

Paying for a top 20 education

UK student body getting richer by the year

By Danny Mayer

According to an analysis of student surveys of First Year students at the University of Kentucky, higher tuition does seem to have had a negative effect on who gets to attend the state’s flagship university. Simply put, as tuition has skyrocketed, the UK student body appears to have grown both increasingly richer and, correspondingly, decreasingly poorer. Considering that the state as a whole has not grown more rich and less poor, this news should call into question the school’s notion that increased enrollment implies increased access to the university and college life.

Each fall, the university surveys new students on a range of topics related to their high school experiences, work-goals, and college expectations. The information is collected and posted on the university’s Office of Institutional Research (OIR) website. One of the last questions on the form—question 31 in 2001 and question 29 in 2008—asks students to report their family’s income.

In the Fall 2001 survey, students who reported coming from families making less than \$50,000 comprised roughly 28% of the entire student population. Correspondingly, students who reported coming from families making in excess of \$100,000 constituted 26% of First-Year students. The college had, in other words, a fairly diverse representation of economic classes. Nearly 10% of students attended from families that made less than \$24,000. Tuition for instate students attending UK in the fall of that year was \$3,735.

Three years later, in the Fall 2005 survey, the balance between students coming from families earning under 50K and over 100K began to show signs of unsettling. Professors, administrators, and visitors in 2005 could expect to see a more wealthy

student body. Those coming from families earning in excess of \$100,000 increased their campus presence from 26% in 2001 to nearly 37% of all new students in 2005. This increase in rich students, of course, came from somewhere—predominantly from a decrease in the number of students attending UK from families making \$50,000 or less less. This demographic, which represented 28% of new students in 2001, now measured just under 19% of new students in 2005. By this time, tuition had risen over \$2,000 in four years time to \$5,812 per year (plus books and room and board and fees).

In the most recent first-Year survey found on the OIR’s website, 2008, things don’t appear to have changed all that much. Students from well-off families making over \$100,000 a year now comprise 37% of new undergraduates; those from families making less than \$50,000, now represent less than 17% of students. Tuition in the 2008 fall term came in at \$7,736, nearly four grand more than the 2001 tuition.

All in all, the first-year student surveys paint a stark picture. In eight years time, students attending UK who came from families making at or below median wage had dropped from 28% to 17% of incoming students; meanwhile that 11percent decline nearly mirrored the parallel increase in students coming from families situated in the upper 10% of wage earners. It’s almost exact—less poor students; more room for rich students.

To be sure, such figures are not “official.” Since in the First-Year survey, students self-report information, they could be inflating or deflating their family income, most likely inadvertently. And of course First-Year students only give a partial snapshot of the entire university.

I use this information because the university, concerned though it claims to be about diversity, doesn’t

have any official figures regarding the economic diversity of its students. (Research rankings don’t measure such a thing as economic diversity.) Rather than collect data on the problem, the University’s response to tuition issues has been to establish a President’s Scholarship Initiative that looks to solicit donations to cover a select group of students to help cover the increasing tuition. In other words, image-conscious band-aids.

The First-Year surveys are as good as I might find.

Paying for a Top 20 education

Whenever a new high-dollar building breaks ground on campus or a new high-profile committee gets named (with plenty of exciting outside talent attracted in for the price), or student tuition gets raised above 9 per cent, you hear it. “The goal of becoming a top-20 public research university is more than admirable...especially considering the overall benefit the plan would bring to the Commonwealth. It will raise education levels, improve health care, accelerate research and increase engagement in communities statewide.”

That one’s from the *Kentucky Kernel* (“UK’s Top 20 Plan far from goals” October 13). Some are shorter, more direct and less nuanced, as in Mayor Newberry’s assurance last month at the unveiling of the brand new \$18.6 million dollar Davis Marksbury Building that the engineering research facility—the second of a four-building “digital village” at the tony North end of campus—represented “a step toward UK reaching its Top-20 status as a research institution.”

Here’s a final one, for effect. It’s the one that the writers at the *Kernel* and Mayor Newberry both got their ideas from, CEO Todd himself in the

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The *Twilight* series

Teen sex, vampires, and passive females: what’s not to like?

By A.G. Greebs

There’s a lot of stuff in the world worth getting pissed about—like health care reform, and the lack of a living wage. And there’s a lot of stuff that’s probably not worth getting pissed about, except that it’s sort of fun—like Michele Bachmann, and the number of people I know who think that corn holing is a really fun game. Hell, I spend most of my time angry about something or another. It keeps the heart rate up, basically my version of cardio.

So when a friend of mine called in a fit of towering rage about the *Twilight* saga, I was less surprised that he’d wound himself up about something so unimportant than by the fact that he would publicly admit to having read the *Twilight* saga.

“Have you read these?” he screamed. “They’re sick. I can’t believe parents are giving them to young girls.”

He proceeded to give an incredibly lurid summary of the books, including:

- The extensive bruises the heroine got while having sex—but can’t remember getting.
- The virtuous, sexless marriages (uh, “life-bonding”) that some of the male characters establish with very (very) young girls.
- The woman who comes to realize that her boyfriend was justified in leaving her for her cousin, because she was “a genetic dead-end” (i.e., infertile).
- And of course, the brave heroine who sacrifices her life to carry her baby to term—despite the fact that it’s eating her from the inside (Pretty subtle, Stephanie).

All this, and hundreds and hundreds of pages of pure, sexless love? Who could possibly resist?

Not me, that’s for sure. And not many others, judging by the fervor that’s greeting the release of *Twilight: New Moon*, the second in the franchise of movies based on the books.

There once was this dog in Tokyo—Hachiko—who’d meet his owner at the train station every night after work. One day, the man died after getting on the train, never returning to meet the dog. Undeterred, the dog continued going to the station every night for ten years, hoping to finally meet his master.

I bring this up because Hachiko, a dog who went to the same spot every day for ten years looking for his owner, is about a million times more compelling than Bella, the central character of the *Twilight* saga.

New Moon is basically the story of Bella’s profound, soul-shattering depression in the months after her boyfriend leaves her. Author Stephanie Meyer has been praised for her realistic portrayal of single-minded teenage devotion, but in *New Moon* it reaches pathological extremes.

To say that Bella is passive would be a massive understatement. She has no real interests that don’t involve staring at her boyfriend, Edward. She’s mostly defined by what she doesn’t want to do: shop, hang with friends, see movies, age, or travel anywhere outside the county line.

At one point, Bella digs out her passport, and Meyers feels compelled to include a full paragraph explanation of why someone so entirely lacking any sort of curiosity about the world would even have one. (Something about her mother’s second

Raiders of the lost block

Photographer turns archeologist to unearth latest project

By J.C. Comannokers

Richie Wireman has been around the block once or twice.

Wireman’s block is the one that rests in the center of downtown, the one where the much-maligned CentrePointe project currently hosts a pasture of green grass.

Luckily for us, when Wireman went down to that block his camera was almost always in tow. And he went

quite often.

A photographer with a love of music, Wireman began to shoot countless shows on the block: at Mia’s, Buster’s, Underlying Themes and The Dame. Not to mention the people interacting inside those venues and outside on the sidewalks—he was capturing the vibrancy of a place and time.

Then that place went away, but Wireman continued to shoot. The pounding of drums was replaced with

the pounding of jackhammers.

As the block was being razed, Wireman came down three or four times a week in the mornings to shoot. The demolition people gave him free reign as long as he wisely steered clear of heavy machinery.

“The project took on a different slant when the buildings were gone and they started digging into the ground,” Wireman claimed. “They started to find all these artifacts—hitting old privies in the center of the block from as far back as the 1800s, pulling up different glassware, bottles and pottery.”

“That got me interested in the historical aspect of the block. So I started collecting the artifacts, and eventually had the idea of incorporating these artifacts with my photography,” he said.

Wireman even had the construction workers excited as to what might be unearthed next. He became so focused on the project that he found himself alone on Sunday mornings digging for more—a photographer turned archeologist. All of which culminates in his unique exhibit debuting at Friday’s Gallery Hop.

Fittingly, the venue for Wireman’s



Glass shards excavated from the CentrePointe block by Richie Wireman.

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The Neighborhood

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

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On someone else's land

Misadventures in gardening: an ongoing series

By Beth Connors-Manke

While Danny has been filling this column space with his thoughts on the basil economy, I have been eating. Every week as our CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) share showed up in my fridge, I took to the serious and very pleasurable task of eating vegetables. So a few weeks ago, as our summer season CSA was coming to a close, I found myself musing in the kitchen while eating something green. I was thinking about some of the lessons I'd learned at the London Ferrell Community Garden over the summer.

Really, they didn't *feel* like lessons. They weren't painful; they didn't require lots of forceful self-discipline. A central lesson I learned from my summer at the community garden was the pleasure of consumption.

