

Homelessness in our communities

Catholic Action Center in north-side neighborhoods

By Jeff Gross

Part One

Nearly as soon as I moved to the north side in February 2009, I heard people call the Catholic Action Center a neighborhood pariah. At a Martin Luther King Neighborhood Association meeting, Movable Feast outlined their renovation plans for the former Nanna's Soul Food. Local residents were concerned that Movable Feast would be another Catholic Action Center. They wanted reassurance that Movable Feasts' clients would not come to the organization's location at the corner of Fifth and Silver Maple and that it wouldn't end up like the Catholic hospitality house three blocks down at Fifth and Chestnut. This isn't to say that neighbors' concerns are unfounded: a quick search of the Lexington Division of Police's Crime Map shows a significant number of calls to the Fifth and Chestnut intersection, though most other intersections in the Williams Wells Brown, MLK, and North Limestone neighborhoods also show high numbers of police calls.



Streets to Home participant Ellis Boatly volunteering at GodsNet.

Between February 2009 and January 2010, I put little thought into the Catholic Action Center's presence in our neighborhood. Perhaps because I lived five blocks away, I never paid much attention to the Center. I had no reason, good or bad, to notice it. Homeless persons walked down my street throughout the day, though I

had no way of knowing if they were going to the Catholic Action Center or somewhere else in the area. Since then, I've learned that many of the people passing through the north side are heading to Baker Iron and Metal off Seventh Street to exchange cans for cash. Others in our area are making their way back to the Hope Center or

some of the camps off North Broadway.

This past January, that all changed when I reported to GodsNet, one of the Catholic Action Center's many arms, on Seventh Street for a community service orientation. Over the past decade, the Catholic Action Center has expanded to include residential homes, food and clothing distribution, community gardens, laundry services, online sales of books and other media, a Streets to Home placement program, and mentoring for its Streets to Home residents. On this Saturday morning, I found that GodsNet was a hub of activity, with people coming in and out for clothing and food. Volunteers were working to pack up the Center's Christmas Store Warehouse. Volunteers and guests of the Center worked side-by-side on projects.

Over the past six months, I have had numerous opportunities to spend time with individuals who are currently experiencing or have formerly experienced homelessness in Lexington and some of the many volunteers and organizations that aid our local homeless.

continued on page 3

In-Feed at July's end

Vacant Lot on N. Lime starting to grow

NoC News

Slowly but surely things are starting to take off at the In-Feed garden located on the 500 block of North Limestone next to the liquor store on Sixth Street. The bush beans planted by seed in the early days of June have begun to come on. People are already picking them. Two of the tomato plants succumbed to blight. The others, planted as small seedlings less than two months ago at the same time as the beans, are still small, but they're all starting to set flowers, and some are producing fruit. An Italian heirloom zucchini and an avocado squash have been added, and both are prospering. Wood mulch now fully surrounds the growing plants.

The vacant-lot garden here was established less than two months ago as one of a series of garden projects for the group In-Feed. The group is one of a growing number of local gardening activist organizations that have begun to form during the past couple of years. In-Feed uses gardening as a tool for making under-used urban spaces more productive. It wants both

to viscerally point out how little of urban space is used and to offer productive models for putting all that waste—private residential green space, vacant lots, business properties, church grounds, alleyways, sidewalk easements and city parks—back into use.

As an outgrowth of that viewpoint, the gardens In-Feed tends represent a diversity of different types of urban spaces. The group uses a private residence on Mack's Alley near Dudley Square for a market garden, splitting profits as a type of coop, and in the process making an under-used bit of private property a bit more socially, environmentally and economically productive. A patch of land behind Woodland Computers on High Street provides a seed garden and employs unused business property. Church plots and a contribution to the new North Limestone Community Garden represent other types of urban space put to use for the production of food.

"In-Feed's mission is much more singular than other garden organization models," In-Feed head Bob

continued on page 2



Henry Huffine surveys the court.

BG State Polo succumbs to Bourbonic Plague

"Huffine factor" key to championship

By Danny Mayer

Coolavin Park

After a series of crushing tournament defeats, including a second place finish here at the BG State Games this time last year, Chris Simpson can finally silence his critics and add a tournament championship to his growing bike polo resume. Simpson and his Bourbonic Plague teammates Nick Redbeard and Henry Huffine outscored and generally out-pedaled the fourteen team polo field gathered in pursuit of last Saturday's Bluegrass Games State Bike Polo championship.

Things kicked off at 12:22 when players and journalist gathered around BG State Games Commissioner of Bike Polo Brian Turner for roll call and a collective discussion surrounding some finer points of game rules over the double elimination tournament.

No T-Boning, no high-sticking, and for godsakes, no striking the ball while using your foot for balance on the court walls, if you can help it.

Fittingly enough, tournament play began on Court A with an amped up Simpson repeatedly circling the court and gesticulating maniacally at teammate Huffine, who was moonlighting as the tournament's master coordinator, to hurry his ass up and get on the court. Bourbonic Plague was taking on Cutters.

The match did not take long. Using a rotating wheel attack, Redbeard assisted Simpson on two of the four goals he scored in the 5-0 Bourbonic rout over the team from Bloomington, Indiana. Simpson's final goal, a game-ending five foot tap in transition while pulling off a wheelie, set the stage for

continued on page 6



"Beans are coming on soon. Pick anytime."

Contents

- 2 — The Neighborhood
Oh yeah.
- 4 — Music
*New album reviews.
Music calendar.
Call for submissions.*

- 5 — Film & Media
*Review: Inception
Reel Visions.*
- 6 — Sports
*ROCK drops.
BGS disc golf.*

- 7 — Opinion
*Response to "Mall of God."
Correction.*
- 8 — Comics
*I'm Not From Here.
River Rats.*

In forthcoming issues

Baseball and immigration.

Lexington's homeless: part 2.

A trip to Fancy Farm.

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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Grits and chorizo

Building a basil economy

By Danny Mayer

I first started eating grits last summer while seeking out breakfast options at Wine+Market. Up to that time, my \$5 purchase of eggs, either from the farmer’s market or at Wine+Market, provided the basis for many of my breakfasts.

The W+M grits purchase was something of a calculated risk for me. I had developed strong negative associations with the grain ever since a series of conversations with my childhood friend Jeffrey Bollerman. Jeff was part of the Jessie F. George School gang in New Jersey that I hung out with up through fourth grade when I left for Charlotte, North Carolina.

At 10, Jeff was already worldly traveled, having once spent a week in the far-away sticks in South Carolina at a place he called Hilton Head, a town so backward, he claimed, that many of the roads were dirt and the *only* thing to eat there were these things called grits.

“Grits. Nothing but grits,” was all he would say to me, arms akimbo and face still incredulous, for the last four months I would ever see him. I was mortified.

As I got older, my disdain for grits, which was really based in a general northern-based youthful fear and dislike of most things southern, did begin to wane. I went to a southern college, married a girl from South Georgia. After a number of high school and college years spent eating at Waffle House, not to mention a good deal of reading about and cooking food, I came to understand that grits were more accurately a lower-class southern cuisine, a part of both poor white and black culinary traditions. Field food. I liked them, sort of.

My intellectual attraction to grits did not really alter my

psycho-somatic dislike of the homely grain. Bollerman’s southern gothic imagination still had a strong hold on me. A one-night experiment while in college with Waffle House’s bland bowl of cheap grits was all it took to convince me that the grain just wasn’t worth its price in salt and butter. My body told me: if you’re going cheap, get the bacon.

But as I continued to read and cook, I grew to resent it when grits began to appear, often for an outsized non-homely price, on foodie menus throughout the South (and particularly in Charleston, SC, where I lived before moving to Lexington), often accompanied with something like shrimp and heavy portions of nice cheddar cheeses to justify the inflated price.

