

Homeless left behind in WEG planning

“Emergency” shelters set up

By Jeff Gross

Last Friday, central Kentucky began playing host to “the world,” as we’ve been repeatedly told. “Company’s coming” has been the refrain and late last week Mayor Newberry sent an email telling residents to “sweep the front porch” for our guests: “When we have company at our house, one of the last things we do is sweep off the front porch so our guests have a good first impression. Now is time for each of us to think of the few last minute things we can do to make sure Lexington’s guests have a good first impression.”

Evidently, one of the “last minute things” has been consideration for the homeless in downtown.

Until October 10, downtown streets will be closed in the evening, filling with festival-goers for live music and medal ceremonies. Normal patterns of downtown life will be suspended, especially for those who live on the streets and in Phoenix Park.

Five years of planning for almost everything

It was announced on December 6, 2005, that Kentucky would be hosting the games, and the nearly five



Men’s bedroom at emergency shelter.

years since have witnessed a number of infrastructure improvement projects as the region has prepared to host the games. Traffic patterns and transportation routes have been carefully planned. Free shuttle routes announced. Entertainment scheduled. Lasting improvements to our community, like the Legacy Trail, have been planned and completed. Details have

been worked out on every level, in an attempt to assure a safe and comfortable visit for central Kentucky’s human and equine guests.

An August 1 *Lexington Herald-Leader* story outlined the estimated cost of the games for Kentucky. Their “analysis found that more than \$107 million in state, local and federal money has been spent on improvements at the

Kentucky Horse Park and other infrastructure projects specifically for the Games. An additional \$151 million is going to projects that already had been planned—some for decades—but were expedited so they’d be finished in time for the Games.”

The state has gambled its economic future on the success of the games, making the WEG a prioritized investment at a time when education, healthcare, and social services have had to take significant cuts in funding.

In the midst of all the planning, however, almost nobody stopped to think about the impact on Lexington’s homeless. As the city has worked to ensure the enjoyment and safety of WEG’s shareholders and stakeholders, the homeless have been left out. To Lexington’s credit, the city has not done what Atlanta did in preparation for the 1996 Olympics, when they passed stricter loitering and pan-handling ordinances and, according to advocacy groups and a number of people on the streets, started making strategic sweeps, arresting homeless in the weeks leading up the games. The Lexington Police Department insists

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Storm sewer education through art

By Beth Connors-Manke

I heard it when I went back to listen to the tapes. Over the course of several weeks, I had talked to Blake Eames and Claudia Michler, always on the street in the heat and grit, always over wet paint. Sometimes they had on fluorescent orange construction vests, with the tan that comes with street work where the sun hits the pavement and comes right back up. Their hair in pigtail braids.

On the tapes were two things: their joy in making art being welcomed by many and the incessant rumbling of cars. As I listened to our conversations, I decided this was the good and bad of it. Art was pleasing them and passersby—this was the good—but the art was a symptom of a variety of failures in our city.

First, the Good

Eames and Michler are the artists responsible for the painted storm sewer drains around downtown, neighborhoods near UK, and the near north side. Made You Look!, their project, won an EcoART grant from the city to help with the storm sewer public education campaign. Their proposal, which sometimes reads like a poem, defines the need at hand:

“Most of us in Fayette County don’t know much about the storm that’s brewing under our feet.

We’re barely aware that we have a storm sewer system that’s wholly separate from the sanitary sewer system.

Barely aware that storm drains exist.

Let alone what they do and why.

Let alone what happens when they don’t work as they should (as is the case right now because they’re ancient and inadequate).

Let alone the fact that when rain-water has nowhere to go, it runs into the storm drain, carrying litter and pollutants with it. And that water runs, untreated, directly into our lakes and streams.”

Therefore, they proposed “to transform select storm drains in high visibility areas in downtown Lexington into fanciful artistic images.”

