North of Center

NOVEMBER 2012 | TAKE HOME AND READ | FREE | NOCLEXINGTON.COM | VOLUME IV, ISSUE 10

36,897: a forbidden number

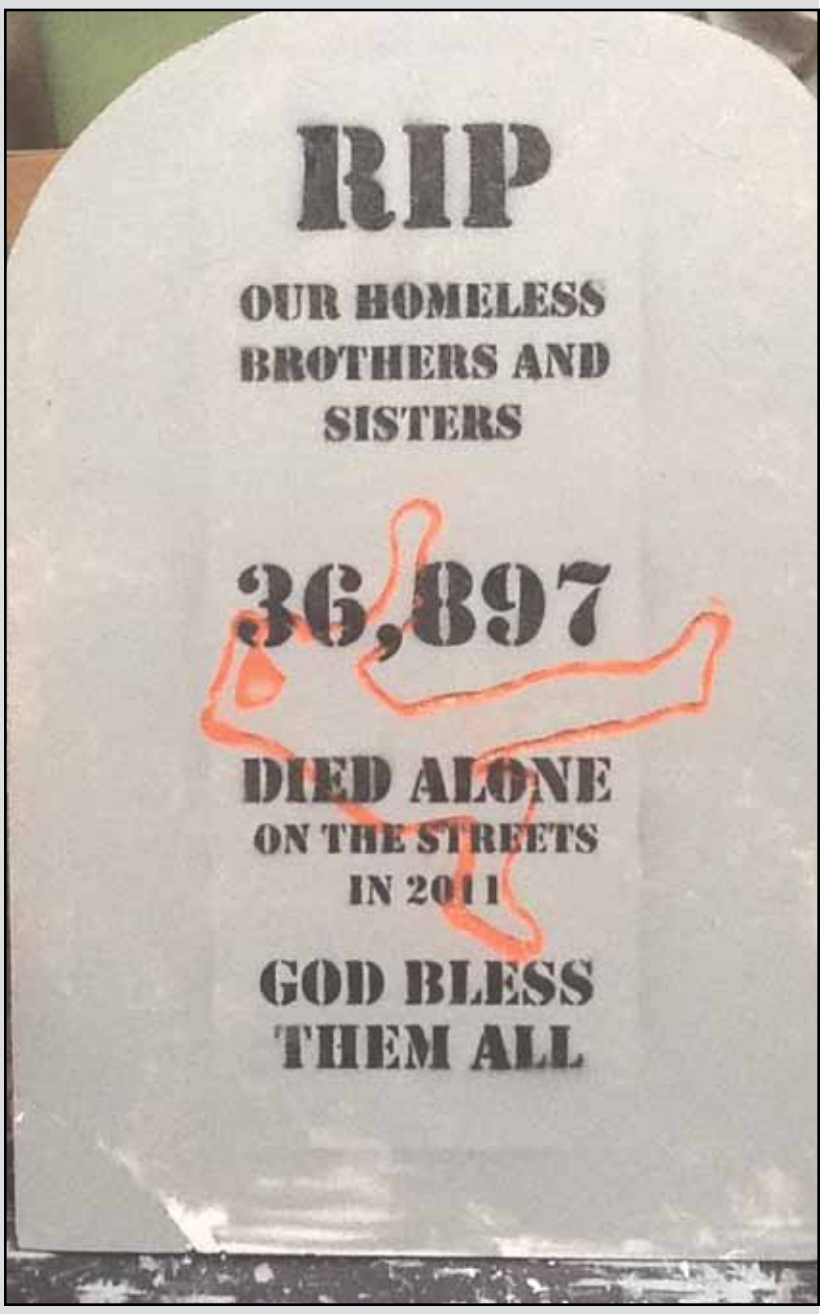
By Ebony Nava

This past Thursday, November 1, at 12:00am, "36,897" sprang up all over Lexington. On flyers tacked to telephone poles, makeshift "tombstones" outside of houses, and large in-your-face banners. "36,897" is how many homeless people died in the U.S., alone and on the streets, in 2011.

The local "36,897" campaign is run by "The Face of Homelessness of Lexington" and backed by the local group Street Voice Council, which serves as a voice for Lexington's approximately two thousand homeless residents. The campaign was created to bring awareness to the city of Lexington's decision to close The Community Inn on Winchester Road due to a zoning dispute, even though freezing weather—which can, and will, prove fatal for Lexington homeless—is quickly approaching.

A mere five hours after it began, the awareness campaign was cut short when Lexington's clean-up crew performed a smash-up job at de-flyering the poles and destroying the "tombstones." Local Lexington resident and activist for the homeless Jerry Moody stated, "Out of the twenty-five 'Tombstones' displayed, we could only salvage five. The rest were completely destroyed. The city even removed and destroyed the signs that were placed on private property."

While Lexington Mayor Jim Gray was apologetic when approached by the Street Voice Council, as of publication no remedy for the destruction of campaign materials has been agreed upon. Meanwhile, lawyers for the "Street Voice Council are preparing to sue the city of Lexington for the destruction of private property and infringement of their right to free speech. While the city removed posters mentioning the 36,897 homeless people who died last year, the surrounding U.S. election posters and campaign propaganda all remained untouched.



The city of Lexington ripped down these posters while choosing to leave nearby campaign posters standing. Photo courtesy of Jerry Moody.

Landmarks and memory

On the "Separate is not equal" bus

By Laura Webb

On the afternoon of Saturday, October 13, *NoC*'s Film Department and I went willingly to a type of space we usually avoid: a church parking lot. Granted, we were not there in search of eternal salvation (much to my relatives' disappointment, I'm sure), but instead as attendees of the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice's bus tour of historic Lexington, part of its ongoing "Voices" event series. The theme of this year's series, "When Separate is Not Equal: Yesterday and Today," focused on segregation and the struggle for civil rights.

From African-American enclaves such as Kincaidtown (now known as the East End) to more recent inconsistencies in downtown restoration and development, Lexington has a long history of creating segregated spaces. Official area histories tend to recognize, and city revitalization efforts tend to prioritize, the upkeep and maintenance of spaces coded white and upper-class, often directly at the expense of black neighborhoods, landmarks and histories.

To cite one example, the popular Cheapside Park — home to the recently developed Fifth Third Bank Pavilion and the substantial Lexington Farmer's Market, as well as other well-publicized events — features prominent statues lauding two Kentucky Confederates, John Hunt Morgan and John C. Breckinridge. In revitalizing the area, the Breckinridge statue was moved to an even more prominent location abutting Main Street. Meanwhile, the square's historical role as a slave market was only overtly acknowledged with a historical marker in 2003, and even then this marker is effectively hidden behind the old courthouse and beneath a tree. (It goes without saying that the plaque was left untouched during the recent renovation that moved the Breckenridge statue.)

Given the general lack of city-wide interest in acknowledging landmarks important to Lexington's African American community, a tour focused specifically on black landmarks about town naturally drew my attention. I was far from disappointed. Our guide, Yvonne Giles (founder and director of the Isaac Scott Hathaway Museum Gallery), amazed me with her depth and breadth of knowledge.

The tour begins at the First African Baptist Church. Photo by Laura Webb.

Wiping the landscape

As our new hybrid bus departed from First African Baptist Church, Giles began to outline the processes that would repeatedly arise throughout the tour. Historically, black spaces such as hospitals and cemeteries were physically separated from white ones. As the city developed over time, important black spaces have been lost even as corresponding white spaces have been preserved.

At times it felt odd to be circling the blocks around my house and realize that not too far away from it were places I had

Continued on page 6

Taking thanks

Meaty holiday fare

This was written about 12 years ago, but since it is late on deadline night--and hey, it is topical--here you go, dear readers.

By Danny Mayer

I was twenty-three and living in Charleston, South Carolina, before I had the pleasure to make my own holiday. It was Thanksgiving, still Hawaiian shirt weather for the coastal lowlands, and I was left, like many of my co-workers from the restaurant where I earned the money to pay for my Masters degree, with nobody to celebrate.

Employees of the food and beverage industry, of which I am a part, are an itinerant bunch. As a group, we place little value in job loyalty, and because of this, we rarely stick around in one place long enough to establish anything approaching tradition. And this, I suppose, is what made this Thanksgiving so remarkable: We joined together, formed an alliance, and created, if only momentarily, a holiday all our own. We knew what was expected of us on Thanksgiving – a turkey, stuffing, people, football – but we also knew enough to see that our unique situation necessitated a break, in some way, with tradition. So we distorted some of the rules, held firmly to others. The result was a cobbling together of our collective childhood holiday experience, a Chimera-like adaptation of our individual notions of family.

I smoked my first turkey. Jim baked his mother's brownies, straying from the recipe only once, to add the marijuana. Price not only brought his Christmas lights (they are a year-round fixture at his house), but also a pumpkin, some candy, and a wreath, all bought at the local Kroger. Seannessy supplied baked brie and a bocce set, Melanie the horseshoes and rotelle, Stan and Leigh croquet and mashed potatoes, Jessica a baseball, two gloves and gravy, Dave liquor for the White Russians and a Sony Playstation, Alicia the homemade rum chocolate cheesecake and hummus. The rest contributed what they could – Pabst Blue Ribbon, chips and dip, french bread, asparagus, a honey baked ham, beets.

The music, like the people who controlled it, was an eclectic effort. Saul swiped a Bing Crosby tape from the restaurant and played it, he claimed, "for the holiday atmosphere." From the trunk of my car, I fished out an old Chipmunks tape, the one where Alvin gives away his Golden Echo Harmonica, a present – both the harmonica and the tape -- given to me at Christmas when I was nine, and we played that. Dave brought in a Hank Williams recording, and feigning sorrow, we crooned to "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry." Everyone brought CDs. I heard Barry White followed by Rage Against the Machine, Neil Diamond open for Bruce Springsteen, and at times, when both house stereos were turned up full tilt, even Frank Sinatra perform a duet with Prince, the performance followed rather unceremoniously by Michael Jackson.

Sometime after dinner, after dessert, after the sky turned too dark for baseball but still light enough for bocce, after many drinks and many pictures, Jim, the forty-year old patriarch/waiter from Colorado, suggested that we take a family photo. We totaled seventeen people, mostly drunk. It was too dark to take the picture outside. After an unnecessarily long discussion, we stumbled back into

Continued on page 2

Contents

Coming soon

More 36,897 coverage

A CfCS parade proposal

Shenanigans from The leek

The Neighborhood

NOVEMBER 2012

Shaming women

Misadventures in the city

By Beth Connors-Manke

Last summer, I wrote a column entitled "It's getting dangerous around here" about being bitten by a dog in my neighborhood. The result of the incident (besides the aforementioned column) was that I bought pepper spray as a mild attempt at holding off canine attacks.