I resented seeing rich clientele inflating the value of grits, good grits. I resented that I noticed the stark class-based polarity in grit consumption, that they either cost \$13 and (presumably) were good, or that they were \$2 and overly bland and buttery. Until I went in search of breakfast grocery items at W+M, grits as a viable food option had never seriously crossed my mind. You could say I was forced into it: culinary desire by creative downsizing.

My first sack

A month before my first grits purchase I had dropped \$10 at W+M on a big sack of Weisenburger corn meal, most likely inspired by the corn bread dinners I’d heard about at the home of Rona Roberts and Steve Kay. I never quite got my money out of that sack—I made very little corn bread last summer—but it did pave the way for my rethinking of the Bollerman prophecies and dropping \$7.95 at the store to test a different Weisenburger grain, their yellow grits.

The purchase was, at the outset, derived from my intention to bend my desires to fit what the store offered—and not to head off to larger stores where my selections of breakfast foods would be greatly expanded. Call it learning by downsizing.

And what a great learning experience it’s been. Grits are great, easy and quick to cook, not to mention immensely versatile in the kitchen. In winter, when my mornings are more hectic and I desire a quickly-made food to coat my stomach and provide warmth and energy during the frigid 3-mile walk to BCTC’s campus, I can make an early-morning bowl of

cheese grits using milk in about 10 minutes.

In summer, when I do not teach and have more time on my hands, I use water instead of milk and herbs instead of cheese, and spend 30 minutes to an hour cooking it down as a late-morning brunch, often forgetting about it as I set about folding clothes in the bedroom, organizing my mess of an office, doing last night’s dishes or gathering produce from our garden. I simply keep adding water to the grits and occasionally stir until I finish doing whatever it is that I’m doing. A stoner with strong ADD tendencies, even I can’t burn this shit.

Grits economics

Of course, finding a food to suit my psycho-social make-up is one thing, being able to afford it on a regular basis is quite another. At its most simple, grits only require water, a small cooking pot and, for taste, a little salt and/or pepper. My \$8 purchase of grits nets me about 15 meals. The basis of the meal, then, costs around 50 cents.

To be sure, the inherent flexibility of grits means that I normally add other things depending on my

Castlewood Neighborhood Association Meeting

Thursday, August 26
6:30 pm
Grace Baptist Church

Join us!

Nishaan K. Sandhu AAS-LMT, AMTA, NCTMB
Licensed Massage Therapist
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& Lay Herbalist

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In-Feed (cont.)

continued from page 1

McKinley confesses. “Our mission is to grow as much food, on as much in-fill as possible. If every vacant lot in town was worked, no one would ever want of a fresh tomato or head of lettuce.”

“There is so much potential for gardening on urban in-fill. From the small vacant lot, to the grassy easements beside businesses and the typically huge pieces of greenspace many churches have for no other purpose than to be mowed. Even the asphalt parking lot of an abandoned warehouse could support temporary raised beds.”

The garden at the 500 block of North Limestone has had its ups and downs. A late planting and a strange summer pattern of intense rain coupled with periodic heat blasts has not been kind to the plants. With gardens located all around town, it’s tough to get to the gardens as much as one needs, particularly during brutal summer conditions. McKinley and fellow In-Feed member Jennifer Barricklow both work full time jobs and have other lives, so time is at a premium. Finding volunteers to take an interest in some of their garden spots has yet to come. (That’s you, people.)

But still, all in all things look good right now, even if a little small.

James Maxberry, who owns both the liquor store and the land on which the In-Feed garden is located, has been impressed. “It’s looking good,” he says. Though things are small right now, the lady who rents above his liquor store has already told him that she plans on picking from the garden once things come in. In this neighborhood, Maxberry says, food for free will be much appreciated and used appropriately.

A resident of the north side for the first twenty years of his life, McKinley doesn’t hold any specific hopes for the space beyond its ability to provide food to nearby residents for the present year.

“We want it to be a neighborhood garden rather than a ‘community garden.’,” he says. “It’s simply there for residents to come pick anything they want for free, anytime they wish. And while we hope to engage some of those same folks to help out, participate, and claim communal ownership of the Limestone plot, it’s not contingent upon their ability to access the produce.”

Like most of the community gardening initiatives here, In-Feed could use help: volunteers—you. Contact Bob McKinley at infeedlex@gmail.com and offer some help. Nobody likes to work alone.



Produce grows at In-Feed lot.

Homelessness (cont.)

continued from page 1

Yet, even in that time, I have probably interacted with under 2 percent of Lexington’s estimated 2,500 homeless. In a north side neighborhood full of progressives involved with SeedLeaf, neighborhood associations, community gardens, and religious groups like the New Monastics, I think we may have to look again at the Catholic Action Center and its outreach programs, viewing it less as a pariah and more as a potential exemplar of what progressive community efforts can accomplish.

A history of radical Catholicism

Perhaps it’s the word “Catholic” itself that scares people off, though it’s worth noting that the roots of the Center trace back to a radical branch of Catholic activists. The Center is based on the model of Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker Movement. Staunchly antiwar and interested in social justice, Day and Peter Maurin opened a house of hospitality in New York in the 1930s to feed and care for the growing number of poor and homeless workers during the Depression. The Catholic Worker movement sought to follow the examples of justice and charity set forth by Jesus Christ. Significantly, the movement has never been recognized as an official organ of the Roman Catholic Church. Day’s vision then moved on to farms, where those she served could learn to grow food, live communally, and ensure some degree of self-sufficiency.

Day and Maurin believed hospitality houses should be placed at the fringes of society to help people. Their hospitality goals meant that they would take in all people and help them address their needs without making people sit through religious services as an exchange for assistance. Other local shelters and homes, they observed, would only feed the needy after they had been indoctrinated with the shelter’s message. Following the lead of St. Francis of Assisi, the Catholic Action Center attempts to preach the gospel with its actions rather than its words. It’s also worth noting that more recent developments in Christianity like New Monasticism, which itself has a growing following on the north side, trace their origins to people like St. Francis, Dorothy Day, and Mother Theresa—all models for the Catholic Action Center.

Lexington’s Catholic Worker Movement

Lexington’s manifestation of the Catholic Worker Movement holds true to Day’s vision for hospitality houses. Unlike other homeless outreach programs in the area, the Catholic Action Center makes no attempts to evangelize. As someone who is Jesuit-educated but often at odds with the Catholic Church and most organized religions, I think I appreciate the most the Center’s willingness to accept everyone as they come. This includes those who serve as volunteers. Going in, I feared being alienated due to my religious or political views, but I found that the Center is more concerned with social justice than spreading any particular religious ideology. Co-founder and director of the Catholic Action Center Ginny Ramsey says that everyone is welcome, from agnostics to Zen Buddhists, as she thinks of “catholic” in the sense of “universal.” The Center,

she suggests, could be called anything, though she likes the way its current name honors the work of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin.

Because the Catholic Action Center is willing to accept everyone through its doors, including those whom other centers and society at large have written off, they deal with all kinds of people. Ramsey tries to find a balance between meeting the needs of the Center’s guests (in keeping with the hospitality house goals, the Center refers to those it serves as “guests”) with the needs of the neighborhood. She stresses that she always welcomes feedback from the neighborhood.

As a member of the neighborhood, the Catholic Action Center has attempted to improve its neighborly image, imposing a number of policy changes based on feedback from the community. Planters have been placed on outside benches, and guests congregating outside have been warned to come inside or the police will be called to disperse them.

In its 10 years of existence, the Catholic Action Center has always tried to take part in the neighborhood, using some of its volunteers to shovel sidewalks and winterize houses for the local elderly. Ramsey also sends her volunteers to participate in local clean-ups, including those set up by the William Wells Brown Neighborhood Association. They’ve planted trees in the area and helped with house maintenance so that homeowners can keep their properties up to code.

Why Sector Three?

Many may wonder why the Catholic Action Center has to be in this neighborhood. Why can’t it be somewhere else? When purchasing the property in 2000, Ramsey says that she purposely looked for the neighborhood that most needed it. In 2000, much like today, Sector Three, where the Center is located, ranked highest in the city in poverty and crime and lowest in education. The Center attempts to work with those who feel the most disenfranchised and disconnected from society.

