

Lexxx trips in tourney

Lose thriller in overtime to Comosexuals

By Danny Mayer

*Saturday, July 25, 2009
Coolavin Park*

After it was all said and done at Saturday’s inaugural Bluegrass Games Bike Polo tournament—after five hours of tournament play had whittled seventeen teams down to two, after an intensely fought 1-1 draw in regulation of the championship game, and after Charlie Hall slipped a ten-foot scoot-shot past Tiff Morrow for a 2-1 Comosexual victory over locals Tripple Lexxx in the seventh minute of overtime—it was the boys from Columbia, Missouri who could walk away with the title “Champions of the Bluegrass (Games Bike Polo tournament).”

Tournament play started at 12:56 PM with Bluegrass Games Commissioner of Bike Polo Brian Turner announcing the tournament brackets and court rules for the double elimination tournament. Ten minutes later, hometown boys Jesus, the Spic, and the Little Kid (Brian Ronk, Texas phenom Rich Lopez, and Kevin Kliment, respectively) opened tournament play with a 4-1 victory over Atlanta team Down Low. While there were occasional sprinkles—notably whenever Lexington team Pray for Rain actually played—the weather held up and made for glorious bike polo and grilling conditions. In all, five Lexington teams entered the tournament, with the No See Ums (Turner, Drew Combs, and Kyle Hord) placing fourth to go with the second place finish of Tripple Lexxx.

The championship showdown will certainly go down as one of the more thrilling finishes in Bluegrass Games Bike Polo tournament history. The game had it all: two dominant teams, precision passes, smart shots, dazzling defensive displays, bike crashes, scorekeepers, a vocal crowd cheering on the hometown underdogs, fast-paced action, and above all else, a championship drama that pick-up games just can’t simulate.

Hometown favorites Tripple Lexxx, featuring Brad Flowers, Tiff Morrow, and Chris Simpson, emerged from the loser’s bracket to face the unbeaten Comosexuals, and at 5:35 PM, the championship game began with a hard offensive by the Comosexuals that lasted all of two minutes before Flowers pushed a half-court runout to within four feet of the Comosexual goal. With a flick of the mallet, Flowers fended off a trailing Comosexual, Nicholas Jacob, by dribbling the ball through Jacob’s wheels and tapping in for an early 1-0 Tripple Lexxx lead.

The crowd went bonkers—throwing chairs, guzzling Ale-8s, and pounding the court walls with mallets like a pack of coked-out wildebeests. They knew that a one-goal lead might be a virtual lock with Morrow, a certified ball crusher, guarding the goal.

But championships have a way of writing their own scripts. Much of the rest of the game was marked by unwanted Comosexual advances on Flowers, Morrow, and Simpson. Five minutes in at the 5:40 PM mark, Comosexual Pete Abram snuck one through a scrum in front of the goal to tie the game up at 1-1. From here, the game settled into a strategic match of bike-chess, with both teams looking, unsuccessfully, for the other team to flinch. By the time regulation play ended in a tie, both teams seemed physically and mentally drained. It was only the excited roar of the onlookers that kept the players going when play resumed at 5:47 PM after a water break.

The game appeared over at the 5:49 mark when Simpson rebounded his own miss along the fence, slipped back underneath to the goal, and tapped the ball over for an apparent 2-1 Tripple Lexxx victory. Bluegrass Games Bike Polo Commissioner, however, was right on top of things with a ruling that negated the shot because Simpson did not allow a second player to touch his ball after his first missed shot. Ultimately, however, it was a run-out

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Chris Sullivan of Tripple Lexxx speeds by a Comosexual during the championship game of the Bluegrass Games Bike Polo Tournament.

Private health care

and what it means for the public good

By Steven Mangine

Locked horns with your health insurance company lately? If you were attempting to pry loose a payment for a medical procedure, you probably spent an evening muttering over an “EOB” (explanation of benefits), a document as accessible as the Scroll of Isis, likewise covered with mysterious glyphs, but dominated by a particular one: “\$00.00.” So goes the “explanation” of your “benefits.”

Sufficient frustration or terror will motivate the call that is so very important to them. Press a “2”, wait, press a “4”, wait, wait...Erika wants to know how she can help you. Something friendly in her voice encourages you to wade in. “Hi. I had surgery on my shoulder on May 15, and this thing you sent me said it wasn’t covered, but I did pre-certify it, and I think you must be confusing it with...” Erika kindly explains that you need to talk to another department. Downhill from there—a second person, a third. “Yes. On my shoulder. The woman in the surgeon’s office told me three times that...What? No, wait, please don’t transfer me again, wait, don’t transfer me DON’T!”

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Connecting filmmakers and audiences

The Lexington Film League anchors the energy around film in Lexington

By Colleen Glenn

Add the Lexington Film League to the growing list of creative, grassroots organizations helping to make our town a vibrant and dynamic community. What started as an idea a few months ago has grown rapidly into an organized group dedicated to supporting and fostering the local film scene.

“Lexington already has filmmakers,” explains Sarah Wylie Ammerman, one of three co-producers who run the league. “It already has all of the parts. It essentially already has a [film] community. There are people doing things and making things—they just aren’t connected. And there’s nothing pithy, nothing with any weight that centers all of that energy. And so one of the things we want to do is connect the community, connect what is already happening in Lexington. And what we want to do is grow that, add to the richness of it, and add to the opportunities for this community.”

“Everyone kind of resonates with film whether or not they make 16 mm

or 35 mm film or they make commercials or they make videos with their camera phones,” says Kiley Lane, who serves as co-producer and co-founder of the league. “And it’s not just about filmmakers either. We wanted to have a community that supports and loves filmmaking, and to create those people within the community.”



Co-producers Sarah Wylie Ammerman, Hannah LeGris, and Kiley Lane of the Lexington Film League.

Getting LFL Off the Ground

After moving back to Kentucky last fall, Lane recognized the need for an organization that could support local filmmakers and audiences here. A documentary filmmaker, Lane had lived for eight years in Colorado, returning periodically over the years to work on film projects with Lexington

filmmaker Arthur Rouse, but last fall she came home with the intention of staying. “I think Lexington and Kentucky has that charm where you can make it your own. I was looking for that in other places, but I wasn’t finding it,” Lane recalls.

As Lane settled into her new job at Video Editing Services on High Street, she and her co-workers Gina Willis and Ryan Rivard began to brainstorm ideas about ways to support the local film community. These conversations eventually led to Lane and Willis founding the Lexington Film League.

In April, LFL held an informational meeting with local filmmakers in order to get their feedback on the concept of LFL and to assess their needs. They asked the filmmakers who attended, “What did you see in the past? What would you like to see in the future?” “We realized then,” Lane recalls, “that we really needed to make this a community effort.”

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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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A public stage for Duncan Park

Between 8 A.M. and 6 P.M. on Friday, July 31, and Saturday, August 1, the public is invited to watch or help with the construction of a performance stage at Duncan Park, located at the corner of N. Limestone and 5th Street. Plans are for the temporary structure “to eventually become a larger Outdoor Community Arts Center,” according to a recent press release from Marty Clifford, president of the N. Limestone Neighborhood Association.

The idea for the Center is to provide a site for organized activities and programs for youth, and for the stage in particular to provide a place for local musicians to perform. The diversity of cultures in the neighborhood and the corresponding breadth of musical styles mean that sounds ranging from Afro-Cuban polyrhythms to traditional bluegrass, and modern pop and rock might be heard on the new stage. Offering a free site for purveyors of these different styles to meet and play and share their musical and cultural heritages is rarely a bad idea—especially when the fruits of such a collaboration can be enjoyed by the rest of the community.

Clifford stresses that the site is virtually “a blank slate and we are asking everyone to chime in with your thinking.” Thus far, in addition to using the stage for musicians and youth groups, residents have suggested reserving a specific night of the week, such as Wednesdays, with a formal show or other program. Another suggested reserving a night for “Family Night,” in which alcohol would not be allowed.

The idea has much potential, and if we support it, it might provide yet another sane venue in which to hang out and get to know each other. The *NoC* News Bureau would love to see a nighttime fall viewing of *Harlan County USA* there.

Contact Clifford with any and all suggestions. You may contact him by phone (859-389-9157) or email (Marty40508@msn.com)

North of Center is currently seeking submissions from artists and graphic designers for a nameplate logo. Please contact Keith Halladay at noceditors@yahoo.com for details and submission instructions.