Now, "consumption" is kind of a dirty word. For more than a century, our prophets have bemoaned the American desire to consume and to consume *so much*. Around the turn of the twentieth century, economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen introduced the term "conspicuous consumption" in his book *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Veblen's critique of consumerism was not complimentary. Since then, criticisms of consumer culture have been a permanent, if ineffectual, refrain in discussions of the

American way of life. Veblen was just one of many who lament the American desire to accumulate wealth, to store up lots of goods.

A short tangent, if you will. For a while, I was enamored with a certain pop song. The story line, or so I thought, was about a man seeing a woman on the subway. Captivated by her beauty, he wanted to be with her but knew that wasn't in the cards. She was a stranger. They were on the subway. Only in movies do those two things end in marriage (or sex at least). He would simply have to appreciate her beauty, be grateful for it, and let her go off into the world without the desire to possess her.

I liked that. It made me think about the ephemeral pleasure of beautiful things (trees), beautiful flavors (chocolate ice cream, brussel sprouts with sesame seeds), and beautiful feelings (kisses, joy) and how wonderful it is to appreciate them and let that be enough.

Well, I was wrong about the pop song. After I finally convinced my better half to buy me the CD for some holiday, I got to pay more attention to the lyrics. It turns out that if the man on the train could have captured her, he would have. He *did* want to own her.

Even if the song wasn't what I had wanted it to be, my thinking had shifted. I began to enjoy the fact that many things I was attracted to (art, shoes, sycamores) were in the world but not necessarily in my house. I was getting less greedy.

So back to my musings in the kitchen a few weeks ago. I was taking pleasure in consuming, in eating something green and delicious. It occurred to me at that moment that maybe we should distinguish between the ideas of consumption and ownership.

As my Webster's told me, "to consume" denotes destruction and devouring; its connotation suggests obsession and desire. Think here of how we consume oil and coal, at whatever cost to the environment.

But when we consume food, we take it into our bodies and transform it into energy. This transient experience is absolutely necessary; food is supposed to perish (either in our bodies or in the field), as our bodies are supposed to perish. The lessons of abundance and decay are lessons of the garden. Many a weekend, Ryan sent me home from the garden with greens that had to be eaten or they would simply rot.

However, when we talk about consumer culture, we're generally not talking about the pleasurable consumption of the garden. We're talking about ownership, about buying material goods that we usually don't devour in any productive way. We're talking about cars, TVs, your sixth cell phone in four years, clothing. These are things that we house and then spend lots of time maintaining and protecting from theft. Our ownership of these things consumes us. The same thing happens in the pop song, even though he doesn't get the girl. He's obsessed with the fact that she can't be exclusively his. He's more hung up on ownership than on her presence in the world.

I didn't get to do any work at the London Ferrell Community Garden when fall came. It was back to the books and the classroom. But I'm sure I know what happened there: everything got turned over, tilled under. The gardeners let go of it, grateful for all those months of abundance. You can't really own a garden. You have to maintain it, and sometimes you have to protect it, but—thankfully—you can't make it something *owned*.

Mountaintop Removal: Some news from the eastern front

By Martin Mudd

Shit's getting kinda scary in the coal-fields. Coal companies are laying miners off because the demand has dropped out, but they're blaming the layoffs on "treehuggers" and basically baiting people to go get violent. The NWP21 Hearing in Pikeville was fucking insane, and at the one in Charleston, apparently a Mountain Justice contingent was turned away by police and were pushed around by a mob of Friends of Coal. Yikes. We just had our first jail sentence of the campaign: Joe Hamsher of West Virginia got 20

days for blocking a road at Massey headquarters.

Meanwhile, Massey has started blasting at Coal River Mountain, not far at all from the 7 billion-gallon Brushy Fork slurry impoundment perched above a valley full of people. If that thing fails (as they have in Buffalo Creek, WV and Martin County, KY),



many hundreds will die. I was arrested this past summer protesting their plans to blast, and here now they've started blasting. Coal River Mountain has a large group of residents who are trying to get wind-turbines built on the mountain rather than mining it for coal, but Massey's gonna get what it can while Mountaintop Removal (MTR) is still legal.

The newly-formed Kentucky branch of the Mountain Justice organization has recently seen a lot of action. We had a great event to raise funds to help pay the fine of an activist who locked himself down to mining equipment in West Virginia in May. In Lexington, activists hung a banner on Memorial Coliseum to protest the UK Trustees decision to rename a basketball dorm the Wildcat "Coal" Lodge in exchange for a \$7 million donation. Around 30 people attended the Board meeting to demand to be heard by the Trustees. The Board refused to listen to them.

We're looking forward to working with our allies in Kentucky and across the region to use non-violent direct action to pressure utilities, politicians, and coal companies to stop MTR immediately and start building sustainable economies and renewable energy in Appalachia. For more information, check out www.ilovemountains.org and www.mountainjustice.org. And keep acting.

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Feinberg Fund Silent Auction at UK Student Ballroom

December event to help raise health funds for UK grad student

NOC staff

On December 3, the University of Kentucky English Department, Hispanic Studies, and Graduate School Congress will be holding The Feinberg Fund Silent Auction to help raise money for Kelly Feinberg, who has been recently diagnosed with liver cancer. Kelly is an award-winning instructor in the Writing Program at the University of Kentucky, as well as an avid gardener and crafter. Her husband, Matt, is a doctoral candidate in Hispanic Studies at the University. They are both kept busy chasing their son, Ari, who is 16 months old.

In February of 2009, Kelly was diagnosed with breast cancer. After six months of treatment, she was released with a clean bill of health and began a grateful recovery. Unfortunately, in September, the family learned that Kelly's cancer had metastasized. Pains in her abdomen led to tests revealing tumors in her liver. She is now undergoing chemotherapy at the UK Chandler

Hospital in hopes of shrinking these tumors.

The Feinberg Fund Silent Auction will be held on Thursday December 3 in the Student Center Small Ballroom on the UK campus from 6:00-9:00pm. We will auction off a variety of gift certificates, gift baskets, vintage books,

artwork, and other unique items from local businesses. Money raised at the event will help defray the enormous cost of Kelly's medical bills. We hope to see you at this important event.

For more information, contact Leah Bayens at 859-583-7796.



Kelly, Matt, and Ari Feinberg at Natural Bridge.

COURTESY KELLY AND MATT FEINBERG

Paying for a top 20 education (cont.)

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school’s Top 20 Business Plan: “[A] top-20 research university is an essential part of any serious effort to make every Kentucky community stronger and the life of every Kentuckian better.”

But does it? Make things better, that is. What lens should we look through to reply to that statement, and which communities does Todd have in mind when he claims Top 20 as a state-wide panacea to problems of poverty, health care, and community destructions of all types?

Certainly the massive investments in digital cities, pharmacy buildings, and university hospitals that comprise the majority of campus building funds do not positively impact most undergraduate students coming here, though of course students have increasingly footed the bill for these Top 20 projects through tuition increases, and will continue paying for them via building maintenance and energy costs that the school now has to fund (and which will also get figured into future student tuition payments.

As the data on First-Year student family income indicates, UK’s compact is negatively effecting Kentucky’s poorer families. And in a poor state with a lot of poor families, that’s a hell of a lot of communities that have lost access to their state university so that it may compete nationally against other universities. To suggest that such competition is beneficial to poorer communities who are now priced out of the UK market seems a bit ridiculous. And pompous.

Kentucky is, after all, incredibly poor when measured in dollars and cents. Of the country’s poorest 100

counties as judged by median income, a whopping 29 of them are located in Kentucky. (Mississippi, housing 13 of the poorest counties, is a distant second place.)

When a new \$3,000 gets added to the tuition tab each year, it gets more difficult to see the university as a place that’s trying to help you out.

And this is not unique to Kentucky. Less than 24 hours ago, graduate students at the University of Illinois went on general strike. Here is an excerpt of graduate student Michael Verderame’s address to the Board of Trustees (who did not flee in horror):

“Tuition is skyrocketing, at the same time that financial aid resources are drying up. As you just heard in the University Treasurer’s presentation, tuition revenue has increased approximately 30% in the past four years. As a result, access to a U of I education is increasingly being phased out for students from poor and working class families.”

Here in Kentucky, of the counties that comprise the bottom fifth of Kentucky counties according to median family income (most located not far from Lexington in eastern Kentucky coal areas), very few have sent *more* students to Lexington during the past six years.

Unsurprisingly, the school’s county-by-county demographic records shows most of those economically poor places—Harlan, Breathitt, Letcher, Floyd counties, to name a couple—have sent fewer students to Lexington for a UK education since 2001. And this comes at a time when the UK braintrust has put university enrollment on steroids.

Strip all those communities away, the ones who on paper have come to

have less access to UK, and well, Top 20’s appeal starts getting very limited. It’s steadily approaching the sort of demographics you’d find, say, at a day at Keeneland betting on the horses. Mostly white; mostly well-off. A couple

exceptions to better define the rule.