From that Misadventures dispatch: "When I get home [from being bitten by the dog], I'm pissed. I've spent the last year and half negotiating the hazards on N. Lime so I could make the streets safer for myself, and now someone's damned dog has made my walks dangerous again. Seriously, I'd rather have a drunk yell profanity at me three times a week than have some lame-o's loose dog take a big chunk out of my calf."

Let me give some context for my anger and fear. I've been bitten before by a loose dog. Two of my brothers have been bitten by Pit Bulls. In one case, the brother was bitten in the face (there's a slice out of his lip); in the other case, the brother owned the dog. I wasn't scared of dogs before these incidents, but I am now — and for good reason. In my childhood, everyone had a Lab or Collie. Anecdotal evidence tells me that people now tend to own meaner, more muscular dogs (Pit Bulls, Rottweilers) or smaller, more frenetic dogs (Chihuahuas). In both cases, the dogs often aren't well trained or controlled by their owners.

Consequently, I've developed the habit of carrying my pepper spray in hand from my back door to about N. Lime and Fourth. Along that route, there are the dogs that roam my neighborhood. There are the two Pit Bulls behind a low fence across from KU; next to that house is a haphazard penning of a yip-yip dog (breed unknown). Then, there's Duncan Park, where a friend's daughter was bitten by a Pit Bull with an unrepentant owner.

Last week, I was walking north on Lime, enjoying the late summer loveliness. I step out into the intersection to cross the street at Fourth and hear three guys passing behind me. One says something to my back. The entire phrase registers as I get to the other side of the intersection: "She so scared in this part of town, she carrying mace."

I'm pissed, so I turn around and start yelling at them about dogs. They keep walking, unwilling to look at me or respond, and I'm sure they mentally scoffed at my explanation. I'm fuming for the rest of the walk home, but not really about the dog thing. Smoke is coming out my ears because I'm tired of men trying to shame women when we show concern about our safety. And because I do—women do—have reason to be wary of men on the street. Case in point, an interaction I had over the summer on Elm Tree.

I was walking home on Elm Tree and heard a guy yell "Hey! Hey!" I don't know him, he doesn't know me, so I ignore him, assuming he's talking to someone else. Then the yelling becomes more insistent: (deepening his voice) "HEY!" A quick side glance tells me no one else is up the street. Having no other choice, I look at him to try to get him to stop yelling. Doesn't work. I hear: (a deeper, more commanding voice) "COME HERE."

Deafening warning bells are going off in my head. A man who speaks to a female stranger on the street as if she is 1) his dog or 2) his "ho" is a red-alert danger to any woman. Trying to show as little reaction as possible, I walk at a faster clip and make sure I have my pepper spray. Approaching me is a group of men coming from another direction. They may know this guy, they may not. I keep walking, make noncommittal eye contact, and pass them as quickly as possible. I get home safely, but it takes a while to shake off the instinctual fight or flight response.

This is only one of two incidents I've had on the northside when I knew my safety was in question. That's a pretty low ratio, considering how far and how often I walk on the northside. Regardless, a woman has to protect herself every time because our culture doesn't safeguard us nearly enough — instead, we're made to be the victims of men's rage, confusion, and fear. And the guys who made the snide remark about my pepper spray, they wanted me to feel shame for that.

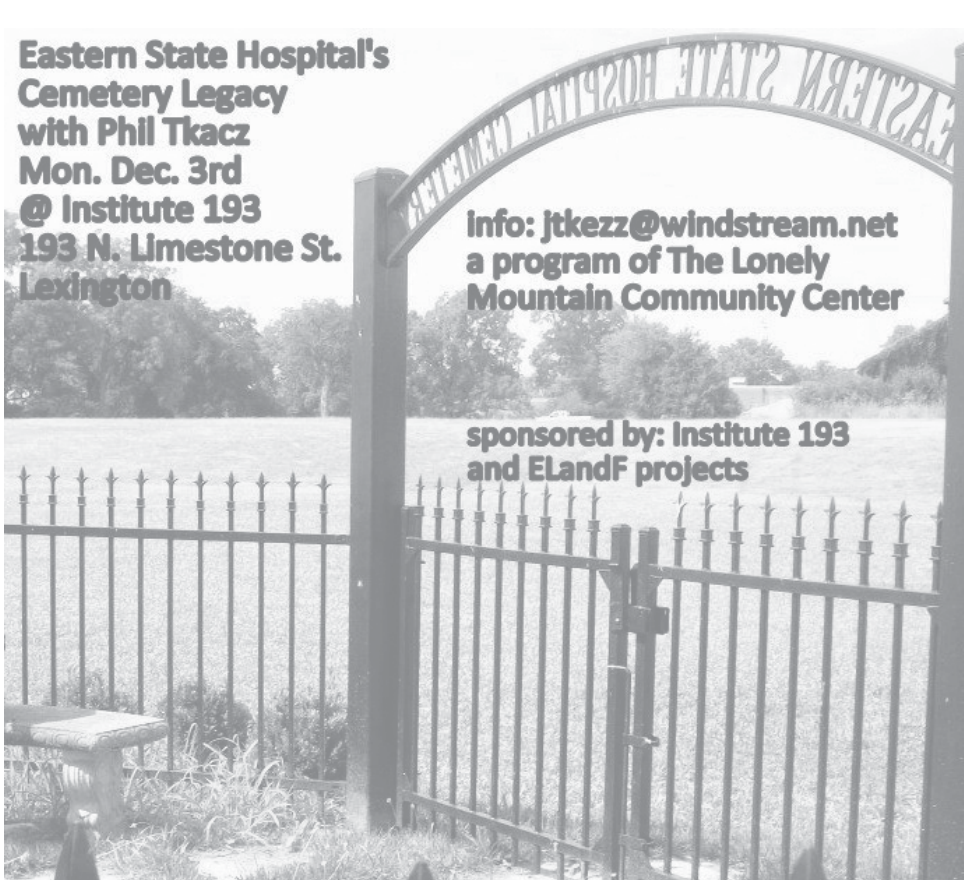
I refuse.

Environmental health photo exhibit at Lyric

On Tuesday 13 November at 7pm, the Lyric Theater and Cultural Arts Center will host a photography exhibition focused on Kentucky women. Titled "Burden of Proof: Living with Toxic Chemicals," the exhibit features portraits of three grassroots activists who are advocating for policies that would reduce women's exposure to toxic chemicals.

Kentucky photographers captured images of three Kentucky women who link their health problems, or that of their families to environmental root causes. The exhibit is designed to help convey their stories on film, and foster dialogue with Kentuckians on the need for industry and policy action that can improve our health.

Guest speakers at the event will include other notable African American women taking action on environmental health and justice, including Eboni Cochran of the Louisville environmental justice group REACT, and Monica Unseld, PhD, health advocate and an expert in endocrine disrupting chemicals.



Emotional Rescue

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

By Captain Comannokers

When we think of people and transportation, we think of infrastructure, and safety, and technology – and probably a number of other key factors before we land on an aspect that often is overlooked: the emotion of transportation.

And there is plenty of it, too, especially in the daily travels of an urban area. People are wound-up balls of emotion, even if they don't readily admit to it. We acknowledge the fact that we get emotional at large events in our lives – weddings, funerals, holidays, and (of course) national championships. But we aren't ready to admit that "I drove to Kroger to pick up some milk, bread, Fritos, and two pounds of flavored Tootsie Rolls – and it was soooo emotional." The fact is, a lot of the time it is.

You get frustrated sitting at long lights, or at the person driving too slowly in front of you. And the anger evoked by parking lot maneuvering, well, that's next-level shit.

I consider myself a defensive and safe cyclist, but I'm hardly free from emotion. When riding as a city commuter, one finds countless opportunities to be flummoxed by the transportation gaffes that I see: from drivers who don't want to recognize me as a vehicle, to fellow cyclists who make up rules of the road as they go.

I try to keep things in perspective. Around my northside neighborhood, bikes are often used a little differently than what I use mine for. I'm one of only a handful of people wearing a helmet, and no one is going to start regularly using hand signals. I think "trying" to keep perspective while riding is a challenge – but also valuable. I prepare myself for tricky places for driver-cyclist interaction, so I don't start yelling as a knee-jerk reaction if things don't go as I expect them.

Avoiding reactionary emotions to each and every move on the road is healthy no matter what form of transportation you are using. That's true for public transportation, too. When I rode the subway everyday, holy crap, there were some people who were walking sticks of anxiety dynamite.

I also have adjusted my routes based on a "least emotional" scale. Depending on time of day and traffic patterns, I put myself in situations that are going to yield the least stress and fewest flare-ups.

For example, I used to ride Elm Tree/Rose southbound on my way to work, but the issues that arise at High just became too much to deal with daily. Now I take MLK through downtown with improved results. I noticed that the recommended bike route by the LFUCG agrees with that choice as well (especially over an option like Upper). If I wanted to continue on Rose, I had to struggle to get left into the lane of through traffic. If I chose to take the right hand turn onto High, vehicles would try to pass me at the last second in order to take the same right hand turn. It was a lose-lose most days.

When we are in cars, we don't often think in those terms – if there is construction, or an accident, we will take an alternate route, but most of the time it's just hit the gas and go. Add in the insanity of the "technology" part of transportation (calling, texting, liking your friend's all-too-humorous Facebook status), or the outrage caused by seeing those behaviors behind the wheel, and simply going somewhere is fraught with emotional peril.

You shake your head in disbelief, you swerve, you gun it. Some people might even yell, or be adept at the art of sign language (we'll try to keep that type of behavior hushed and under our breath here). It's an emotional journey out there, even for the most Zen of us. The sooner we recognize that, the better off we will be.

In order for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers to share the road successfully (I'm not talking utopia here, simply that we relax our reflex to throw things at each other), we all need to check our level of emotion when on the move. What you do to calm yourself is up to you: count to 10, whistle, listen to Yanni – whatever it takes.

Be safe out there – this is your Captain speaking, over and out.

Thanks, cont.

Continued from page 1

the den, crammed together, chose our poses and took the photo. I'm sure that it was more difficult than this last sentence implies, but it was well worth the effort.

A look through my drawers, filled with useless, sentimental scraps of my life, confirms this: I do not have much to remind me of that day. Leftovers are either eaten or left to spoil. We drank all the booze, recycled all the bottles. I lent my Chipmunks tape to Alicia, have yet to get it back, and now moving to Lexington, have given up hope for its return. I no longer speak to any of the people there that day.

In fact, I consumed or gave all but that one picture away. I look at it whenever I worry that I won't have a family of my own, that my acts while alive will remain personal and separate. I look at it to remind me of my family and of the traditions that have helped define me, blood and otherwise. I look to it as proof that my grandmother, dead fifteen years, still matters, that she is not separate from me, that the small dab of white in the lower corner of her left eye in the one photo I have of her, the result of a camera's flash from a long since finished Thanksgiving dinner, continues to flash into my own meal forty years later.