On someone else's land Misadventures in gardening

By Beth Connors-Manke

In Search of London Ferrell and His Legacy (part two)

In my last column, I began the story of my search for London Ferrell, the black Baptist preacher from the early 1800s for whom the London Ferrell Community Garden is named. After speaking with Bob Voll and Carolyn Ware, both of Christ Church Cathedral (which owns the Old Episcopal Burying Ground and the land on which the garden stands), I was left with two questions: Why hadn't I heard of this once popular and important historical figure? Where is his gravestone?

“We know for certain he was buried here [at the Old Episcopal Burying Ground]. And somehow that the gravestone was broken and was removed inside a little fenced area next to the cottage,” Bob told me. “So, somewhere, somehow, the First African Baptist Church was allowed to take the stone. He began their church.”

“We found the stone and talked to some of the people at First African Baptist,” Bob continued. “Some of our people said ‘get the stone back, it's against the law’—I said that—but after we met it just became apparent that they took better care of it than we did. They showed greater respect to that headstone than we did. Obviously it had been neglected here.”

So while Ferrell's grave is still at the Old Episcopal Burying Ground, the minister's headstone is not.

After being immersed in Ferrell's story for much of a wet summer afternoon, I wanted to see the preacher's gravestone. I asked Bob if he thought First African Baptist would let me see the stone. He'd viewed the gravestone there and thought First African Baptist would welcome me. I made an appointment to visit First African Baptist the following week.

In the meantime, I called Yvonne Giles of the Isaac Scott Hathaway Museum, an African America history



The grave marker of London Ferrell, the second pastor of First African Baptist.

organization. I wanted Giles's perspective on London Ferrell. “Does the public know enough about this important historical figure?” I asked.

“The public doesn't know a lot,” Giles said. In May she had done a historical walking tour that included information about London Ferrell. Giles assessed that only about half of the participants knew about the minister.

Helping me put the circumstances of Ferrell's life in their proper historical context, Giles stressed that it was hard to be a freed slave in the early 1800s. Slave code laws put former slaves in a precarious position: “You were free, but you had restrictions and had to know people of influence to keep safe and earn a living. A support base of white Americans was important.”

Without knowing it, Giles had answered one of the major questions I had about Ferrell's place in the community: How was it possible that he had so many white friends and staunch supporters? In fact, when one of the members of his own church

congregation tried to have Ferrell expelled from the state, it was some white Lexingtonians who intervened at the legislative level to keep Ferrell and his wife in Kentucky.

About a week after I met with Bob and Carolyn, I found myself with my husband/trusty photographer at First African Baptist on Price Road. Phaon Patton, the executive secretary at the church, met us at the door and escorted us to the basement. There, in one of the activity rooms was a casual shrine that included Ferrell's gravestone, a sign that had hung over a previous location of the church, and a historical document important to the church called The Quill's Letter. It was an informal, but clearly valued grouping of the artifacts.

As Bob had promised, Phaon was welcoming and seemed also to be an amateur historian willing to talk about the history of her church. A lifelong member of First African Baptist herself, Phaon's parents and some of her grandparents had also attended the church. Recounting some of the history of First African Baptist, Phaon told of

Bob had told me of future plans by Christ Church to commemorate Ferrell. Affirming that the gravestone should be at First African Baptist, Bob said, “It is fitting, so what we will be doing in the future will be to create a monument of some sort [at the Old Episcopal Burying Ground]. And hopefully, and I believe this is almost a given, the people of First African Baptist will join us, hand-in-hand, and we will dedicate the monument together. We'll have a ceremonial passing of the original headstone back to them for care. There should be some way to document that official act because that demonstrates the interconnectedness of all of us.”

“It's clear that London Ferrell baptized both black and white, his funeral was attended by both black and white. There are many, many people in this region of any color who owe, if they are Christians, that to London Ferrell,” Bob continued.

Bob sees the garden as another extension of Ferrell's legacy. “We're in our second year of the garden, and we've concluded that it's going to hap-



Phaon Patton, executive secretary of the First African Baptist Church.

how the church's name had changed and changed back over time and about the controversy over which is truly the oldest African-American church in Lexington. She explained that Ferrell served as the co-pastor of First African Baptist with Peter Durrett (called “Old Captain”), the founder of the church.

Still wondering why so few in Lexington know about London Ferrell now, I asked Phaon a leading question. Did she think few people knew about Ferrell because the city doesn't know a lot about history, or doesn't know a lot about African-American history? “The latter,” she simply said and suggested that the younger generation needed to be better connected to history.

As Phaon gave us a short tour of the church, I was reminded of something Bob had said about how little we know about the popular preacher. On a wall outside the sanctuary were pictures of the reverends who had shepherded First African Baptist since its inception. Ferrell was listed, but there was no picture—not even a drawing—of him. Even there, he was a name without a face. As we packed up, thanking Phaon for her graciousness, I continued to think about Ferrell's legacy. What does his legacy mean for Lexington, for residents both black and white?

pen one person at a time, one relationship at a time. There's not going to be a broadcast, ‘This is the London Ferrell Garden, and now we're all healthy.’ The best demonstration that it is happening, or well on its way, is last year we had two families of color who had private plots. This year we have ten. Last year there was little known of our neighbors and their needs. This year we know more and foods are being delivered to people who can't come over here. More people are being invited and welcomed.”

“I hope this will be a garden representative of this community, which means it will be half or more people of color. And wouldn't that be wonderful?”

Note: London Ferrell's name has taken on multiple spellings. The community garden uses “Ferrell,” as does a stained glass window at the First African Baptist Church. Another spelling is used in *The Biography of London Ferrill, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Colored Persons, Lexington, KY*, printed by A.W. Elder in 1854 (available online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/ferrill/ferrill.html>). Although “Ferrill” may be the earlier and more accurate spelling, I use “Ferrell” for consistency's sake.

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Health care (cont.)

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his Senate Finance Committee’s health care reform hearings (supposedly wide-open brain-storming sessions). When a group of single-payer advocates, several of them physicians and nurses, showed up anyway and expressed their views from the gallery, loudly, Baucus very respectfully asked them to please pipe down, as this was, after all, a *Senate Hearing*. He explained that he was in fact quite interested in their views—their calls were very important to him—but this was just not the time or place. The protesters figured, reasonably enough, that a Senate hearing on health care reform was exactly the time and place, and would not pipe down. So the Chairman called security and had them arrested. I understand that Senator Baucus magnanimously agreed to meet with the concerned health care providers later. Presumably the senator and the activists had open and productive policy discussions through the food-slot.

So now the Obama administration is offering a government-administered health insurance program that would compete with the private plans for customers. The administration reasons that since private health insurers lack real competition, they are free to inflate the prices and abuse the policy holders, who have little choice but to hobble back for more mistreatment after the next illness.

The industry’s proxies have already de-clawed their would-be government-run competition. The most viable reform bill now contains provisions that would bar many employees from leaving their employers’ insurance plans and buying into the government-run plan. Now many health advocates are wondering whether this particular half-loaf of reform would be better than none at all, and find themselves unsure whether to support the Obama plan. (See Paul Krugman’s recent editorial “Not Enough Audacity”).

The private health insurance industry is resisting an effective public

option savagely, inverting the old bumper sticker quip, “Don’t steal. The government doesn’t like competition.” In their public campaign to eliminate the government-run option, they are banking on a reliable old American stereotype: the cash-guzzling Federal program, run by a bloated bureaucracy of dim-witted malcontents who sit around creating new versions of Form 8799C and playing solitaire on Windows. This stereotype derives its power from its foil—the efficient, profit-driven private corporation, run by sharp young MBA’s. The best-and-brightest populating this stereotype spend *their* days constructing sophisticated spreadsheets, developing new efficiencies, and streamlining service delivery.

This well-practiced American trance creates dangerous levels of tunnel-vision and amnesia. After all, just a few months ago those corporate wizards who brought us the credit default swap were chauffeured clear of their smoldering wreckage.

This same corporate brain-trust built our current health care finance system—the equivalent of having headed the design team for the Edsel or the Veg-O-Matic. The phone labyrinth with no useful information at its Minotaur-guarded center, the encrypted EOB’s, the arcane coverage rules that appear to shape-shift as you threaten to collect a reimbursement—the MBAs designed all that in the name of *efficiency*. Only a strange sort of efficiency requires a subscriber to repeat her health history three or four times, and pays three or four employees to listen to it. But you can bet a month’s insurance premium that the corporate illuminati have run the numbers on this entire system of “customer care” (a term for which quotation marks do scant justice). The spreadsheet has spoken. Paying employees to fend off customers who bought coverage with 20% of their household income is good for business. Frustrating health care providers who just want payment for their honest work without needing a legal

team supports the bottom line.