“These are the folks that nobody else will take,” says Ramsey, explaining the guests the Center serves. Part of the Catholic Action Center’s outreach is its “From the Streets to a Home” program, which has placed 64 individuals in homes since March 2009. The program is part of the Samaritan Project of the Kentucky Housing Corporation and the Shelter+Care Program of the Lexington Housing Authority. Joe Shuman and Ellis Boatly are two of those initial 64, and they have both lived in their apartments for almost a year and a half. They represent the successes of a program like Streets to Home.

Joe Shuman, 50, is a graduate of Lexington Catholic High School and a lifelong Lexington resident. In 2008, Shuman’s longtime girlfriend died unexpectedly. Suddenly, Shuman’s life began spiraling out of control. Before long, he was addicted to alcohol and living on the streets of Lexington. Within eight months, Shuman had been arrested three times for alcohol intoxication and had lost touch with society. With the support of the Catholic Action Center, Shuman completed six months of intensive, residential alcohol rehabilitation at the

Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center in Erie, PA.

Now sober and focused on his recovery, Shuman has completed job training at Jubilee Jobs, volunteers six days a week at the Catholic Action Center, and is active in the community. Earlier this spring, he served as a fill-in cleaning person for the Newman Center for a few days. Only when I interviewed him for this story did Shuman tell me that he invested the \$200 he made into B.U.I.L.D. (Building a United, Interfaith Lexington through Direct Action). In addition to his other volunteer activities, Shuman serves on B.U.I.L.D.’s leadership council. Feeling no longer in need, Shuman aims to give back to the community in every way he can.

Boatly, 50, spent nearly eight years on the streets in Lexington before being selected for Streets to Home. I was able to speak to Boatly in April while attending the Downtown Trash Bash, an Earth Day Event to clean up downtown streets. Boatly often talks about the importance of giving back to the community. He pushes fellow Streets to Home community members to volunteer their time because they are benefitting from government housing funds. With Shuman, Boatly volunteers six days a week at GodsNet and speaks regularly to church and school groups about his experiences. Boatly also serves on the leadership council

for the Street Voice Council (SVC), an organization made up of those who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness in Lexington. The SVC gives Lexington’s homeless a unified voice in community discussions and debates.

Speaking of Boatly, Ramsey suggested that he once represented the individual who scared the Center’s neighbors. A regular at the Center since its 2000 opening, he had been turned away from other centers due to drunkenness. Being selected for Streets to Home, Boatly says, “brought hope back for me.” With the mentoring they have received through the Streets to Home program, Shuman and Boatly have been able again to participate in community life and find, as Boatly says, the “joy” in having a home, volunteering, and living a more stable existence. All of this came after most organizations and centers had written the two men off as incorrigible due to their substance abuse issues and their inability to fit the molds required by other agencies and centers. The Streets to Home program has taken them off the streets and given them an opportunity to serve others experiencing homelessness.

In this series of articles, Jeff will continue to explore the Catholic Action Center’s place as a resident of the north side as well as the broader concerns of those experiencing homelessness in our community. Stay tuned.

Grits and chorizo (cont.)

continued from the previous page

per meal. Both cheese hunks and grits store for a long time, only increasing their flexibility in the kitchen.

The economics of the meal allow me to do two things. First, I am able to buy my grits from Wine+Market even though they cost more here, meaning I don’t have to deal with an out-of-the-way trip to Kroger or the Co-Op. Second, the cheapness of grits allows me to buy Weisenburger products, a locally sourced company from Midway that offers a variety of flours and grains.

I buy Weisenburger because first because it’s what’s available at Wine+Market. But buying Weisenberger also helps my money stay closer to its source than, say, the

I choose Weisenburger flours and grains, much like I travel to Wine+Market, in part to help foster an emplaced taste to what I eat. I make do with what’s available and possible. I believe there are beneficial social repercussions to this orientation, though that’s a topic for another article.

A grits and chorizo recipe

My go-to grits meal for this season has been, unquestionably, grits and chorizo.

I use Palacio’s Chorizo, a slightly-processed chorizo from Spain that I purchase because it is conveniently sold at W+M for \$10 a packet. I’ve come to value Palacio’s because like grits it too is versatile. It can stay in my fridge for many weeks without going bad, which has allowed me to think of different ways to incorporate small hunks of the spicy meat into a variety of dishes I cook—breakfast, lunch and dinner.

I normally get between 5 and 6 servings out of it when using it solely for chorizo, or somewhere close to 2 ounces of chorizo per meal. The reduced size helps me limit my meat intake. Counting the chorizo cost into my grits, the breakfast costs around \$2.50.

Of course, one doesn’t have to purchase their grits and chorizo from Wine+Market; the taqueria and grocery store nearby me on Seventh and Maple, for example, has a cheaper chorizo, a mexican style oddly made in the USA, that comes as an unprocessed raw meat. It can’t stay in the fridge as long as Palacio’s, and its texture is more like ground beef than salami; however, the mexican-style chorizo more intensely flavors the grits, a good thing for those who cook for many people.

Blue Moon Garlic at the Farmer’s Market also sells a local chorizo, in links, that should work similar to the mexican chorizo, though I haven’t tried this as I normally purchase brats instead from Blue Moon (\$6 for 4 brats that, with bread and mustard, comprise the basis for four solid summer lunch meals).

All these options work, and importantly, all are available to a wide diversity of urban and suburban shoppers—different classes, life-schedules and geographical locations around the city’s inner-suburban core—if only we shoppers learn to make the effort.



Palacios chorizo. Oh yeah. With beans.

cheaper (and more bland) Quaker Oats variety found on the shelves of Kroger (nearby their Weisenburger offerings).

I also prefer Weisenberger out of a general desire to maintain regional cooking. I used to spend time watching well-paid globe-trotting chefs at the Food Network take trips to unique sections of Italy, and I used to pore through travel magazines that waxed poetic about expensive restaurants who hocked different regional cuisines for many a scheckel.

At some point I realized that the very term that I enjoyed, regional cuisine, had arisen through limited choices—a type of flour, a sort of salt, a type of grape or potato grown or easily procured nearby. At its base, regional food is peasant food, the very word, regional, implying a sense of limits that the rich—myself included—have rarely abided by.



Seedleaf

Planting gardens
Growing Gardeners

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Music you need to hear: July 29 - Aug. 7

Wednesday, July 28

Home Blitz, Jovontaes, and Dead Rabbits
Green Lantern. 9 P.M. \$5.

Jersey-spawned Home Blitz plays the sort of uptempo punk-pop made popular by Iggy Pop and the New York Dolls, refracted through the jaundiced lenses of the Dead Kennedys and the Damned, put away for a couple of decades, and brought back during the previous presidential administration by a number of since-vanished bands whose names I never bothered to learn.

It's authentic stuff; the guitars and vocals are frenetic and forever teetering on the brink of being off-key or out-of-tune, while the drums pound in that way that fairly demands the spastic/vibratory style of punk dance (except for that one really far-out guy who always shows up at gigs such as this and opts for something like interpretive space exploration and ends up flailing into your beer). Yet what's yet missing from Home Blitz is the cult-of-personality frontman: the Iggy, the Johansen, the Biafra, the Vanian. Is it better to be more loved than feared or more feared than loved? Here, probably a bit of both. —*Keith Halladay*

Thursday, July 29

The Swells
Thursday Night Live, downtown. Free.

The city's only acoustic Dixieland/rockabilly/folk-jazz combo listing Brazilian Batucada drumming as an influence on their Myspace profile swings for you—yes you—when you wander downtown Thursday night. —*Buck Edwards*

Friday, July 30

Blind Corn Liquor Pickers, Arnett Hollow, and Bryan Himes
Buster's. 9 P.M. \$7. 18+.



