

# NORTH OF CENTER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2009

FREE

TAKE HOME AND READ

VOLUME I, ISSUE 15

## The art of the public

### ELandF's cab ride with Vice Mayor Gray

By Beth Connors-Manke

I blame Bruce Burris for the fact that *Fiddler on the Roof's* catchy tune "Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me a Match" has been in my head for days. When we met at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Coffee last week to talk about his current endeavor, he told me, "I just wanted to be a matchmaker."

This is what Burris says motivated him to sponsor a contest for a taxi ride around the city with Vice Mayor Jim Gray. Burris, the mastermind of ELandF Small Projects Accelerator and Latitude, is interested in "creating and exploring intimate interactions which occur in public spaces."

The taxi ride, which will take place on December 7<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, will be awarded (although Burris doesn't really consider this a contest) to the person with the best 100-word essay about why he or she wants to spend an hour with the Vice Mayor. The essay submission period closed on November 28<sup>th</sup>; currently Burris and "helpers" are sifting through the entries.

The mission of ELandF is to provide various supports for "intimate, artist driven" projects that take place in public and fall outside traditional grants programs. The Small Projects Accelerator is designed to help someone realize a project or assist in small ways with publicizing an event in sync with ELandF's philosophy. Currently, the projects are mostly performance-based, but Burris is open to other types of ventures.

Periodically, ELandF also sends out calls for event participation that read like "help wanted" ads: "Wanted: Cloud Watcher" or "Wanted: Town

Crier." For this project, Burris had to solicit a citizen, a space, and an official.

#### Wanted: Public Space

Fascinated as I was by Burris' idea that public spaces could provide intimate encounters (things we generally ascribe to our private lives), I asked him to define "public space."

"Public space is a very broad concept with a fluid definition. It's as elastic as you want it to be. Almost everything could be public. Even a place that has a locked door that you jimmy and go inside is less private and more public, though you're in there illegally." For the purposes of ELandF's projects, "public" usually means outside, in accessible, plaza-like spaces that don't require "a password or any money to get into." Burris also considers public transportation, despite the cost to ride, a public space.

The most recent spaces that an ELandF project inhabited were near Wine and Market and 2<sup>nd</sup> and Jefferson Streets. In early November, two Cloud Watcher performances took place. Yep, people watched people watch clouds for an hour. (What could be more simple and enjoyable?) At the Book Reader performance in the spring, several people read books in streetside parking spaces. (Reading things made of paper in public—is that still legal?) In another event, ELandF sent a poet on a bus ride and asked her to compose a poem based on the journey.

More political have been performances related to downtown "development" (a.k.a. demolition) and mountain top removal. A Town Crier event occurred in May when three people were selected to serve as town criers



COURTESY ELandF GALLERY

Matchmaker Bruce Burris of ELandF Small Projects Accelerator.

reading one of Dudley Webb's letters to the Urban County Council. "We Are Mountains Ourselves" was a September performance of writing related to resisting mountaintop removal that took place simultaneously on the Venice Beach Boardwalk and in Lexington.

ELandF's performances demonstrate that, as Burris said, "We have the power to reclaim public spaces." Burris' projects are the art of the public.

#### Wanted: One Public Official

So the taxicab is the public space part of the equation, and Vice Mayor Gray is the public official part. But why Gray?

"Certainly he's the most provocative and public figure that we've seen in a long time," Burris said. "And although there are other council people that are quite popular and doing a great job, he really serves as the lynch pin for a lot of the changes which might occur—so he's a person someone might want to spend some time with."

Although anyone and everyone

is encouraged to submit to ELandF's projects, for the cab ride, Burris says he was "really thinking about folks who live their lives outside the loop."

"Public figures really are very accessible, but you don't really know that. A lot of people live their entire lives totally frustrated by the fact that they feel as if they can't have an interaction with a public official. I was hoping, in the back of my mind, that the taxi ride would allow that interaction for someone who has been feeling that way."

I asked Burris what he has observed of the accessibility of public officials in the time he's been in Lexington. Linked to public issues and action in San Francisco, Burris said that he felt a lack of connection when he moved to Lexington some 16 years ago—especially as a person not tied to the horse industry, the University of Kentucky, or an established Lexington family. (He wasn't even a UK basketball fan.)

The change Burris has seen since

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## Sunday bike polo grows

### Players look for ways to open court 2

NoC Sports Desk

Sundays are turning into crowded days of bike polo at Coolavin Park. Many of the familiar faces still show up for the late afternoon weekly pickup games—Morrow, Flowers, Brooks, Tedder, Simpson, Hord. And quite a few recent additions have begun to pedal up regularly as well: Stanton, Wood, Katie Jo, and 2 vs. 2 Inter-City Bike Polo Tournament and Velo Swap winner Mike Rozzi, among others.

But what has some grizzled veterans taking notice are the increasing numbers of new players taking up mallets and going foot-down for the first time. Pickup games that earlier in the

summer drew eight or ten participants have morphed—on several recent glorious fall Sunday afternoons, at least—into full scale Bike Polo happenings. This is a far cry from a couple years ago, when players gathered and played on the rooted Woodland Park lawn, or even twelve months ago, about when the converted tennis courts at Coolavin started to get parceled into two bike polo courts.

Indeed, an unsuspecting spectator coming upon the bike pit that separates Courts 1 and 2—where bikes, mallets, balls and all manner of human shapes and gesticulations all but spill out onto game action—might mistake the gregarious crowds for a mob of bikers up

to no good, which of course might not be all that far from the truth.

Today's rookies are of course tomorrow's tournament MVPs, and one can't help but notice the teaching going on: Simpson in the bike pit drawing up strategy with his bike mallet to a throng of fresh and eager faces circling around him; Morrow instructing about "tournament" rules after a 15 foot ball-jointed goal by Wood; Brooks instilling general court awareness by sending giant forearm shivers, willy-nilly, at any number of unsuspecting rookies, already gone foot-down, who have found themselves trapped helplessly against the court walls.

While the influx of players seems only to have increased the joy experienced by everyone involved with the sport—both during play on the court and in conversations off the court—the increase has also made for longer waits between games. As one long-time player remarked casually, "Games go two, three deep now." What was once a one-game wait to get your mallet back into play now takes three, four games.

This is, of course, not a serious problem at the moment, nor might it ever become one. Bike polo players—like the larger bike community in which they reside, it seems—are notoriously giving and happy to have more people share in the game. At its heart, bike polo seems to be about enjoying sport, establishing friendships and



BRIAN TURNER

The freshly painted walls of Court 1 at Coolavin Park.

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## Aapeli massage opens for business

### South Broadway gets a boost

By Danny Mayer

On the surface the 1200 building of South Broadway looks like any other building built between the years 1965 and 1985. But what lies within is anything but ordinary.

Fusing traditional massage therapy with contemporary techniques, Aapeli, which means "breath" in Finnish, will celebrate its grand opening this Saturday, December 5, from 4-8 PM. In addition to providing free massages, Aapeli will also offer door prizes, live acoustic guitar by Lyle Van Outer, refreshments and a local artist of the month exhibition. Currently displayed are the early works of Jan Hicks.

But what's most impressive about Aapeli and its owners, Jason and Renata Hicks, isn't the fact that they offer the most affordable, "high touch" massages in all of Lexington at an introductory rate of \$30 an hour, or eight yoga classes Sunday through Friday, or art exhibitions from local artists, it's the fact that they chose to open Aapeli in Suite 202 of 1200 South Broadway.

Once an apartment building, the building at some point was made over into an office for a variety of businesses. When the Hicks moved in, the place looked like your standard suburban office—phone jacks lining the walls, nondescript carpeting, bland

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## In the next issue

*North of Center will be taking a brief hiatus during the month of December. It will return with the January 13 issue.*

# The Neighborhood

## On someone else’s land Misadventures in gardening: an ongoing series

By Beth Connors-Manke

While the subtitle of this column is “Misadventures in Gardening,” the pieces here have also always been about the city and an urban pedestrian life. My summer Saturday morning walks to the London Ferrell Community Garden gave me time to muse, while on my feet, about our city. My morning jaunts were easy and safe because of what many militant pedestrians like myself consider the most sacred of modern inventions: the sidewalk.

As mundane as sidewalks may seem, they are periodically the focus of hot tempers and public debate about who has the right to take up space on them. In a *New York Times* letter to the editor from 1887, a “non-obstructionist” complains about commercial infringements on pedestrian byways: “Sir, I am obliged to come up Barclay-street daily, and on the south side of the street can scarcely get a foothold... why should two Italians selling raisins by the box (virtually running a grocery store without paying any rent) drive 1,000,000 people of all nations into the gutter?”