So, who benefits from the private health insurance industry’s “efficiency”? Brace yourself here—it *does*. According to Health Care for America Now, the top ten providers collected \$12.9 billion in profits in 2007 (up four-fold since 2001); their average CEO salary topped \$11 million. In a word, the industry has proven highly efficient at enriching high-level executives, shareholders, those of our elected officials who legislate on a fee-for-service basis, and assorted hangers-on (MSNBC reported that one principal health insurance industry lobbyist, Karen Ignagni, was paid \$1.5 million last year).

Meanwhile, it is beyond debate that this system is contributing mightily to keeping a large swath of the U.S. population sick, worried, and broke. According to a report by the Institute of Medicine, 18,000 Americans per year die in substantial part because they lack health insurance, and many more suffer needless ill health. Meanwhile, our bank accounts are suffering along with our bodies: 62% of all bankruptcy filings in 2007 were linked to medical expenses (*American Journal of Medicine*). Most of us, even the insured, live one medical crisis away from bankruptcy, and that alone cannot be good for your health.

The economic relationship between the general public and the private health insurance industry might seem complex. However, if these economic entities were living organisms, a biologist would have no trouble classifying them. When one organism takes up residence inside a larger one, gorging on its food and energy such that the invader’s gain is the host’s loss, we call that invading organism a parasite. So the private health insurance industry functions as a highly efficient economic and social parasite, fattening itself on resources siphoned off from our general health, wealth, and security.

Even the most adept parasite trips the host’s immune system sooner or later. But nature has produced nothing so resourceful as a wily parasite running scared. Malaria, for example, cloaks itself in a cell membrane filched from a liver cell, avoiding immune detection by posing as a responsible citizen of the body. “Now is the time for health care reform. We support

coverage for all Americans, coverage they can afford, and coverage they can keep.” This is the voice, not of Barack Obama, but of “America’s Health Insurance Plans,” chief lobbying organization of the private health insurance industry. Those responsible citizens of the body politic—they hear the T-cells coming, and they are not planning a graceful exit.

The renegade life of a parasite may be romantic, but it is not cheap—the pathogen burns lots of energy just protecting itself. Likewise, in providing health care, the public sector holds decisive built-in advantages over for-profit business. The federal Medicare system, the organization that could be extended into a national single-payer plan, spends 2 – 3% of its budget on administrative and overhead costs. With private insurers, overhead costs run around 30% (*The Denver Post*). No surprise here—they have to brand, advertise, furnish corporate offices (with the skyrocketing cost of mahogany and teak), fund enormous executive salaries, and pay legions of phone warriors to fend off mobs of frustrated customers and furious providers. It is less expensive to serve the public than to deceive and stonewall us, just like it takes less energy to live as a legitimate liver cell than as an imposter always on the run.

Of course there is another possible ending to the parasite story: the parasite could kill its host. Unfortunately, this could indeed be the outcome of our drama, if the national immune system does not do something drastic, and quickly. Major economic organs are failing. GM is bankrupt, and no wonder, with the company paying out more for health care than for steel while its foreign competitors spend so much less (or nothing at all) for employees’ health insurance. Who knows how many labor disputes, shuttering of businesses small and large, layoffs, bankruptcies, and foreclosures represent casualties of the private health insurance industry—the real cost of its \$12.9 billion in profits.

“National,” “Public,” “Federal”—these words point to the mutual dependence in our common life; they do not violate the obscenity statutes. Preventing the more efficient parasites among us from poisoning the life of the whole community—I thought that was what a government was for.

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An open letter to a Harvard asshole

Author’s Note: While it will probably never be read in the midst of what must be a flood of digital messages sent in solidarity and support as well as with hatred and contempt, I fired this off to Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Dr. Gates,
I have been following your story and am profoundly outraged for the injustice visited upon you in your own home. I will try to keep it brief, as I cannot imagine the deluge of mail you must be receiving. My name is Carl Root, and I teach Criminal Justice and Police Studies at Eastern Kentucky University. Like you, I was recently arrested for public order offenses, while in a private residence (Disorderly Conduct, Alcohol Intoxication). Knowing that I was guilty of no crime, my righteous indignation led to my questioning the officers, which in turn, led to an escalation in their use of force and my arrest on several unwarranted charges.

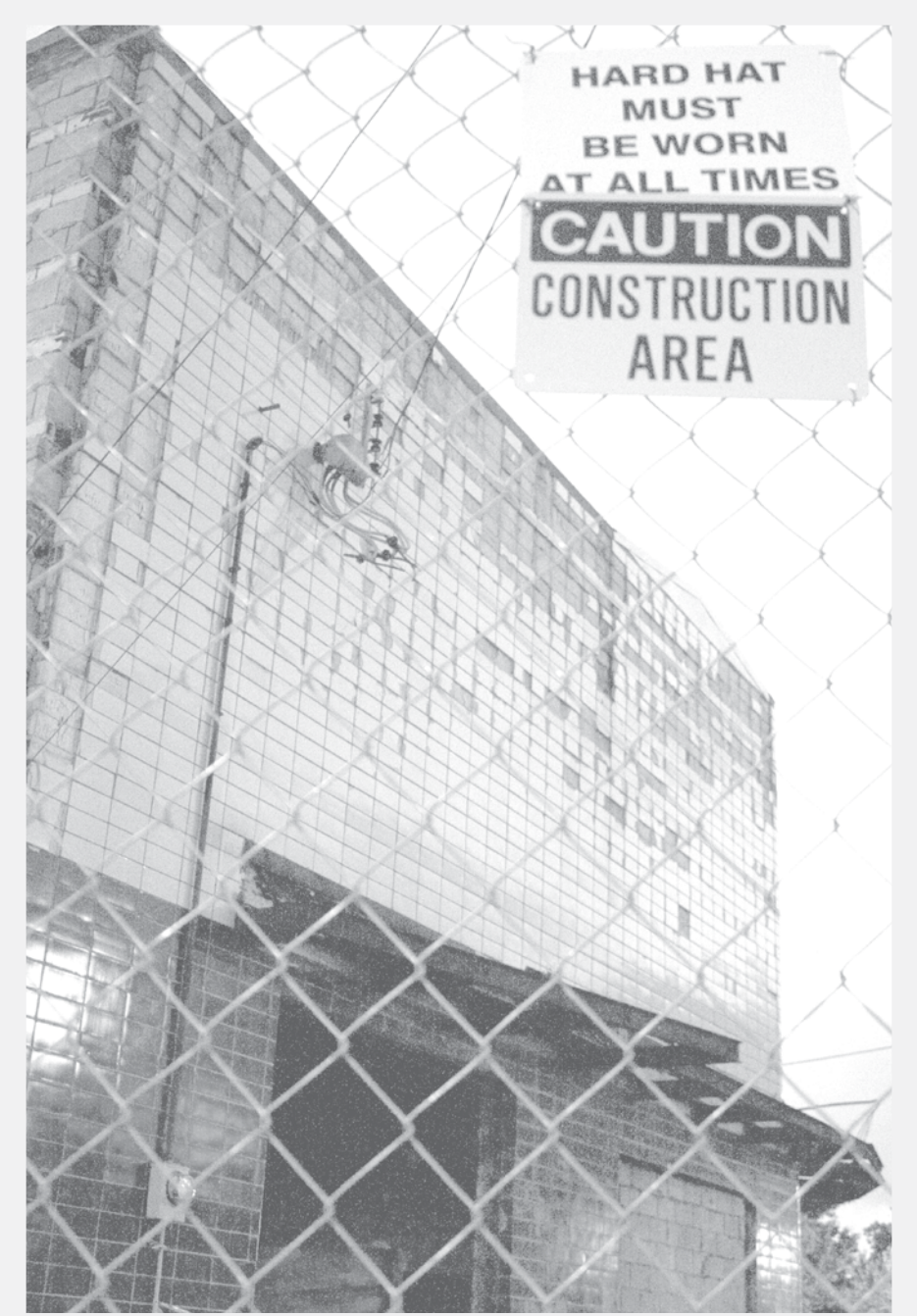
After the trauma from the physical assault and the threat of overwhelming legal action subsided somewhat, I dove back into the literature and found out that I am an “asshole.” As defined by a renowned scholar on Police Culture, John Van Maanen, in 1978. Sir, believe me when I say that I mean you NO disrespect, as from everything I have

read, you appear to me to be a man that demands respect without demanding anything of anyone. However, I believe that a quick read of this article will convince you, as it has convinced me, that you are guilty of nothing more than being “an asshole” in the eyes of the police. Here is a link to the article: http://petermoskos.com/readings/Van_Maanen_1978.pdf.