Blind Corn Liquors Pickers.

On the master list of human achievement, right after quantum entanglement, the greatest discovery of the last century was the realization by bluegrass musicians that there are other chord progressions besides I-IV-V and other rhythms besides the two-step and the waltz. New Grass Revival and David Grisman, among others, merged traditional instrumentation with progressive harmonies and rhythms in the 1970s, and the Blind Corn Liquor Pickers tread the path they blazed.

While none of the individual members of the Liquor Pickers possess *quite* the instrumental virtuosity of Bush, Fleck, or Dawg (and then again, how many do?), collectively they play as well as anyone around these parts. Louisville's Arnett Hollow round out the bill with pop-inflected Americana. —*KH*

Saturday, July 31

Aram Shelton Quartet
Gumbo Ya Ya. 7 P.M. \$5 (\$5 additional for buffet)

The quartet features Shelton and Chicago-based company, Keefe Jackson (saxophone), Anton Hatwich (bass) and Marc Riordan (drums). Their music falls within the category of free jazz, and the emphasis on improvisation lends itself to an energetic blurring of aesthetic lines.

The performance is part of the Outside the Spotlight series, which focuses on exposing legendary but obscure artists in the modern jazz vein. The series has brought acts from around the world to Lexington, most recently Japanese percussionist Tatsuya Nakatani and German saxophonist Peter Brotzmann. —*Megan Neff*

The Have Nots w/ The Yellow Belts & The Rough Customers
Buster's. 10 P.M. \$5. 18+.



The Yellow Belts.

The opening acts for the Dropkick Murphys' June show in Lexington return to Buster's for a substantially cheaper price of admission than the last time around. So if you like them the first time, now's your chance to see

Boasting a guitar tone to make John Squire proud and vocal melodies plucked from the great tree of sensitive Brit-pop singers (a bit of Chris Martin here, some Thom Yorke there, and a sprinkling of various Invasion-era crooners), Lexington's Open Letters are one of the more interesting groups in town right now. They're the sort of band whose attention to melody and songcraft make you think, "you know, with the right producer and a swell video, these guys could hit the big time." Despite it's charms, Al's isn't quite the big time, but that's your gain. See them now for three smackers and laugh at the suckers who pay \$50 to hear them support Blur a few years from now. Trance-folk trio Englishman open. —*KH*

Sunday, August 1

Chuck Prophet
Natasha's Bistro. 8 P.M. \$12 advance/\$14 at door.



Big Maracas.

Boston's The Have Nots for less money than you spent on your air-conditioning bill while reading this paragraph (I swear the air around here the last few weeks has become so super-saturated that it's turned into some sort of non-Newtonian fluid. I mean, where do we live? Calcutta?)

And while you're staking out a good spot under the Big Ass fan, waiting for the Have Nots, and smug about all the money you're saving, dig Lexington's own Yellow Belts, who are ferocious enough in their approach to rock music that the headliners run some risk of being blown off the stage. Bring plugs; this one may get loud. Lexington's own ska act Rough Customers commence the destruction. —*KH*

The Open Letters w/ Englishman
Al's Bar. 9 P.M. \$3.

It occurs to me that in the years since Jeff Lynne destroyed Tom Petty's music, Bruce Springsteen married Patti Scialfa and more or less began to suck, and John Mellencamp started shilling for Chevy, only one red-blooded, Telecaster-wielding, skeptical-of-the-government American rocker has kept the faith, and that rocker is Chuck Prophet. So go, Lexingtonian, go to Natasha's and see what thinking-man's guitar rock once was and can still be. —*KH*

Saturday, August 7

Big Maracas
Al's Bar. 9 P.M. \$8.

One of the few combos in the city that might actually incorporate Brazilian Batucada drumming into their music burns Al's down on a hot August night. —*BE*

Reviews: Lynch's *Mare*, new O'Rourke

By Megan Neff

Jim O'Rourke, *All Kinds of People ~ Love Burt Bacharach*

We have all been had by a pop song at some point. And Burt Bacharach is undeniably one of the most dangerous seducers in American history. As if his eternally perfect salt and pepper comb-over were not enough, he had in his arsenal the melodious perfection of "Walk on By" and "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head."

With *All Kinds of People ~ Love Burt Bacharach*, musician and producer Jim O'Rourke has made Burt Bacharach over in a way that would

have made Dionne Warwick happy. And in this special music episode of Fashion Emergency, the songs get a refreshing, if not slightly warped, makeover. Electronic glitches make room for a breezy jazz piano. Perfect pitch is replaced by off-kilter vocals and the occasional mispronunciation.

Though a bit tongue-in-cheek, the album is playfully earnest and doesn't sacrifice the integrity of the original songs. Guest vocalists include O'Rourke's former bandmate, Thurston Moore, and names in the Japanese music scene like Haruomi Hosono (Yellow Magic Orchestra) and free jazzers Akira Sakata and Masaya Nakahara.

The concept may seem slightly silly, but then what good pop song isn't? O'Rourke pulls off the stunt with expert instrumentation, impeccable production and his personal brand of pop mojo.

Julian Lynch, *Mare*

It's been a week now. I'm still trying to clear my head enough to write this review. It seems no amount of undisturbed space within my mind will be sufficient. But that's sort of the

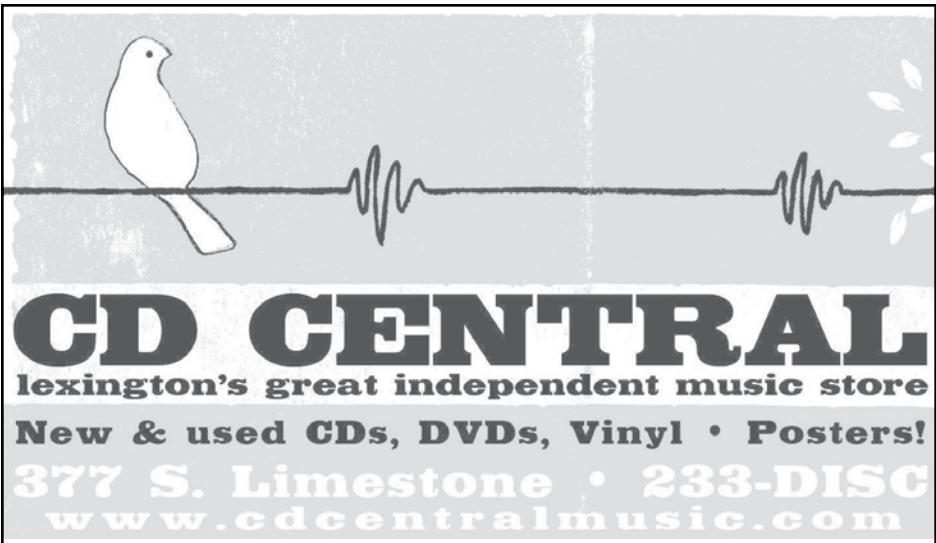
way this album goes. Attempting level-headedness while underwater.

Technically speaking, it all adds up. Lynch, a former Smithsonian Folkways Recrodings employee, now studies ethnomusicology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. An expertise in music spanning decades and genres is apparent in the album's very fabric. World blends with folk blends with ambient electronic. Ancient wood keeps time with modern synthetics.

A funeral Dixieland jazz band beams through the sunburnt pop of

"A Day at the Racetrack." Old grows into new according to a precise diatribe. A melody buds along the snaking vine of a tribal rhythm. Dusty guitar-picking gives way to a muffled chorus within a sedate and ingratiating pop song.

More than logic or technicalities, though, this album induces a feeling. With *Mare*, Lynch explores the divide between past and future tense. And in doing so, takes us into a perfectly beautiful present where perhaps words are not enough.