Trust me, that Keeneland demographic is not representative of the Commonwealth. And it shouldn’t be representative for the Commonwealth’s flagship university, either.

Extra! Extra! North of Center seeks Photo Editor

Poor hours, worse pay highlights of position

North of Center is seeking to add a photography editor to its news team. The position will include no pay but plenty of fringe benefits like a biweekly \$35 tab at Al’s Bar and general goodwill. (Tab shared with other 6 other hungry and/or alcoholic members of the NoC team.)

Photo editor will be responsible for assigning photographers to news stories; collecting, sizing, and cropping photos; and sending them to the layout editor for placement in the paper. Photo editors will also be responsible for developing a photo database for future use by the paper.

Ethical flexibility a must.

To apply, get in touch with Danny Mayer at noceditors@yahoo.com.

Email from Illinois
Reports of unrest among the Illini

Editor’s Note: This email arrived the night this paper went to print. After contract negotiations broke down with the University of Illinois, the school’s Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) went on strike Monday morning. The sticking point: the university would not guarantee tuition remittance for out-of-state teaching assistants. GEO members teach 23.1% of all undergraduate course hours at the university, yet receive a mere 6.5% of state funding. Faculty salaries comprise over 55% of the university’s budget.

This is a first-hand account of the event from a participant graduate student who once attended UK. Illinois is both a benchmark and Top 20 research university.

Huge, inspiring, soul-reaffirming day. Thanks all of you for the kind words of support. You forget just how utterly gratifying and emotional it is to work collectively until you’re actually there, over 1000 strong, freezing in the rain and raising hell as one body. by the end of the day, we moved from enclave participation guarding strike lines at every door of a stuck building to en masse encirclement of the administration building. In regard to Wes’s insights, both Teamsters and UPS refused to drive

trucks onto the campus and have halted all deliveries. Many faculties have shut down in solidarity, many in English in particular devoted large portions of the day to writing administration personally explaining just exactly what public education means.

All activity in the humanities-social sciences sector was shut down completely. English, as usual, won the prize for 0% activity in the building and the entirety of the department has agreed to refuse to extend any labor-teaching, administrative, etc.--until the strike is resolved favorably. Many faculty marched with us. We had folks down from 4 other big ten schools as well--Michigan, Michigan St., and Wisconsin.

I have blackberry video but will not sabotage your inboxes with massive files. i’ll youtube them and send links, perhaps, if the main site doesn’t have something up soon, but for those of you on facebook (which eventually you footdraggers will have to do so quit stalling!) i’ll have them up there for the viewing in a few.

here’s, again, the official site: www.uigeo.org

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On Saturday, November 14, I met with Richie Wireman to talk about his upcoming Gallery Hop exhibit (see front page story). We decided to roll down to the CentrePointe block—Richie via skateboard and I on the swift walker (that’s a bike).

While there, a couple of gentlemen hopped over the fence and started to throw around the pigskin. It was a beautiful afternoon. Who wouldn’t want to enjoy it with some exercise and camaraderie?

And right downtown, in an urban green space—it was like Central Park in the Bluegrass. Progressive city planning had arrived.

Except...well, what were they doing in the sacred Webb-zone?

They frolicked about for a good 15 minutes and they were still there when we split. During that time a police car parked on Limestone; an officer got out and let the gentlemen continue their football follies (he didn’t see them practice the Wildcat formation though).

Had the block been turned into a public park without the public knowing about it?

Who were these men of special privilege taunting all those who would love to be able to join in their reindeer games?

NoC wants to know—and will investigate further. —J.C. Comannokers

Review: *Nick Nolte: No Exit*

By Colleen Glenn

“Every interview is a lie,” declares Nick Nolte in *No Exit*. Ironically, this may be one of the few honest statements he makes in the film.

Nick Nolte: No Exit (2008), the latest contribution by Kentucky filmmakers Tom Thurman and Tom Marksbury, is a rare and experimental documentary on the life and career of actor Nick Nolte. Since 1985, Thurman and Marksbury have been making documentaries on film stars, directors, and American cultural icons. Their explorations of figures such as Sam Peckinpah and Hunter S. Thompson have always been insightful, graceful, and intellectual, paced at a slow rhythm that allows for the discoveries about the figure in question to manifest. In their latest work, their characteristic lyrical voiceover narration has been replaced by the subject’s own attempts to make sense of his life. The result is riveting.

The stark, bare-bones documentary casts Nolte in the roles of both interviewer and interviewee with Nolte both asking and answering questions about his life and acting history. The questions, written by Marksbury,



are tough and direct, designed to cut through the customary bullshit and make the endeavor worthwhile.

In recent years, Nick Nolte the celebrity buffoon has obscured Nick Nolte the actor. His notorious DUI mug shot is now as much a part of his profile as his acting credits. Nolte,

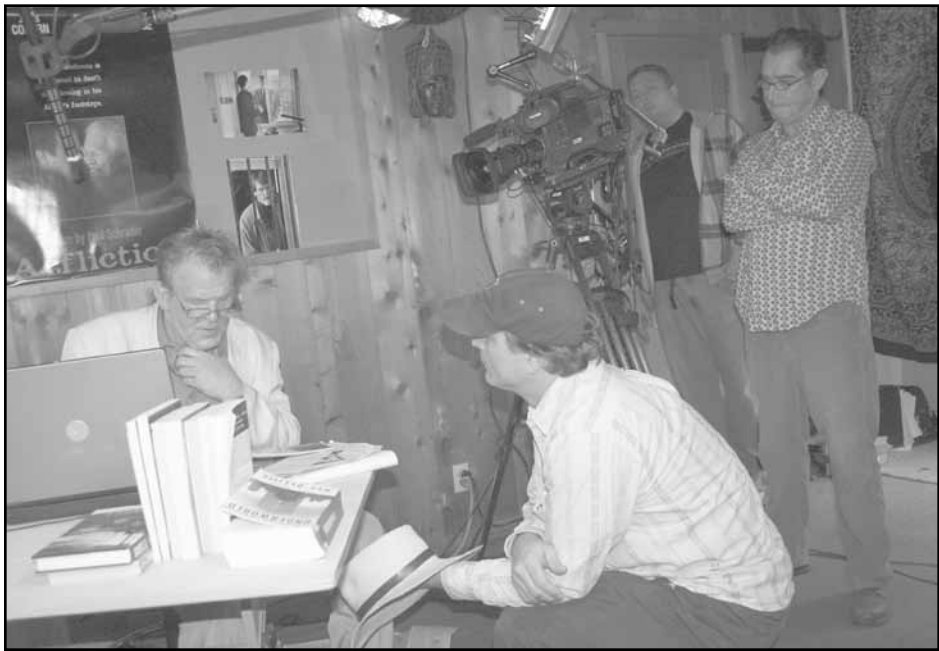
alternatively funny and serious, is surprisingly articulate and cognizant of the caricature he has become in the media. “Are you a whore? Will you do things for money?” asks Nolte. “Well, I’m certainly not doing this for money, that’s for sure,” he retorts.

No Exit is challenging and risky for everyone involved, especially Nolte. At times, it’s downright humbling. But Nolte bears the interrogation well, seeming grateful, in a way, for the opportunity to clear his name—even though ultimately he chooses not to.

Though the film was shot over a two-day period, with the questions filmed one evening and the answers the following morning, *No Exit* is constructed as if Nolte is interviewing himself in real time. In fact, the editing even goes so far as to suggest that Nolte is at times surprised or contemptuous of his own answers. Cutting to “Nick 1” for reaction shots provides a sense of self-detachment that seems crucial to understanding the enigmatic Nolte, who offers strikingly different permutations of himself from shot to shot.

One never knows when an actor stops performing. Is it when the cameras stop rolling? Or when he walks off the set? Or when he is home, safe from the paparazzi? In *No Exit*, the performative aspects of Nolte’s interview are unavoidable, and yet, at the same time, Nolte gives the impression that the mask is off, that all guards are down. His self-deprecatory demeanor and disarming sense of “realness” persist, even though he is essentially playing two characters onscreen.

No Exit will make you re-think celebrity interviews and the concept



Nick Nolte, Tom Thurman, and Tom Marksbury on the set of *No Exit*, to be released via video-on-demand services on December 16.

of performance in general. Perhaps more importantly, it may prompt you to see more of Nolte’s films: despite the fact that Nolte himself says little about them, the testimony offered by others in the documentary reminds us he has made significant contributions to the movies.

Thurman and Marksbury have always been interested in Hollywood outlaws, and while they have always aimed for objectivity, they have treated their subjects with a kind of nostalgia that testifies to their esteem for them. The tone of their superb films on Warren Oates, Ben Johnson and Sam Peckinpah has always struck me as congruent with that of the many Westerns in which their subjects starred and directed. That is to say, the documentaries themselves evoke the mood of Westerns from the

1960s and ‘70s—intriguing, beautiful, and melancholy.