From one asshole to another, here’s hoping that you use your position to give voice to the voiceless, and please remember that “assholes” transcend boundaries of race, class, gender and geography. I am poor and white in the foothills of the Appalachians (though my part-time professor position lends an air of “middle class respectability,” I suppose) and was treated unjustly, like you, for having the audacity to question, or worse, be offended by the manner in which the officers were “protecting and serving” my community. I hope that this incident doesn’t cause you too much more unnecessary stress, as my entire summer thus far has been consumed with legal drama, and even the “drawing of lines” on the issue of “which side are you on” with regard to family, friends, colleagues, etc.

Best of luck to you sir.

In solidarity,
Carl Root



The Lyric Theatre at twilight on a summer Saturday night, 2009. Half a century ago, this is when one could expect crowds gathering and bustling to reach their seats for a show. Since then, the only show has been the monotonous pulse of red and green streetlights reflected on the wasting facade. Now, people in hard hats have joined the ensemble. —Jonathan Hampton

Kathryn Bigelow’s wild men

The importance of gender in *The Hurt Locker*

By Michael Dean Benton

Here’s a radical thought: She is, simply, a great filmmaker. Because while it is marginally interesting that she calls “action” and “cut” while in the possession of two X chromosomes, gender is the least remarkable thing about her kinetic filmmaking, which gets in your head even as it sends shock waves through your body.

–Manohla Dargis, “Action!” (*The New York Times*: June 18, 2009)

Manohla Dargis is both right and wrong in this statement about action film director Kathryn Bigelow. First, Darghis is right in reminding us we should be able to approach Bigelow’s

oeuvre as the work of an auteur free from the fact that she is a woman. If we lived in the supposedly free and equal society that many believe we do, then this would not be a consideration. Unfortunately, we live in a culture in which female artists face considerable barriers in getting their work out to the public.

Consider that this “great filmmaker” is releasing her first feature film in the last seven years. When *Entertainment Weekly* posted their pick for the 25 Top Directors earlier this year, they did not choose one woman. No female director has ever won an Oscar for directing, and only three have been nominated. Less than ten percent of films yearly are made by

women directors. The film industry is dominated by male executives, and like the art world in general, there is a long tradition of privileging the male gaze. The male domination of the film industry suggests the “extent to which the dreams that radiate off theater screens and into our culture are still almost exclusively the dreams of men” (Michelle Goldberg “Where are the Female Directors,” *Salon*, August 7, 2007).

Secondly, and this is where Darghis is clearly wrong, “gender” is extremely important to any consideration of Bigelow’s “kinetic filmmaking.” However, the gender that should be under consideration here is not female, rather it is Bigelow’s repeated

construction of the aggressive, adrenaline-junky, male outsider.

There is a continuing series of charismatic, dangerous male characters in Bigelow’s films: Jesse Hooker (Lance Henriksen), the patriarch of the outlaw vampire clan in *Near Dark* (1987); the extreme-sport guru Bodhi (Patrick Swayze), who leads a gang of bank robbers in *Point Break* (1991); Lenny Nero (Ralph Fiennes), the ex-cop turned street hustler, who deals the adrenaline-junk vids that his consumers are addicted to in *Strange Days* (1995); and the unyielding Russian submarine Captain Alexi Vostrikov in *K-19: The Widowmaker* (2002).

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Lexington Film League (cont.)

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That meant not only thinking in terms of building a community for filmmakers and their audiences but also reaching out into the existing community for help in getting LFL off the ground. “Over the course of April to July,” Lane recalls, “it came to light how much work this was going to be.”

Lane immediately thought of Hannah LeGris, an Americorps

developed a program for filmmaking, “using a lot of the same professionals that Rouse gathers for the Filmmaker’s Lab.” Other nearby programs, such as Asbury College’s film program and the film societies of Paducah and Louisville, have all had a major influence in helping to create LFL.

LFL is building upon the expertise and knowledge that is already here in order to be a kind of centralized location for resources for filmmakers and

As Lane points out, funding is a major challenge for filmmakers, “but now, with the tax incentive and film league, the chances [of securing funding] are better.”

Kentucky already has a lot to offer the film industry besides the tax incentive: “We have the most amazing scenery in Kentucky,” Lane notes. “We have everything you could want [for filmmaking].”

And with LFL’s efforts, making movies and appreciating them has become that much easier in Lexington.

“We hope that [LFL] impacts the community positively, but even if it doesn’t, it has impacted our lives positively,” muses Lane. “We are all a part of something that is creative and allows us to put our creative energy somewhere. We want people to get together. We’re excited about Lexington and what’s happening here and in the state.”

The Workshop Series at the Carnegie Center

As part of their mission to provide educational opportunities for the Lexington community, LFL will offer a series of classes at the Carnegie Center for Literacy and Learning. Taught by local professors and filmmakers, the fall workshop series kicks off in September. The workshops are designed to be a new outlet for peo-

movie making, including publishing to the web.

If you’re more interested in studying and discussing movies than making them, LFL has developed two other courses that involve screenings and group discussion. LeGris and Yuri Metelski are co-teaching “Independent Film and Contemporary Literature,” which will run from late September to early December. The course, which is free, pairs stimulating novels and movies, promising rich and lively conversation. Later this fall, Bluegrass Community and Technical College professor Michael Benton will teach “The Production of Identity: a Cinematic Exploration.” Benton’s course will feature international films that provoke new understandings and conceptions of identity.

In addition to providing instruction, the workshops also bring people together who might not normally get the chance to meet. LeGris has been running a weekly film and literature discussion group at the Center for the past six months, and it has formed into a solid group of friends who now regularly attend movies together. “We have people who just moved to Lexington or are just out of college, and this has been a really good outlet” [for meeting people], LeGris notes.

Mark Your Calendars for the Evening of August 13

LFL’s first major event will bring together filmmakers and spectators to share a cinematic experience. In conjunction with the Lexington Art League’s current “Open” exhibit and “Art Talk” series, the Lexington Film League has issued an open call for short films.

LFL will choose four or five of the shorts and will screen them on August 13 at the Loudon House (209 Castlewood Drive). The filmmakers will be on hand to discuss their films afterwards. The event, LeGris states, is a “chance for people to submit their work and a chance for us to see what’s going on with local filmmakers.” It’s also, she adds, “an experiment to see whether we’re reaching filmmakers.”

The August 13 screening is a good example of the kind of positive and inclusive spirit that characterizes LFL. The event provides a much-needed opportunity for local filmmakers—professional or amateur—to display their work. And it also brings together people who are excited about film,

“We wanted to have a community that supports and loves filmmaking, and to create those people within the community.”

Volunteer who serves as the Youth and Family Outreach Coordinator at the Carnegie Center, and Sarah Wylie Ammerman, a filmmaker who was in the process of moving back to Lexington. Willis and Rivard remain integral to the leadership of LFL, but co-producers Lane, Ammerman, and LeGris now put in the majority of the time.

Ammerman had recently graduated from the San Francisco Art Institute with her MA in filmmaking and was still living in California when Lane called and asked, “Are you interested [in helping with LFL]?” “I was like, yes! Resoundingly,” Ammerman remembers, citing Lexington’s need for an organization like LFL. She adds, “Selfishly, I remember thinking, we can create a film community that I can be part of. Not to make money or anything, but to be part of creating something. [It’s not just about] what Lexington can offer me, but what I, as an individual, can offer Lexington. I think that it’s a really great place about where Lexington is right now—that individuals can do so much.”

Commenting on the good vibes flowing through Lexington, LeGris says, “I think there’s really been a push towards recognizing what’s really good in your community and then trying to make it even better and build on what’s already there. Instead of focusing on making money in order to leave, young people are thinking, let’s do what we can while we’re here. And try to figure out what you want it to be if it’s not already moving in that direction.”

The Film Scene in Kentucky

LFL owes its roots to various filmmakers and film societies that have been circulating for some time in Kentucky and in Lexington. “Every year the Idea Fest has a Filmmaker’s Lab, which was started by Arthur Rouse and the folks at Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation (KSTC),” Lane explains. A weekend-long series of classes for screenwriting, producing and filmmaking, the Filmmaker’s Lab draws people come from all over to participate. “It happens every fall; it began in Lexington but now it’s in Louisville,” says Lane.

Out of that annual event, Bluegrass Community and Technical College

film enthusiasts.