Film & Media

Review: *Inception*

By Stan Heaton

I’ve been excited about this movie for a long time. After Christopher Nolan’s success with *The Dark Knight*, I couldn’t wait to see what he would dream up next. And with *Inception*, he doesn’t disappoint. The basic concept is that dreams can be shared, and because they can be shared, the dreamer’s subconscious is susceptible to attack. This is where Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) comes in. He specializes in navigating the mind, and he is the best in the world at training the subconscious to resist attack.

Training minds and stealing ideas from people while they dream is really just child’s play for Cobb and his team. The real challenge is planting an idea in someone else’s head without them realizing where the idea comes from—a process called inception. The plot is full of twists, turns, and a few good secrets, so I won’t ruin the movie by belaboring the narrative. The important detail to know is that an energy mogul named Saito (Ken Watanabe) wants Cobb and his team to perform inception on the heir to a rival energy empire.

The movie becomes extremely interesting once Cobb agrees to Saito’s plan in an effort to return to his family. Making up Cobb’s team is an architect named Ariadne (Ellen Page) who builds the dreamscape. Not only is she a good reference to Greek mythology, she also plays a vital role in pushing Cobb to deal with his past.

Also on the dream team are Arthur (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) and Eames (Tom Hardy) who effectively comprise the badass portion of the group. And finally, there’s a chemist, Yusuf (Dileep Rao), whose responsibility it is to make sure that sleep is deep and long enough

to give the team ample time to plant the idea. After extensive planning and practice, which is only a prelude to the real fun of the movie, Cobb and company infiltrate Robert Fischer, Jr.’s (Cillian Murphy) mind.

What follows is some very intelligent filmmaking and an extremely entertaining hour or so of action and discovery. Cobb’s team plans to use dreams within dreams to go deep enough into Robert’s subconscious to make it seem like the idea came from within the energy heir. As Cobb says to his team while on the top level of Robert’s mind, “Downward is the only way forward.”

This line is perhaps more apropos than Nolan realized. Nolan’s idea about planting an idea in someone’s head is not new. Alain Resnais had this same idea in 1961 with *Last Year at Marienbad*, though the method in Resnais’s film is far different than the method in *Inception*. For this reason, and others, it’s hard to see Nolan as a visionary on the level of Stanley Kubrick or Alfred Hitchcock.

However, what Nolan does better than many other directors today is connect themes in his movies to the art of filmmaking. He is able to anchor the action on screen to the techniques that make movies unique and fascinating. In other words, “downward,” into the depths of how films make meaning, “is the only way forward,” into genuine creation.

What’s most impressive in *Inception* is the brilliant way Nolan uses parallel editing to distinguish and connect each dream plane. Normally, parallel editing is a technique that uses cuts of two or more locations back to back for the purpose of showing that the action in those locations are part of one story.



“Downward is the only way forward” in Christopher Nolan’s *Inception*.

In Nolan’s version of parallel editing, however, the same characters are in the different locations at the same time. Weird, huh?

Moreover, the way time flows in each location is different. Sixty minutes on the top level of the dream means two weeks on the level below and six months on the level below that, and so on. Constructing the film world this way not only makes for a really cool fight scene between Arthur’s and Robert’s subconscious military, it also speaks to the power of movies. In a movie, as in Robert’s dream, time and space can be altered with infinite possibility, and to control time and space, as Nolan and Cobb do, is powerful and artistic and beautiful.

It helps, of course, that *Inception* is full of fantastic acting. DiCaprio delivers, as usual. His ability to conceal, but hint to, troubled regions of a character’s psyche is quite impressive. Ellen Page drops the quirky sarcasm that has made her so famous in *Juno* (2007) in favor of a more subdued energy that is more appropriate for this type of movie.

The big surprise for me was Joseph Gordon-Levitt. He’s been in a lot of movies lately, but most of them are off my radar. He played an excellent second to DiCaprio, and he looks an awful lot like Heath Ledger (possibly a replacement Joker, but I doubt it). I’m also a big fan of both Cillian Murphy and Ken Watanabe, and both of these actors perform well throughout the film. By far the most delightful bits of acting come from Marion Cotillard who plays Cobb’s wife. She springs up at different times for a few brief moments of beauty and insanity that poetically represent the chaos of the human mind.

This movie is a must see. Even without the knowledge of many of the filmmaking techniques Nolan uses to progress the story, the film is exciting and thought provoking. It’s not exactly the most mind-bending enigma in film history, but it gave me a few ideas.

Inception is currently playing at several Lexington-area theaters.

A new vision for KY filmmakers

KET to feature local short films

By Ben Allen

On August 1, KET’s *Reel Visions: A Spotlight on Kentucky Filmmakers*—a new series that showcases the talents of film artists from Kentucky—enters its third season. Each *Reel Visions* program presents a half-hour collection of some of the best short-films from filmmakers native to or living and working in Kentucky, featuring everything from experimental art films and animations to quirky short stories and off-the-beaten path documentaries.

Filmmakers have the opportunity to have their work viewed across the state—a level of exposure that may have previously been unattainable—while viewers unaccustomed to the world of

strange day in the life of a very peculiar comic book fan. David Meyers’ *Wood Diary* uncovers the beauty and intrigue of a seemingly forgotten and loner soul walking the path of his everyday activities, all of which center on several small carved wooden pieces: a heart, a star, a fish, and a bird.

In collaboration with the Lexington Film League, *Reel Visions*’ third season also features five films from LFL’s “Doers Film Contest.” The contest invited Lexington citizens and organizations to create films that would reveal the great things being done in their own communities.

The *Reel Visions* “Doers” special will feature Angela Shoemaker’s *A Place to Call Home*, a look at homelessness in Lexington; C. Scott Shuffit’s *Me and This Bike*, a profile of photographer and avid motorcyclist Sarah Lyon; Chad Stockfleth’s *Lauren Argo-21C*, documenting the 21-day, living window art installation of artist Lauren Argo; Patti Parsons’ *The Braves*, examining the work of the Bluegrass Miracle League; and Jeremy Midkiff’s *Ronnie Reader*,

documenting the everyday life of a homeless man in Lexington, KY and his great passion for reading.

The *Reel Visions* production team at KET also sends out an invitation for filmmakers to submit any new work for review for the upcoming (fourth) season. To learn more about the show and how to submit your short-films for review, please visit www.ket.org/arts/reelvisions.

Reel Visions hopes to continue offering this new outlet to Kentucky’s filmmaking community and welcomes any film lover to enjoy the collection of work assembled so far on the show.



independent filmmaking get a glimpse into some of the best offerings of film fare in the Commonwealth. Check out the first show of the new season on Wednesday, August 4 at 10:30 P.M. on KETKY and Thursday, August 5 at 10:30 P.M.

Some highlights from the third season include Harlan, Kentucky native Colin Spoelman’s *Coming Down the Mountain*, a film that tells the story of a father and son as they cope with prescription drug abuse and isolation in rural Appalachia. Evan Peters’ black and white short-film *The Poster* harkens back to episodes of the *Twilight Zone*, following the course of a very

We want *your* stuff

Musicians, venues, and promoters too

NoC Music Staff

For the past year, the music staff of this newspaper has sought to provide the community with consistent, insightful coverage of local musicians, and it has largely done so. Former Music Editor Nick Kidd had much to do with the establishment of the music page as a useful community resource, with informative, concise show previews, album reviews, and occasional features on some aspect of the Lexington scene.

But Nick has now left the paper, gone to seek his fortune in Austin, Texas, and now we sense a bit of a void here in the *NoC* offices. For the past year we relied on Nick’s familiarity with the local music scene to fill the page devoted to it; even in the leaner fortnights he always had *something* to write about, and usually some up-and-coming act the gray-hairs at the top of the masthead had never heard of.

h, easing our befuddlement is the appointment of longtime contributor Megan Neff to the editor’s desk, who knows what’s going on in a way that the rest of us don’t. And while change is often scary, we’re positive people, and we see this situation as an opportunity for real growth. Yes, we think we can do *even better*. But we need your help. More to the point, we need your stuff: your music, your calendars, your press kits, your *very souls* if you’ll give ‘em. Or at least a web link. We need this stuff because we need to know who you are in order to write about you.