In the letter, this non-obstructionist challenges both the new mayor and the corrupt bosses who run the streets of New York. Oh, the glory days of the militant pedestrian cause!

Although I have heard tell of powerful and vicious slum landlords

here in LexVegas, I’m sure that we have fewer mob bosses controlling sidewalk trade in fresh produce than 19<sup>th</sup> century New York. In the circles I frequent, people are usually actually relieved that some of the restaurants downtown have tables on the sidewalks, letting scared suburbanites know that IT’S OK TO BE ON THE STREETS OF A DOWNTOWN.

Yes, it is ok to let the soles of your shoes kiss the badly “bricked” sidewalks downtown, but beware: someone you don’t know might try to talk to you.

One of those people was, until a few weeks ago, Louis Gill Cobb, a.k.a. “Shoeshine.” On Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>, Shoeshine was found unresponsive on Main Street; he was later pronounced dead at UK hospital. Dreadlocked and outspoken, Shoeshine would ply his trade on the street, talk to you as you walked past, and attend Urban County Council meetings. “He was a controversial and colorful character whose presence often enlivened our meetings,” Mayor Jim Newberry said in a statement reported by the *Herald-Leader*.

I never had my shoes shined by Shoeshine nor did I ever really talk to him. Sometimes our ambulatory paths crossed on Limestone, but that was about it. I accepted him as part of downtown and continued on my way. Evidently, he was enough a part of the fabric of downtown that the

*Herald-Leader* reported on his death three days in a row in its “Briefs” section.

I found out about his death in a more roundabout way: at work people were debating the eulogizing of Shoeshine. Some liked him. Others thought the praise should be tempered; they felt he could get a little salty and sometimes aggressive.

My response to the conversation was that sidewalks are not private promenades. I don’t really like to be heralded or heckled by people as I walk down the street, but I do have a middle finger, if I need to use it. While I am learning some southern social habits, as a Northerner I still prefer that strangers don’t talk to me. Nonetheless, I know that sidewalks are public spaces that make foot transit possible—but not without “obstructions.” Shoeshine, crusty or congenial, was part of a long tradition of sidewalk inhabitants and businessmen who have made downtowns lively for over a century.

Far from the overcrowded Manhattan streets of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Lexington’s downtown streets need more life. I’d love to have to hurdle Italians selling raisins by the box. Let me throw elbows at rotund and aproned vegetable vendors. With the relatively sedate sidewalk life we’ve got right now, I’m grateful that there are people like Shoeshine—people whom I sometimes talk to and sometimes avoid.

## The state of our newspaper address *North of Center* end of fiscal year report

By Danny Mayer

“The newspaper business is great—if you can keep the money out of it.”  
—Troy Lyle, graduate of UK journalism and *NoC* sports editor

*Author’s Note: These updates on the paper will be delivered periodically for anyone needing the courage or knowledge to start up their own micro-community ventures. For those not interested, this will all come off as pretentious bullshit. If you fall into the uninterested camp, I suggest moving on to a different article.*

In May of 2009, *North of Center* appeared in Lexington for the first time. I knew we were onto something good when I teared up while reading a draft of Beth Connors Manke’s feature piece on affordable housing. That first issue, which included Beth’s piece and came in at eight pages of text and 1,000 copies, cost me a little less than \$270 to produce.

The first place I asked permission to leave the paper at, a business on North Limestone, told me no. Luckily the second and third places, Alfalfa’s and Sunrise Bakery, said, “Why yes of course.” Were it not for their enthusiasm and kindness, the paper might not have lasted more than a couple issues. I am easily discouraged and a poor salesman to boot.

*North of Center* began operation in May 2009 without a business plan, without any advertisers or other source of self-generating income, and without any hired help. It had no distributors until a couple issues ago when Don Pratt, having come across it at some point, emailed and asked out of the blue to give them away. The paper’s first paid advertisement didn’t come until issue 3—a \$25 ad from Evenstone Landscaping—from a friend who just wanted to help see the paper work out. Our main ad guy, Jerry Moody, has no phone and is currently homeless. The paper’s writers work for free around their own full and weird schedules. It was not until issue 8 that our layout person, Keith, was able to get to bed before 5:00 AM on Monday night/Tuesday morning. Even now, we habitually run to 3:00 and 4:00 AM on layout nights, sandwiching our learning of the newspaper business around our

full-time day jobs. Only last week did I finally get an office in our house out of which to work.

I started *North of Center* for a number of reasons, but chief among them were (1) a curiosity to see if I could do it and (2) a desire to create a community-minded reading text and writing outlet for students taking my first-year writing classes at Bluegrass Community and Technical College.

As a sort of working bonus, in the summers I teach an extra class of first-year writing. As a community college teacher, the class is a blessing. After a year juggling five classes a semester, the one summer course allows me to treat the class like a seminar...and it gives me extra summertime cash to supplement my salary. Last year, I bought a canoe with some of that cash. This summer, I used the money to pay for the first six issues of *North of Center*—enough to cover most all of the summer.

As it turns out, I bought one king-hell of a summer adventure: newspaper drops to Eric Sutherland at the public library location of Good Foods and to Krem at Wine+Market; early-morning chats about “the newspaper life” over coffee and donuts and cold pizza with Troy and Keith; interviewing Seedleaf and Urban Gleaning leaders; getting my own sports beat; meeting up at Al’s for a group looksie over beer, jokes, and food on the Wednesdays when the paper came out; meeting John Lackey and Ed McClanahan; learning about my community from the viewpoint of someone obligated to write about it.

Typical male that I am, I have a one-track mind that is ill-suited to the kind of multi-tasking and long-range business planning skills needed as an as editor-in-chief of this filthy local rag. When we started last summer, that one-track focused on seeing if the collection of every-issue writers who really make *North of Center* work—Beth, Keith, Troy, Michael Benton, Colleen Glenn, Nick Kidd, Andrew Battista, myself—could actually commit to putting out a biweekly paper, on schedule, with no pay at all.

Having answered that question in the affirmative, this past fall I’ve wanted to ensure that these same writers, when most of them went back to

their everyday jobs teaching college students how to read and write, didn’t go certifiably insane attempting to make biweekly deadlines for long 2000 word articles or dropping off caches of papers to places like the Lexington Art League or CD Central.

In short, this first year has been less about evaluating our fiscal viability than it has been about ensuring that the paper’s most important asset, its human capital, could function well. I wanted to know, did our hobby have legs to stand on?

The way I see it, in a venture like this, there’s little sense in worrying about money when you don’t know if the project is worth saving to begin with, and no project can work without invested, committed human capital. We have been fortunate in that the paper lucked into a group of varied, thoughtful, committed, and above all damn good writers who hold somewhat similar notions of putting their talents on display out there in the public, for the public.

So purely in terms of human capital, the state of *NoC* is good. On the docket for next fiscal year, we’ll have interns and potential collaborations with some university classes. People have begun to ask about things they want to see covered, which means, hopefully, that the paper should continue to move in the future toward different avenues of focus, staffed by other people like our film, culture, sports and features editors, who are interested in putting forth the energy to channel their voice and to actively assist others to effectively channel theirs. People are even starting to write letters to the editor (though we’d encourage more).

Our human capital, for the moment at least, seems to be moving toward stable footing.

But now we have to answer the economic question: are we economically resilient. That question thus far remains unresolved. As a paper, we have a commitment to offering our writing and insights to the community as a freely given, freely taken community good. But at some point, we have to pay the bills; at some point, I’ll feel an obligation to pay our writers at least a pittance for their contributions.

Things are not all bad here north of center. Though we still lose money on virtually every issue we put out, we’ve steadily lost less money with each issue—a record Bernanke and Summers and Geithner would be proud of. We’ve got some advertisers (who you should support within your own personal means) that seem like they’ll be steady streams of revenue, and we’re always optimistic about prospects for a couple more. At the moment, we’ve built up enough dough in our business account to pay for about the next six issues or so.

A six-issue horizon. It’s almost as if we’re right back where we started, which if I can recall at this late hour in the evening, was a wonderful and exciting place to be.

To give all of us some much-needed time off to recharge and reflect on what worked and what didn’t, what we can build on and what might be best cast off, *North of Center* will go on vacation for the rest of December; we’ll start back in mid January. Until then keep pushing for a better Lexington.