At the initial meeting, Lane recalls, “Filmmakers indicated they needed equipment, facilities, and space. That was kind of a defining moment for us where it was like, whoa, we’re not a production company. We wish we could provide that kind of stuff, but that’s really not our mission. Our mission is to bring filmmakers and people who want to make film together, and they go out and they make that film.”

Facilitating networking and educational opportunities for filmmakers is a sustainable and enriching service for the arts community in Lexington, especially an expensive

“There’s really been a push towards recognizing what’s really good in your community and then trying to make it even better and build on what’s already there.”

art like cinema. “A community that supports filmmakers is crucial,” Lane says, “because without the community support, you don’t have anyone to approach to pay for the budget of your film or anyone to go see it when it’s available. So that symbiosis [between filmmaker and audience] is really important.”

“We’re connecting filmmakers to filmmakers but we’re also connecting audiences to films,” sums up Ammerman.

Perfect Timing

LFL’s timing could not be better. With firm roots already laid by the various powers-that-be in Kentucky’s film community, LFL is riding the waves of the recent passion and energy that has defined the last couple of years in Lexington.

And with the recent passing of House Bill 3 by Kentucky’s General Assembly, which included tax incentives for filmmakers, Kentucky just became a more attractive option for those working in the film industry. The tax incentive will hopefully lead to more jobs and opportunities for Kentucky filmmakers, allowing our directors and production teams to stay in the state to shoot, rather than seek tax incentives elsewhere, as they have been doing.

ple who are interested in making and studying films.

“The Carnegie center is the perfect partner,” Lane states, “because not only are they offering us space, and allowing teachers to come in, but they already offer classes on technology and media.” And you won’t find a better deal in town: LFL courses run about \$40 or \$45 for a four week course, and some are totally free. The Carnegie Center also offers scholarships and financial aid, making the courses a viable option for virtually anyone who is interested.

No previous experience or fancy equipment is needed. Instead, LFL hopes to “enable everyone’s inner

filmmaker” by using means already at his or her disposal, Ammerman explains. For example, in September, Ammerman will teach a course called “Little Movies.” The course invites us to utilize our everyday technologies as cinematic tools. Using cell phones, digital still cameras, and palmcorders, Ammerman will teach the basics of

allowing for friendships and partnerships to be made.

The event will start at 8 P.M. and is free.

Note: At the August 13th event, LFL plans to announce their video contest that will run through the end of the year.

Culture

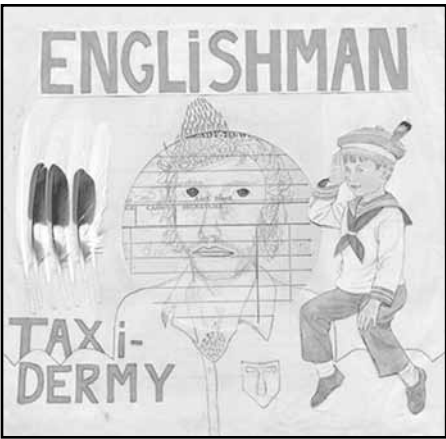
Review: Andrew English’s *Taxidermy*

By Samantha Herald

Andrew English has been a dependable fixture in the Lexington music scene since the inception of his locally adored and critically acclaimed band The Scourge of the Sea began their quest for folk rock domination in 2005. However, it wasn’t until 2008 that English began writing and performing solo material as Englishman. Live, Englishman is a trio featuring English strumming his acoustic guitar and singing, Scourge bandmate Justin Craig on lead guitar, and Matt Duncan on piano.

English recently self-released the Englishman debut EP, *Taxidermy*, containing five beautiful, light-electro folk-pop songs that will seep deep into your psyche. All of the songs on *Taxidermy*

are written and performed by English, with vocal contributions from Kelli Burton on “Double Torch.” Anyone familiar with the Scourge canon will immediately recognize English’s delicate songwriting and smooth baritone, but the songs of *Taxidermy* aren’t simply Scourge b-sides. Much more in fact.



Vocally, in both sound and style, English has a lot more in common with old mainstays like James Taylor or John Denver than some of his artistic peers, which is partly why his music is so infinitely relatable. There is no rock n roll posturing in Englishman songs, only front porch nostalgia that

genuinely flows from English’s mouth and fingertips.

As he croons about childhood toys so hard to part with or warming cold hands with his breath, you feel the honesty in his lyrics and easily visualize the picture he’s painting. A master of reverb and language, his songs are instantly familiar. It’s as if they’ve been swimming around in your head for years and English has just done you the favor of giving them names and faces. *Taxidermy* is a triumphant beginning to an inspiring new endeavor and the wistfulness and allure of Englishman will inevitably leave you wanting more.

Taxidermy is available at CD Central. Check out Englishman at the Green Lantern on Friday, August 8 for the Wolf Run benefit show.

Bigelow’s *The Hurt Locker* (cont.)

continued from the previous page

In her latest film, *The Hurt Locker* (2008), this role is filled by the reckless, dangerous, yet sympathetic Staff Sergeant William James (Jeremy Renner). James is reckless in his disarming of bombs and in his pursuit of a sense of justice; he clearly follows Bodhi’s philosophy that “fear causes hesitation, and hesitation will cause your worst fears to come true.”

Usually these “wild” figures are opposed by more rational, empathetic and/or civilized counterparts, who alternate between worshipping these Alpha Males and seeking to end their reign. This is most fully brought to life in the classic *Point Break* through the figure of ex-college football star and undercover FBI agent Johnny Utah (Keanu Reeves), who develops what can be clearly defined as a romanticized love for the rogue outlaw Bodhi, who represents for him the ideal “wild” male figure. The eroticism of their relationship is clearly represented as Utah, while chasing the masked Bodhi after a bank robbery, falls down in pain as a result of his recurring, career-ending, football injury. Utah aims his gun at the retreating Bodhi, and has him clearly in sight. But at the last second, Utah lifts the gun skyward and shoots repeatedly into the air, screaming ecstatically, while Bodhi smiles back at him.

In *The Hurt Locker*, this role of the “civilized” male is filled by former intelligence operative, Sergeant JT Sanborn (Anthony Mackie). Sanborn is confused by his mixed feelings toward James. On the one hand, he admires the extreme bravery and capability of James in high intensity situations; on the other hand, he recognizes that this

same aggressively gung ho attitude is a danger to the soldiers surrounding James.

A macho rivalry between James and Sanborn soon erupts into unexpected punches, drunken brawling, and even a scene where James literally mounts a prone Sanborn, riding him like a bronco as Sanborn reacts with killing force. Sanborn even openly considers putting James down like a dangerous animal in order to save others.

In these films, the audience is usually placed in the role of the civilized male counterpart. We are there to observe these men who refuse to bend to the rules of society. We marvel at their freedom to engage in behavior that most of us would be too timid to pursue. We alternate between envying, desiring, imitating and fearing their unbending attitude.

These violent Alpha Male leaders have long been adopted as a symbol of ideal maleness in patriarchal American culture, and Hollywood film culture has played a traditional role in influencing society to accept them as their leaders. It is in the swagger of George W. Bush as he states “you are either with us or against us.” It is in Ronald Reagan’s challenges to the “Evil Empire.”

However, there is a difference in the typical Bigelow hero from these presidential portrayals of “propriety individualism” (Michael Rogin: *Ronald Reagan, the Movie*, 1987). Unlike the traditional swaggering American leader, Bigelow’s heroes make no claim to the rewards or benefits of the society they struggle against or retreat from. In fact, like the tragic Western man of action, Shane, there is no place for them in proper society.

This is clearly exhibited in James’ experiences stateside in a store. He stands confused in the aisles and is overwhelmed by the programmed choices of the cereal aisle. Later, he speaks to his little son about the slow process of social erasure of pleasure. Bit by bit, as we are raised, as we conform, he tells his son, we lose each pleasure of life, until there is but one left, and that becomes your only reason for living. For James, his sole pleasure in life is the challenge of defusing a bomb. Tragically, nothing else matters.

The film opens with a Chris Hedges quote that “war is a drug”

(from *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*) and this sets the tone for the addiction that James suffers from. He cannot find pleasure in civilized life and must resort to the addictive challenge of navigating the violent chaos of the Iraq War. The criminal surfer Bodhi would have understood the EOD Specialist James completely: “If you want the ultimate, you’ve got to be willing to pay the ultimate price. It’s not tragic to die doing what you love.”

The Hurt Locker is playing at the Kentucky Theatre from July 29 until August 6.

