently speak out for justice and sustainability, even when it's difficult—not to back away just because the world has grown more ominous.

Adopting this apocalyptic framework doesn't mean separating from mainstream society or giving up ongoing projects that seek a more just world within existing systems. I am a professor at a university that does not share my values or analysis, yet I continue to teach. In my community, I am part of a group that helps people create worker-cooperatives that will operate within a capitalist system that I believe to be a dead end. I belong to a congregation that struggles to radicalize Christianity while remaining part of a cautious, often cowardly, denomination.

I am apocalyptic, but I'm not interested in empty rhetoric drawn from past revolutionary moments. Yes, we need a revolution—many revolutions—but a strategy is not yet clear. So, as we work patiently on reformist projects, we can continue to offer a radical analysis and experiment with new ways of working together. While engaged in education and community organizing with modest immediate goals, we can contribute to the strengthening of networks and institutions that can be the base for the more radical change we need. In these spaces today we can articulate, and live, the values of solidarity and equity that are always essential.

To adopt an apocalyptic worldview is not to abandon hope but to affirm life. As James Baldwin put it decades ago, we must remember "that life is the only touchstone and that life is dangerous, and that without the joyful acceptance of this danger, there can never be any safety for anyone, ever, anywhere." By avoiding the stark reality of our moment in history we don't make ourselves safe, we undermine the potential of struggles for justice and sustainability.

As Baldwin put it so poignantly in that same 1962 essay, "Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

It's time to get apocalyptic, or get out of the way.

Article originally appeared in Love and the Apocalypse, *the Summer 2013 issue of* YES! Magazine. *Robert Jensen is a professor in the School of Journalism at the University of Texas, Austin, and author of* We Are All Apocalyptic Now: On the Responsibilities of Teaching, Preaching, Reporting, Writing, and Speaking Out. *He can be reached at rjensen@austin.utexas.edu*

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Next to Fifth Third Bank Building at the Town Branch sound sculpture. Photo by Danny Mayer.

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Clean, cont.

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Louisville, whose revitalized urban experience has recently purchased it the accolades of a variety of travel and food publications, has been the earliest and most active user of Commonwealth TIF funds. Of the nine TIF projects approved prior to 2009 listed by Kentucky's Cabinet for Economic Development, seven list a Louisville location. Though a couple of these projects are no longer active, collectively, the $2.7 billion dollar total cost for them to commence work was underwritten by the commitment of $1.5 billion in pledged future state tax increments. On a per acre basis, the 4,938.3 acres covered under KEFDA's Lousville TIF districts had cost projections that averaged $546,746.85 per acre, of which the state projected to rebate $303,748.24 in taxes per acre of "public improvement."

Since the Phoenix Park and Distillery District TIF districts, KEFDA has approved more Lexington TIF projects. Downtown, the state has committed to $500,000 in TIF funds for the boutique art museum hotel 21C that sits across Main Street from CentrePointe.

And other projects are on the horizon. Between the Distillery District and Phoenix Park TIF districts sits the Rupp Arena Opportunity Zone, which has been test-marketing plans for $300 million and up in construction costs. The city has been shopping around developers for the land surrounding the downtown transit station; its most recent suitor previously filed for and then withdrew a TIF application to help fund an unrealized Angliana movie theatre project. Threading the TIF district projects together is the Town Branch Common linear park, itself an expensive urban overlay project (like with Rupp, no official figures have been released) seeming to cry out for TIF consideration.

In fact, looking at the Town Branch map that threads downtown, it appears that the only portion of the proposed Town Branch Commons not already slated to benefit from public TIF subsidies is the creek's headwaters in the disinvested East End.