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A taxi with Jim Gray (cont.)

continued from page 1

then has been a function of the attitude of council members along with a critical mass of involved people who “have created the sense that we should take responsibility for what we want to see happen in our community. You have an opportunity to make it work yourself.”

Before I go any further, I should give my *mea culpa*. I have to confess that when I heard about the taxicab ride, I wanted to “win” it (remember, though, that this is not really a contest). I didn’t really like my chances in the essay competition. So instead the NoC editorial staff hatched the idea for this article. Rather than a 100-word essay, I’d write a 2000-word article. (You really *can’t* trust the media.)

My reason for wanting to talk to Vice Mayor Gray for an hour? Urban planning and affordable housing. I knew, among other things, that the Vice Mayor had been a Loeb Fellow in urban planning at Harvard University in 1997. I wanted to get a sense of how his business background, his political views, and his study of urban planning meshed.

The Vice Mayor generously agreed to meet me early on a Sunday morning over coffee to “talk about the taxi ride” (that was my ruse, of course). Here’s how the interview started:

BCM: How did you get involved with Bruce’s project?

JG: I couldn’t say ‘no’ to Bruce, and I was fascinated and intrigued by this idea.

BCM: Vice Mayor, let’s cut to the chase: are you going to support the affordable housing trust fund?

Ok, that’s not really what happened (but I suppose that type of thing could happen on the real taxi ride). I did ask how Gray had gotten involved with the project, and he did say, “I couldn’t say ‘no’ to Bruce, and I was fascinated and intrigued by this idea.” And he also said: “If you know Bruce, you know you can expect the unexpected and the stimulation that the unexpected provides. The more I know him the more I come to realize what an artist he really is.”

I didn’t have to ambush the Vice Mayor with questions about urban planning and housing because he naturally started talking about those issues. Although the itinerary for the ride has been left open by ELandF, I asked Gray where he would go on the ride if it were up to him. One of his first stops would be Best Friends Day Center, an adult day program for people with Alzheimer’s, where his mother spends time.

As he described it, the rest of the Vice Mayor’s route would revolve around shared city spaces—public and private.

“It might be interesting to ride around town and talk about redevelopment opportunities, the toothless spaces on our streetscapes—you could drive around and see how many of those you can count. Of course, we could drive around, with a little commentary, the OK Corral in the center of town now.”

Finally, the Vice Mayor suggested riding through the Lexington Cemetery. “It’s a space that a lot of people don’t think of as a park. It’s probably the best park that we’ve got. It and the Arboretum are the only really passive parks in Lexington. It’s a great example of what we still have potential with because we still have [urban] space.” The private land surrounding Lexington, Gray said, is beautiful but is only a “drive by” experience for the general public.

After I lamented the poverty of large parks in Lexington, the Vice Mayor told me there is conversation right now about benchmarking park systems with Memphis and Atlanta. “Most of these models have a private benefactor—a large component of it is private philanthropy. My sense is that there is plenty of private wealth that would contribute in Lexington, if the vision for these initiatives was inspiring created.”

Wanted: A Thriving Urban Core

“The challenge we have in Lexington,” Vice Mayor Gray said, “is of creating a stimulating core and packing that core creatively—that’s the whole challenge with the juxtaposition of our urban core with a rural landscape. And maintaining that with an intentional, deliberate effort to put the urban core on steroids in terms of creative planning, creative density.”

The Vice Mayor pointed out that economics is at the heart of the issue when it comes to moving Lexington forward. “Lexington’s cost of living is higher than some of our benchmark cities and our average income is less. Those are numbers I don’t think many people really recognize or are aware of.”

Art and imagination had been a motif in our conversation, and it seemed that the Vice Mayor looked at economics and urban planning organically. “The way in which I conceive of a city and its potential is not unlike the way I conceive of my family’s company [Gray Construction]—that social system. And it’s the same I see with artists—it’s all about imagination. Business at its best is about art and creating. It’s about imagination. And it’s true, too, with a city.”

Finally, I asked the Vice Mayor what future he imagined for the north side.

“You look at the north side, and it has potential because it hasn’t been compromised. You still have the fabric of neighborhoods and commercial space that has enormous potential.”

Talking about the economics of smaller spaces, the kind that could be fostered again on the north side, Gray said, “In a city block you could have 25-30 individual merchants. If one or two of those struggle and go out of business, you’ve still got the rest—the critical mass—that supports the block. If you have one big massive building and it goes down, the whole block goes down. And that’s what we’ve seen in the decay of major cities.”

“Decay starts from the core and works out, which is why the core must be preserved. There are laws of urban

planning like there are laws of physics: there are some things that you just don’t do. And one thing you don’t do is plow down your history. And one thing you do is respect scale and fabric.”

As we wrapped up our conversation (the meter had been running long enough), I asked the Vice Mayor, “So are you ready to be locked in a cab with a constituent for an hour?”

He chuckled. “That will be easier than being locked in council chambers sometimes for three or four hours.”

For more information on ELandF Small Projects Accelerator, visit <http://elandfgallery.blogspot.com>. Some of the essay submissions for the taxi ride with Jim Gray will be available online after the event. Burriss is considering trying to arrange dinner with Dudley Webb at a local restaurant as a future ELandF project.

Kenn Minter signs “The Experts”

Artist appears at Morris Book Shop 12/11

Veteran Lexington comic artist Kenn Minter will sign The Experts, the latest graphic novel from Minter and Clarence Pruitt. This book introduces a new team of heroes: three novices and three veterans, selected for demographic appeal, ability, and (of course) a willingness to work cheap! The Experts is a quirky, off-kilter superhero

series that’s chock full of both action and irony.

Check out some of Kenn’s work on the back of *North of Center*, where his “I’m Not From Here” strip has been anchoring our comic section for many issues now.

The signing is Friday, December 11, from 6:00 until 7:30 P.M.

Sedaris’s “Santaland Diaries” opening

8 performances from Thursday, Dec. 10 through Sunday, Dec. 20

Actors Guild of Lexington is back this holiday season with “The Santaland Diaries. Join Crumpet the elf for a subversive and hysterical look behind the scenes of life as a Macy’s elf. Frustrated parents, wannabe actors, and a gaggle of Santas ranging from naughty to nice, all brought to life by the talented Timothy Hull and directed by Leif Rigney and Eric Seale.

Enjoy the wit of David Sedaris as staged in a site-specific venue. The former Portabella’s on Locust Hill

Drive will, this December, become Lexington’s very own Santaland. See the show, visit the vendors, even get your picture with Santa and his elves. This is the perfect holiday event for even the biggest Scrooge.

Evening shows at 7:30 P.M. Sunday matinees at 2:00 P.M. \$20 adults; \$17 seniors 65+; \$15 students.

Student Rush Tickets available 15 minutes before curtain on the night of the show for \$7.50 (with valid student ID).

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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](mailto:noceditors@yahoo.com).



Documentaries that matter

By Michael Dean Benton

Documentary films, up until recently, were generally consigned to the cultural ghettos of public television and educational institutions. The general public, outside of higher education, saw very few documentaries. All of that changed with the demand of cable television and free-form media outlets available on the Internet.

This has brought about a new sense of importance in regards to the genre of documentaries. Despite the increasing array of media options we are more and more plagued by documentary repetition and imitation. The messages we receive through the mainstream media, including hundreds of cable TV channels, is limited and circumscribed—think VH1’s *Behind the Music*. Documentary filmmakers have begun to lead the charge into this cultural wasteland and claim their right to represent reality as a part of a collective cultural commons that demands diversity of viewpoint and supports a sense of global justice.

With this in mind I have been developing the Spring 2010 Bluegrass Film Society schedule as an opportunity to explore recent Documentaries That Matter. The documentaries I have chosen are films that open the audience up to realities and viewpoints that are often ignored, marginalized and misrepresented in the mainstream media.

**Capitalism—A Love Story (USA: Michael Moore, 2009)**

I predict that this will be considered Moore’s masterpiece. Even more than in the excellent *Sicko* (2007), he downplays his star personality and develops a critical history of the current crisis of capitalism. He once again centers the story on the everyday people hurt by the economic crisis and attempts to understand how it happened.

**Capturing Reality: The Art of Documentary (Canada: Pepita Ferrari, 2008)**

An essential documentary for understanding how and why documentaries are made. The film is centered around interviews with some of most

important global filmmakers and is supplemented with clips from their key films.

**The Corporation (Canada: Mark Achbar/Jennifer Abbot, 2003)**

How did the corporation become, under American law, to be considered a legal “person?” If we consider the corporation to be a person, what would happen if we applied the DSMIV psychological test to them? Adapted from Joel Bakan’s book, these are the beginning questions that frame this film; the filmmakers introduce us to a wide and balanced range of interviews exploring the global rise and dominance of corporations.