“Reel Visions: Spotlight on Kentucky Filmmakers” to air Aug. 3

By Megan Neff

All focus and exposure metaphors aside, “Reel Visions: Spotlight on Kentucky Filmmakers” will do exactly what the title suggests: shed a good heaping of that golden limelight onto a Kentucky-proud breed of directors, editors, writers and producers.

The first “Reel Visions” series runs through the month of August and will be divided into half-hour episodes, each highlighting short films created by Kentucky filmmakers. The program will debut on KET KY Monday, Aug. 3, at midnight/11 P.M. CT and Sunday, Aug. 9, at 1 A.M./midnight CT on KET 1.

August’s roster of films includes Travis Jones’ “Dog Days,” Bill Santen’s “Portrait Studies,” Josh Flowers’ “Still Life” and Brad McCombs’ “TA Tundra.” KET is taking submissions for the second installation of the series until Oct. 1, in case you missed your chance this time around.

Kelli Burton, producer of “Reel Visions,” proposed the idea for the show and has seen an overwhelming amount of enthusiasm from both sides of the fence since getting it approved.

“I worried, without a show to base it on and with all the loose talk of potentially, maybe, hopefully doing the program, that we would have a thin flow of submissions. That was not the case,” said Burton. “Now I’m more

worried that there are great filmmakers out there in the state who still do not know about it. Hopefully, that will change.”

And behind the scenes, the team at the Lexington KET branch—including Associate Producers Ben Allen, Sara O’Keefe, Allison NeCamp and Clark Bradshaw, Executive Producer Nancy Bradshaw along with staff members helping with the screening process—forms a strong and passionate base of support.

“Sometimes we get so excited about an entry that we just run down the hallway to a co-worker’s office and say, ‘You have to watch this one right now. It’s great.’ I think the entire team working on this has felt a high level of excitement and inspiration throughout the process,” said Burton.

With “Reel Visions,” Burton and KET cohorts don’t just want to expose the talent already lurking in your backyard. They also want to inspire young Kentucky filmmakers and encourage them to keep at it.

“There’s already a bit of a local buzz surrounding Kentucky filmmakers going on throughout the region,” said Burton. “I hope this program heightens that, brings further life to it, to the arts in general, to the young local talent in our state – ultimately inspiring the community to no end.”

Visit www.ket.org and search “Reel Visions” for scheduling and episode details.

KET is searching for short films for a second series of “Reel Visions: A Spotlight on Kentucky Filmmakers.” Next deadline for submission is October 1, 2009.

Short films must not exceed 27 minutes in length and must include contact information on your submission format. Acceptable formats include DVD, DVCAM, DV, Mini DV, DVC PRO. Feel free to send art films, experimental films, documentaries, narrative films, animations or student films.

Send film submissions to:
Reel Visions: A Spotlight on Kentucky Filmmakers
KET
600 Cooper Drive
Lexington, KY 40502

GREEN

CORNER OF THIRD AND JEFFERSON
252-9539

LANTERN

EVERY SUNDAY

OPEN-MIC

Hosted by Jerry Moody

8:00-12:00

Recreation spending in Lexington

Part one of a two-part musing on the relationship of youth sports and crime

By Keith Halladay

In fiscal year 2008-2009, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government spent just a shade less than \$55 million on its police department, the largest single expenditure of General Fund monies, which also includes the city's finance department, public works, environmental quality, social services, and various other agencies and programs. It also spent another \$30 million on its jails, bringing the total budget for criminal investigation, prosecution, and detention to about \$86 million. This figure represents roughly a third of General Fund expenditures.

Read it again: a third of all General Fund expenditures (slightly more than

\$275 million) go to catching criminals and locking them up. By contrast, the budget allotted social services agencies and programs exactly \$7,926,530, or just less than three percent of total General Fund expenditures.

Now, this is a sports column on a sports page, and as such we don't need to begin arguing about the wisdom of our fair city spending almost 11 times as much money on catching and jailing Lexington residents as it does on the sorts of services that are specifically designed to prevent the need for catching and jailing residents in the first place. I can't imagine how the community gained by slashing the Youth Services budget by 28% between 2007-08 and 2008-09, from more than \$3 million annually to about \$2.25

million, but I'm not privy to the decision-making processes in the budget office. I'm sure there was a good reason.

However, we must agree that, in essence, we seem to be considerably more interested in enforcement than prevention. Of course enforcement itself can be a mode of prevention: don't rob that store, or you'll go to jail. But social services work too, and they work in a way that doesn't usually end in violence, imprisonment, and/or heartache.

On the other hand, Lexington doesn't suffer from *that* much crime. A

bit of wading through the violent-crime statistics available from the FBI, Bureau of Justice, and Wikipedia web sites shows Lexington squarely in the middle of the pack, a bit safer than Corpus Christi, Texas, but more violent than Plano. So the state of affairs doesn't seem all that dire, despite everything.

Then again, in 2008 there were 11 murders, 1,102 assaults, and 137 rapes; for the victims of those crimes, rankings don't mean much. They might find, as I do, a serious civic commitment to ending violent crime more

continued on the next page



Bluegrass Games (cont.)

continued from page 1

by Comosexual Hill off a rare Tripple Lexxx offensive that ended the game. Hill swooped in to steal a pass over the middle to Flowers. On the sprint the other way, Comosexuals Abram and Hill converged with Flowers, which resulted in a foot-down for Abram.

Abram's foot-down gave Hill the daylight he needed to spring to center court and slip a ten foot shot quickly past Morrow's pedals for the win at the 5:53 PM mark. Although disappointed with the outcome, the crowd appreciated the spectacular play by both teams and roared with delight for all six players.

Notes and quotes

The one that got away

Tripple Lexxx made a beautiful tournament run against improbably odds, but Brad Flowers might look back to a shot on goal in the championship game as "the one that got away." At the 5:37 PM mark in regulation, Flowers missed an open goal tap-in for what might have been an insurmountable 2-0 Tripple Lexxx lead. Flower's mishit left the door open for the Comosexuals to pry their way back into the game, which they did three minutes later with Abram's game-tying goal that ended up sending the game to overtime.

Comosexuals are good

Though they did not generate much hype on their way into town, the champion Comosexuals from Columbus, Missouri, are a battle-proven team. The team finished second in a

tournament held in Atlanta, Georgia, and as competitors on different teams, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th at this summer's Denver tournament.

Injury deja vu

Shane Tedder's injury must have seemed eerily familiar for Lexington Bike Polo. Nearly a year ago Alex Brooks shattered his wrist a week before the crew were to travel to Chicago for a tournament. The injury required surgery and, it seems, a premature end to a promising bike polo career. Brooks was in attendance at this year's tournament cheering on his former teammates.

"The Commish"

When Lexington player Brian Turner scored a goal at the 3:14 PM mark to put his his team The No See Ums ahead of fellow Lexington team Toxic, the crowd began to yell out "The Commish." Turner is acting Commissioner of Bike Polo for the Bluegrass Games. Judging by crowd reaction, the nickname seems like it'll stick.

Stay Hydrated

Want to succeed in tournament bike polo? Choose water over beer and liquor. Tournament champions Comosexuals didn't have a drop of the stumbly stuff until after their tournament victory. Same goes for the fourth place-finishing No See Ums. Dayton, Ohio's Two Appalachians and a Kneegra, on the other hand, drank heavily and saw their play rapidly decline by their fourth game in the tournament. The eventual third-place finishers lost their final two

matches in quick succession: 5-1 and 4-2 to the eventual championship game teams.

Comosexuals hard on No-See-Ums,too

Although Tripple Lexxx made it all the way to the championship game, Lexington's fourth-place finisher the No See Ums came close to medal contention. In another tough-fought game with the Comosexuals, the No See

Ums lost in overtime 4-3 when the ball appeared to bounce in off the tire of a foot-down player.

When Identity Politics and Sports Collide

A second round match featured two teams that owned their identities: Dayton Ohio's Two Appalachians and a Kneegra played Lexington's Jesus, a Spic, and the Little Kid. Two Appalachians and a Kneegra won 3-1.

From Favorites to Underdogs to the Championship Game

NoC Staff Reports

Incredibly, Flowers and Simpson of tournament runner-up Tripple Lexxx, a heavy favorite coming into Saturday's play, had to jumble their roster on the eve of the tournament when teammate Shane Tedder went down to a wrist injury during a pickup BP game. As news began to filter throughout Lexington about the loss of Tedder, who had played with Flowers and Simpson on the fabled fourth-place finisher at last year's Midwest Bike Polo Championships in Dayton, local bookies had to put a temporary stop on betting before adjusting their odds. And just how much did the line move? With a healthy Tedder, Tripple Lexxx began Friday afternoon as a solid 4-2 favorite to win the tourney. Without Tedder, the line just before the game stood at 9-1.