If their prior work evoked a similar sense of loss that we might associate with the end of an era, *No Exit* pushes beyond that boundary by revealing its very subject to be an anachronism.

For Nolte, watching *No Exit* must feel something like attending his own funeral.

Nick Nolte: *No Exit* was directed and produced by Tom Thurman and written by Tom Marksbury. Premiered in May 2008 at the Cannes Film Market, *No Exit* will be released on December 16 through Sundance Selects’ video-on-demand service, then through the Blockbuster chain, and then later on The Sundance Channel. *No Exit* was funded in collaboration with Post Time Productions.

Twilight (cont.)

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or third marriage...blah, blah. To say that Meyer is verbose would also be a massive understatement.)

It’s the extraordinary length that saves the saga from being as sick as my friend made it out to be. At the end of the day, *Twilight* books are just too dull

Hundreds and hundreds of pages of pure, sexless love? Who could possibly resist?

to be truly deviant. They are creepy, though, in that way that most discussion of sex by religious conservatives comes across as creepy.

and yet she’s written books that are entirely about sex. (Incidentally, she maintains that the characters “came to her in a dream,” which is vaguely embarrassing, the Mormon-hausfrau equivalent of “I fantasized about this while pleasuring myself,” although it does look better on a dust jacket.)

Yet, despite my friend’s outrage, I’ve decided this is no big deal. It’s true *Twilight* books are very, very easy to mock. And because they’re regressive and misogynistic, they’re fun to mock. But Stephanie Meyer didn’t invent self-hatred as a marketing tool or narrative device. The financial viability of Yoplait, Victoria Secret, and the Republican Party (to name a very few) entirely depend on convincing women that being a woman is sort of a shameful and vaguely icky thing.

What makes us uncomfortable with *Twilight* in particular, I suspect, is that it’s marketed to kids. The “take me, break me” mentality that underscores so much contemporary romance

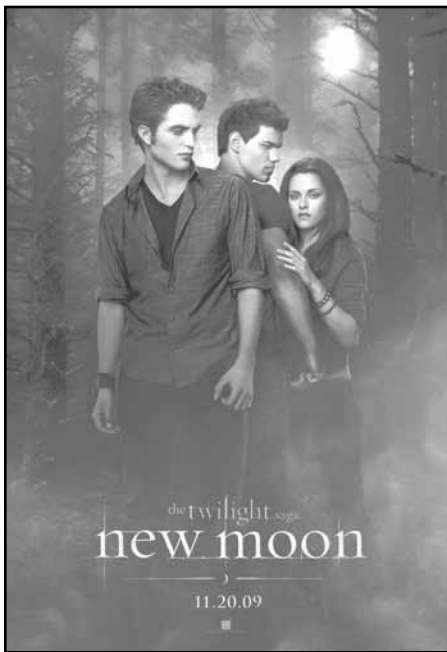
least slightly inured to it by the time they’re twelve, they aren’t going to have much luck withstanding it in high school.

The *Twilight* series is creepy in that way that most discussion of sex by religious conservatives comes across as creepy.

Which isn’t to say these questions are unimportant. No one who’s lived through the Bush administration could make the mistake of thinking stupidity is harmless. But as *Twilight* takes its place between stripper Halloween costumes and beauty magazines, it’s easier

to put it into perspective with so much of our pop culture—meaningless, interchangeable crap.

And yeah, kind of hilarious.



The *Twilight* Saga: *New Moon* opens in theaters everywhere on November 20.



Bella and Edward do that crazy thing that they do.

Meyer uses the word “sex” about four times in her several thousand pages of writing (mostly she prefers to say “it”), but I have read porn that is less lavishly erotic than *Twilight*’s descriptions of ice-cold abstinence. This is the paradox that makes *Twilight* seem a little more twisted than it probably is—Meyer clearly feels that all sex is dirty and wrong,

for adult women seems a little less harmless if it’s given to 12-year-olds as a model for power dynamics in a relationship. Who wants to tell small girls that the best way to get affection is to be entirely passive (and dumb like a rock)?

But this is a pretty prevalent message in our culture, and if those girls haven’t managed to become at

Lex. Film League “Do-ers” Video Contest

By Kiley Lane

When we came up with the idea to have a Lexington Film League video contest, we wanted to make sure that it got both the community and filmmakers involved. People living in Lexington sometimes complain that there is nothing to do here. But to the contrary, there is a lot going on—just no one seems to know about it.

For us, and perhaps for many of you, we are tired of *not* hearing about what’s happening in Lexington. Furthermore, we would like to hear and see more of what people are doing across the state. There are a lot of cool people, organizations, and businesses “doing” interesting things in Kentucky, and we, the Lexington Film League, are asking you, the filmmaker or person with a camera, to tell us a story.

The Lexington Film League invites you to submit a five-minute video about people trying to make a difference. Any individual, business, or organization can enter this contest;

you just need an idea and a little bit of equipment. Say your neighbor delivers brownies to the old folks home every Saturday: Why? Tell us his story. Or perhaps there is a business in town focused on becoming the greenest company in Central Kentucky; tell us the story. Or you happen to be a member of an organization that helps underprivileged children, people with HIV/AIDS, builds community gardens or likes to march around the streets of Lexington playing music and twirling hula-hoops all for the sake of a few smiles; definitely, tell us the story.

A big event for filmmakers, friends, and family will be held in February 2010 to announce the winner. There is a cash prize, but your incentive should be to show off your filmmaking and/or story telling skills. If you have questions please email us.

The contest deadline is January 15, 2010 so you better get started!

Please visit lexingtonfilmleague.org for contest details and guidelines or send us an email at lexfilmleague@gmail.com.

Culture

Morris Book Shop & the cultural commons

By Nick Kidd

I love escaping with a newspaper or a book, being whisked away by the words and thoughts of a famous (or not-so-famous) author, transported from the monotony of day-to-day experience, whether it's to explore impossible fictional worlds or grim realities half-a-world away. Obviously, I harbor romanticism toward the written word, which, if nothing else, explains why I majored in English at UK.

But I'm an old-school reader, one who actually enjoys holding and unfolding a newspaper more than gleaning my news from a computer screen. So I read of newspaper's demise with trepidation. It's a story *du jour* most everywhere, a reaction to unforgiving forces like "the market," "the times," and "progress." Still, it just

Google's pursuit and acquisition of the largest (digital) library ever assembled is a significant investment with ostensibly lucrative returns.

It's important to remember that Google is a large corporation playing for keeps. But what's interesting is that they're taking on copyright holders, some of which are large corporations themselves, in both their digitization of the global library and even in their day-to-day operations as a search engine.

One of the most vocal critics of Google has been Rupert Murdoch, chief executive of News Corporation. News Corp owns The Wall Street Journal, Fox (including 20th Century Fox and Fox News), the New York Post, HarperCollins, MySpace, and hundreds of other magazines, TV networks, and newspapers across the globe. They even own the National

who, a few months ago, promised to start charging for News Corp's online newspapers by June 2010, an initiative he's already backpedaling on.

Murdoch is obviously thinking as a protectionist, but these days that logic is rapidly becoming old hat. Corporations have always threatened, bullied, and sued the pants off anyone who dared threaten their profits, but even Murdoch must know he's fighting a losing battle this time around. In order to stop aggregators, News Corp would have to ask the courts to more narrowly interpret the Fair Use clause in copyright law, which could potentially backfire for News Corp—and every other copyright holder—by actually expanding the interpretation of what constitutes Fair Use.

We plebeians down here on earth will have to see how things shake out through the courts with all the Goliath versus Goliath in-fighting going on over digital rights management, but I'll take the Blue Pill and assume that copyright holders will have to accept reduced profits at the expense of a thriving, more vital intellectual commons. The modern state of the music industry might make for a telling example of what's to come for publishers.

Small Print: Morris Book Shop

Of course, all this speculation is of a decidedly armchair variety, so I figured I'd talk with someone who has a horse in the race, so to speak. I set up an appointment to have an open-ended discussion with Hap Houlihan, manager of the Morris Book Shop, about the future of print media. The starting point of our discussion was, ironically, a "paper"—in this case a PDF—I sent Hap via e-mail called *Hamlet's Blackberry: Why Paper is Eternal* by William Powers. I contacted Hap and set up our discussion through the digital medium of Facebook.

I met Hap at the Morris Book Shop; he was there "on the clock," meaning he'd occasionally have to get up and help a customer find a title, often fielding a bevy of questions along the way. This happened, in fact, as soon we sat down to chat.