In addition to expanding our knowledge of who’s who around town, we also want to get a better grasp of who’s where; it’s easy to get the low-down on the next band at Buster’s, but not all shows are quite as well publicized. So venues, be you big, small, loud, quiet, or just kind of smelly, let us know who’s on your stage on which nights, and we’ll do what we can to get a few more bodies through the door.

Of course we can’t get everything in that we’d like to, as we have just the one page, but we’ll try our best to give a bit of column space to everyone who asks for it. And if you don’t get what you want the first time, pester us. Not overly, you know, but at least keep in touch.

We have a new vision as well. The head dude of this newspaper, Danny Mayer, recently whipped out from his satchel a copy of Athens, Georgia’s alternative weekly *Flagpole*, flung it on the conference table, and bellowed, “now this is the sort of music coverage we should shoot for!”

“Stories analyzing the cultural significance of Bill Berry’s eyebrows? That sort of coverage?” It wasn’t clear who’d muttered it.

“No,” Mayer roared, “the hipness! The style! The *je ne sais quoi*! When I was in college, not *that* long ago, this was the source for finding out what shows to see!”

The Features Editor raised her hand and in a helpful tone said, “I think that kids these days just use the internet.” The room murmured its assent, but *el jefe* was unmoved. He wanted us to become the *Village Voice*. Of the Bluegrass. The old *Voice*, before it got too corporate. *Rolling Stone* before all the blow. The way things used to be.

Now, you have to understand that Mayer’s taste in music, which is the product of a blissful world in which Gordon Lightfoot is still “current” and MP3 files are kind of scary, colors his perception of what local music journalism should be. Nevertheless he is our leader, though he be as Luddite as the day is long, and you know what? We’re gonna do what he wants, because we agree with him. There’s still a place for print publications in music coverage.

So that’s it, then: send us your stuff and we’ll get the ball rolling. Where to? If it’s electronic, send it to music@noclexington.com. Kicking it old school? Mail it to 430 N. Martin Luther King, Lexington, KY 40508. We look forward to hearing from you.

JULY 28, 2010

ROCK lose nailbiter to BBRG

By Sugar Shock

Our regular reporter Troy Lyle apparently has a legitimate job somewhere that prevented him from attending our bout this past weekend in Florence, Kentucky, against the Black and Bluegrass Roller girls (BBRG). He asked me to write this in his stead. There's nothing quite like getting your ribs nearly shattered by a girl twice your size, and then finding your pen so you can take notes on it.

We, the Rollergirls of Central Kentucky (ROCK), started off the night by scoring 46 unanswered points. Our jammers took turns blasting through the pack while our blockers shut down

BBRG's jammers. Halfway through the first period, BBRG had yet to score. Our next jammer, who may or may not have been me, got sent to the penalty box, allowing BBRG to score their first points. After that, they went on to get lead jammer status the next 10 jams in a row. Roller derby rules state that in order to block the opposing jammer, you must be within a certain distance of "the pack," which is defined as the largest group of players from both teams. This rule prevents fast blockers from chasing a jammer all the way around the track. With that bit of knowledge in place, BBRG began employing their

devastating strategy of skating so slowly, virtually rendering our blockers useless. If our blockers sped up, they would be too far away from the pack to block legally. If they stayed with the pack, they'd be skating too slowly to lay any sort of hit on the jammer as she sped by. As you can see this posed quite the conundrum for our team and by halftime, BBRG had caught up and surpassed our earlier efforts. *ROCK 48, BBRG 54*

Our troubles continued into the second period, with BBRG pulling

continued on the next page

BSG sees record number of huckers

NoC Sports

With nearly 70 players participating in this year's July 17 festivities at Veteran's and Shillito Parks, a 50 percent increase from last year, disc golf seems to be ever growing in the greater Lexington area. Of those 70 disc golfers, the top three from each of the 15 divisions were awarded either gold, silver or bronze medals. Here's a quick rundown of each divisions medalists:

- Men's**
- Open - Josh Winfrey, Gold; Drew Smith, Silver
 - Open Master - Lewis Willian, Gold
 - Advanced Grandmaster - Warren Foy, Gold; Jon Winfrey, Silver; Bill Abbey, Bronze
 - Advanced Master - James Miller, Gold; Thomas Moe, Silver
 - Advanced - Darell Motley, Gold; Jerry Dobbins, Silver; Kevin Angel, Bronze
 - Intermediate Master - Rod Angel, Gold
 - Intermediate - Charles Barnes, Gold; Steven Brown, Silver; Jeff Schetler, Bronze
 - Recreational Master - Rodger Hilliard, Gold; Rex Richardson, Silver; Kevin Harris, Bronze
 - Recreational - Michael Cassinelli, Gold; Earnest Cruse, Silver; Daniel Dutton, Bronze
 - Novice Master - Ricky Kirkpatrick, Gold; Marty McMichael, Silver; Edward Kirkpatrick, Bronze
 - Novice - Mark Baumgardner, Gold; Tommy Lanham, Silver; Audie Thacker, Bronze
 - Junior Boys - Gabriel McMichael, Gold; Andrew Oisten, Silver; Daniel Baumgardner, Bronze

- Women's**
- Recreational Master - Candy Rollins, Gold
 - Recreational - Farrah Weleski, Gold; Heather Johnson, Silver; Alysyn Tipton, Bronze
 - Junior Girls - Melanie Prager, Gold

Upcoming disc golf events in the Lexington area

- July 17 - Bluegrass State Games, Lexington
- July 24 - PDGA Lebanon Open III, Lebanon
- August 7 - PDGA Beware the Beavers IV, Nicholasville
- August 21 - PDGA Freeman Lake Open, Elizabethtown
- August 28 - PDGA River Cities Classic, Ashland
- Sept 4/5 - PDGA Charlie Vettiner, Louisville
- Sept 11 - PDGA Super Summer Slammer at Veterans Park, Lexington
- Sept 18 - Discraft Ace Race, Richmond
- Sept 25 - PDGA Autumn Classic, Lawrenceberg
- Oct 2 - PDGA Greater Louisville Open, Louisville
- Oct 9 - Clash at Catalpa III - Richmond, Jason Nichols
- Oct 16 - PDGA Great Pumpkin Bowl, Louisville
- Oct 30 - Adoption Benefit Tournament, Mackville
- Oct 30 - Halloween Glo Tourney II, Lawrenceberg
- Nov 6 - PDGA WCCPR Open at Ironworks Hills II, Winchester

For more information on any of these events, please visit the Forums section of the www.bdga.org website or click on PDGA Tour website for their Events Schedule and Results at www.pdga.com.

Bourbonic Plague (cont.)

continued from page 1

the Plague's take-no-prisoners attitude. True, it was a move bordering on show-boating, but it was effective, and it sent a message to the rest of the field. "Sometimes you just gotta be a dick," Simpson would later say, while standing on the sidelines in his extra game-day capacity as bench-coach/mentor for team Rubbin's Racin', about his final goal on Cutter.

Heat a factor

Bourbonic's quick disembowelment of Cutter set the stage for a fast-paced day of bike polo action. Intense heat, a forfeited match by Team Columbus, reportedly stuck in traffic enroute, and several lopsided games, some of which finished before the 10 minute time-limit for tournament matches and none of which went into overtime, contributed to the tournament's fast pace. In other first round play, Dayton's Two Appalachians and A Knee-Gra blanked Atlanta's Muffin Haters 5-0, while Jared Baize and his Rubbin's Racin' team beligerently pummeled the 2010 Census by a score of 4-1. Only the Lisa Frank Unicorns/Balls Deep match played close, a hard-fought 1-0 victory for the local boys of Lisa Frank.