As it turns out, of course, Tripple Lexxx's last second replacement Tiff Morrow turned in a solid workwoman-like effort in helping bring Tripple Lexxx to the final match. Morrow's defense and timely transition mid-court work seemed a perfect complement to the more offensive-minded Simpson and Flowers. With Morrow clamping down on the defensive end, only one team scored more than two goals on Tripple Lexxx in their six tournament games.

The tournament runners-up opened tournament play with a 5-2 victory over the entrant from Saint Louis. Perhaps still feeling the effects from the previous night singing karaoke at The Sidecar Lounge, Tripple Lexxx came out flat and watched as Saint Louis hit a couple quick hit goals.

With his team suddenly down 2-0, Flowers awoke the stunned crowd with

a dazzling three minutes of bike polo that featured some of the day's best offensive and defensive plays. After putting in a rebound off a Simpson miss to cut the lead to 2-1, Flowers saved what might have been a momentum-turning 3-1 Saint Louis lead by preventing an easy open-goal shot. With Simpson and Morrow going foot-down, Flowers raced back to defend an open goal against the entire opposing team. Craftily, the veteran Flowers intentionally over-rode the goal and came up through it to fend off what should have been an easy uncontested walk-in goal.

Flowers closed his momentum-changing run by sinking a beautiful shot from four feet out that sent the crowd into a frenzy. Charging from half-court with two Saint Louis defenders draped all over him, Flowers shook loose eight feet from the goal by suddenly breaking to a complete stop, shaking one defender, and then quickly accelerating to shake the other. With players falling all around him, Flowers managed to keep himself suspended on his bike after the stop-start action long enough to sneak a six foot shot into the goal. The crowd shrieked with cries of "twinkle toes" and just like that the score was tied at 2. From here, Tripple Lexxx went on for a 5-2 first game victory.

It looked like Flowers, Morrow, and Simpson might breeze through the rest of the tournament. After an easy 5-0 second game victory, however, the team ran into the Comosexuals in the winners bracket. Quickly down 3-0, Tripple Lexxx fought back to 3-2 before time expired. The loss placed the Lexington team into the losers bracket, where they would later emerge to play the Comosexuals in the thrilling championship match.



The recently resurfaced tennis courts of Woodland Park, shown here on a sunny July day.



Brad Flowers of Tripple Lexxx readies for a shot on goal as spectators line the court.

Opinion

Costs of “uniquely American” health care

The other day at Third Street, I found myself with Alex Brooks discussing the finer points of strategy surrounding last Saturday’s Bluegrass Games Bike Polo championship match. Our discussion soon turned to Shane Tedder’s devastating wrist injury, which had resulted in him being scratched from tournament runner up team Tripple Lexxx on Friday night, and the team’s brilliant replacement pickup with the last second addition of Tiff Morrow. Alex, too, had suffered a late summer a similar wrist injury just days before a big bike polo tournament, so he could commiserate.

As conversations often do, ours took a sharp turn off course—to the left—and we soon moved from talking about what’s been called Fowler’s Folly in regulation of the championship game into an interesting conversation on the costs of Alex’s cracked arm to his finances, our community, and entrepreneurial business in the U.S.

For a variety of reasons, I was a little out of my head when he bumped into me, and it’s now 3:13 AM on deadline night—a too unreasonable hour, I think, to make the two phone calls necessary to get his number and re-interview him—so I can’t give you the specifics, but Alex’s story basically goes like this: About this time last year, the players of Lexington Bike Polo were preparing to head off to Chicago for a bike polo tournament. Several days before heading up to Chicago, in the course of playing some pickup bike polo Alex fell off his bike and broke his arm pretty bad. Not death bad, but he did need surgery and it cost \$4,000. It all came in separate bills: the emergency room, surgery, prescriptions, follow ups, and some others that I’m a bit foggy about because at some point, in the state I was in, lists like that just wash over you. But all told, about 4 grand.

Alex is an artist who lives down the street from me. Unlike me, he isn’t a recent interloper to the area. He moved into his house several years earlier, before the wave of money had visibly crept up the street. It was what he could afford to buy on his artist’s salary. I think it’s also his workplace.

So far as I can tell, he doesn’t really make things that are in the thousand dollar category. In other words, he’s an artist I might actually be able to afford to patronize, which consequently means that he’s pretty small scale all around in terms of monetary outputs (what he spends) and inputs (what he makes). I’ve got one of his Bike Polo patches, this one a free gift to fans and

players at the Bike Polo tournament, and it’s fantastic—a much needed addition to my tattering wardrobe.

Because being a low-scale artist in Lexington doesn’t afford one much of a salary (though it does offer a sort of cultural cache), Alex didn’t have health



care coverage. He had it in high school (parents), in college (parents/UK), and for a couple years after that (a mish mash of COBRA, his parents, and other things, I think). But he wasn’t insured at the time he busted his wrist playing bike polo mainly because as a self-employed, well-housed, well-fed, but not far from monetarily poor artist, Alex couldn’t afford the costs of coverage—either outright or weighed in conjunction with potential services rendered by the insurance company for that coverage. Paying \$100 a month, say, for a \$3000 deductible has its own costs. And particularly in this case, if Alex had this hypothetical coverage, the coverage would have only kicked in after he had paid out his deductible.

So Alex owes \$4,000 for breaking his arm. He no longer plays bike polo, or at least he was decidedly not playing last Saturday in the biggest Bike Polo tournament to hit Lexington in...well....ever. He’s still paying off the arm, a year later. He’s excited about applying for a job as curator for a place nearby. This means, inevitably, that he’ll have less time for his art. He seemed excited about the proposition, but also a bit bummed. In his decision to move away from being self-employed, the promise of a steady check (to pay for health care regularly) and the possibility of getting onto an insurance policy (which in general offer cheaper and better coverage) weighed on his mind significantly.

Alex’s particular situation got us talking about how the costs of health care have damaged entrepreneurship in the U.S. Alex wondered aloud how many small-scale artists and micro-scale businesses are forced, because of worries about paying for a broken bone or a baby or a yearly mammo-gram to check on a family history of

breast cancer, to stop being entrepreneurs and start working for someone else just to get covered and get a salary able to afford coverage—in a word, to give it up “the dream” in either a large or small measure. He was asking, in short, how much the consideration of paying for health-care drives small scale entrepreneurs away from entrepreneurial creativity.

I countered that this arguably is only the start of the negative effect on small business—the place where most innovation occurs. Indeed, not only might the carrot of health care attract those creative artists into larger companies who can offer health care, it also acts as a trap for those who have jobs at those companies that offer health insurance. In other words, it is also a big reason why people stay in jobs that they don’t particularly like or want or need to work.

How much does the threat or reality of insurance costs eat into the pool wanting to go out and start a local business? Perhaps for those businesses in, say, technology or the medical field (seemingly our governor, mayor, and UK Presidents’ favorite types of businesses) where there’s still a good amount of venture capital out there to at least consider adding the costs of health to sweeten employee compensation, this isn’t an issue. But there’s a great cost to those small businesses that do struggle with health care costs: local barbershops, mechanics, bar or restaurant owners, grocery market proprietors, bread makers, farmers urban and rural, and now even computer fixers. Collectively, it is these businesses that will have the most practical value in providing many of our most immediate community needs, and it is these businesses that are both most essential and most damaged by our current health care crisis.

Pivoting slightly, Alex returned to the beginning of our conversation—Fowler’s Folly and the rest of the Saturday of bike polo at Coolavin Park. It was such a neat thing, he said, to see so many faces from the immediate community come out and spend the day spectating and grilling and laughing and heckling the teams from Ohio. He felt good about his contribution. Though he didn’t play this year because of last year’s broken arm, he was happy to have helped build the court in the frantic two weeks before tournament day, to have spent the day cheering on the players and generally helping out where needed, and I’m guessing above all to have offered up

his talents in creating the Bike Polo patches, which came in several different sizes, shapes, and styles. It was a piece of his own labor that he, quite literally, gave away to the community of bike polo players and spectators and helpers who were there.

These are of course things that require a great deal of time to make and do. These are things he probably couldn’t do if he’s not self-employed. In fact, since Alex has broken his arm, he’s quite frank about it: he has done less in the community. He’s got to work more to pay off his medical bills. The relatively minor mishap has clearly (and rightly) left him worried about the what-ifs: what if it were something bigger, more expensive? These worries require that he work longer at something that pays him more, which has meant less time giving to his community.