And so here am I: A fireplace. Wood paneling. A couch on shaggy carpet. Jason gives bunny ears to Dave. Seanessy stands up, grabs Alicia's bare legs, and helps her to a handstand. Price cocks his head and laughs. Danny bites into a drumstick. Dave gives bunny ears to Kirsti. Carson flips the bird. Leigh feeds Stan a bite of her cheesecake. Reck waits impatiently to return to the bocce. The Redskins are on TV. Tupac is on the stereo.

And somewhere, far from here and there, our grandparents smile with myriad subtleties.

"Sacrifice was part of Chavez's rhetorical strategy, which also included the notions of penitence, pilgrimage, and revolution."

Popularizing austerity

By Mary Grace Barry

"Time accomplishes for the poor what money does for the rich," writes labor organizer Cesar Chavez in his "Good Friday Letter." Published in 1969, the letter is addressed to E.L. Barr, Jr., the president of the California Grape and Tree Fruit League. Chavez's farm worker's union had enacted a table grape boycott in order to gain better working conditions. Staunchly non-violent, Chavez was troubled by growers' accusations that strikers had been violent.

I like to imagine that Chavez was more than "troubled" by the rumors about violence, that below the earnestness, spiritual humility, and quiet righteousness, Chavez was irked. He had trained his people to embrace sacrifice non-violently — the one thing they had absolute control over — and their struggle was being besmirched. Having pushed and prodded and demanded more from already downtrodden workers, Chavez could not have been happy with either real violence from strikers or lies from growers. His point to Barr: endurance and suffering are what the poor do best; that's how we'll beat your oppression, not with violence.

Austerity was one of Chavez's talents. He underwent fasts for the sake of the farm workers' movement. He went to jail for civil disobedience. He lived on next to nothing at times. And he seems to have worked like a demon. In one interview, he mentions that jail was hard because it disrupted his routine of working 16-hour days. Sounding like a consummate organizer, Chavez told one audience of church folk: "When you sacrifice, you force others to sacrifice. It's an extremely powerful weapon. When somebody stops eating for a week or ten days, people want to come and be part of the experience….When you work and sacrifice more than anyone else around you, you put others on the spot and they have to do at least a bit more than they've been doing." Austerity is a way to up the ante — both with your people and with your opponent.

Chavez's calculus

Sacrifice was part of Chavez's rhetorical strategy, which also included the notions of penitence, pilgrimage, and revolution. Played out in action, this meant that Chavez demanded self-discipline from those in the movement — that is, from people who had already been disciplined by abject poverty, dispossession, racism, and political exclusion. He reminds Barr, "As your industry has experienced, our strikers here in Delano and those who represent us throughout the world are well trained for this struggle. They have been under the gun, they have been kicked and beaten and herded by dogs, they have been cursed and ridiculed, they have been stripped and chained and jailed, they have been sprayed with the poisons used in the vineyards. They have been taught not to lie down and die or to flee in shame, but to resist with every ounce of human endurance and spirit."

This tough-minded sacrifice extended to collecting dues from farm workers. Chavez tells of his moral dilemma after concluding that the union must demand workers pay their dues, even when Chavez knew they couldn't afford it. In one story, Chavez goes to collect seven dollars from a man who is leaving for the grocery store with his last five dollars. The organizer gives the worker two options: pay $3.50 or be put out of the union. "Three-fifty worth of food wasn't really going to change his life one way or the other that much," Chavez later reflected. The man ponied up the $3.50, and Chavez continued to persuade farm workers that, in the long run, the union was the mechanism by which to substantially change their quality of life. But, no doubt, that man went hungry for several days.

Like most of the civil rights movements of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, the platform for Chavez's union included self-determination for it's members. As the organizer asserts in his "Good Friday Letter," "[p]articipation and self-determination remain the best experience of freedom." In Chavez's calculus, willing austerity plus long-term endurance yield collective self-determination. In this equation, there's no quick fix for the workers; they, who were already suffering deeply, were expected to give up more for the sake of their self-determination. And, they were expected to wait patiently: the Delano Grape Strike lasted five years.

Beasts of burden

Chavez's insistence on self-denial has been painted as a deep belief in the capacity of the poor to fight for their own cause and triumph. The same could perhaps be said of other organizers of the era like Gandhi and King. But I wonder, too, about popularizing austerity as the way to achieving freedom and independence. At some level it's often coercive, regardless of a leader's intentions. Chavez worked hard and long and wanted others to feel compelled by that. He embraced his family's poverty to justify what he demanded of others. In debating the issue of dues, organizers in the union eventually decided they were going to pursue payment of dues because "[w]e're poor, too. We're poorer than they are, and we can afford to sacrifice our families and our time. They have to pay."

This kind of thinking is easier to swallow when leaders put themselves on the line and the cause is righteous. When farm workers gain from what they have given up. When the government is forced to give blacks the rights they should have had long ago. When Indians win back their country from the British.

But what about right now? We are, domestically and internationally, in the clutch of austerity thinking, with all kinds of players telling us that we have to sacrifice, that cutting away the fat will put power back in the hands of "the people."

Now, there is reason to object to my turn from Chavez to the economic austerity programs being enacted today. One might say, "But Chavez wasn't talking about trimming excess; he was sponsoring spiritual discipline in the union." True, but his impoverished farm workers were already down to the bone, so the point is already moot. But there is an aspect in which austerity plays out the same: the people with the least resources and power are made morally responsible for changing unjust circumstances created by the wealthy, the powerful, by institutions and high-level

Continued on page 6

Sirens stun ROCK 159-134

Fifth season concludes

By Sunny Montgomery

On the last Saturday in September, the Rollergirls of Central Kentucky (ROCK) concluded their fifth season when they faced off against the Red River Sirens (RRS) of Clarksville, Tennessee. I attended ROCK's final home bout with my mother and my grandmother—or Mimi, as I call her—who was visiting from Philadelphia.

My mother and Mimi arrived just in time for announcer Bill Widener to introduce ROCK's junior roller derby team, The Pebbles. One by one, he called their names.

"Sue Nami!

Lean Machine!

Devilish Cutie!

The Amazons of the future, ladies and gentleman!"

As Widener continued, the miniature rollergirls, complete with face-paint and fake tattoos across their biceps, made their way around the track, high-fiving the fans lining the edges.

Graves blows and a ROCK trap

After introductions, Michael Graves, lead singer of the Misfits and performer at Lexington's annual Scarefest, stopped by to blow the starting whistle. The first jam began. Mimi closed her program and folded her hands politely in her lap.

ROCK's initial strategy was to control the speed of the pack. The trick is to "trap" an opposing skater by using two or more players to gang up on her, thus forcing her to slow down or possibly even to stop. At the same time, the jammer works to push the opposing blockers far enough away from the slow-moving pack. Once blockers become a certain distance away from the rest of the pack, one of two things happen: the blockers must either stop blocking and allow the jammer through or face out-of-play penalties. Jam after jam, ROCK executed the trap effectively, took lead jammer and quickly took the lead: 88 to 64.

"And that is the end of the first half," called co-announcer Mike Trusty.

"First half?!" Mimi groaned, turning to face me. She eyed me as I scribbled notes and asked, "Is that going to go in the article?"

"Just writing it down," I smiled.

A deeper understanding of the derby

I gave Mom and Mimi permission to leave during halftime, but they were determined to stick it out. Mimi was determined to understand the roller derby. Suddenly, she had hundreds of questions.

She wanted to know about ROCK's hype-man, Darstrosity, the cost of the roller skates, what it meant when a referee pointed to one of the jammers and made a sweeping motion with his hands.

"I'm not sure," I confessed.

"Well write that down, why don't you." I did and later learned that a referee makes a sweeping gesture at the jammer to indicate that jammer is not lead. To indicate the lead jammer, a referee points one finger at the skater and points another finger in the air.

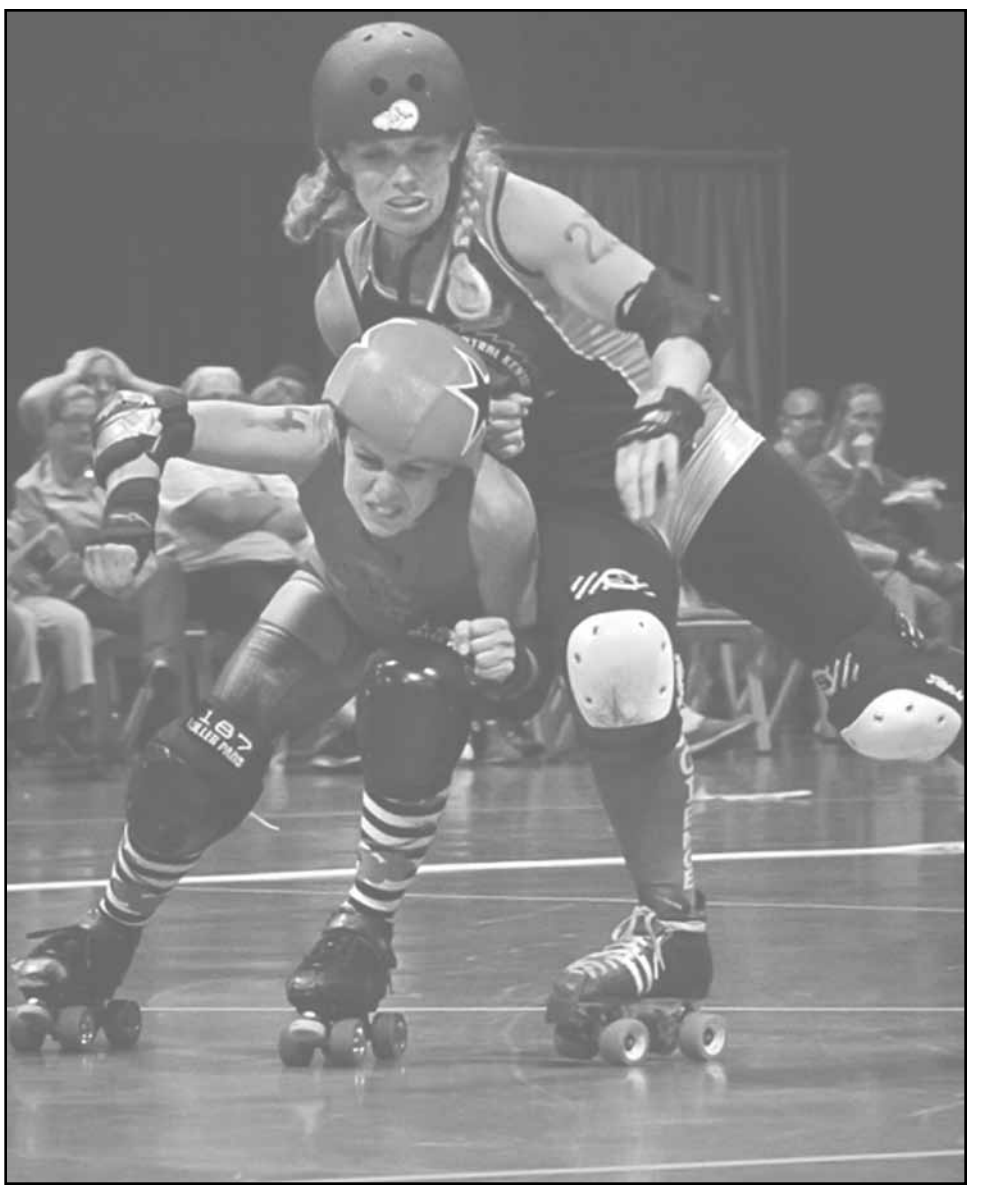
Sirens re-group, as does Mimi

During the second half, ROCK's initial strategy became less effective when RRS learned to combat ROCK's "controlled-plays."