With temperatures soaring into the 90s, the convenience store on Sixth and Jefferson quickly sold out of beer. Players, fans and journalists went into a speculative tizzy. Black market High Life bottles, imported from the Broadway/Loudon gas station, fetched \$2 on the open velo market; Bittburger smuggled in from the far away land of Shopper's Village briefly fetched three times that amount at 3:00 PM when the heat and frenzy crested. Players huddled under tarps, journalists dove for cover beneath a couple of nearby pines, over-grown now and with branches wilted to the ground, that had created a quite shady courtside cave. A couple lucky souls were even granted entrance into Simpson's opulant private tarp chalet set on the hill overlooking Coolavin Courts.

On the court, where the hard surface collects the sun's energy and neither trees nor tarps could offer any respite to the players, the heat contributed to lethargic tournament action. On court temperatures soared into the triple digits. Players were soon sapped of energy, their bodies glistening wet early into the ten minute games. Perhaps owing to the heat, a number of teams experienced an increase in flat tires; those that didn't



Jared Baize bangs on Chris Simpson's hubcaps. Mike Rozzi looks on.

still played on low tires, which slowed player movement up and down the court. The burning court surface also made for a bad case of hot balls—which are slower, softer, less bouncy and thereby less fun to slap—as the plastic surface slowly melted, losing its rigidity. Players continually called for more cold balls please.

The Huffine factor

Given the grueling heat conditions, Bourbonic Plague seem to have chosen the correct strategy: beat the ever-living snot out of everyone you play, do it quickly, and then head for the comfort and shade of a tarp on a hill, some brown liquor on ice, and a spot in the winner's bracket.

In advancing to the championship game with four straight convincing wins, Bourbonic only surrendered one goal, a short tap-in on a weaving half-court break-away by blond bomb shell Chris Cornell in a Round 2 match versus the Tater Tots. The Cornell goal would mark the only time in the tournament that Bourbonic fell behind.

Characteristically for this tournament, after the Tots surged ahead, it was the Plague's Henry Huffine who would provide the steadying sober hand for his Bourbonic teammates: after Cornell's score, Huffine simply went down the court and scored his first, and nearly only, BG State Tournament goal. Huffine's leadership and targeted offensive work eventually allowed Simpson and Redbeard to get back on track and finish things off with four straight goals in what turned out to be an easy 5-1 victory over the Tots.

Though the internationally praised Simpson and emerging star

Atlanta A to championship game

In the loser's bracket, out of towners Atlanta A and Dayton's Two Appalachians and A Knee-Gra appeared to be headed for a show-down match for the right to face Bourbonic in the championship, though several Lexington teams stood in their way. After an exciting 5-4 victory over Lisa Frank, Rubbin's Racin' rolled over to Atlanta A in a 5-0 match that secured Rubbin' a better-than-expected fourth place tournament finish led by Jared Baize.

Atlanta A's victory over Rubbin' set up a loser's bracket finale against Two Appalachians that, on paper, looked to be a closely played match. It wasn't. The much older Two Appalachians and a Knee-Gra withered under the sun and, like last year, lost going away, 5-1, to finish in third place.

The winning Atlanta team, comprised of a trio of wiry and fast players, employed a strategy of quick passes and corner charges that had been overwhelming other team's defenses. Their fast style of play had clearly been wearing down opposing teams. After an early-round loss to Bourbonic, Atlanta A seemed to be peddling on all gears heading into the championship.

Unfortunately, the expected matchup between the offensive prowess of Atlanta's A Team and the gitty defensive play of Huffine, what some now call the Huffine factor, never played out. From skillful nudges of the ball to Simpson or Redbeard for quick run-outs the other way, to stopping a shot cold with his face, the chafed Huffine was unflappable in goal.

Redbeard and Simpson scored early and often, and before the crowd knew it, the game was over, by a margin of 5-1. Bourbonic Plague had secured their place in Bluegrass (State Games Bike Polo Tournament) lore.

Notes

Lexington Teams in tourney

Lexington bike polo was well-represented in the 14 team field. Five Lexington teams participated against teams from Bloomington, Atlanta, Dayton and Louisville. Normally,

continued on the next page



Opinion

Church, state and social justice

A response to “Mall of God”

By Jake Caldwell

I am writing in response to the recent article in *North of Center*, “Mall of God.” I first want to tell you how much I have appreciated the work that you and your volunteer staff have poured into *North of Center*. I believe it is a much needed service to the Lexington community and the articles have been consistently well written and critically incisive.

Before I offer my response to “Mall of God,” however, a disclosure of my self-interests is in order. I am a minister on the staff of Central Christian Church, the congregation that Andrew Battista criticizes for acquiring property from the Windstream Corporation at below market value. Like almost all of the ministers I know, my work routinely positions me to see the shortcomings of my own congregation, which is to say that I do not, as a minister, labor under any pretensions about the church being above or immune from criticism. And like most ministers I know in mainline Protestant traditions, I agree whole heartedly with the issues Andrew raises with the way mega church strategy and polity parrots consumer trends.

I would, however, like to offer a theological critique of Andrew’s broader point about the problems inherent in according privileged status to religious organizations. It would be disingenuous for me or anyone else to feign impartiality on this question. After all, one’s level comfort with the privileged status of any organization will inevitably be colored by the value one places on the purpose and work of that organization—a bias that is sharpened when dealing with faith and religion which dabble in such foundational matters as one’s identity and purpose in the world. Thus it should be no wonder that religion sometimes dictates political discourse in ways that can be constructive, but so often has been detrimental to the progress and wellbeing of our society. Yet it would be naïve to imagine

that the reverse is not also true—that political discourse sometimes exerts a controlling influence in matters of faith and religion. This tension is fundamentally a struggle over who gets the privilege of narrating events and circumstances in the public sphere as they *really* are.

In “Mall of God,” Andrew correctly identifies a tension in Christian thought between the Kingdom of God and earthly kingdoms. This tension should emerge as Christians utilize their understanding of the character and concerns of God to measure and narrate their vision of the way things *really* are. By so doing, Christians position themselves within the narrative of God’s reign over against competing narratives shaped by other concerns.

In this case, the competing narrative is that measured by the concerns of Lexington’s ruling elite, which I will call Lexington’s royal narrative. Andrew’s critique of Southland Christian and Central Christian, as I understand it, is that by taking advantage of their tax-exempt status to acquire property, they have entered into a relationship with the government that compromises their ability to embody the tension between the Kingdom of God and Caesar’s Rome, or, to set it in local context, Newberry’s Lexington. Thus they have corrupted their position in the narrative of God’s reign by playing an incongruent role in Lexington’s royal narrative in which key players are concerned to maintain the status quo and nurture institutions that do likewise. Andrew attempts to position himself and his concerns within the narrative of God’s reign to critique the actions of the churches and the government, which he believes have colluded in ways that reflect the concerns of Lexington’s royal narrative.

The problem with “Mall of God” is that it claims to critique Lexington’s royal narrative from within the narrative of God’s reign, yet, in several key respects, merely capitulates to the royal narrative. For example, to place a value

on a property like the Lexington Mall and on the things for which it will be used on the basis of their potential to generate tax revenue is to locate oneself uniquely within the royal narrative. That doesn’t mean that as a Christian I can’t pay taxes. But it does mean that before I take up the cause of the local tax deficit, I must also ask questions like these: Will the revenue be used to assist Lexington’s homeless and marginally housed population? Or will it be used to create a more aesthetically impressive experience for wealthy patrons who will come to Lexington for horse games? If, in Lexington’s royal narrative, the latter is the prominent concern, then one whose interests are framed by the narrative of God’s reign will not lament lost tax revenue irrespective of any budget situation.

It is certainly true that in Christian theology the reign of God makes significant claims about economic justice even if American churches in general and American evangelicalism in particular have failed to grasp the implications. In the story of God and of God’s reign, true justice becomes a possibility only where God is truly worshipped—where the children of God gather to offer words of prayer and praise. The call for justice is fundamentally a confessional claim and is thus rooted firmly in the church’s central act—the worship of God. Whether that worship is led by guitars and drums in an auditorium (i.e., evangelical mega churches like Southland Christian) or organs and choirs in a sanctuary (i.e., mainline liberal Protestant churches like Central Christian), the worship of a faith community becomes the spiritual, intellectual, and, yes, even the physical hub from which the community lives into its identity and purpose.