**Crips and Bloods: Made in America (USA: Stacey Peralta, 2008)**

A masterful spatial, economic and cultural analysis of the historical origins of the twin gang powers of South Central L.A. Peralta, as in his earlier film *Dogtown and the Z-Boys* (2001), effectively mixes historical analysis with first-person interviews and visual documents. Provides an important counterpoint to *The Garden* below.


**Flow: For the Love of Water (USA: Irena Salina, 2008)**

This film explores the pending future of a world that will battle over water resources. Water is currently a “425 billion dollar industry” and multinational corporations are busy buying up water rights worldwide, - including in the USA. Who owns water? Who gets to decide how it will be regulated and controlled? What happens when a resource we need to consume daily is completely controlled by private interests? From the Bolivian revolution, to Indian dams, to various American water lawsuits, this film explores this growing global crisis.

**Food Inc. (USA: Robert Kenner, 2008)**

There is an exploding array of essential books from Eric Schlosser, Michael Pollan, Peter Singer, Marion Nestle, and others, exploring the problems with the American food industry and American eating habits. This film takes us into this critique through two of the most prominent critics, Schlosser and Pollan,

and builds a thorough case that all Americans should question what they are eating and how it arrived on their tables. Not only is this a healthcare issue due to American eating diseases,



but it is also an animal rights issue, and importantly, a human labor issue.

**The Garden (USA: Scott Hamilton Kennedy, 2008)**

More than any film I have shown this year, this is the film that most electrified and angered my students. In the aftermath of the 1992 Rodney King riots in South Central L.A. the local and state government took surface steps to address the socioeconomic and cultural crisis of the neighborhoods. One measure that passed before the spotlight shifted and politicians once again abandoned South Central was the deeding of a 14 square block area to local farmers to create a central community garden. For over a decade these citizens came together to create an awe-inspiring garden in the middle of a concrete jungle. Then the local representatives conspired with developers to take the land back from the community farmers. This is the story of that struggle.

**The People Speak (USA: Tony Sacco, 2009)**

Based upon Howard Zinn’s landmark history *The People’s History of the United*

*States*, the later collection of the original texts by Anthony Arnone and Howard Zinn *The Voices of the People’s History of the United States*, and the resulting popular tours of performers reading the first-person texts around the USA. Zinn is instrumental in changing way that we view history, and as he states in the documentary: “We didn’t want to hear the words of the people in the White House, we wanted to hear the words of the people that were picketing the White House, agitators, the anti-war protestors, socialists and anarchists, in other words, the people that gave us the liberty and democracy we have in this country.” This is a documentary of the spirit of resistance to illegitimate authority.

**Sir! No Sir! (USA: David Zeiger, 2005)**

A powerful documentation of the hidden history of the GI resistance movement during the Vietnam War, told mostly through the soldiers who were a part of it. Challenges the myth that Vietnam era protestors were predominantly privileged college students and restores the soldier resistance to its prominent place in Anti-War Activism history.

**Standard Operating Procedure (USA: Errol Morris, 2008)**

A documentary about the background history of the Abu Ghraib photos and the after-effects of their explosion onto the world scene. Errol Morris, since he made groundbreaking *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), has been continuously exploring how we perceive truth. His films are forensic explorations of representations of reality and this is another masterpiece.

**Taxi to the Dark Side (USA: Alex Gibney, 2007)**

A journey through the legal and procedural decisions of the American government to institute the torture of prisoners in Guantanamo, Iraq and Afghanistan. Gibney explores both the murder of an Afghanistan taxi driver and the broader history of the policies that led to that death.

*continued on page 7*

Review: A Serious Man

By Brandon Colvin

Despite being the least stylized, most aesthetically conventional example of the Coen Bros’ auteur-tastic cinema, *A Serious Man* is so damn unusual that it might be their most radical, difficult film.

Pondering the film’s (intentionally) obscure narrative and thematic intricacies is akin to stretching one’s brain around an elusive (meta-) physical paradox, encouraging what could be called a “quantum” viewing experience, one hinging upon the fundamental principle of underlying uncertainty—the principle that defines the existence of *A Serious Man*’s pathetically unfortunate protagonist, Jewish mathematics professor Larry Gopnik (Michael Stuhlbarg).

Overcast with a complex and complicating membrane of impenetrable spiritual and existential malaise, *A Serious Man* narrates Larry’s Job-like downward spiral with exceeding intrigue while being more than a little disjointed. As one might observe upon viewing *A Serious Man*, however, the film’s puzzling disunity may be the Coens’ exact intention, the narrative fulfillment of physics theories and mathematics proofs that suggest our universe is indomitably chaotic.

Larry, an archetypical conventional mensch plodding through a banal existence in suburban Minneapolis c. 1970, finds himself in the midst of a vertiginous descent into an inescapable abyss of mind-crippling, heartbreaking, soul-crushing inscrutability. Beset by fate or randomness or Hashem (God) or nothingness, Larry

suffers a series of mounting crises, from the dissolution of his marriage to the bizarre death of his wife’s (Sari Lennick) manstress to his extortion at the hands of frustrated Korean student (David Kang) to his accruing debt and failing attempt to earn tenure.

Attempting to model himself after and seek advice from the “serious” Jews around him—including a slew of ineffectual rabbis, uncaring community leaders, and his wife’s self-important lover, Sy Ableman (Fred Melamed)—Larry probes the (non?) meaning behind his misery, fruitlessly investigating the confusing collision of religious enigma and cryptic mathematics showering ambiguous shrapnel all around him. Though his questioning is undertaken in earnest, it is also darkly hilarious—ironic and biting in its unrelenting honesty, sharply devastating in its unsolvable futility. Larry’s

tribulations are, like *A Serious Man* as a whole, tonally paradoxical, both emotionally-lacerating and cackle-inducing—as ambivalent as the uncertain universe its characters populate.

This elusive universe is best interpreted according to two complimentary quantum concepts discussed by Larry in his lectures: the paradox of Schrödinger’s cat and Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle. The first is a thought experiment revolving around the indeterminacy of atomic particles, specifically the unpredictability of radioactive decay. Schrödinger explained that if a cat were locked in a box with a device that released a tiny amount of radioactive substance that could cause atomic decay (but *might not*), after a certain amount of time, the cat could theoretically be either alive or dead. Because the decay is unpredictable, one could not know

for certain. In this instance, with the box locked, the cat is both alive *and* dead, demonstrating the quantum concept of superposition—the overlapping coexistence of multiple outcomes/realities—in concrete, macrocosmic terms. The cat is not either living *or* dead; it is both. That is, until one opens the box.

There are, however, some boxes that cannot be opened. Their contents remain immeasurable. Larry’s trials constitute such a “box,” and, as Heisenberg suggests in his uncertainty principle, as he seems to begin comprehending some aspects of the universe, the others retreat from his grasp with ferocious intensity. Nothing can be pinned down for sure. It is always shifting, always indefinite. This is the reality of *A Serious Man*.

The film’s bizarre prologue establishes the nature of the narrative’s ambiguous circumstances before Larry even appears onscreen. A 15-minute Jewish parable taking place in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Poland, *A Serious Man*’s introductory scene depicts the eerie experience a curmudgeonly couple has with what is either a man or a dybbuk (demon) masquerading as a man. The husband (Allen Lewis Rickman), who has offered the entity (Fyvush Finkel) entrance into his home in order to repay its previous kindness, believes it to be human, a local acquaintance. His wife (Yelena Shmulenson) is convinced it is a dybbuk, citing evidence that the man in question is three years dead. The husband remains skeptical.

As they debate, the entity remains seated in a chair, until,

*continued on page 8*



Michael Stuhlbarg in the Coen brothers’ A Serious Man.