Surely you’ve seen some of them, been startled when you saw the awning design from a la lucie on the drain in front of George’s Deli (as I was) or confused by the brick pattern tagged with “Made You Look” in front of the old Spalding’s building at Sixth and Lime (as I was). Maybe you saw the two artists taking their lives into their hands as they worked at the corner of Third and Elm Tree. Or maybe you have been one of the hundreds who have stopped to show your appreciation for the bright colors and whimsical designs Eames and Michler have laid at your feet—laid down on hot, dirty concrete littered with weeds and trash.

Maybe you were Shane (as described by Eames): “We’ve got this great guy who came by yesterday. He was walking by on his cell phone, and he had this great shirt, with all these lion heads all over it. He looks at me and goes, ‘Exquisite Decoration.’”

Or Gummy, who in his motorized wheelchair tracked the work around town, disliking most of it until the two drains at Third and Elm Tree, pieces inspired by the Art in Motion bus stop sculpture. There, Eames and Michler won his approval.

Or maybe you were they guy who stopped, while the artists were working on Central Avenue, and started cross-referencing the drains: (from his car) “Are you the ones who did Third and Elm?” The women smile and nod yes. The driver gives the thumbs up.

A More Organic Public Art

Made You Look! has been granted relative freedom by the city, according to Eames and Michler. The city wanted them to focus on storm sewer drains around and near downtown, where the storm sewer problems can be especially acute. Eames said, “They have given us amazing freedom and trust.” To Michler’s mind, LFUCG has given



Storm drain at High and Rose.

them a pleasantly surprising amount of license in location and imagery.

The drains have taken on all kinds of looks: Matisse in Rastafarian colors, butterflies, geometry, ladybugs, flowers, Picasso, red peppers. All of them in bright, vivid colors.

They are also designs that, by and large, have been inspired by the sites themselves. The artists did have a set of sketches prepared when they applied for the grant, but since then they’ve let the local landscape generate the ideas for their art.

Of the drain design at the corner of Rose and Maxwell, Eames said: “We just sat there for a few minutes and absorbed the area. There were so many wheels: there were bicyclists, there are skateboarders, scooters, cars. We had this vision of doing this beautiful, graphic, very vivid color piece and then having all these tires rolling over it.”

This is where art like Made You Look! departs from projects like Horse Mania. Little is unique about Horse Mania (other cities have done similar projects with different animals) except that the horse herd is about branding the city for the World Equestrian Games. On the other hand, Made You Look! is tied to an organic expression

of Lexington’s uniqueness — and to some of it’s needs: better infrastructure and more color.

Since color is a physical human need, at least in my book, it’s not surprising that all kinds of people have expressed their appreciation for the art on the storm sewer drains, especially as it has appeared in neighborhoods and as well as on major thoroughfares.

Michler noted that “there are almost two aspects to this: the storm drain aspect — because people are really interested, actually, in the watershed idea. The other aspect is that people are just loving the color. I think that’s what they are really responding to. These [drains] completely seem to have cross-cultural appeal. Every kind of car, every kind of person, everybody is liking it. I find it interesting that the art crosses all those boundaries.”

“Art can be intimidating to people,” Eames added, “especially if they think they have to know something about it to appreciate it, or love it, or care about it. And so when they are just seeing it in this way, it’s under foot, it’s more for them, they take more ownership of it. It’s accessible. People are very

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The Neighborhood

The Don Pratt conundrum

A progressive city council candidate in a hopelessly conservative city

By Danny Mayer

Say what you will about Don Pratt, but it’s difficult to deny that, for the past 50 years, the current at-large city council candidate has been one of Lexington’s most engaged local citizens on issues big and small, national and local.

So why is it that he’s been snubbed for political office so often, for so long, by a city that proclaims its desire to have an active citizenry, one that’s trying to re-brand itself as a progressive city?

The Pratt biography: active citizenship

As a teenager growing up in Lexington during the mid-1960s, Pratt was one of the few white citizens in the region to see the city’s so-called “polite racism” for what it was—racism—and to act on his convictions. As a public school student, he participated in several unpopular and mostly ignored protests outside UK’s Memorial Coliseum designed to pressure his future alma mater into integrating its all-white sports teams. He would continue his direct action for civil rights by traveling throughout the South to participate in other agitations, demanding equality for all of our nation’s citizens.