Hap proved to be a patient and well-informed tender of the store and his interactions with customers gave me time to reflect on the shop surrounding me. Alongside where Hap and I were to converse was a large "Kentucky" section, the first prominent section you see as you enter the store. To my right sat a display of books made by the Larkspur Press (out of Monterey, KY) featuring several titles by Kentucky authors.

As Hap finished helping one customer pre-order the new Cricket Press book (Cricket being comprised of Lexingtonians Brian and Sara Turner), another customer walked through the door. This happened to be local musician Ben Sollee, whom Hap helped find a title toward the far end of the store. The lone clerk working the register was a friend I'd made years ago volunteering at WRFL, Kate Hensley. Then I remembered that the Morris Book Shop made its Lexington debut by setting up a booth at WRFL's FreeKY Festival last spring, selling their first book to Robert Schneider, also known as the frontman of Robbert Bobbert, Thee American Revolution, and The Apples in Stereo. As Sollee and Hap returned to the front of the store, they were discussing Massey Energy and the Kentucky coalfields.

It was then that I got a sense that Morris was more than just a place selling books. It was a manifestation of the intellectual and cultural commons, specializing in transmitting a local kind of knowledge. I had planned to ask Hap why the hell Morris would open in this day-and-age of a shifting, unpredictable media landscape. But sitting there I felt that, regardless of how readers interact with media in the future, there would always be a place for local bookshops to help us make sense of the world.

Local bookshops are able to provide the interpersonal intimacy absent from the digital realm. More specifically, a transaction at a shop like Morris establishes a relationship beyond mere commodity, or information, exchange. The Shop is a nexus for community interests, interests that

continued on page 8



NICK KIDD

Inside the Morris Book Shop.

seems flat-out wrong that many newspapers are on the out-and-out. Without them, where do people without internet access turn to get their news? Newspapers, especially on a local level, are part of a shared communal and cultural experience. We get to know our writers, or counties, ourselves. We get to parse the happenings, perspectives, and opinions around the proverbial watercoolers of our cities and towns, each of us with something at stake, each of us with two-cents to proffer.

The loss of the daily newspaper seems like bad news for everyone, especially tree farmers. But it's not just newspapers that are slated to abandon paper for the digital realm—books are too. E-readers are a burgeoning technological thingamajig preparing to make paper books obsolete. They allow users to wirelessly download and store thousands of books in one convenient, portable, lightweight device. They can even read to you.

Electric Print: the digital library

Google has made news recently with its ambitious plan to digitize every book in the world, positioning itself as the de-facto one-stop shop for tomorrow's e-readers. Of course they've hit some legal snags along the way, as they stand to profit quite handsomely by charging readers for access to copyrighted books (copyright holders get a slice too), but

Rugby League and a 15% stake in the Colorado Rockies.

Murdoch recently called out Google (as well as Microsoft and Ask.com) for linking to content "owned" by News Corp. Google News and other search engines, including the Huffington Post and the Drudge Report, are news aggregators, meaning they manually or automatically—using advanced algorithms—collect and provide links to other websites' news stories.

What's got Murdoch peeved about aggregators? Say you go to a website of the Wall Street Journal, the leading US financial paper, and find a story in the Business section. You click to read the article, but after the second paragraph there's a link telling you that in order to read further, you must be a subscriber (i.e., a paying customer). Now go to Google News and search for the same WSJ article. There you'll find a link to the full article: no subscription or password required after the second paragraph—you get the whole thing for free.

Murdoch has threatened to remove News Corp's newspapers from Google and other search engines, but so far he's only talking tough. (Simply adding a "robots.txt" file to a website stops Google from searching for it, but News Corp hasn't added this. It should be noted that 25% of the Wall Street Journal's web traffic comes through Google.) This is the same Murdoch

Wireman at CentrePointe (cont.)

continued from page 1

exhibit will be above Bellini's on Main Street—a perfect bird's-eye view overlooking the current state of the block.

Wireman will have 10 framed pieces that incorporate items found on the block, a process unlike anything he has done before.

"It celebrates what was, and then it gives an insider's view of being right in the middle of the rubble—the asbestos and dust that I'm sure I breathed," Wireman said.

"Getting involved gave me a greater sense of community on this block over the years. That's been my intent with this project—to show what this block meant to so many people. Also, I was documenting the actual physical act of tearing the buildings down and incorporating historical objects from the block, giving them a new life in an artistic way."

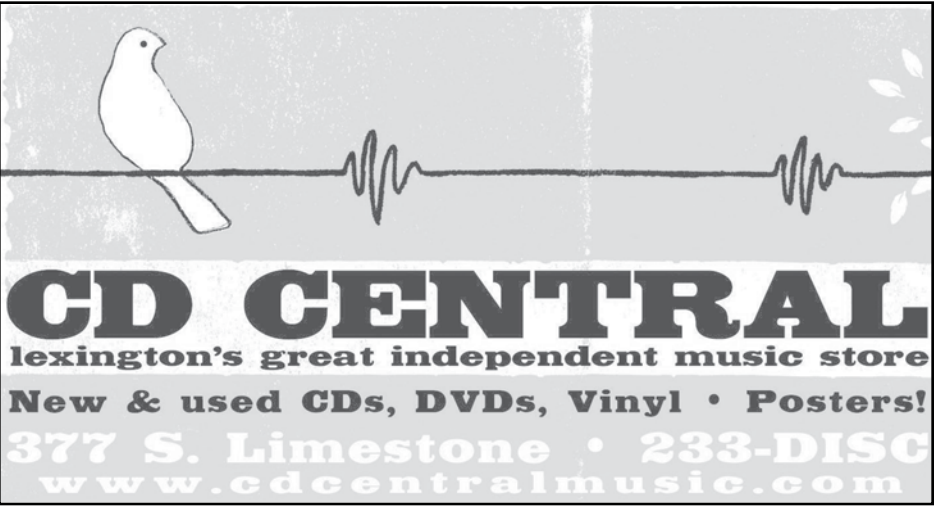
The presentation goes beyond the framed pieces. A digital projector will

show over 1,000 images that Wireman has captured over the years, and at 9 P.M. musicians Dave Farris and Willie Eames will perform a piece arranged specifically for the project—a reflection of the block before, during and after the demolition.

Wireman recorded some of the dynamic sounds of the demolition on a handheld mp3 recorder which he gave to Farris and Eames to work into the piece.

"To have two local musicians that played in these venues many times and have a real connection with this block is special. I didn't want to just have a DJ in the corner spinning records. I wanted every aspect of the show to really resonate about the block."

Check out Wireman's exhibit on the CentrePointe block during Gallery Hop. He and Eames/Farris will be above Bellini's. Check out some of Wireman's work at www.richiewireman.com.



J.C. COMANNOCKERS

Richie Wireman surveys the scene surrounding CentrePointe.

Zenyatta takes Breeder’s Cup Classic

Win casts light on gender inequity in sports

By Troy Lyle
NoC Sports Columnist

It’s rare for a female to go up against the big boys and win¾rare because few females ever get the chance. Hopefully all that changed when Zenyatta proved to the world over that given the opportunity women can and will succeed.

I already know what you’re going to say. What’s a man know about women’s hardships or women succeeding? NOTHING! NADA!! ZILCH!!! I know I’m the last person qualified to even try and speak on women’s behalf. To make matters worse I’m the very demographic who’ve done so much to persecute women throughout history□white male. So yes, you’re right. I’m an idiot for even trying.

But try I will.
Zenyatta reminded the world again that when given the opportunity women can and will succeed. Zenyatta, a 5-year-old mare named after The Police’s third album, *Zenyatta Mondatta*, overcome astronomical odds, graded stakes company and history itself to be the first female to ever win the Breeder’s Cup Classic, the Super Bowl of horse racing.

Not only did she win, she won in stunning fashion, jockeying around four male contenders in the final paces of the 1 ¼ mile race to pull away for the lead. That win was the 14th of her career. She has never lost a race. In all likelihood Zenyatta will win 2009 Horse of the Year, beating out several male contenders and another female, Rachel Alexandra. Rachel, a 3-year-old filly, who is also undefeated. She

too battled and beat the big boys by winning the Preakness this past May.

Both females defied history: Zenyatta, the first female to win the \$5 million Classic in its 26 year history; Rachel, the first female to win the Preakness in 85 years.

Before I move forward here with my unqualified argument, I want to state for the record that we at *North of Center* in no way defend or endorse the horse racing industry. As an industry, it continually abuses its most prized asset (horses), forces weight restrictions and unhealthy lifestyles on its most prevalent employee (jockeys), under pays, if not exploits, its most central work force (immigrants), and, as we will see later, undermines the advancement of women within the sport itself.

That being said the horse racing industry has provided a great metaphor for how, given the chance, women can be equally, if not more, successful than men. At the very least the industry clearly demonstrates women deserve more opportunities.