With ROCK no longer controlling the speed of the pack, RRS had an easier time taking lead jammer. During one particular jam, ROCK's jammer was sent to the penalty box, which allowed the girls from Clarksville to rack up major points. All of a sudden, the Sirens had taken the lead: 118 to 90.

But, as Widener often reminds the audience, it is always anybody's game at the roller derby.

With nine seconds left in the bout, things were looking bleak. In the roller derby, each jam can last up to two minutes unless it is called off first by the lead jammer. It was critical for ROCK to take lead jammer and roll off a ton of points in the remaining minutes. Otherwise, the Sirens could call off the jam and end the bout.



ROCK's Robin Souls tries to knock RRS jammer out of lead. Photo by Lewis Garder.

The score was 129 to 155 with the Sirens in the lead.

When the final jam began, ROCK's Sugar Shock shot forward. The crowd hollered at the top of their lungs. And then, moments before the referee could declare her lead jammer, she was sent to the penalty box. Seconds later, RRS's jammer joined her in the box. By the time Sugar Shock was released and sprinted onto the track, whooshing past her opponents, and then doing it again for a grand slam, the arena was on its feet.

I glanced at Mimi, but she wasn't paying attention to the skaters. She was too busy watching the outside penalty tracker on the sidelines, who was putting on a show of his own, flipping his score board over his head, twirling it on the tip of his finger, then throwing it up in the air and catching it like a baton. Mimi thought it was the funniest thing she'd ever seen.

I turned my attention back to the track for the final tense seconds. ROCK fought hard but, alas, not hard enough. Red River Sirens won the bout 159 to 134.

"What did you think," I asked Mimi. She removed a Kleenex from her purse and dabbed at her eyes.

"Well, he was a show in himself, wasn't he?!" she exclaimed.

So there you have it, the exciting conclusion of ROCK's fifth season. And further proof that there really is something for everyone at the roller derby.

The Region

NOVEMBER 2012

The river beneath the sea

Camp Nelson to High Bridge

By Wesley Houp

Our put-in is Camp Nelson, a smattering of water-weary shanties, trailers, and RVs pinched between river and road in what can only be considered loose apposition to any sense of the term "community." We park Danny's ramshackle Isuzu under Lloyd Murphy Memorial Bridge on U.S. 27 (mile 135 on the Kentucky), unload and shuttle canoes and gear down the crumbling concrete ramp, and within twenty minutes we are on the water, shuffling and restowing dry bags, resolving vagaries of trim and draft.

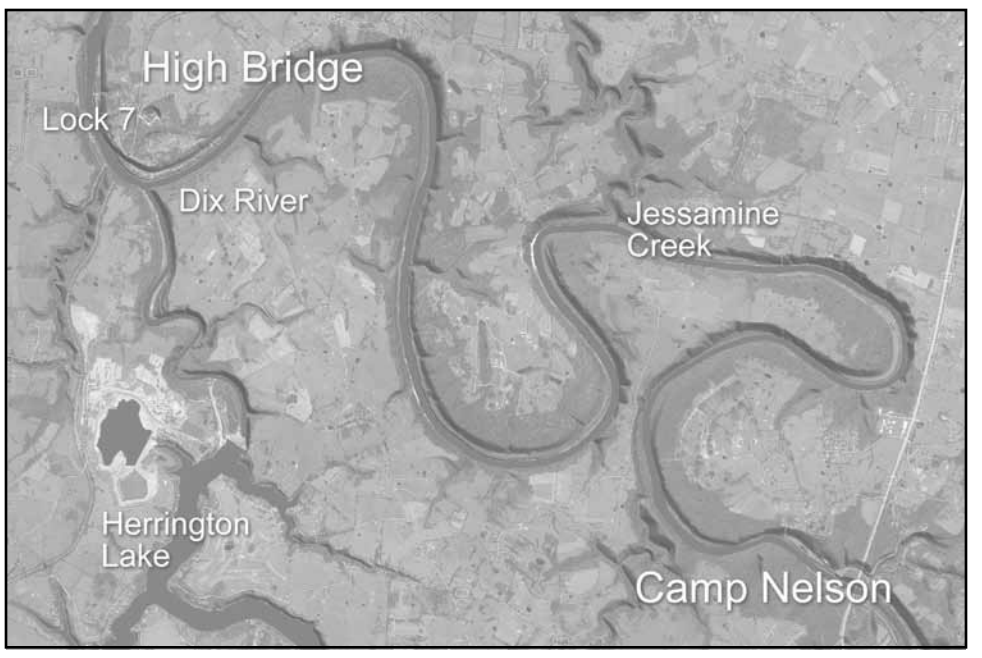
Downstream and northwest, the river disappears around the sharp bend, a leading edge of palisades opening where the Camp Nelson bottom finally tapers to steep, wooded talus. The striated face of Ordovician limestone glows, as if back-lit, in rarefied October light, its gold deepening the sky's sapphire. It's nearly three o'clock; we're off to a late start, and with eleven miles to paddle, our chance of making Jessamine Creek gorge—our preferred bivouac—before dusk is slim. A stout headwind dials up the drag, and we push a little harder. Fortunately, the Kentucky's deep meanders offer intermittent reprieve from the gust. Just around the bend, we find a casual pace and enter one of the most remote and dramatic riverscapes in the eastern United States.

Inherited entrenched meander

The twenty-mile series of bends below Camp Nelson represent what geologists call "inherited entrenched meanders." Willard Rouse Jillson, Kentucky's state geologist in the early decades of the twentieth century, hypothesized that the Kentucky River's ancestral headwaters lay far to the southeast in present-day North Carolina. These source streams, what is now the Watauga River watershed, were effectively beheaded and diverted into the southwest-flowing Holston and French Broad watersheds through successive periods of regional uplift, crustal warping, and faulting during the Mesozoic and Cenozoic eras. All told, the Kentucky lost approximately 3,000 square miles of watershed. The topographic results of uplift were Pine and Cumberland Mountains, long, straight anticlinal ridges extending southwest to northeast. The uplift concluded some 50 million years ago, and the beheaded (and greatly diminished) Kentucky River captured new headwater streams from the northeast face of Pine Mountain.

The loss of water volume influenced the river's course, particularly in its lower stretches, where the corresponding topographic character was largely featureless peneplain, extending uninterrupted into salty marshland of the old gulf (of Mexico) embayment. Numerous channels were abandoned and new channels were carved. These redirections are known as "process meanders," formed by the post-uplift, revived Kentucky River. But in certain upper and middle stretches the river had already abraded its bed so much so that abandonment was impossible. So the present-day Kentucky represents both an "antecedent" and "consequent" stream. Down in these deep abrasions, these inherited entrenched meanders, the contemporary paddler is boxed in the ancient, antecedent Kentucky. Here, the palisades offer awe-inspiring stratigraphy, a vertical portrait of geologic time extending back (and down) through the Paleozoic world.

It's humanly impossible to imagine the Ordovician world in anything other than gross abstractions. Continental Drift—the understanding that the Earth's mantle is fluid and that the Earth's crust, i.e. continental plates, move around like cosmically sluggish ships powered by the heat of the mantle's convection—is a layman's term for some bewildering geo-goings-on. Back then, half a billion years ago or so, the major continents, Gondwana, Laurentia, and Baltica, were drifting ever so slowly toward their critical mass, the supercontinent Pangaea, a destination still some 270 million years away. Deep oceans covered Ordovician Earth, and great swaths of the continents themselves steeped in warm, shallow seas. This was a shellfish planet, a planet where the delineation of plant and animal kingdoms wasn't so visually distinct, one hundred million years before the oldest ancestor of fishes emerged. Brachiopods, brachiospongia, bryozoans, cephalopods, crinoids, cystoids, gastropods, trilobites, and a menagerie of other small creatures dominated aquatic life while primitive mosses accounted for most of the greenery on land. The earth, at 3.5 billion years old, was still too young even for insects.



Once the continents had amassed and formed Pangaea (at the end of the Paleozoic era some 230 million years ago), the Teays River system, of which the ancient Kentucky was part, had formed as a result of Taconic Orogeny, the great mountain-building event that gave rise to the Appalachians. The ancient Kentucky helped drain the mountain waters into a shallow inland seaway that stretched across the heart of the North American continental plate—the confluence of the Mowry Sea breaching down from the north and the Tethys Sea swelling up from the south. By this time, remnants of the Ordovician period lay beneath the collective sediments of the Silurian, Devonian, Mississippian, Pennsylvanian, and Permian periods.

In the Bluegrass a Pliocene reverberation of that distant orogeny, known as the Cincinnati Arch—a cataclysmic event that forced the region of central Kentucky violently upward and left many faults and fissures—allowed the uplifted and overlaying strata to erode, and by the Pleistocene the Ordovician world reemerged from primal sleep. The Kentucky, which originally flowed over the arch, found redirection around the south side of the "Jessamine Dome"—the highest point of the arch—exposing layer upon layer of compacted past.

Continued on page 5

Wild and Scenic Film Festival storms KY Theater

By Dave Cooper

The 2012 Wild and Scenic Film Festival rolls into Lexington's Kentucky Theater on Tuesday, December 4 with a great lineup of 13 inspiring short films.

The Wild and Scenic Film Festival, which began in 2003, combines stellar film-making, beautiful cinematography and first-rate storytelling to inform, inspire and ignite solutions and possibilities to restore the earth and human communities while creating a positive future for the next generation. Selections from the three-day festival in Nevada City, California, go on tour and are hosted by local environmental organizations. In this way, the festival reaches over 100 cities annually, the largest environmental film festival in North America. And thanks to the folks at Kentucky Heartwood, it's coming to Lexington.

Highlights of this year's film festival include:

Miss South Pacific: Beauty and the Sea (2010, Director: Mary Lambert, 39 minutes).