# Culture

## Live music you need to know about

NoC’s music staff breaks down the next two weeks

**Saturday, December 5**  
Wussy, The Sundresses, and Killer Meteor  
*The Green Lantern. 10 P.M. 21+*

Cincinnati’s Wussy make dusty roots-rock along the lines of Uncle Tupelo and The Jayhawks, influences guitarist and part-time lead vocalist Chuck Cleaver carries over from his former band, The Ass Ponys. But Wussy’s penchant for melody (especially found in the playing of bassist Mark Messerly) and strong hooks point to other influences, including Built to Spill, Yo La Tengo, and REM. The band’s not-so-secret weapon for their diverse sound is guitarist/ part-time lead vocalist Lisa Walker. When singing, Walker’s sugary-sweet voice gives Wussy an indie

much as narrates icy homilies. His lyrics seem terse on paper, heavy on symbolic language hiding more than his cool voice reveals. He’s a masculine storyteller, an aphorist, one whose relaxed delivery plants fractured barriers between the man and his subject matter. I wonder if his sincerity disturbs him and he hides his pain behind metaphors and an inscrutable persona. This is, of course, a right any honest storyteller deserves. But if it’s so, it’s unlikely we’ll ever know because Callahan has always been more submerged than not; even at his warmest he’s not quite thawed.

Callahan’s reserved manner is appropriate for an artist whose tone tends to paint his wry witticisms and insights



Bill Callahan visits Cosmic Charlie’s on December 7.

pop-like warmth that helps balance the band’s otherwise keening, tremolo-heavy downer jams. The band’s latest self-titled album (released in May 2009) has received rave reviews from the likes of Rolling Stone, Village Voice, NPR, and Britain’s Uncut magazine. Wussy appears to have hit the big time!

Another Cincinnati act, The Sundresses, will be opening. The Sundresses have become a Green Lantern staple of late, and with their feral, Tom Waits-inspired carnival-style swinging punk rock, it’s easy to see why.

Rounding out the bill will be Lexington’s own Killer Meteor, a band comprised of current and former members of several bands like The Apparitions, Neva Geoffrey, These United States, and others. They’re a Johnny Cash-meets-My Morning Jacket outfit whose brand of southern-fried Lexington blues keeps gets better with age, just like other Kentucky delicacies like bourbon and John Wall. Be sure to come out early and show these locals some love as they share the bill with a couple of Cincinnati’s finest.

**Monday, December 7**  
Bill Callahan w/ Lights and Neil Morgan  
*Cosmic Charlie’s. 21+. \$8*

Bill Callahan isn’t an easy read. He’s a folky blues artist whose baritone, deadpan voice—one often likened to Leonard Cohen’s—doesn’t sing so

malevolently, whether he means to or not. It’s this malevolence that’s found bubbling beneath the surface of his earliest recordings. Twenty years ago, as Smog, Callahan pioneered a breed of DIY lo-fi music that brought listeners inside the living room of a man who immersed his life—dreams, failures, turmoil, anger, humor, warts and all—into the void of a cheap 4-track recorder, releasing limited batches of cassette-only missives on his own Disaster label. These earliest recordings are crude communiqués from an exceptionally precise lyricist, ballads garbled amongst bloated percussive racket, poorly tuned guitars, and murky sonic collages. It sounds, at times, a mess, some of which was fittingly recorded on a “dumpster Porta-Studio.”

Smog’s insular misery, understatement, and tape hisses quickly won Callahan a cultish following. He landed a deal with Drag City records in 1991 and seemed poised to stay the lo-fi course. Fortunately, however, Smog didn’t shy away from the possibilities afforded by the recording studio, working on different albums with various producers and musicians to create ever-f fuller compositions and focused melodies. He was prolific throughout his first decade on Drag City, creating a vast, kitchen-sink sonic palette that eschewed nothing but predictability. By the end of the millennium, Smog had begun recording as the parenthetical (Smog), perhaps to distance himself from his growing popularity. By the

early 2000s, his music had touched on everything from Velvet Underground-inspired rock to folky drones, country twang, gospel, krautrock, indie rock, chamber music and more.

After 2005’s *A River Ain’t Too Much to Love*, Callahan dropped the (Smog) moniker and began recording under his proper name. He’s since released two LPs that make a striking counterpoint to his earliest Smog recordings. 2007’s *Woke on a Whaleheart* is a heavily rhythmic country and R & B-influenced album—a downright ebullient release for Callahan. His latest LP, 2009’s *Sometimes I Wish We Were an Eagle* takes a step backward from *Whaleheart* to move closer to where later (Smog) releases left off, recovering Callahan’s tranquil poise in dealing with bleak subject matter. It’s a romantic catharsis that features Callahan’s uniquely austere voice gliding atop Brian Beattie’s dramatic string and horn arrangements. *Sometimes...Eagle’s* chamber-style interplay coupled with Callahan’s lyrics and sparse delivery makes it a milieu best described as stunning. It’s easily one of the finest albums of the year.

For a preview of Callahan’s forthcoming Lexington performance, I highly recommend heading to the NPR website and streaming his Tiny Desk Concert. This performance features a trio of *Sometimes...Eagle’s* standouts songs and provides a glimpse of what’s in store come concert time. This show should not be missed!

### Aapeli opens (cont.)

*continued from page 1*

colors throughout, bad lighting. The two set out transforming the place immediately, in a sense, re-inhabiting it.

Jason ripped out the fluorescent ceiling lights and replaced them with a more subdued track lighting with dimmers, sunken into the ceiling. He replaced the carpet, painted the walls, installed a mini wall of rushing water to accent the sounds from Broadway.

They began to replace the sterile office feel and reclaim some of the more homely aspects that were latent in the space’s bones. On one side of the gigantic entry room, the two bedrooms became Jason and Renata’s separate massage rooms, connected by a bathroom. On the other side of the large room, the kitchen became the Aapeli office.

The Hicks also had plans for the oversized room that visitors first enter when coming for a massage.

“When we realized we were gonna have this big empty space that people just walked into,” Jason recalled, “we thought we wanted to make it more comfortable and we wanted to do something more useful or more community oriented with it. So we decided rather than just saying we were a massage clinic, to turn this center room

**Saturday, December 12**  
The Dave Rempis/Frank Rosaly Duo w/ Mezmer Society  
*Al’s Bar. 8 P.M. All ages. \$5*

Dave Rempis (who also plays with the Vandermark Five, Engines, and several other groups) brings his alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones back to Lexington with accompaniment from percussionist extraordinaire Frank Rosaly. They’re touring in support of their new album, their first as a duo, *Cyrillic* (482 Music). The two last played together in Lexington back in October 2007 with the Rempis Percussion Quartet in what was one of the last and most memorable shows held at the sorely missed Icehouse.

Expect their set to delve headlong into free form improvisational passages, alternating between sparse, brooding restraint and tempestuous avant-garde outbursts. Rosaly often uses smaller, non-traditional drumsticks when accompanying, rapping across all parts of his kit and beyond, picking up and tossing aside percussive flotsam scattered around his kit, creating sparse spaces of rings, taps, clicks, and clangs that give Rempis’ fervid improvisations plenty of space to explore. These moments are countered by louder, more resonant drum and cymbal accompaniment, generating elastic dynamics sure to expand and melt the minds of all who hop aboard this ride into the sonic unknown.

into a gallery to give artists a place to show or sell their work. We thought we’d keep the room open and do clinics in it. So right now we’ve got yoga in it several days a week.”

The multi-functionality of the room extends beyond its particular uses as an art gallery, entryway, concert hall, yoga center, and general meeting area. The room also serves as a melding pot, of sorts, for sound. Some of the sounds are inherent to the building—the cello coming through from the strings teacher next door, the streets muted humming from the traffic coursing through Broadway below.

Some of the sounds are the Hicks’: waterfall, ambient music, conversation. Others echo from the very bones of the place. Once a home, then a business. Now a place dedicated to healing.

Local artists are encouraged to stop by Aapeli and view the space, shop their craft and maybe even line up a future display, he said.

In addition to on-site massage, yoga and art, Aapeli also offers hot stone treatments, aromatherapy and will even come to your home for an in house treatment.

*Troy Lyle contributed to this article.*



The open Aapeli central room features local art and yoga classes.



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# DG at River Hill Park

## Prepping for the PF Open

By Troy Lyle  
NoC Sports Columnist

Earlier this summer my disc golf game went the way of the dodo. I couldn't execute a single throw, much less make a putt. I was so frustrated that I shelved my game and focused on kayaking. But with this year's PF Open (the annual fall disc golf tournament held in Keene) quickly approaching, I wanted to try and whip my game back into some form of shape.

So I decided two weekends ago to call up *NoC* sports enthusiasts Keith Halladay and Danny Mayer to check out the new disc golf course at River Hill Park. Having opened in early November, the 9-hole course located at the corner of Man o' War Boulevard and Crosby Drive would be just what the doctor ordered for my struggling disc golf game. My thinking was having not played the course prior, I could come in fresh and new.

Mayer, Halladay and I met around noon on Saturday. I went through my normal warm up routine of stretching, high stepping and body weaving. Watching me warm up is like rubbernecking at the scene of a car crash. You don't want to look at the horrific aftermath of the accident, but you can't take your eyes off it.