Lest I come off as raising Alex’s contribution up too high, let me also note that Alex wasn’t the only one giving his time and his labor away that day. There were citizen photographers, a neighborhood journalist (me), the “Commish” Brian Turner, the grill cook, and most visibly the players themselves, who did truly magical things on two wheels that compelled the rest of us to ooh, ahh, gasp, and beat our mallets like wild banshees against a donated treated lumber court-side wall. It was a free event, donated by a bunch of people who in the main don’t make shit for a living and don’t necessarily need to right now—many of whom are probably also as tenuously insured as Alex was because their labor often takes place at small workplaces that can’t afford to help pay for their health care

These sorts of jobs also tend to grant the greatest amount of leeway—time—for people to give back to their communities. As health care costs contribute to the pressure for them to filter into jobs that pay more and have better benefits yet require more time “at work,” these give-backs become harder to do. Consequently, our communities lose out on their mostly unremunerated labor.

This isn’t, of course, the only reason why our current health care situation sucks, but it’s function as a drive away from small business, along with the damage this does to our communities that rely in part on bought, traded, and given things and services—that is, both paid and unpaid labor—is a part of the health care discussion whether we recognize it publicly or not.

Recreation spending (cont.)

continued from the previous page

reassuring than simply noting that we’re not quite (but it’s very close) as violent a city as Louisville.

How does Lexington approach the task? Well, it’s clear that social services aren’t held in particularly high esteem around town; the city subsidizes the operating costs of a number of services organizations, but the Hope Center shelters only so many, and the Chrysalis House has only so many rooms. To make matters worse, most of the organizations at least partially supported by the city aren’t specifically aimed at kids, which is a shame, as mounds of data confirm that lifelong criminal behavior starts early.

But if we’re unwilling to increase services funding, maybe there’s another way. As most experts agree, youth sports programs, properly implemented, can do the same thing: “recreational sport programs,” wrote Lynn Jamison, chair of the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies at Indiana University, in a recent survey of the available literature, “help youth establish peaceful and productive relations with their neighbors,” and “sport has been shown to be highly successful for building bridges and creating friendships among youth.” Sports even “connect youth from different

ethnic backgrounds and help them gain a sense of belonging.”

We do seem willing to fund parks and recreation in Lexington, to the tune of \$18.5 million last year. But almost \$12 million of that paid for personnel wages, while just \$1.75 million went into recreation program administration. And of that last amount, the budget provided only \$100,000 for youth and adult sports programs.

Considering the positive effects sports programs *can* have on a community, I wonder if that figure is quite enough. We’ve all browsed the seasonal LFUCG Parks & Rec program guide, and the offerings are adequate. But what does \$200,000 of sports programs look like? What about \$500,000? A million?

That last number seems exorbitant. A million dollars of sports programs annually would surely, if not crippled by embezzlement, give Lexington leagues, clinics, and facilities beyond our wildest dreams. Assuming the city also hired enough people to staff all these programs, we could conceivably have ten times the sports programs we have now, and they could all be absolutely free. That would mean youth baseball, for example, could be played on the cheap not just at Castlewood, Douglass, and Idle Hour Parks, but at any number of the 30 Fayette County parks that have baseball fields. Ditto football, softball, basketball,

cheerleading (though I still refuse to accept it as a legitimate sport), tennis, volleyball, and softball. And add some soccer, ultimate, bike polo, horseshoes, bicycling, gymnastics, kayaking, and—because there’s no reason America shouldn’t be internationally dominant in this stupid sport—curling. Yes, central Kentucky could become a hotbed of Olympic-caliber curling talent, given the financial support.

To that end, I propose a radical increase in sports program funding. No, not just a million bucks a year, but budget expansions of a million bucks each year for ten years, resulting in a budget of \$10 million—just in time for the 2019-20 curling season.

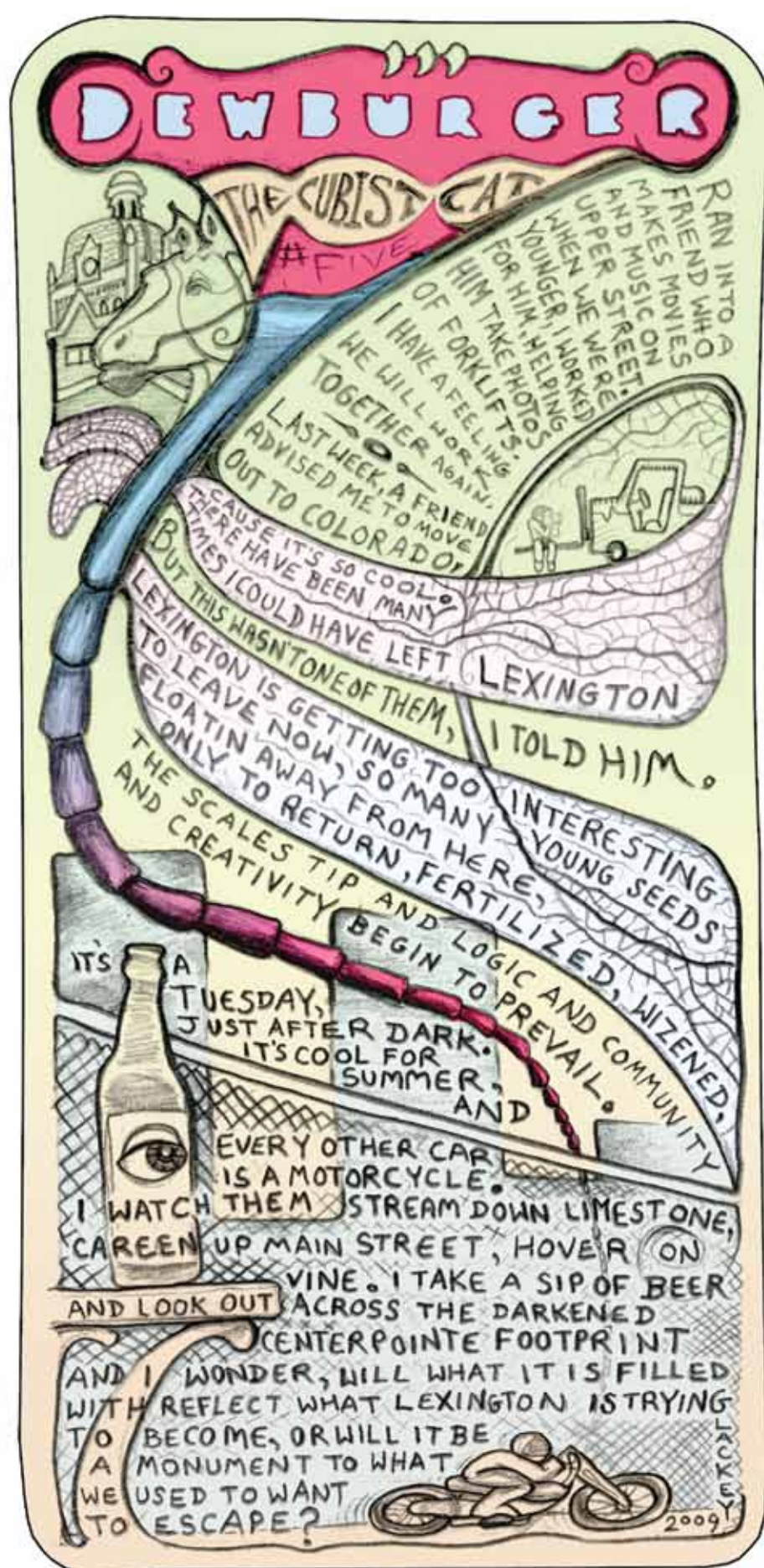
I’m not sure where the money comes from yet (and yes, I’m willing to

negotiate that number down a bit), but I think a million or two off the top of the police department’s \$50 million payroll would be a good place to start. And look: I’m not anti-cop. A well-funded police force is necessary for community safety. But if crime prevention and reduction via sports programs works as well as the data suggests it can, then surely we’d manage fine with fewer officers on the street. We only need be willing to take a chance.

And be willing to implement the programs the right way, as the experts remind us; in Lexington, that means rectifying some discrepancies in programs and facilities across neighborhoods, races, and economic classes. In the next issue of *NoC* we’ll look at some problems and ways of correcting them.

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and a new language
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mantle this town and I say
hola, or maybe
ajo is on the wind tonight
and they keep hammering
and I don't understand
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