To fully understand the enormous struggles that lie ahead for women everywhere, let’s take a look at how women fare within society as a whole. Take for example the American workplace. It’s no secret that men dominate the highest percentage of top notch positions and women are concentrated into the lower-ranked and lower-paid occupations within a given profession. But would you believe me if I told you women are paid on average 30-35 percent less than men to perform the exact same job.

According to Hesse-Biber and Carter’s, *Working Women in America: Split Dreams*, if women are in

management positions, they are more likely to be in personnel than in marketing professions. Their average salaries are \$48,048 annually, compared to that of men who earn \$56,940 per year. Furthermore, female doctors are much more likely to be heavily constricted into areas such as family practice or pediatrics, which average about \$130,000 and \$126,000 per year, respectively; men on the otherhand are more likely to become surgeons or highly specialized medical practitioners who tend to average \$240,000 or more annually. In addition, only 16 percent of the top executive positions in America’s largest corporations and enterprises are held by women.

The numbers tell a similar story when it comes to sports. The 2005-06 biennial gender equity report indicates that within Division I, 66 percent of total expenses were directed toward men’s athletics versus 34 percent for women’s programs. The gap between men’s and women’s spending was slightly wider (three percentage points) for the 2005-06 report compared to the previous study.

Also, Division I-A men accounted for 57 percent of the participants and received 59 percent of the scholarship dollars, while women saw a 1-2 percent decrease in overall scholarship funding. As far as coaching salaries go, the proportion of dollars spent on head coaches of women’s Division 1-A teams decreased from the previous report from 38 to 36 percent.

Women within horse racing haven’t fared any better. Little has changed since 1969, when Diane Crump was the first female jockey ever registered to ride in a thoroughbred race. Despite

numerous wins from female jockeys like Bev Buckingham, Claire Lindop or Mary Doser, to name a few, the sport has remained under male domination. Today it is estimated that less than 9 percent of all jockeys are female.

Women trainers have made their mark: Rosa Hoots (owned Kentucky Derby winner Black Gold), Mrs. John D. Hertz (owner of Stoner Creek Farm and Triple Crown winner Count Fleet), Helen Hay Whitney (known as the “First Lady of the Turf” and owner of two Derby winners), Lucille Wright Markey (owner of Calumet Farm after her husband’s death and responsible for 4 Derby winners), Penny Chenery (owner of Secretariat), Diana Firestone (owner of Genuine Risk), and Frances Genter (owner of Derby winner Unbridled). Yet despite their apparent success, female trainers only comprise between 5 and 10 percent of the total number of trainers. Many are ostracized or demonized for disrupting the ‘good ol’ boy’ way. I mean, they don’t call it “the sport of kings” for nothing.

I’ll be the first to say once again that I don’t know diddley-squat about what the average woman endures daily. But I do have two eyes, two ears and a brain, though small by comparison. And with my bird sized brain I view things this way. Whether you see the gender equality glass as half full or half empty, or whether you agree with any of what I’m saying or not, you have to love what you saw from Zenyatta two weekends ago. She wowed the world, shocked the very foundations of horse racing, changed history and hopefully gained a little ground for women everywhere.



Lexington bike polo shows them in MO

By Brian Turner

On November 7-8 many of Lexington’s bike polo players made the seven hour plus drive to Columbia, MO to participate in the 7th Midwest Bike Polo Champeenships (a generally accepted spelling). For the second time in a major North American tournament, Lexington boasted the most teams and most players in attendance. Lexington rolled into town 17 strong, with 16 of those actually playing in the 2-day tournament.

Lexington’s teams were as follows: Cash 4 Gold (Tiff Morrow, Jared Baize, Nick McLean), Unborn Twin (Andy Stith, Megan Stanton, Mike Rozzi), Bourbon Deth (Patrick Garnett, Matt Burton, myself), Tripple Lexxx (Brad Flowers, Shane Tedder, Chris Simpson) and Bitches Brew (Kyle Hord, Drew Combs and the lovely Birdie from Madison, WI). As is the case at bike polo tournaments, for various reasons many teams are made up of mixed players from various cities. Lexington’s Kevin Klimment joined our Dayton, OH pals, Elton and Dana, to round out Two Appalachians and a Knee-Gra (2/3 of the team that ended up taking 3rd Place in the Bluegrass State Games tourney back in July). Ben Wood joined up with two seasoned Chicago players to form the team, Air & Hope; Ben later confided in me that they were so named because air and hope was what they were riding on.

Tournament play was divided up into two days: Swiss Rounds (a variant of a round robin) on Saturday determined the top 24 teams (out of 44 total) for Sunday’s double-elimination brackets.

Saturday was a bit strange. The day was split into a morning round and an afternoon round; each team either played all of their four games between 10 A.M. and 3 P.M., or between 3 P.M. and 8 P.M. Morning rounders got to relax for the latter part of the day, while the evening rounders had to basically sit around and wait for their action to take place much later. Most of Lexington’s teams played during the first half, but those who did not were understandably anxious for most of the first day.

Play was also divided between two courts. The “A” court was a standard-size roller hockey rink with full dasher boards, while court “B” was a smaller, temporary setup much closer in size to what Lexington is used to playing on at Coolavin. The dramatic difference in court sizes forced teams to adjust their playing style accordingly. Some Lexington teams seemed to adapt better than others. Speed and long-range, accurate passing was a must for the large court, while defense and physical scrap-piness ruled on the smaller court.

At the end of the first day, five Lexington teams advanced into the 24 team double-elimination brackets:

— Bourbon Deth - #10 seed

- Two Appalachians - #17 seed
- Bitches Brew - #20 seed
- Cash 4 Gold - #21 seed
- Tripple Lexxx - #23 seed

Sunday’s games started off with an interesting hometown match-up on the small court between favored Lex team, Tripple Lexxx, and Bourbon Deth. The game played out fast and loose, much like a pick-up game at Coolavin, with lots of heckling and the characteristic lack of seriousness you’d expect in a battle between good friends. Tripple Lexxx ended up winning 5-1, and the crowds were treated to a post-game wrestling match between the two teams at center court, in true Lexington fashion.

Some of the most exciting games played throughout the entire tournament were those involving Bitches Brew and Cash 4 Gold. Kyle and Drew connected so amazingly well with Birdie, you’d never have guessed that they were playing with an out-of-towner. Their game against Birdie’s compatriots on Madison’s team was so evenly fought, they could’ve easily pulled off the major upset of the tournament. Relatively new players, Nick and Jared proved how far they have both come in the past few months while helping Cash 4 Gold survive into day 2 play. Looking like twin red-bearded Viking brutes, their ability to muscle their way into numerous clutch shots provided the perfect complement to Tiff’s graceful handling on the court.

Perhaps due to their successes at recent tournaments, Tripple Lexxx squared off against nearly all of the toughest teams in the tournament, but were bested by two of Milwaukee’s top three teams. Unfortunately, all of the five Lexington teams competing in Sunday’s bracket were eliminated before the semi-finals, but all teams played admirably and fought hard to the end.

With another major tournament under their wheels, Lexington returned home battered and bruised but not beaten. Every tournament performance, no matter the outcome, provides us with an opportunity to learn from others, learn from our mistakes, gauge our progress and figure out ways to improve our game. The Midwest region is clearly where the sport is advancing the most, and is by far the most competitive hotbed of bike polo talent in North America. We’re lucky that we live in such a centralized location for this new sport, and that we have the opportunity to routinely play against some of the best players and teams in the world. Here’s to the future of Lexington Bike Polo!

Farewells: Tuesday November 17 marked Texas Phenom Rich Lopez’s last day in Lexington. Lopez is moving to Burlington, VT where he has already scoped out a small pocket of bike polo players and will carry Lexington’s game back up there with him. North of Center wishes him well.

Opinion

A case of compact fluorescent lights

“Being green,” eco-consciousness, and quantum thought

By Obiora Embry

We are told that “green” is the new “thing,” yet seldom do we go beyond “being green”—an action often limited to reducing our energy consumption—to arrive at a deeper consciousness of thinking, living, behaving, and doing: an eco-consciousness. For US to survive the problems that we humans have created, it will take more than simple-minded actions or “being green” to undo our continued desecration, pillaging, and rape of Mother Earth.

In order to save ourselves before it’s too late, *we the people* will have to act with a purpose and an understanding of the sacred and symbiotic relationship between the human body and Mother Earth that we rely upon for our survival. We cannot switch from one evil to a lesser evil—from incandescent bulbs to compact fluorescent lights (CFLs), from a gasoline engine to a hybrid gas/electric engine, or from energy powered by coal to nuclear or hydrogen, etc.—and hope that our misguided actions will immediately restore our only home, Gaia, to a stasis or equilibrium that will continue to sustain humans. A government and media-driven focus to perform simple-minded actions that can be done in-between commercial breaks, during a lull in a favorite TV show(s), or while pausing “live” TV is counterproductive to developing a deeper level of thinking or eco-consciousness. It goes beyond conserving electricity, recycling, and using “energy-efficient” products.