To make matters worse I had added a layer to my beer gut since last using my discs. If only I could harness the raw energy and torque of the beer gut. The centrifugal forces alone could add 30 yards to my drive. Though I've tried, I have yet to break through to any tangible returns.

River Hill is a small park by most standards. What it lacks in acreage it makes up for in variety. In addition to nine holes of disc golf the park offers three tennis courts, a walking path, a small baseball field, a basketball court and a newly updated play area complete with swings and jungle gyms.

Most of the nine holes fall between 190 and 280 feet. But what the course lacks in length it makes up for in elevation change, pin placement and

obstacles. Nearly every hole requires angling a shot around several trees. And in some cases, like holes 2, 6 and 8, you not only must maneuver through the forest but also make putts above or below your feet.

It didn't take me long to spread my stench over the beginners' course. While Mayer birdied the first hole after a fine drive to within ten feet of the hole and Halladay saved par on a strong second shot, I bogeyed the opening hole after missing a short putt. I managed to add insult to injury by bogeying the second as well. At our farm in Keene we don't use baskets on our 22-hole course. Instead baskets are supplanted with trees, fence posts and cisterns. So I wasn't used to dropping a shot into a basket so much as I was accustomed to hitting a vertical target. Both of my opening putts rimmed off each basket.



Danny Mayer follows through on the sixth at River Hill.

After Mayer bogeyed the second hole, too, I found myself at the bottom of the threesome, looking up at Halladay, who already held a two stroke lead over me through two holes. His tried and true technique of steady, if unspectacular, par play was already working its magic. I badly needed a solid drive off the third tee so I went



NoC editors Troy Lyle and Danny Mayer search for their drives on the ninth at River Hill.

with my ringer throw — an overhand, double breaking anyhzer (where the disc aims upward at the point of the release). My bright orange Innova Valkrie disc didn't let me down.

I managed to drop the shot within 15 feet of the basket and secure a par, on my way to an 18-hole even par victory over Halladay (+2) and Mayer (+1).

I will not bore you with the play-by-play of a bunch of novice disc golfers. Just know that we all made a few birdies, a couple bogeys and a lot of pars.

As a whole the River Hill Park course is a lot of fun. All of the tee boxes are concrete slabs. There are two pin placements for each hole and the nearly 2100 foot layout provides for a nice afternoon walk through the entire park. Not to mention the average disc golfer can play all nine holes in roughly half an hour. It's a great addition to south side of town, which now has three disc golf courses, the others being Shillito and Veterans.

Notes  
*The Mayer Fade*

Per usual Mayer dropped off the face of the disc golf planet on hole 6 after leading at the turn. His blunders and gaffs are so synonymous that players and journalists have dubbed his recurring choke the "Mayer Fade."

In a general sense, the phenomenon occurs when a player throws lights

out for six to nine holes and then completely shifts the bed in one great, cluster-fuck of a hole, usually resulting in a double or triple bogey; then following up any and all subsequent holes with further insults of single, double and in some cases triple bogeys.

The Mayer Fade is not just a physical or mental melt-down. Many observers who have studied the phenomenon note how it involves a near simultaneous breakdown of biological, psychological, meteorological, and geologic proportions.

*Halladay conditioning woes continue*

Once again, Halladay finished the first part of a disc golf round with the lead only to relinquish his top spot as he completed the back nine holes. There is little question that the 6'4", 270-pound flinger has the physical tools to be successful playing disc golf. Some question, however, whether Halladay has the conditioning necessary to compete at the highest levels of mediocre amateur disc golf play.

*If you'd like to learn more about disc golf courses or events in the area check out the Bluegrass Disc Golf Associations website at [www.bdga.org/](http://www.bdga.org/). Or visit DGcoursereview's website at [www.dgcoursereview.com/](http://www.dgcoursereview.com/) for complete listings of all the courses in the greater bluegrass area, as well as printable score cards, player reviews, and course layouts and yardages for each.*

## Bike polo grows (cont.)

*continued from page 1*

acquaintances, and celebrating biking by putting it to creative use.

But with more players arriving, it may now be time for Court 2, which sits to the north of Court 1 across the bike pit, to finally get retrofitted for bike polo action.

A little context. This past summer before the Bluegrass State Games Bike Polo Tournament held at Coolavin Park, most of the players then associated with Lexington bike polo donated their time to construct a lumber court—essentially, a 2x6 treated piece of lumber that frames the court and ensures that the ball will not get caught in the fence that encloses both courts. (The frame is taller on the bike pit side.) The lumber-ed in section acts as Court 1, and it has always (since summer, at least) sufficed for play. Sufficed wonderfully, actually. But across the bike pit, Court 2 has yet to be finished. Currently, it sits as a dumping grounds for pets, a unicycle stage for when Lay brings in his

unicycle, and an occasional practice space on which players may warm up. But mostly, it sits unused during bike polo play—viewed correctly as a lesser, unfinished, court.

For some time, players have been inventing ways to come up with the dough to buy the supplies and amass the community energy needed to finish Court 1 and get Court 2 ready for game action. For Court 2, this would include the construction and painting of court walls to make both courts identical. Unlike Court 1, there are no boards along the entire perimeter of Court 2 to keep the ball in play.

Unsurprisingly, their ideas reflected the varied creative skill sets of the individuals whom the sport seems to attract. Though the thought of selling ad space on the court walls was originally bantered about as a revenue possibility, the players decided to focus for the moment instead on generating money in ways that kept the focus on the talents of the bike polo players themselves. Paint to finish Court 1 was paid for by funds

collected independently and pooled from the resources of various fundraising ideas: registration from the 2 vs. 2 Tournament held in October and sales of official Lexington Bike Polo t-shirts created and printed by Bluegrass State Games Commissioner of Bike Polo (and Cricket Press co-owner) Brian Turner.

"One of the things we are most proud of is what we have been able to accomplish within our group," notes Tripple Lexx member (and Bullhorn Will partner) Brad Flowers. "Not just raising funds but also generating the excitement and energy to reach out to other helpful organizations such as the Parks Department."

Last Sunday, that energy was in full view as Lexington bike polo players helped transform Coolavin once again. Here's Turner: "From about 10 AM until 5 PM [Sunday], shifts of regular players were able to completely prime and paint all of the existing wood walls at the courts. It looks absolutely amazing. Everything that was once bare wood is now coated in a bright, traffic cone orange. Coolavin no longer looks like a temporary structure cobbled together, but an actual legitimate sports facility." This effort by Lexington bike polo players of course will help solve the immediate problem of a backlog of games on Court 1, though maybe not the larger underlying issue of weighing the sport's growing popularity in Lexington against player accessibility (ie, being able to get into a game). In other words, the issue of players running up against the realities of geographic limits, both physical and human.

Another, farther off, possibility might involve players cycling in and

then out of the courts at Coolavin in search of other parks or forgotten and under-used spaces: micro-migrations of players in search of other local centers of bike polo action, perhaps allowing for the development of other home "courts," other Coolavin Parks. (Note to Bike Polo landscapers: *NoC* would love to see an ivy-filled Green Monster for a wall at some future court.)

Among other things, this might allow for different Lexington groups to play each other, perhaps as a precursor to a Lexington bike polo league that might sustain a couple more locally focused tournaments a year (modeled partially on the success of the 2 on 2 tournament Chris Simpson concocted in October). And it might allow players to "follow" games around Lexington, to play on different days or at different times, and to have (or not have) a home base/court and plenty of other satellite courts.

But this is all the work of an over-productive imagination at the moment. The more immediate issue is building a more viable spill-over space at Coolavin.

Lexington bike polo has already put in their creative energy and sweat equity to fix up one court. With a potential influx of new players to the park, how might the city or community residents offer the players the necessary support and help necessary to fix up Court 2? Is there a market that might support the reclaiming of under-used public space for public displays of sport?

In the end, it may partially depend on how the businesses, artists, benefactors, and residents of the various communities that comprise "Lexington Bike Polo" value that space, those players, and the games they play there.



Al's Bar proudly sponsors Lexington Bike Polo  
Wednesdays & Sundays at Coolavin Park  
Post-game shenanigans at Al's



# Opinion

## UK BOT rules aren't "obviously" working Does Jimmy Stanton support inefficient and anti-student policies?

In a front page article in the November 18 *Kentucky Kernel*, Laura Clark reported that the UK Board of Trustees (BOT) had rejected UK finance professor Joe Peek's request to change the rules governing how ordinary students, teachers and staff get to appear before the Board. Here's how Clark described the process currently in place: "In order to speak before the Board of Trustees, President Lee Todd, a committee and the full board must approve the request—all in a 30 hour time frame."