What does a beauty pageant in Suva, Fiji, have to do with climate change? "Miss South Pacific: Beauty and the Sea" is a short documentary film about the 2009-2010 pageant that brought contestants from all the major Pacific Island Nations to compete for the crown of Miss South Pacific and to raise international awareness about rising sea levels and the salt water intrusion that is destroying their land, crops, and drinking water. Rising oceans have already forced residents of the Pacific Island nation of Kiribati, which is only two meters above sea level, to begin planning for their evacuation to Australia and New Zealand. Addressing the theme of climate change and its impact on Pacific Island countries, the contestants passionately implore judges, spectators, and the world at large to reduce global carbon emission lest their island homes be lost to rising seas. Is it too late to turn back the tide?

Miss American Samoa delivers dramatic poem about the 2009 tsunami. From "Miss South Pacific."

...

Mountain Roots (2010, Director: Sally Rubin)

"Mountain Roots" is part of a collection of short films in the People Power series by Director Sally Rubin, well-known in Kentucky for her 2010 documentary film *Deep Down*, about the complexities of the struggle in eastern Kentucky to oppose surface mining in an area that sometimes views destruction of the land as economic development. Carol Judy, of the Clear Fork Community Institute in Eagen, Tennessee, is a root digger. She digs ginseng, yellow root, black cohosh, and goldenseal for their medicinal value in the mountains of Appalachia. Above her community is a 10-mile-long strip mine. Carol is an outspoken opponent of mining, and she says that "There's beds that I have been digging for 10 or 12 years that are no longer in existence." Carol, a colorful speaker, will attend the film festival and speak after the film.

...

The Craziest Idea (2012, Director Andy Maser)

Thirty years ago, the idea of removing dams on the Elwha and White Salmon Rivers in Washington State seemed crazy. After all, millions of public tax dollars had been spent over a hundred years ago to build these dams. Yet these two dam removal projects are now the largest in history and represent a turning point in the effort to restore free-flowing rivers for salmon, whitewater recreation and Native American culture. The climactic moment of the film is the explosive breach of 125-foot-tall Condit Dam on the White Salmon, captured using video and time-lapse photography techniques.

...

Dark Side of the Lens (2012, Director: Mickey Smith)

"Dark Side of the Lens" is one man's personal and heartfelt account of life as an ocean-based photographer. This short film takes you on an eerie, stunning and moving journey amongst the epic oceanic grandeur of Ireland's west coast. Renowned documentarian of the heavy salt, Mickey Smith has succeeded in creating a visual poem that offers a humble glimpse into his strange and magical world, reflecting insights that ring true with many of our own lives.

...

One Plastic Beach (2012, Camera / Edit: Eric Slatkin, Producer: Tess Thackara)

Richard Lang and Judith Selby Lang have been collecting plastic debris off one beach in Northern California for over ten years. Each piece of plastic Richard and Judith pick up comes back to their house, where it gets cleaned, categorized and stored before being used for their art. The couple make sculptures, prints, jewelry and installations with the plastic they find washed up, and in the process, raise a deeper concern about the problem of plastic pollution in our seas.

...

Weed War (2012, Director: Rich Addicks)

A profile about Mark Harbaugh, a goat rancher and representative for Patagonia fly fishing equipment, "Weed War" documents one man's obsession to do his part for the environment by using weed-eating goats to control noxious invaders in the Rocky Mountains.

Films begin at 7:00pm and the festival runs until 10:00pm at the Kentucky Theater in downtown Lexington. Tickets are $10. The Wild and Scenic Film Festival is a fundraiser for Kentucky Heartwood and Kentucky Mountain Justice. Kentucky Heartwood is a non-profit forest preservation group that has been dedicated to protecting the beauty and integrity of Kentucky's native forests for over 20 years. For more information on the festival and selected films visit www.kyheartwood.org.

"As he did throughout his career, Jillson preferred the long view. He was a man of his time, a positivist."

River, cont.

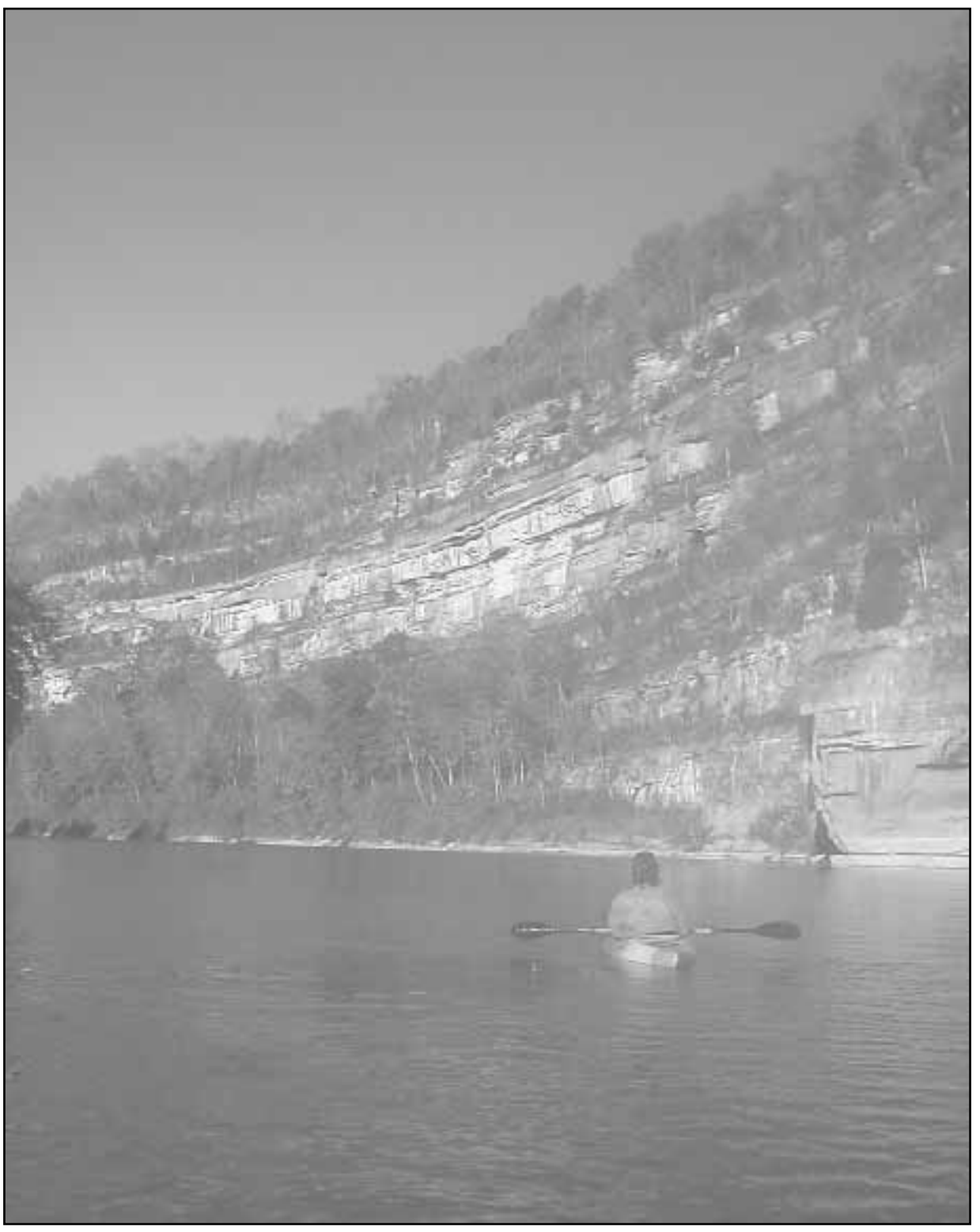
Continued from page 4

Two miles into our journey we beach on White Oak Bar, a prominent towhead at the mouth of an otherwise diminutive White Oak Creek, one of countless, spring-fed capillaries to rise atop the peneplain, slice a narrow gorge, and debouch its waters in the Kentucky. On bars like this, amateur rock-hounds can recover (with relative ease and without sophisticated implements) the remnants of ancient life. Within minutes, I've collected a handful of brachiopods, Platystrophia by genera to be precise.

Platystrophia and butter churns

Henry's *Pocket Fossils* book informs me that Brachiopods were "the common shellfish in ancient seas," living on the seafloors, filtering their food from the water. The brief description concludes with glib, Darwinian fact: "Since the beginning of the Mesozoic era, they have largely been replaced by bivalve mollusks." Henry, my son, is nearly five years old, and prehistoric shellfish extinction is neither a glib nor substantially formal proposition. Brachiopod fossils (particularly *platystrophia*, which I have collected in abundance) are simply "really neat-o." Like me, he is partial to those specimens most intact, the ones preserving their deep fold (the slightly raised mid-section of ribs fanning from beak to curve) that helped them maintain a constant stream of water—and food—flowing between their two shells.

But brachiopods aren't the only remnants of past life to be recovered here. An old cabin used to sit in the bottom at White Oak Creek, set in the overgrown woods off the river. Back in the late 50s, years before the record-breaking floods of '72 and '78, my father, in the height of his wanderlust, frequented the long-abandoned homestead while running his trap-lines along the 24-mile lock 7 pool. For the most part, he recalls, the cabin had been long since emptied of its artifacts. The only item he recovered—and kept—was a common dash butter churn constructed of ash staves and brass bands. Apparently, similar churns could be had from Sears and Roebuck for a mere 53 cents, but by 1908 such domestic technology had disappeared from their catalog altogether. The White Oak Creek churn has adorned a corner of the Houp household ever since. My sister and I used to play on the churn, working its handle up and down, calling in affected, sing-songy voices for the butter to "come" from its magical wooden barrel. We also mistakenly attributed the antique to our own great-grandmother, Haggie Mae Horn; I only learned recently of the churn's true provenance.



Entering straightaway around Polly's Bend, Swallow Rock on the palisades to the right, Jessamine County. Photo by Wesley Houp.

An old photograph, a young geologist and evolution

Two miles downstream from White Oak Bar, past Buzzard Bar on the right, Candle Stick Rock looms high on the palisades at the leading edge of Polly's Bend. In 1920, a 30-year-old geologist named Willard Rouse Jillson posed for a photograph at the base of Candle Stick Rock, a nimble 45-foot pillar of limestone standing out and protruding up from mineral-stained cliffs some three hundred feet above the river. Over millions of years the combined forces of wind and water, working around and behind what must have been a vertically oriented fold of limestone, left what appears now as a precariously stacked chimney. Erosion around and between each stratum of limestone gives the illusion of individual boulders frozen in a Paleozoic balancing act. And there, in the black and white photo, stands a self-confident Jillson, all cavalier five-foot whatever, his jacket unbuttoned, left hand in trouser pocket, and ranger's hat cocked ever-so-slightly on his head. In the foreground, another stiff-brimmed, dusty ranger's hat and opened rucksack, dropped haphazardly on the narrow, sloping limestone ledge, presumably effects of the unseen photographer, suggest a hastily planned portrait. The two of them, Jillson and his companion, are literally on the brink of a 400 million year freefall.