We are foolish to think that we will be able to undo the damage before it’s too late for “humanity” to survive without having a clear and holistic plan. It’s past time for us humans to (re)think how we view the natural environment—including humans (each other), as we come from the Earth and are “walking rocks.” To heal Mother Earth for our continued survival, we must change the way we live our lives, and this means that we need to become responsible for our actions and conscious of the effects our actions have on the air that we breathe, the water that we drink, and the land from which our food grows.

We need to become quantum thinkers that look at our bodies and the Earth as interconnected complex systems that have a positive and negative effect on each other. This way of thinking is far different from the classical thinking that has taught us

that everything is separate, and as a byproduct has given rise to modern-day specialists for the human body and specialized post K-12 education programs. By emphasizing the inherent inter-relatedness of the world’s human and natural systems, quantum thought and eco-conscious thinking emphasize our need to assess the Life Cycle Analysis (manufacture/production, distribution, packaging, shelf life, use, and end-of-life) of the products that are being marketed as “green” or eco-friendly.



Take for example, the “call to action” that encourages US to replace our incandescent bulbs with Compact Florescent Lights (CFLs) to conserve electricity as a means of “going green.” This action is based on false pretenses as the material composition has been downplayed, which I found out after I did some independent research. CFLs contain a heavy metal, Mercury (Hg), which is a known neurotoxin, and possibly other heavy metals, though its material composition is sketchy.

As a parent, this concerns me because children are often asked or told to persuade their parents, neighbors, and others to use CFLs, so we can reduce our energy consumption. However, too few of US know the health risks associated with Mercury, which can be exacerbated when children are involved because they sometimes do NOT wash their hands at appropriate times (i.e., after handling a CFL bulb).

As an engineer who has worked in manufacturing, I know that (almost) all current manufacturing processes create waste, either as a liquid, solid, or gas, and will eventually find its way

into the water, the air, and soil. This means that Mercury (and any other heavy metals in CFLs) will bioaccumulate—generate a higher concentration of a substance in an organism over time compared to the concentration found in the natural environment—through the production of Compact Florescent Lights.

The bioaccumulation of Mercury can lead to the formation of methyl mercury, which can accumulate in small and large fish because they consume those micro-organisms on the

bottom of the food chain that metabolize metallic mercury. This increase in the concentration of Mercury in aquatic life is why we are cautioned in 41 states (as of 1999) against eating fish caught in public lakes, rivers, and creeks. The health effects include birth defects, central nervous system and kidney disorders, and/or death.

But birds and other mammals that eat fish have not been warned about the hidden danger of eating the fish, which means we humans may inadvertently consume an animal (other than fish) that likewise has an excess amount of Mercury in its body, thereby inadvertently putting someone at risk of heavy metal poisoning. (For those interested in learning more about the health hazards associated with Mercury, read a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).)

More than 300 million CFLs were purchased during 2007 in the United States. One CFL has the potential to contaminate 6, 000 gallons of water beyond safe drinking levels. And the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that 670 million Mercury containing lights are sent to the landfill each year adding 2 to 4

tons of Mercury into the environment, which over time will bioaccumulate in our bodies causing damage to our bodies.

What I have presented above on CFLs only scratches the surface of its Life Cycle Analysis. I did not discuss the energy source used primarily in the U.S. to turn that light on (coal-fired plants emit Mercury into the atmosphere); nor the mining of the heavy metals to manufacture the light; nor the amount of petroleum used in its production, packaging, and transport; nor the amount and type of waste generated during its production; nor the health hazards to humans working in the factories to manufacture the light; nor all of the short and long term environmental effects that result from the production of CFLs.

Rather than to fixate on fixing the singular problem of the light bulb (as a solution to decreasing energy consumption), we should look instead at the interconnected systems that have created our environmental problems to begin with. We should focus on the inherent flaws of designing against nature rather than that we find in our homes, workplaces, houses of worship, schools, and communities; on our continued reliance on fossil fuels and non-renewable energy; on our continued mining of heavy metals; on the material composition of our lighting; our continued production of synthetic materials; our poorly designed and wasteful manufacturing processes; our desire to put profits above people; and our phantom money market system that hides the true costs of goods and services are as much a part of the problems as energy over consumption.

As we begin to become eco-conscious, we cannot solve problems one at a time unless we want to further desecrate the air, land, and water that sustain our existence. We should instead look systematically at the good, the bad, and the short and long-term effects that our present and future (eco-friendly) actions have on our bodies and on our home, Mother Earth.

Obiora Embry is a Lexington native that has been an environmental steward since he was in elementary and now, he offers eco-conscious consulting through his business, EConsulting™ that he began in January 2006. You can find more information on EConsulting™ @ <http://www.econsultingllc.org/>.

Questioning Coach Coal

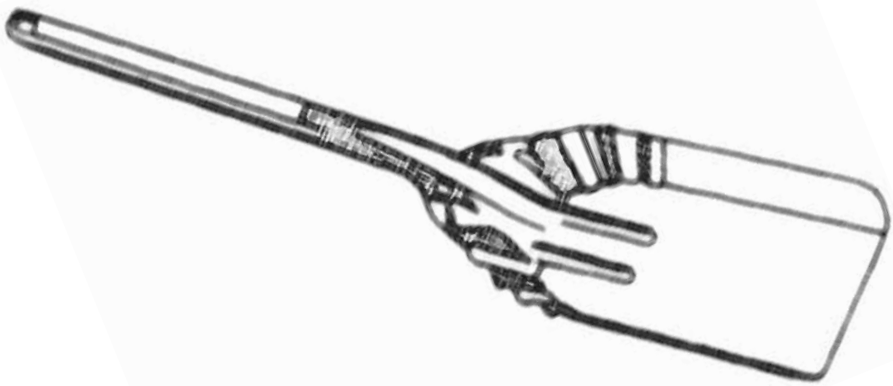
Have regional media given UK basketball coach a free pass?

So let us get this correct: a \$7,000,000.00 dollar gift to the University of Kentucky athletic department by a well-heeled group of donors who shill for a hot-button state industry generates a series of protests and an avalanche of media coverage—and John Calipari, the tweet-loving dude who makes in excess of \$3,000,000.00 a year to coach the basketball team that is the recipient of the gift, isn’t even asked to comment on the topic? Are Kentucky fans and journalists really that committed to having a winning coach (albeit one whose teams have consistently cheated when they have been their most successful) that they just don’t want to know that Calipari might support mountaintop removal, or are they just slow on the uptake—still thrilled with themselves for having a genuine, apparently sober, UK coach as their (Twitter and Facebook) friend?

Whatever the answer to that question—avarice or stupidity—the

acrobatics required by our local media to indict, on the one hand, the University of Kentucky and its CEO Lee Todd for selling out to coal interests, and on the other hand to simultaneously wonder and suckle at the polished Calipari teat, has been quite a thing to watch develop.

Coach Coal is a supporter of



the coal industry. One might say an enthusiastic supporter of the industry, though to be honest we don’t know that for sure. Nobody’s thought to ask, or if they have, they haven’t written anything on it. Instead we get great gems from Jerry Tipton on the heroic return of John Wall—from a 1-game suspension, against a severely

overmatched opening-night patsy, for receiving money for recruiting trips—and detailed analyses from national authorities such as Dickie V. and Jay Bilas on the importance of defense to Coach Coal’s vaunted dribble drive offense.

But of course, sportswriters—even groveling medium-market sportswriters like Tipton who have dropped down on all fours and set up shop right in front of the new ball-coach to happily lap up anything that happens to dribble forth—are not normally considered the most salient of social critics. As a rule, they’re pedantic sycophants with nothing to say outside of what they conceive of as the sports world, which for them extends from the court to the showers.

What’s more troubling has been the free pass all the other so-called journalists have given Coach Coal.