A separate sidebar, appearing next to the article, gave further details of the insane process. At 9 AM on the day before the Trustees meet, a meeting agenda gets released to the public. From here, a student interested in participating in the civic process of addressing the Board must draft and submit a proposal to President Todd. Todd, who on the mornings before BOT meetings presumably sits at his computer for several hours awaiting and considering student requests, then decides whether or not to forward the proposal to the next level of designed bureaucracy: a BOT-appointed committee set up to look at such things.

This committee, a collection of busy people with wildly different schedules, also must presumably sync their schedules to meet and consider any forwarded requests from Todd. If this committee agrees that the issue is weighty enough to allow a lowly student (or faculty or staff member) to meet before the grand Board, this sub-committee then adds time on the BOT agenda for the petitioner to appear.

Of course, even here the petitioner may not be allowed to appear. First, the Board will take time to hear the sub-committee report on the petitioner's request. Rather than do the sane thing and read the request itself, the Board instead "determine[s] if they will hear the petitioner at a set time and place" based on the sub-committee's (and presumably Todd's) report.

This protocol, which has been in place since September 1970, was enthusiastically given the thumbs up by UK spokesperson Jimmy Stanton, who assured concerned citizens that the policy had a storied history.

"It's been in place for 39 years, so obviously it's working," Stanton bleated.

That Stanton would make such an ill-informed remark isn't that surprising. If Lee Todd shits on the hallowed statue of James Patterson located in front of the Patterson Office Tower, it's Stanton's job to convince us that it's all roses and high grade compost before sending us along to the nearest UK donation booth. As the university's Executive Director of Public Relations and Marketing, making sunshine statements that defy reality are a large part of his job description.

But it shouldn't mean we let him or the university get away with it.

First off, the Board's policy that Stanton says is "obviously" working is

remarkably inefficient, even for fat cat BOT members, so "obviously" chosen on the basis of the dollars in their purse rather than the brains in their heads. If anyone can explain the sense in requiring, in effect, three separate "pre-meetings" before a decision can be made as to whether someone is even allowed to address the Board, please let us know. We'll give you all the column space you want to explain your position.

For the rest of us, though, the process sounds like a colossal waste of time—a strikingly inefficient way to use a university president's time and



overpriced salary, much less the collective time of the sub-committee and the board, all of whom have to take time away from their 'real lives' just to determine whether someone is allowed speak their voice.

In short, from a labor perspective the policy is strikingly inept, even for our non-Top 20 CEO and BOT. Hell, it's inefficient even for us here at *North of Center*—and we've never been a strong supporter of the business art of efficiency.

Of course, this assumes that Todd, the sub-committee, and the BOT actually do what the regulations imply: receive a request, research and think on it, weigh its merits and forward it onto a sub-committee that in turn, makes space in their schedules to receive, research, contemplate and write up a report on the request to the trustees, who once again are to thoughtfully hear the request and hopefully finally rule on its merits as to whether they wish to hear the speaker or not. All in 30 hours.

We make no such assumptions, which is why Stanton's statement needs even more unpacking.

When it comes to such heady, official things such as "rules," we tend to think of them as just appearing out of the blue. Because their writing comes off as stodgy, ahistorical and legalistic, we assume rules, laws, regulations and the like lack a history. This is certainly what Stanton had in mind when he thoughtlessly said the rule has worked for nearly 40 years.

But Administration Regulation 1:2, which governs how people are to address the Board, has a history. Like

all rules and laws, it didn't just appear out of nowhere. It was put in place at a Board meeting on September 30, 1970.

This happened to be the first time the Board met after the law was implemented. *That* day was the first BOT meeting to be held in the more defensible 18th floor of Patterson Office Tower.

In what sense was the meeting more defensible you might ask?

In the sense that it was more difficult for students and faculty to interrupt or even participate in the meeting, much less have their voices heard

by the board. In the midst of 10 years of active student organizing throughout the nation—for civil rights, for free speech, for U.S. withdrawal from an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam that held bipartisan support—starting in the mid-1960s universities across the U.S. built square, vertical buildings whose architecture made it more difficult for students to occupy, or in most cases, even participate in the discussions taking place regarding the direction of their own universities. Then as now, UK was behind on the construction curve in 1969/70, when their fortified building that would help contain student activism—the Patterson Office Tower—was finally completed.

But in that first BOT meeting held in the tower that May of 1970, UK students attended by the hundreds. Denied access to the elevators traveling up the 18 floors to the meeting, many students surprised the Board when they climbed the 18 flights of stairs and entered the meeting anyway. (They were denied access due to "fire code" issues, a curious thing to say about a brand new building, but remained on the floor and sat in the open areas outside the closed doors of the meeting.)

The students called on the Board to do two things: (1) They demanded their school respond to then President Richard Nixon's illegal and secret expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia (think Afghanistan/

Pakistan); (2) they demanded redress for the National Guard's shooting and killing of peacefully demonstrating students at nearby Kent State University. SGA President Greg Bright, who would later be arrested for being on campus after the university declared a campus curfew, gave a compelling speech. After the meeting and before descending on the elevator, former Governor (and at the time a BOT member) A.B. Happy Chandler assaulted a student, for which the student was prosecuted. Charges were eventually dropped, but Chandler became a folk hero throughout Kentucky for hitting a dirty hippy. For hitting, let's be clear, an unsuspecting college student.

The particularly history of this speaking regulation shows quite clearly, of course, that contra spokesperson Stanton, the rule has not obviously worked for nearly forty years—at least if you are a student. It was designed, in fact, precisely to cut off student voice before such a voice even begins to form. Finding an agenda, dealing with Todd and the chain of command, getting locked off express elevators traveling to the 18th floor, and once there seeing your very president going off and cowering in a board room while you try to talk—it's all designed to make you, if you are a student, shut the hell up and learn your place.

Of course, if you are a faculty or a staff member, you ought to be worried, too. Finance professor Joe Peek, the person who last month requested to change the Board's policies regarding how people get on the Board's secretive agenda, was never even given a chance to address the Board. His request to speak died at the sub-committee level. For all we know, the Board never heard a word of what he said.

Peek holds the Gatton Endowed Chair in International Banking and Financial Economics. As an endowed chair, and as one located in the highly influential Gatton College of Business and Economics, Peek is one of the more powerful members of the faculty. The dude's got an impressive vita with enough publications, grants, fellowships and awards to put Lee Todd—a not-very-impressive-academic but we're told a damn fine fundraiser—to shame.

One would like to think that, in an academic setting supposedly based in the free exchange of ideas, the views of a well-respected endowed chair might have merit and value to a board of governing trustees. But in the end, Peek lost out to a 39 year-old regulation blatantly designed to keep smelly hippies away—and increasingly, most anyone that plays a part and has a stake in the everyday function of the university.

If that is an obvious show of the Board's policies working, we're left to ask: who do they work for?

### Documentaries (cont.)

*continued from page 4*

***This is What Democracy Looks Like* (USA: Jill Friedberg and Rick Rowley, 2000)**

Compiled from the films shot by a 100 media activists, this is an on-the-ground documentary of the 1999 WTO Protests in Seattle. The battle over the cultural significance of the Battle of Seattle continues today, a first place to start is this essential documentary. A work of art and activism.

***The Trials of Darryl Hunt* (USA: Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg, 2006)**

In 1984 Darryl Hunt was convicted of a crime he didn't commit. Hunt, an African-American male, accused of raping and murdering a white woman, was convicted by an all-white jury to life in prison. There were no witnesses and no evidence linking him to the crime. This is the story of the long battle to free this brave man who would not give up the fight for his freedom.

***Union: The Business of Getting High in America* (Canada: Brett Harvey, 2007)**

Another criminally slandered issue in America. With no clear deaths linked to the use of marijuana why has it long been deemed a criminal offense to use it? Currently we have 45,000+ people in prison for marijuana and an average of 7 billion dollars spent annually on a useless Drug War centered upon Marijuana. When will the madness end and how many lives have to be destroyed by the government?

***Why We Fight* (USA: Eugene Jarecki, 2005)**

Starting from Eisenhower's 1961 presidential farewell speech in which he warned that we must guard against the increasing power of the military-industrial complex, this film moves through the policies of the following presidents, democratic and republican, and their reasoning for going to war. Insightful first-time documentary from a 23 year old filmmaker, it is so impressive, West Point later invited him to lecture on the subject. What happens when war becomes a business?