While a college student at UK, Pratt would draw upon his civil rights activism in joining Lexington’s burgeoning movement against the Vietnam War. Far from the hippie stereotype we hold today of anti-war protesters, Pratt was no long-hair. An ROTC student at UK, his opposition to the war like his call for civil rights grew out of his entwined moral and religious convictions.

In the early 1970s, while still a student at UK working within the city’s anti-war movement, Pratt made national headlines when he went to prison over his refusal to answer his military draft notice. Though he had an already documented medical condition that would have disqualified him from service—considered a golden parachute for most American citizens

(including many war-mongering politicians holding office during the past 10 years)—Pratt instead made things difficult for himself by choosing to adhere to his moral convictions. He refused to show up for the medical exam that would disqualify him from service, an act that ultimately would lead to his imprisonment for two years for draft evasion at a federal prison in Michigan.

Back when UK professors actually engaged with their students, an English professor by the name of Wendell Berry even devoted a chapter in his first book of essays, *The Long Legged House*, to Pratt’s actions during this time. The chapter is titled, “Some thoughts on citizenship and conscience in honor of Don Pratt.”

Since returning to Lexington in the early 1970s, Pratt has continued to engage with national, regional and local politics, though with considerably less fanfare. He fought (successfully) with others to protect the now nationally revered Red River Gorge area from being turned into a giant lake and (unsuccessfully) to secure local ownership of Lexington’s water supply. In addition to these big concerns, throughout the years Pratt has become a regular at city council meetings, even running several times for the District 1 (UK-area) city council seat. And he’s done all this while raising over 20 foster kids and, for much of that time, owning and operating a small local grocery store well before Lexington got hip enough to value such a thing.

Ignoring Don Pratt

Just don’t tell the *Herald-Leader* all this, or Lexington’s so-called liberal and progressive citizens. Despite a clear 50-year record advocating for just about everything that the *Leader* now advocates for on its editorial page, the city’s paper of record has inexplicably failed to endorse Pratt in every single election he has run.

In the most recent dismissal of his candidacy, last May’s primaries when nine at-large candidates for the

city council would be pared down to six, Pratt lost out to nobody, literally. Though it could endorse up to six at-large candidates in the primary race, the *Leader* only saw fit to endorse five in its May 18 “election day” editorial.

This was quite a snub: in the other two non-partisan races where multiple candidates would advance, the *Leader* dutifully selected two candidates, as in its endorsement of both Jim Newberry and Jim Gray for mayor. Not choosing a sixth candidate to endorse in the race was a pretty telling—not to mention spineless and questionable—statement.

Even more astounding than the explicit abdication of its role as a non-partisan civic voice, though, the *Leader*’s endorsements themselves made absolutely no sense. The paper endorsed Chuck Ellinger despite acknowledging that he’s “made a faint impact in almost eight years on council,” and it endorsed George Brown, a former council member it described as being “shortsighted in his almost slavish support for development and business interests.” Presumably, the paper believes that these candidates are not only better than Pratt, but that they

had a difficult time gaining a foothold politically in this city. Both the paper of record and the “progressive” site of record have consistently marginalized him. With an advertising budget 1/20 the size of his opponents, Pratt doesn’t stand a chance when public news outlets consistently dismiss him.

The “nature” excuse: bullshit

The reason cited by the *Herald-Leader* and Barefoot and Progressive for not endorsing Pratt?

Given his local civic biography, it certainly wasn’t that he was “a newcomer to electoral politics” who “needs a stronger grasp of the details surrounding city issues”—the *Leader*’s critique of Kathy Plomin, whom the paper endorsed. And it’s not because Pratt has lost several previous council races—this would also describe fellow candidate Steve Kay, whom the paper, like B&P, enthusiastically has endorsed, in part because of Kay’s “extensive civic involvement.” (B&P has even dreamed of Kay being vice-mayor.)