Born in Syracuse, New York in 1890, Jillson studied geology at Syracuse University, graduated in 1912, and spent the next five years working as a field geologist for the petroleum industry. With his brothers, Jillson surveyed and invested in the burgeoning oil fields in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, an early professional direction that would have significant implications later for his adopted home in Kentucky, where he settled in 1917, married a good Floyd County girl, and used his academically-enhanced but natural talents to dowse the depths for the burgeoning oil and coal industries. After a brief stint teaching geology at the University of Kentucky, Jillson was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Geology in 1919 by Governor Augustus O. Stanley and in 1920 directed the 6th Kentucky Geological Survey. He held the post of State Geologist for the next 12 years.

The photograph of Jillson at Candle Stick Rock, like hundreds of others taken in the field during the Geological Survey, captured the man at the beginning of what would become a prolific career not only as a field geologist but as a writer. From his initial appointment as Deputy Commissioner in 1919 to his death in 1975, Jillson published hundreds of articles in hundreds of scientific journals, in addition to numerous monographs. His writing wasn't limited to science; he published biographies of Edwin P. Morrow, the fortieth Governor of Kentucky, Paul Sawyier, Kentucky's celebrated impressionist painter, and Daniel Boone; he collected and anthologized "youthful rhymes and verse"; he wrote regional and local histories; he documented Kentucky's major literary figures and works. His interests cut across historical periods, academic disciplines, and the domains of life. Of most pertinence here is his book on the river, *The Kentucky River: An Outline of Drainage Modification of a Master Stream During Geologic Time*, published in 1945.

The Kentucky River Valley must have represented El Dorado for a young and ambitious geologist. The approximately 100-mile stretch of palisades offered relatively easy access to the region's oldest (and arguably most interesting) geologic structures, not to mention early settlement history, and Jillson, evidenced by the flurry of writing beginning in 1919, dove in head-first. So much of his writing is of little interest to literary scholars; his prose is that of a consummate scientist speaking to other scientists. In *The Kentucky River*, Jillson's concerns are Cretaceous headwater diversions, Tertiary stream piracies and Pliocene period drainage modifications—riveting subject matter for neither public masses nor literary elites. But interspersed throughout, we glimpse the scientist waxing philosopher waxing citizen:

While it is the purpose of this little volume to outline and describe the principal changes the Kentucky river has met during the geologic past, it is hoped that all lovers of nature who turn to the beautiful, but rugged valley of the Kentucky for their moments of out-of-door leisure, will find in these pages a somewhat expanded vista into the largely inscrutable order of the universe.

and later

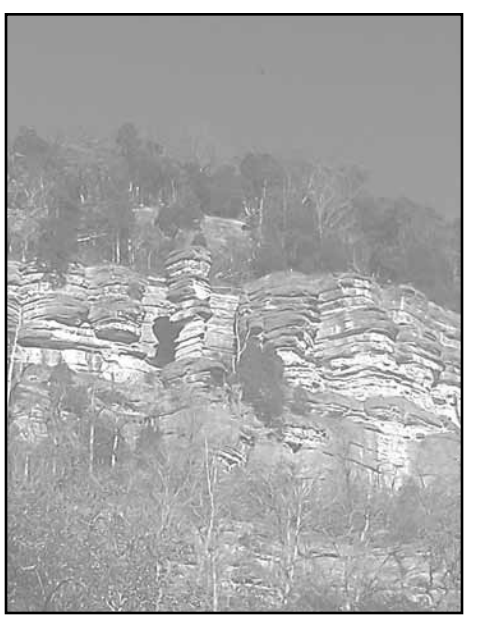
It is, therefore, perhaps a melancholy, but none the less impressive thought, that in the undoubtedly long period of time ahead, when man and his civilization, which has found a dependable way to read the record of the geologic past, has, like many another once dominant form of life on this earth, passed entirely away, the Kentucky river still governed by immutable geologic laws, again unappreciated and unknown, will continue to sweep on in its ever changing valley while eastern continental North America shall endure!

As he did throughout his career, Jillson preferred the long view. He was a man of his time, a positivist. His long view was forged in science, an intimate reading of the physical earth; however, his "objective" understanding of the truth of the cosmos was tempered by Christian teachings. When pressed on the matter, he sounds consummately Jeffersonian. Science leads the intellect, while religious teachings hold the potential to mold morality. His editorial in *The Lexington Herald* from 1922 opens with unambiguous denunciation: "Let the ignorant and uninformed deny it whenever or wherever they will, the fundamental principles of organic evolution are indisputable" and "do not need to be defended." In short, these principles "are above argument." Yet in the next breath he acknowledges "Christ-like attitudes and broad evolutionary understandings are not incompatible. Jesus said, 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'" He closes his "Thoughts on Evolution" with compromise:

It is a demonstrable fact that the foremost evolutionists of America are good and godly men, highly respected in their communities and by the world. Would that all our Kentucky youth were more like them, as high in their ideals, as broad and useful in their role of service, and as upright and as Christ-like in their physical and mental relations to themselves and to mankind.

All told, his scholarly background in geosciences and his passionate understanding of geomorphology (particularly in the Kentucky River valley) tell him that the Earth and all its creatures are inextricably bound together in chains of events stretching back billions of years, but his upbringing and general respect for the institution of Christianity tell him that the human capacity for the rational, the ethical, and the moral is only enriched by religious observance. The confident man in the photo—the dashing young scientist, balancing on a narrow ledge high above an ancient river with Candle Stick Rock balancing its top-heavy burden beside him—was undaunted by the psychic balancing act of science and religion. Leave truth to science and moral teaching to God.

In the next issue, Wes will conclude his narrative of the paddle between Camp Nelson and High Bridge.



Candle Stick Rock looms high on the palisades. Photo by Wesley Houp.

"As I would find out on our tour, the Industrial Home was comparatively lucky: its building is still standing."

Bus tour, cont.

Continued from page 1

never heard of, a sentiment echoed among many of the bus's other passengers. Case in point: the former "Colored Orphan Industrial Home," a stone's throw away from the Eastern State Hospital campus (and future BCTC campus), on Georgetown Street. Historically an orphanage and retirement home for Lexington's African-American community, this stately brick building is now the Robert H. Williams Cultural Center, which, appropriately, houses Giles' Isaac Scott Hathaway Museum.

As I would find out on our tour, the Industrial Home was comparatively lucky: its building is still standing. Lexington's Colored Fair, which was not only financed and operated by the city's black community but was also arguably the largest and most successful in the country (its first run attracted about 10,000 attendees), now exists as a historical marker on Georgetown Pike. Baseball fields have become industrial parks; farms and fairgrounds are now suburban housing tracts. As our bus rambled along Lexington's streets, I had difficulty piecing together what I saw out the window with what I heard about it inside.

Of course, this pattern of destruction, development and change takes place in every city: not every place and structure can be preserved. The tour highlighted, however, the noticeable discrepancy between whose spaces were and were not preserved.

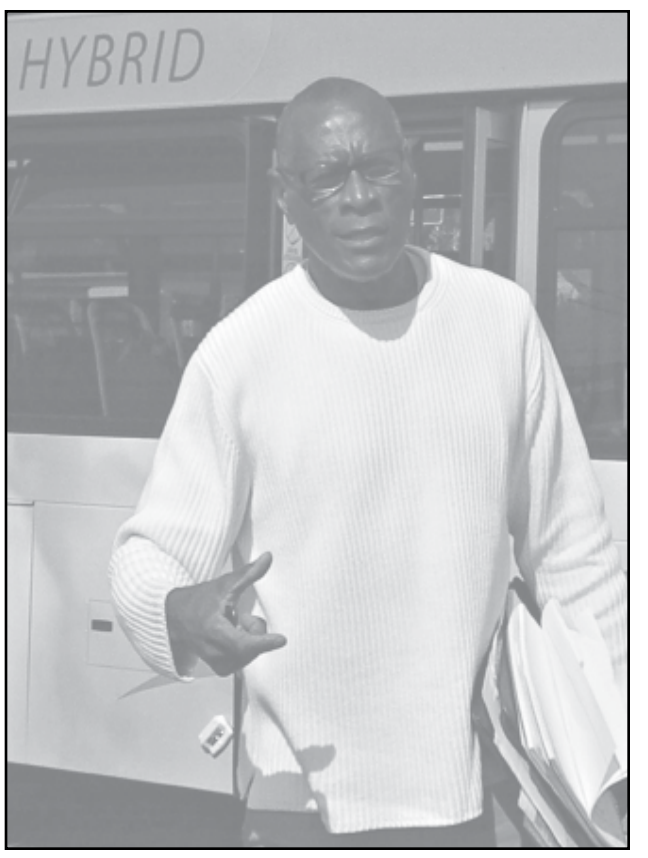
The consequences of this discrepancy reach further than simple nostalgia. As Douglass Appler, the Helen Edwards Abell Endowed Chair in Historic Preservation, stated at the University of Kentucky's sixth annual historic preservation symposium, "If the history of a particular group is wiped from the landscape, its past can't be explored or recognized to the same degree as that of another group whose history is left in place and remains standing."

Scavenging history

Lexington and Fayette County have many historic spaces; among their most prominent and well-preserved are, of course, the slave-owning estates of Ashland, Waveland and the Mary Todd Lincoln House. Meanwhile, the material history of slaves and their descendents lie largely beneath our feet, cropping up haphazardly and if you know where to look. Trouble is, most Lexingtonians don't know where or how to look.

Throughout the bus trip, I was strangely reminded of walking the streets of Cuzco, former capital of the Inka Empire. There, for three hundred years, invading Spanish conquistadores melted down priceless cultural and religious artifacts for their metals and scavenged the precisely-cut boulders of ceremonial complexes for new colonial buildings. Walking Cuzco today, one can still see the Spanish colonial construction fitted atop Inka temples and palaces, both layers distinct and visible to the trained eye.

Here in Lexington on Third Street at the future home of the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden (IMMAG), guest speaker and IMMAG Board Vice President Thomas Tolliver told us tour-goers about the lavish Kentucky Association grounds that ran nearby. The Kentucky Association was the first established race course in the state, and was located near the current intersection of Fifth and Race Streets. Upon its closure, Tolliver noted, parts of its track and clubhouse, where many great African-American jockeys and trainers made their fame, were scavenged for use at Keeneland. Though little trace of the Kentucky Association now remains on-site in the East End, its gates (still reading "KA") provide Keeneland with its iconic entrance.



Thomas Tolliver speaks during the tour. Photo by Laura Webb.