### Letter to the editor

I read with interest your article about the "gentrification" of U.K. This situation is very disturbing to me because, as I see it, the university, which was essentially established as an agricultural school, served for decades as one of the very few means of accessible, affordable higher education in the state.

Although I came onto the scene a bit later, 1968 to be exact, the campus at that time was populated with a lot of middle and lower middle class kids such as I. With the costs of tuition, room and board being relatively low compared to the few in-state options available at that time, so many of us were able to complete our higher education.

My recent trips to the campus left me puzzled as to what had become of that special mix of kids from the remote corners of the state that used

to inhabit the place. The entire atmosphere of the school had changed, and in my opinion, not for the better.

I love that I managed to survive some economic privation, the Viet Nam war era on campus, and a lot of other situations that the country endured in those days. It is sad to see that one of the biggest opportunities for advancement for students from the remote, rural areas of Kentucky have diminished so.

William Munson

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







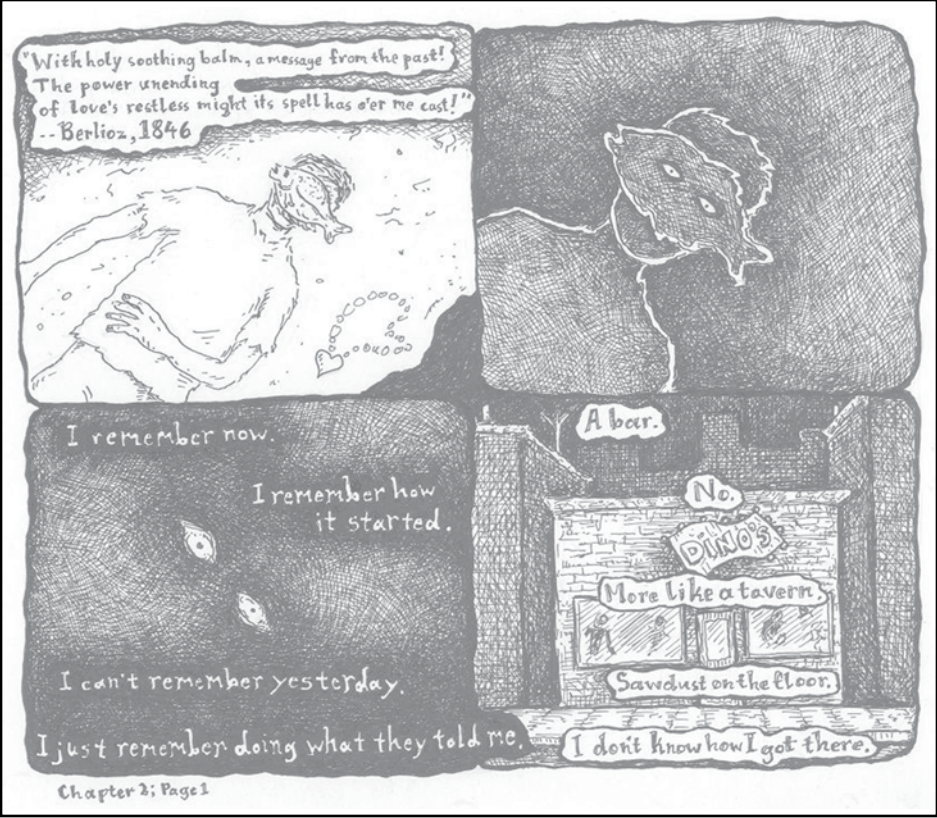
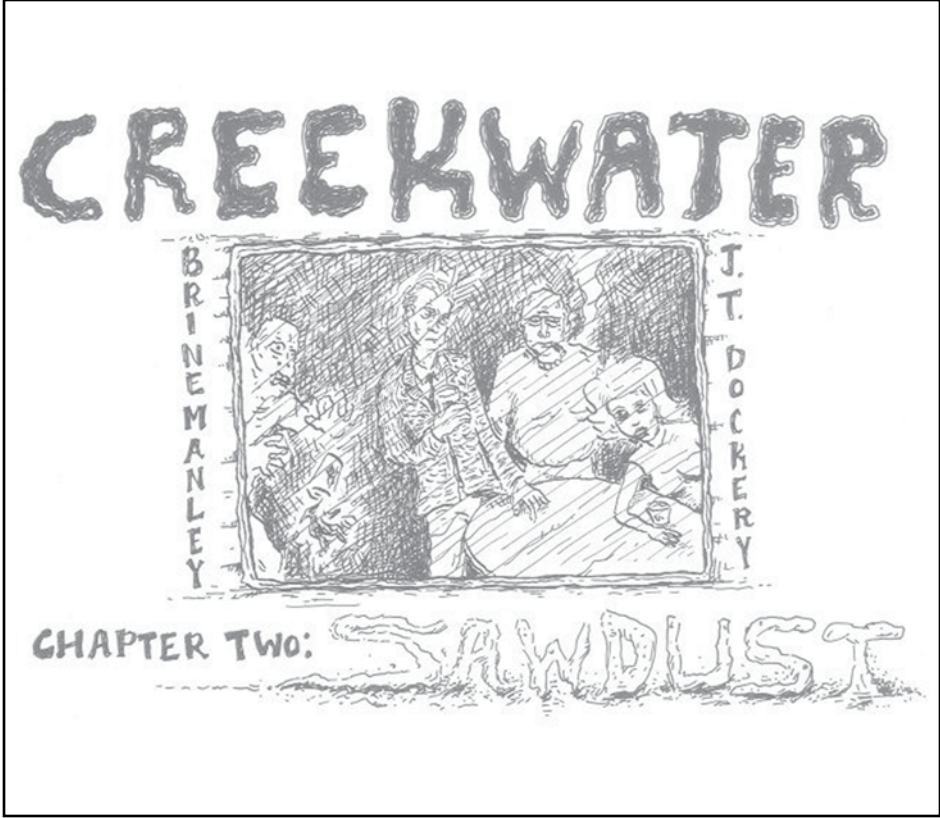
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A Serious Man (cont.)

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suddenly, the wife stabs it through the heart with an ice pick. The entity's reaction is curious. At first, it does not bleed; it merely chuckles. The wife notes the lack of blood. Suddenly, red begins staining the entity's shirt, rippling out from the wound. Befuddled and bleeding, the entity leaves into the snowy cold, remarking that it knows when it is unwelcome. Horrified, the husband worries what will happen when the body is found in the morning, feeling his wife has committed murder. Confidently, the wife remarks that she has merely forced evil out of the house. The entity is presented as both man and dybbuk. The Coens leave the box unopened.

Despite a few cliché moments, a couple of bland dream sequences, and a handful of unnecessarily canted angles, *A Serious Man* proves to be an intriguing entry in the Coens' oeuvre. Like *Job*, Larry and the viewer never receive an answer to the persistent "why?" All that is displayed in the awesomely destructive power of the universe/Hashem/uncertainty, epitomized by *A Serious Man's* stunningly unexpected conclusion. Whether one is a pot-smoking teenager, like Larry's good-for-nothing son, Danny (Aaron Wolff), or a whacked-out neurological quack, like Larry's brother, Arthur (Richard Kind), the universe remains incalculable, even with the assistance of Danny's marijuana or Arthur's garbled prophecy, *The Mentaculus*.

WEDNESDAY  
DECEMBER 9  
7PM

**AL'S BAR**  
CORNER OF 6TH  
AND LIMESTONE

THE CULT FILM  
SERIES  
AT AL'S BAR PRESENTS  
Jim Kelly & Scatman Crutcher in

**BLACK BELT JONES**  
Directed by Robert Clouse, 1974

SPONSORED BY THE BLUEGRASS FILM SOCIETY  
„BECAUSE ‘B’ MOVIES WERE MEANT TO BE SEEN IN A BAR  
<http://bluegrassfilmsociety.blogspot.com>

No solution is stable. Threats await in the form of racist neighbors, bullies, unfulfilled sexual liaisons, car crashes, subscription scams, lawsuits, anonymous defamatory letters, natural disasters, and x-ray results only delivered in-person. Though Larry is "trying to be" a serious man, he is left dangling

over an abyss of obscurity, just like the viewer. There is only uncertainty; and, perhaps, even that is uncertain.

*This movie has departed local theaters, but is still playing at the Mariemont 3 in Cincinnati, and should be available on DVD and Blu-ray eventually.*