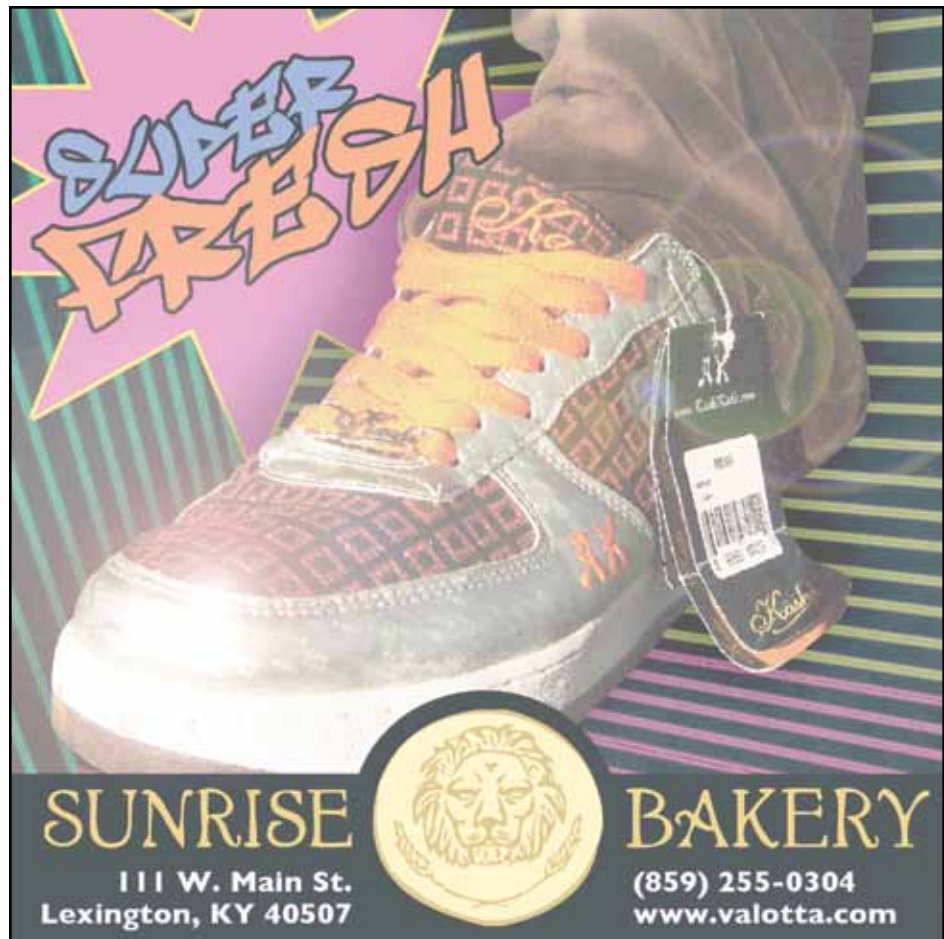
Corrections

We mistakenly published an unproofed earlier version of Amber Scott’s review of the Lexington Art League’s exhibit *Generously Odd: Craft Now*, which will be at the Loudoun House through December. For the slightly changed final version, visit our Facebook page, where we have it posted under our Notes section. Sorry Amber.

In the article “Bank Funds MTR,” author Danny Mayer mistakenly implied that Physics graduate student Martin “Marty” Mudd had closed down his account at Chase during the October 30 demonstration. As it turns out, Mudd only made a withdrawal. He plans to close his account in early January along with other Chase account-holders who have pledged to close their account should Chase continue to fund mountaintop removal. If you are interested in joining Mudd in closing your Chase account, contact Mudd. If you have difficulty tracking him down, email noceditors@yahoo.com (i.e. us), and we’ll help get you in touch with him.

Address your correspondence, suggestions, complaints, and sundry comments to noceditors@yahoo.com. We’d love to hear from you.

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Coach Coal (cont.)

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The *Herald Leader's* editorial page, for example, has consistently questioned the state's massive reliance on the coal industry, and they spoke out vociferously against the \$7,000,000.00 Joe Craft and his coal buddies earmarked to build a new private dormitory for already-pampered UK basketball players (to be named the Wildcat Coal Lodge). But when it comes to Coach Coal, all we get are statements that he is the "un-Gillespie," and that his hiring has "been a public relations dream for the university" ("End of an error for UK sports," October 16).

Lost in the *Herald Leader's* praise, of course, are the details. Coach Coal participated this past summer in a ribbon cutting marking the opening of Alliance Coal's \$300,000,000.00 Riverview Mine in Western Kentucky. Alliance Coal's CEO, Joe Craft, is the same rich white guy who spearheaded the Friends of Coal group that has demanded that the university name the donated building Wildcat Coal Lodge. At the ribbon cutting, and on a later blog posting, Coach Coal cited his deep reverence for miners (they're the ultimate team!, Calipari explains, though we doubt he recruits the coal fields heavily), based primarily on his own grandfather and great uncles' experiences working in the mines near Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Whatever else one can say, Calipari has readily entered into the Kentucky coal conversation. So why is he not being asked about the Coal Lodge, mountaintop removal, and the destructive history of coal in his home region, which is now officially a sponsor of the team that he personally coaches? And why are these questions not offered up and analyzed at least as often as we hear about John Wall, or the dribble drive, or the status of any 2012 recruits?

We realize that we're relatively new to this journalism game, and that as a periodical we are too small to expect Coach Coal to answer any of our questions, but we'll offer three in the hopes that some other enterprising journalist

with both a heart and a brain will do just that—Alessi, perhaps, or maybe Clay, whose too-short piece on the way the Coal Lodge deal went down was both on the mark and depressingly nonchalant.

— Coach Coal, you claimed in a *Herald Leader* article that you take your civic duties very seriously. You stated, "Whoever is sitting in that (head coach's) seat, if you're not getting involved in the community, you're cheating this place." When the Wildcat Coal Lodge vote went down, why didn't you use your position as the face of Kentucky basketball to voice your thoughts on the subject? Clearly, this was an issue that many people in your local (Lexington) and regional (Kentucky, Appalachia) communities had very deep feelings about. Your respected and loved voice might spark a more honest—or at the very least a more public—discussion of a very serious regional issue.

— Coach Coal, you attribute your love for coal-mining to your grandfather and grand-uncle, who in your words "spent hours down under as West Virginia coal miner[s]." This familial admiration is also shared by, among others, Kentucky author Silas House, who in the book *Missing Mountains* noted that "mining allowed [his grandfather and uncle] to rise out of poverty." While like you House celebrates his "coal-mining legacy," he has also written that current forms of coal mining in Eastern Kentucky—primarily the practice of mountaintop removal—have meant the destruction of entire social and natural ecosystems: fouled watersheds (leached chemicals), lost jobs (increased mechanization), destroyed communities (migration to cities), and obliterated homes (lost mountains). Can you give anything more substantial regarding your support of coal than that your family were coal-miners?

— Coach Coal, do you support mountaintop removal? Can you explain how it works?

Your community wants to hear your voice.

Creekwater, Chapter One: Fishtowne

Brine Manley & J.T. Dockery



Cultural commons (cont.)

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one shouldn't have to—even virtually—leave his or her community to explore. Its connective tissue is simply people (who are your neighbors) and books.

When Hap finally sat down I was feeling fortunate that our discussion would be open-ended. After learning he'd read and enjoyed *Hamlet's Blackberry*, I couldn't resist asking Hap the question I'd just answered for myself: why the hell open Morris now, in this uncertain landscape for print?

"The print industry isn't dying," Hap replied. "You're going to find a lot of loyalty to the book. People like to have a souvenir of the experience of reading, they like having their book signed by the author, they like giving books as gifts. These experiences, I think, are underestimated. There are a lot of people, a lot of readers, who will resist abandoning books, especially my age and up."

Hap noted that people resisted abandoning LPs for CDs, too, adding "now CDs are in as much trouble as LPs ever were" because of MP3s. "By the way, our entire discussion has a relevancy of 20 years or less. But almost exactly 20 years ago was when people started ringing the death-knell of the printed word. And here we sit today, and those people are 89% wrong." Hap went on to explain that Morris exists not to save the printed word but to serve a real communal need. The Morris Book Shop materialized from the vision owner Wyn Morris had to open a bookstore people could participate in; one whose smallness (in comparison to, say, Barnes and Noble) is an asset; one whose modest staff allows customers to learn its employees' thoughts and interests well; one that's, simply put, personable. Morris is that

kind of a place, a place that accommodates an exchange of dialogue rather than the establishment of a monologue. This distinction is an important one in the day and age of impressive big-box stores that offer so many things, none of which is intimacy.

"Wyn and I both worked at Joseph Beth for over 10 years and we loved it. But we missed the intimacy of traditional bookstores. We feared it was a romantic notion, but we wanted there to be a bookstore like this in our town. Some people start a business just saying, 'Hey, there's money in that.' But this store is more than that. We now find ourselves asserting an identity and engaging in a dialogue about Lexington. We were doing that all the time anyway, but this is a way we can do it as an indispensable part of our community. I mean, we would've been fine if someone else had done it, but Wyn was tired of waiting around, so he made it happen."

Advantages of Scale

There's no telling what will happen to the printed word in the future, but places like Morris needn't worry anytime soon. By providing a venue for the community to educate itself and learn about one another, it connects to its customers by establishing bonds that transcend typical commodity transactions. While its fate is beholden to the industry it operates within, it sees itself—and deserves to be seen—as something greater than a middleman.

Let the courts and the Rupert Murdochs and Googles of the world decide who owns the rights to do this or sell that. Because none of them can tell you about the world around you like the clerk wearing Chuck Taylor's down at your local bookstore can.

"O come
all ye faithless..."

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