This has been particularly true for the congregation of Central Christian who, several times in recent years, has reaffirmed our commitment to stay downtown, utilizing our physical space to serve the community as a natural extension of our worship. To forsake this vital connection is to operate in a symbolic universe other than the one established in story of God and of God’s reign.

While it is yet to be seen how Southland Christian will utilize their newly acquired space, the parallel drawn between that and Central Christian’s acquisition of the Windstream property is telling of the narrative confusion that plagues “Mall of God.” The critique is that the Windstream transaction ultimately resulted in a loss of

tax revenue for the city and that it is an example of how the government subsidizes the expansion of “Christian empires” that exist to make money. I have already stated why the valuation of the acquisition and use of a property based on its potential to generate tax revenue is an accommodation to the royal narrative.

But the ironic misjudgment of Andrew’s critique is revealed in full when we consider that Central’s Windstream property is used almost exclusively for two purposes: hosting Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and housing men who are homeless during the colder half of the year—the latter being a group to whom Lexington’s royal narrative offers little hope. Both of these worthwhile services to the community come at a significant financial loss to the church. Neither activity befits the straw man Andrew has created—the sinister, capital mongering, empire colluding church. And, if one is truly working within the framework of values established in the narrative of God’s reign, neither of them could be judged less valuable than whatever taxes would have been remitted to the city if the land had been purchased by a for profit operation.

“Mall of God” offers a sensible analysis and critique of mega church culture, but not from its claimed perspective of the reign of God. The operative canon for the article is not the New Testament or the reign of God, but rather an understanding of church and state born of modern secular principles that happen to be dressed up in theological language. As sympathetic as I am to the concerns the article raises about the “socially-regressive” principles and consumerism peddled as gospel by many mega churches, from my perspective as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is equally important to be attentive to how we tell and embody the narrative of God’s reign. To tell it in such a way as to accommodate one’s particular political sensibilities is a common practice in the religious-political discourse of our time, and perhaps it always has been. But that’s why it’s so important to make sure we have our stories straight before wielding them as hollow rhetorical devices in the public sphere.

In last issue’s story, “Mall of God,” Andrew Battista incorrectly asserted that Southland Christian has bookstores, coffee shops and apparel outlets on site. The church does offer coffee both for a price and for free, but it does not house a bookstore nor any apparel outlets.

Bike polo (cont.)

continued from the previous page

out-of-town “A” teams perform well at tournaments such as these, which was the case with Dayton and Atlanta’s “A” teams finishing in second and third place behind Lexington’s Bourbonic Plague. However, a look further into the standings shows that the next three highest placing teams, Rubbin’s Racin’ (4th), Lisa Frank Unicorns (5th) and Kitten Pox (6th), were all Lexington teams.

This finish is even more surprising given the fact that polo standouts Tiff Morrow, Mike Rozzi, Brad Flowers and Shane Tedder did not play in the tournament.

Baize’s shaky day

Jared Baize, the short-tempered tea pot playing for Rubbin’s Racin’, had a rather schizophrenic day at Coolavin. The red-haired giant has a reputation as a tough-nose player with a significant mean streak on the court, and teammates often have to cool him down when he gets into verbal and physical scrapes with opposing players. Baize’s tournament day began with his mallet getting broken during a pick-up game, an act for which he loudly blamed a fellow Lexington player. With Chris Simpson operating as a courtside coach, Baize’s on-court belligerence was tempered somewhat during Rubbin’s first-round match against 2010 Census (a 4-1 Rubbin’ victory). The temperance was short-lived, however, as sources say Baize completely lost it in a second round loss to Atlanta A.

But then something amazing happened. It was almost like a new Jared showed up for Rubbin’s next two victories, against the Muffin Haters from

Atlanta and Lexington’s Tater Tots. The new Baize stopped yelling and started playing for fun; the new Baize stopped threatening other players and started working with his teammates. Some spectators even suggested that the new Baize even looked different.

Things couldn’t last, though, and by Rubbin’s loss in the semifinals to Atlanta A, the old Jared had returned. After letting two straight goals roll past his wheels, Baize once again went belligerent, continuing his ranting with a strangely homo-erotic heckling of a single Atlanta A player all throughout the championship match, which prompted a player/spectator to cry out afterwards, “You are the most disgusting, ignorant man I have ever seen.”

Polo retirement community

Several long-time bike polo players did not suit up for the tournament. Shane Tedder and Tim “Mad Dog” Buckingham took the time during the tournament to shake some hands and officially announce their retirement. Tedder, along with Chris Simpson and Brad Flowers a former member of the fabled Tripple Lexx squads of 2008, is reportedly hanging up the pedals for a new career in competitive tubing down the Elkhorn. He was only able to break away from his rigid tubing schedule when some fellow tubers from Mississippi called and canceled at the last second a scheduled trip down the Rockcastle.

Buckingham joined Tedder in going into retirement. Mad Dog has long been a colorful character on the scene, but polo is a young-person’s game, and no doubt his old crank shaft, like Tedder’s, will be replaced by newer ones.

ROCK (cont.)

continued from page 6

away to an almost 30 point lead. By this point we’d had all we could stand and decided to turn it up a notch. We figured out their strategy and were able to use it against them. For the last 15 minutes, we’d close the lead, and they’d stretch it out again and again.

Last year, we played BBRG on my birthday. That night, we’d worked up a healthy 30 point lead, and I was stoked going into the last jam. Then I did something stupid, landing me with a two minute penalty. Then two of our blockers were penalized. As the final seconds ticked away I sat in the penalty box and watched in horror as their jammer made pass after pass. It’s was excruciating to see our lead slipping away. In the end, she didn’t overtake us. We won by five points, but I was devastated. I’d nearly lost the bout for the entire ROCK team.

I took the last jam against BBRG again last night. They were ahead by 25 with less than two minutes left. I made my first scoring pass. It was brutal. Everyone was on the floor at some point or another in those last

minutes. But then, BBRG’s jammer and two of their blockers were sent to the box. Our blockers held their girls completely at bay as I skated and skated and skated. What sweet redemption!

But in the end all those passes weren’t enough. When the final whistle blew, I had scored 20 points; BBRG’s jammer had scored five.

ROCK 121, BBRG 131

Up next for us are the Lafayette Brawlin’ Dolls from Indiana. The bout is set for August 14 at the Lexington Ice Center. Doors open at 7 PM. The bout begins at 8 PM. For more information about our team dial us up on facebook or visit us at www.rockandrollergirls.com.

I hope to see you all there.

Correction

We’d like to apologize for an incorrect photo credit in our last issue. The front page photo of the S.E.E.D.S. entrepreneurs was taken (and generously shared) by Thad Salmon. Sorry, Thad.

JULY 28, 2010

Comics

I'm not from here by Kenn Minter

SMOKIE HAD TO BE 10 OR 11 YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME...

I HAD NO IDEA WHY SHE WAS INTERESTED IN ME... MY SELF-ESTEEM WAS LOW AT THE TIME.

WHADYA MEAN "WHAT AM I DOIN'?" IT'S MIDNIGHT... WEDNESDAY.

I'M SLEEPIN', DARLIN'!

SHE'D ALWAYS CUT OUR KISSING SHORT.

SHE'D ASK ME OVER AND OVER TO DO EXSTACY WITH HER...

I GOTTA GO.

WHA?

I PROBABLY SHOULD'VE.

C'MON DUDE...

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General Dallas in: The Quest for the Dixie Belle

By Staley & Mayer #2

General, we're approaching Minter's Branch, a tributary...

...named for homesteaders who settled the headwaters in the 1800's

Well men, the Belle isn't up here. Let's move on

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