Perhaps the Association's most famous nearby resident, the three-time Derby winning black jockey Isaac Murphy, has had his history not so much scavenged as forgotten. Tolliver quoted Affrilachian poet Frank X. Walker: "In Kentucky, [Issac Murphy] is to Lexington what Muhammad Ali is to Louisville," but while Louisville celebrates Ali, Lexington has mostly ignored Murphy — and others like him. Even the location of Murphy's opulent home, described as a "mansion" in contemporary newspapers but never photographed, was mostly unknown until recent excavations at the future IMMAG site revealed its foundation.

Colored Orphans Home, now home to Robert H. Williams Cultural Center. Photo by Danny Mayer.

Keeping stories alive

Although at this point restoring spaces like the Kentucky Association racetrack or the Isaac Murphy home is all but impossible, Tolliver argued that this should not be our goal anyway; instead, he emphasized the importance of keeping alive their memories, and the memories of other people and places like them.

Here, Lexington has a spotty history at best. An extensive campaign has slowly brought Isaac Murphy back in the spotlight. The extension to Newtown Pike was renamed to honor Oliver Lewis in 2010, but few still know his story at all. The East End neighborhood features roadways with names like "Race Street" or "Equestrian View," but until now I'd been unable to pinpoint exactly why.

Other names and places, which have not benefited from the same efforts, have fared worse. Tolliver pointed out what several Lexington geographers and *NoC* contributors have noticed about Thoroughbred Park, which sits at the east entrance to downtown and within blocks of the Kentucky Association track where Murphy raced to fame and fortune: that despite the great contributions of people of color to the horseracing industry, not a single black person related to the horse industry is enshrined there. In the face of such exclusion, places like the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden are important. With the power and passion of a revival preacher, Tolliver's call to action still resounds in my mind — "We can't count on the people who built Thoroughbred Park to tell this story. We gotta tell this story!" And these stories desperately need to be told.

Unfortunately, obstacles still exist for many of the storytellers we were introduced to on the trip, funding in particular. For example, the initial budget estimation for the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden has proven insufficient, and approximately $200,000 more is needed. The new First African Foundation, which hopes to purchase, restore, and develop the First African Church (constructed in 1856), is also in need of donations. Like many other nonprofits, all have been hit hard by the economic downturn. While this means that progress can come frustratingly slow, it also means that there are ample opportunities to help out for anyone who is able.

...

For more information on the organizations mentioned in this article, please visit:
www.peaceandjusticeky.org
www.isaacmurphy.org
www.firstafricanfoundation.org
To contact the Isaac Scott Hathaway Museum Gallery, please write the Robert H. Williams Cultural Center at 644 Georgetown St. or call (859) 255-5066.

Austerity, cont.

Continued from page 3

officials that should have born the brunt of the economic aftermath, but didn't. Sacrifice sounds noble in the case of Chavez's farm workers' union, but the reality is that industries and the government were refusing to uphold their moral and political obligations to workers and citizens. In the "Good Friday Letter," Chavez asserts that farm workers are not "beasts of burden," but the truth of the matter is that non-violent campaigns like Chavez's train members to bear the moral burden of the fight. They give up almost everything, while their opponent, at most, gives concessions. In degree, austerity and concessions are nowhere near the same thing.

Bait and switch

To prove my point about our current austerity conversations, I could rehearse some examples from beleaguered European Union nations. Or, I could trace the logic of the Republican tax plan for "giving Americans their own money back" while also eviscerating funds for education, infrastructure, and social services, leaving us on our own to figure out how to pay for school, get our roads repaired, or stay out of the poor house in retirement. The self-determination promised by the conservative tax game is a wholesale shifting of the cost (in dollars and sweat-equity) of American life to individuals and neighborhoods.

But there's a different, more recent and more local, example that crystallized for me exactly how austerity discourse works. As most are aware, UK had a round of layoffs this summer, and the upper administration has mandated budget cuts to various units across the campus. University employees are now waiting for the promised second round of cuts. On October 22, UK President Eli Capilouto convened an open meeting with a restive Faculty Senate after the Senate accused him of manufacturing a budget crisis. About an hour and half into the meeting, a faculty member asked Capilouto if the new budget model wasn't creating "franchises." In other words, wasn't the president shifting the responsibility for funding the university from his office to departments and units whose job wasn't, in fact, to be entrepreneurs for their area, but to teach students or support that educational mission.

Capilouto's response? "This is not just a passing on to you, this is a way to empower you."

One can use populist rhetoric for almost any bait and switch.

If you are interested in the UK budget and the October 22 discussion, a link to video of the meeting is available on President Capilouto's webpage: http://www.uky.edu/president.

Opinion

Stop pestering Iran

By Marcus Flores

Because everything an incumbent president does is, to his challenger, wrong, Obama's résumé in the Middle East has become a sort of fetish during the debate season. Yet the responsible voter—who can momentarily set aside their Obama or Romney pennant—notes that both candidates are virtually indistinguishable on Iran, and that is a pity.

It will suffice to say that Iran does not approve of Israel's existence, and neither of the candidates can afford to be too soft on their own disapproval of the situation. Thus far, President Obama has chosen to intimidate the Iranians into nuclear disarmament through little more than classic gunboat diplomacy, the dummy formula for which is a show of naval power and crippling economic sanctions. (A January naval incident reveals that Obama may be treading perilously close to a rendition of Tonkin Gulf.) One of Romney's favorite talking points — that Obama missed a golden opportunity to raze the Iranian regime in 2009 — was, of course, repeated, implying that Romney would not hesitate to take advantage of Iranian instability in the future. Meanwhile, Iran has made it clear that it will actively resist victimhood in a region where governments are toppling like toadstools.

Unable to militarily match the United States, the Iranian strategy is simple: harass the imperialists by proxy. Though divided by the Sunni-Shiite chasm, the majority of Arab nations believe (if privately) that Israel should be amputated from the region. Speaking to FDR in 1943, King Ibn Saud presciently noted that a Jewish settlement would make for a "hot bed of troubles and disturbances" in the years to come. In 1948, the United States formally recognized Israel only 11 minutes after Israel recognized itself. Call it the United States' unplanned pregnancy.

Despite the Nazi genocide and numerous Arab attempts at regional eviction, history has forged an uncommon resilience among the Jewish people. While traveling north toward Tiberias in 2009, my tour guide recalled a time she was driving along the same stretch when shells from Hamas began to explode along the side of the road. Her posture and comfort during the story suggested that raindrops might have inconvenienced her more, but also indicated that Israelis rationalize terrorism as a dismissible banality, something like tornados to Midwesterners.

While conventional shelling is nothing new to Israel, the constant threat of nuclear attacks is cause for understandable fright in such a small nation. The length of a drive from Lexington to Indianapolis spans all of the Jewish nation, a short span which would magnify the damage of a well-placed nuke. But this is exactly why a preemptive nuclear attack from Iran is most unlikely. Jerusalem, that womb of the world's faiths, is home to the Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock (sites as important to Judaism and Christianity as they are to Islam), and there is great risk that the fallout — if not the blast itself — would vaporize a number of Palestinian settlements and possibly damage nearby nations.

Whether for weapons or advanced medicine, Iran wants very much to be included in the nuclear club. The President and his challenger both agree that sanctions (Romney claims he would apply the most severe sanctions possible; Obama says he has already done this) are the way to go. But I doubt ranking members of the Iranian government or the country's nuclear scientists have trouble putting food on the table. Sanctions afflict modest venders and weavers of rugs more. The United States presently has trade embargoes against Somalia, Cuba, and North Korea, and not one of those nations has demonstrated sociopolitical maturation in the last two decades. Though history provides some examples to the contrary, economic hardship only seems to strengthen tyranny.

Because of the unifying effect it would have, a preemptive strike on suspected Iranian nuclear sites spells the worst possible decision Israel could make. Satellites in Gaza and Hezbollah militants could directly inflict casualties before Israeli pilots could even return from a bombing run. Since both candidates used the final debate to reaffirm their vow to Israel, the next American president would inevitably follow Israel into a conflict where Iran can immediately damage U.S. interests in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Turkey. And because the United States refuses to drill its own oil, a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz would have dramatic domestic consequences.

The obduracy and complexity of the situation leaves few political options. In the context of the U.S. presidential election, it also leaves little room for candidates to distinguish themselves. Obama was correct, though hypocritical, to label Governor Romney a "Cold Warrior." The third and final debate served as an uneventful contest between two men: one who wants to expand the military's size and the other who has greatly expanded its presence. Americans generally forget that sanctions against Japan brought about Pearl Harbor. Today, if military threats and sanctions fail to undo the nuclear progress a nation has already made, we can surely quit giving them reasons to use it.

Letters to the editor

Mutually sincere appreciation

Keith,

I appreciated your piece on Facebook ("Facebook discussions") in Volume IV, Issue 9.

Sincerely,
Whitney Baker

Author responds:

Thanks Whitney! Glad you liked it.

Bowsher on the candidates

Dear Editor,

Thank you for publishing my letter. I was honored. A very proud moment for me. All the letters I write, all the ones I mean to write, sometimes leave me frustrated, but when I get such a wonderful affirmation as you gave me I am nearly speechless.... But not completely. Check my math on this please, I have already triple checked it myself.

I like to take poetic license with the spelling of Romney's name because it is so funny that with just a little jumbling of the letters all of a sudden he is Rmoney, a much more fitting name.

Dear Editor, know that I have watched and listened closely to Rmoney's answers on taxes. What I have had trouble figuring out is his claim that under his plan we will continue to get 60 percent of our tax revenue from the wealthy. He stated that emphatically during the debates. It has finally dawned on me. He is planning such draconian cuts to all government spending (except defense) that the federal budget and our current programs will be a distant memory. He didn't say we would have the same level of government spending; he said the wealthy's share of tax revenue would remain at 60 percent.

Don't forget that his plan not only calls for a 20 percent reduction in all income tax rates, it also calls for elimination of taxes on interest, dividends, capital gains and elimination of the estate tax. As I understand it, the wealthy like Mr. Rmoney derive the majority of their income from those first three categories, and the fourth item (eliminating estate taxes) would assure their thirtieth generation would be even more obscenely wealthy than the current generation.

Continued on page 8

Patients allowed to sell organs to pay premiums

The leek: a satirical take

By Horace Heller Hedley, IV

In a bold move to open more payment options for financially strapped customers, Anthem Blue Cross will allow subscribers to pay premiums by offering their vital organs to the insurance giant. The new program, dubbed "Kidneys for Koverage," provides a variety of flexible options, allowing both healthy and ailing customers to derive monetary value from their functioning organ systems.

"We asked ourselves, 'Those subscribers who can't afford monthly premiums — where are their untapped assets?'" said Ronald Hilfinger, Director of Customer Relations. "Their houses are mostly sold already—especially our customers in poor health. But with a healthy kidney going for $150,000, the average person's most valuable asset is their excess organ capacity. Since we already had access to an extensive network of surgeons, it was a natural fit."

Anthem's team created a menu of options for customers interested in cashing in on their physiological assets. High-end options involve exchanging working organs for lifetime insurance coverage by Anthem. Complete, fully-functioning organs earn the best coverage — for example, a healthy kidney earns lifetime membership in Anthem's comprehensive "360-Degree Plan." Tissue contributions not requiring the member to sacrifice an intact organ — a segment of liver tissue, or a lobe of a lung — purchase a high-deductible plan. Subscriptions are also available, where periodic contributions of skin or bone marrow offset monthly premium payments. The insurer will also offer small discount vouchers for plasma donation.

Industry insiders have reported that the Kidneys for Koverage initiative faced bitter opposition inside Anthem's corporate boardroom. "KfK is an actuary's nightmare," said a former Anthem executive who asked not to be identified. "Can you imagine trying to price out this monstrosity? You've got the value of the organ in the world's most volatile market, weighed against the cost of benefits that we're giving away to the donor. Maybe it slipped their minds that people with one kidney get sick a lot, and they're on the hook for it! And can you imagine how people will cheat selling their organs? Has anyone in that boardroom ever bought a used car?"

But in fact Anthem performed painstaking analyses to identify such financial pitfalls, and attempted to hedge against them in the KfK cost structure. Several cost-containment measures were considered but ultimately rejected, sometimes out of concern that they could create public-relations difficulties. "Depreciating the kidney's value as its recipient aged got voted down," said another anonymous source within Anthem. "Organ rental was a non-starter. We couldn't cover the cost of removing the organ from the subscriber, installing it in the recipient, pulling it out again when they died, then re-installing it in the subscriber. Plus, we didn't think subscribers would be crazy about resuming paying their insurance premiums once they got their organ back. Letting parents use their own organs to pay for their kids' coverage market-tested very well. But we decided that we'd better get our feet wet with the simple one body/one premium model before getting our operating rooms swamped."

Anthem will be requiring extensive performance testing of organs before accepting them as payment. An anonymous Anthem manager involved in Pre-Owned Organ Certification suggested that this was a prudent move. "This kidney I checked the other day — the owner had told me it was real clean, and it Blue Booked at around $75k. We ran the labs, and man, that thing was throwing creatinine like you never saw. Chronic nephritis — right there in the maintenance records. Before we make the deal, we really gotta kick the tires."

Ronald Sarandon, President and CEO of Anthem, defends the KfK program as consistent with corporate ideals. "Look, we knew this program would raise some eyebrows. But we see it as a values issue. At Anthem, we value access to health care. Illness knows no boundaries of income. Rich or poor, you can't just buy yourself a healthy kidney. Well, you can…but it will really set you back."

The program is being watched carefully by Anthem's competitors, and some beyond the health care industry are considering adopting the model. Interested parties include Bank of America's mortgage unit, and Wells Fargo's student loan division.

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

Editor & Publisher
Danny Mayer

Associate editor
Beth Connors-Manke

Contributors
Michael Benton
Andrew Battista
Dylan Blount
Captain Commanokers
Stacey Earley
Marcus Flores
Kurt Gohde
John Hennen
Horace Heller Headley, IV
Wes Houp
Michael Marchman
Cannon-Marie Green Milby
Kenn Minter
Sunny Montgomery
Kremena Todorova

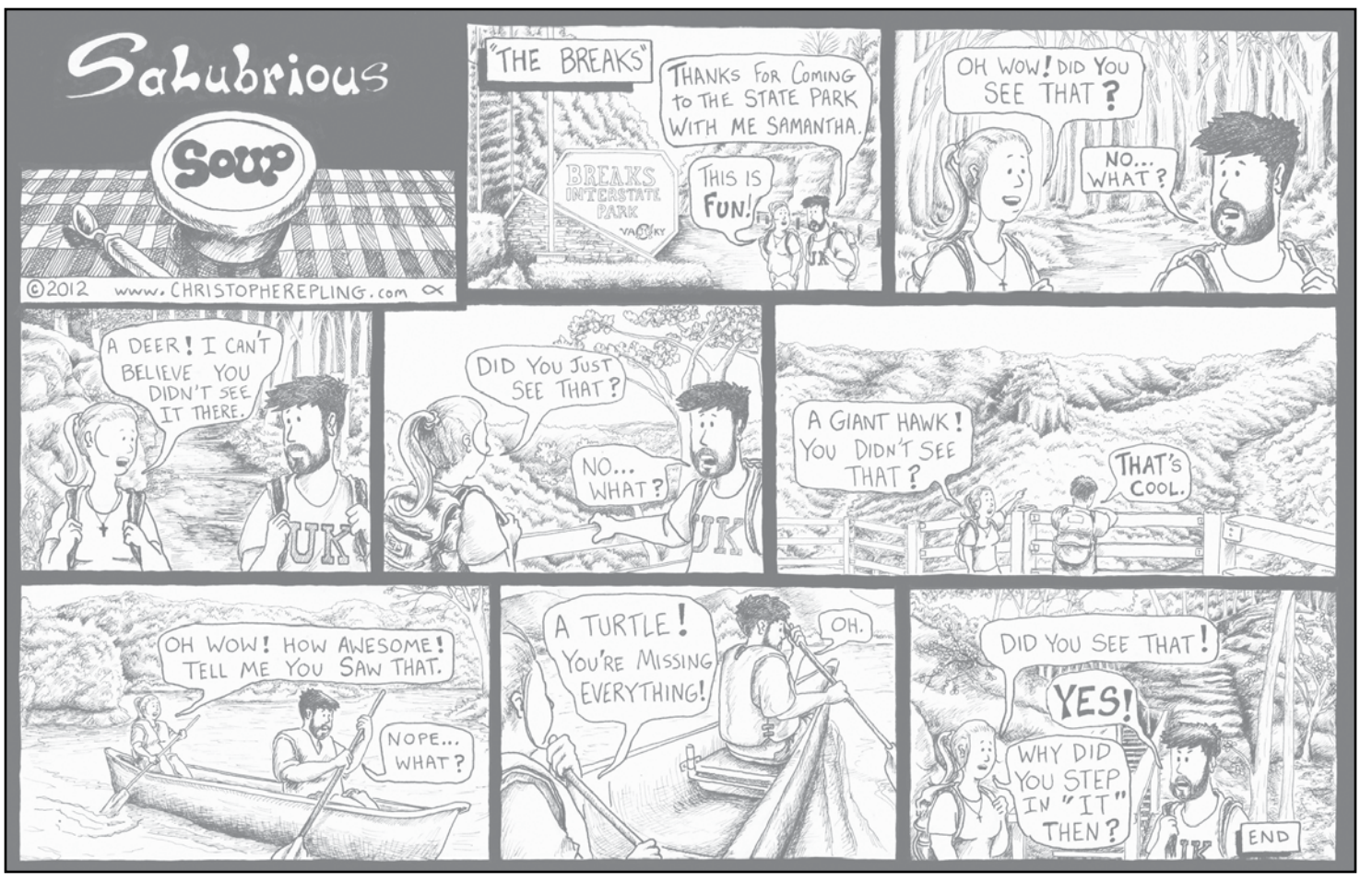
Address correspondence, including advertising inquiries and letters to the editor, to **noceditors@yahoo.com.**

Comics

I'm not from here — Kenn Minter

Delmar von Lexington — Dylan Blount

Salubrious Soup — Christopher Epling



Community Supported Journalism Order Form

Individual Shares (good for 1 year)

$40: 3"x5" ad for whatever you want to promote.

$50+: Add + invite to NoC potluck at Danny's abode.

Business/Non-Profit Shares (1 year)

$50: 3:x5" ad.

$75: Add + invite to NoC potluck at Danny's abode.

Submit payment online, or mail order to: North of Center, 430 N. Martin Luther King Blvd, Lexington, KY, 30508

For more info, write to the address above, or visite noclexington.com and search for Community Sustained Journalism.

Letters, cont.

Continued from page 7

Mr. Rmoney in fact derives over 98 percent of his $20,000,000.00 in income from interest, dividends, and capital gains. So what he is supporting is that instead of paying 14 percent to 15 percent taxes on his income, he will be paying less than 1 percent taxes on his income. (This is based on one of his two years of released income tax returns where he received $360,000 in income from speaking fees.)

I triple checked my calculation. He makes twenty million dollars per year ($20,000,000.00/year). His income is from interest, dividends and capital gains (in the form of carried interest), which would not be subject to taxes under his tax plan. The $360,000 would be subject to a 39 percent tax, except he wants to implement an across the board cut of 20 percent. So that effectively becomes a 32 percent rate.

32 percent of $360,000 is approximately $120,000 in income taxes. This means that the tax on $20,000,000.00 would be $120,000, for a tax rate of .6 percent (that's right, point six percent!).

It's nothing short of remarkable the audacity of the plan. Obama may have the "Audacity of Hope," but Rmoney has the "Audacity of Greed."

God help us if he wins the Presidency.

Charles A. Bowsher
Southbend Drive, Lexington

Dear Mr. President:

I don't know if this will ever reach you in time. I have very limited resources so I can't buy my way to national attention, even though I believe that what I have to ask/say is of utmost importance to our Nation and to you.

Thursday, October 18, 2012 you were right when you said on the The Daily Show that, "There is no excuse not to vote."

I also think it is time that all of you in Washington begin to look at things from a completely different angle. Instead of you in Washington telling us what you are going to be doing, we (the People) need to be telling you what you are to do for us.

It's time the American People be given an actual opportunity to not only vote in elections, but to begin voting on some of the major issues going forward. We have the technology and capability to poll vast numbers of Americans nearly instantaneously, yet it is unused. Why aren't we being presented weekly topics and information to meet about and to discuss? The American people have a burning thirst to be involved in direct Democracy. Yes, it will take a tremendous amount of effort to pull this off, but our Democracy is worth it. We are a competent lot, just you try us.

In the meantime, here is what I ask you to pledge to. There are ten items. You get ten points for each one. What is your score? What are you willing to commit to?

The Pledge I want you to make to us, or "Ten Things I want my President to be willing to fight for"

1- ___ Preserve and protect current Medicare Program for all.

2- ___ Preserve and protect current Social Security for all.

3- ___ Return income taxes for those making more than $250,000/year to levels they were during the Clinton Presidency (best job growth in decades).

4- ___ Reinstate the estate tax rates of the Clinton Presidency, while preserving protections for family farms less than 10,000 acres.

5- ___ Increase educational funding and programs for all.

6- ___ If we know of cruelty in the world, it must be stopped.

7- ___ Set up a commission with members drawn from the general population, not just big wigs and great thinkers, but school teachers, bus drivers, mechanics, ministers, mothers, fathers, engineers, etc. etc. etc. Their mission is to work on a vision for the future America. The time to act is now. The future will not wait on us any longer.

8- ___ Global Peace

9- ___ Fight to end "extreme poverty" (poverty that kills) by 2020

10- ___ Better protection for the environment.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Bowsher
Southbend Drive, Lexington