Nope, it has nothing to do with what Pratt’s actually done (because he’s done a lot), and nothing to do with

Castlewood Neighborhood Association Potluck

Saturday, October 16, 12 noon - 2 p.m.

Castlewood Park Pavilion

Bring a dish to share, your own drinks, silverware, plates, and we'll eat together!

are head and shoulders better than Pratt. They got an endorsement, after all.

Of course, one might expect the corporate run *Herald-Leader* to downplay the grassroots campaign of a city council candidate who has spent less than \$1,000 on his campaign as a matter of principle. (Most of Pratt’s opponents, by contrast, have raised over \$20,000, thereby raising the economic bar for citizen entry into local politics. Bravo wealthy candidates!)

More surprising has been the response he’s received at Barefoot and Progressive (B&P), the insurgent online blog that claims to cover all things political in the city and state. Though it claims to cover local politics from a “progressive” viewpoint, it has consistently downplayed Pratt, damming him with faint praise while suggesting his viewpoints are crazy. A March 2008 post, for example, when Pratt was running for the District 1 seat, listed him fourth—among four candidates in his district—in order of voting preference. Then, the fledgling site endorsed 26-year old Eric Thomasson based solely on his desire to save downtown (a vague stance that Pratt’s 50 years of activism no doubt also embodied); but it also named Diane Lawless, who won the seat, and Jonathon Rodgers as better candidates than Pratt.

Two year’s later, in this year’s council race B&P has unambiguously endorsed at-large candidate Steve Kay, whom moderator Joe Sonka called “the only candidate that I can definitely say I’m going to vote for” in the primaries, a position he upheld in other posts. (Sonka, like all of us, can vote for three candidates for at-large city council, and at the time of his writing just before the primaries, he could vote for 6 at-large candidates.)

And Pratt? Though Citizen Pratt shows up in several non-council race B&P posts dealing with specific local moments of health care activism and fights for local control of water ownership (both positions endorsed by the site), when discussing Councilman Pratt the site has offered such backhanded compliments as “Don Pratt’s good thoughts outnumbered his crazy thoughts.” (When Pratt asked which thoughts the site deemed crazy, he received no response.)

With progressive friends like these, it’s no wonder that Pratt has

his current public stances (which both sites agree with). The *Leader* and B&P do not endorse Pratt because of his “nature.” Specifically, our city’s public civic voice of record did not endorse Pratt because “his uncompromising nature might undermine” his constituencies’ needs in a place where “compromise and alliance-building are required to get anything done.” A vote for Pratt, the paper contends, is only a vote for “an agitator in residence.” Over at B&P, the tune is similar. For this progressive blog, Pratt “still needs to dial down the anger a little bit.”

Of course, the supposed outlandish Pratt nature, which is never explained in anything a writing instructor might call “detail,” needs to be put in context. I mean, Pratt’s not going off and dropping F-Bombs all over the place in public, as both I and, more importantly, council person Doug Martin have done. And as he and his council opponents conceded in a candidate debate in April, Pratt is probably the most straight edge of all the candidates—though he nevertheless advocates decriminalizing marijuana offenses and turning Lexington into a medicinal marijuana hub (talk about building upon an economical counterpart to the eds/meds push!).

And of course, when Pratt gets labeled a crazy person who does crazy things like putting his underwear into evidence, remember that former vice-mayor Jim Scanlon is allowed to get on all-fours and bark at fellow council members, and current vice-mayor Jim Gray can bring a sack of lawn seed to a council meeting and use it as an agitating prop. Scanlon and Gray, though, get described as effective and colorful leaders.

Pratt? No. He’s just a crazy loon. It’s in his nature, after all.

No need to look at his actions. Just know that picketing UK to advocate for civil rights might be evidence of being a little too angry. Remember that going to prison on your principals when every other sane person would take the free medical pass is merely an example of “an uncompromising nature.” Sleep well knowing that fighting to keep the Red River Gorge area a Kentucky treasure and our water resources local owned is just something “agitators in residence” do.

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Community announcements

GLBT Parent support group meetings

PFLAG Lexington is a support group for parents with gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans-gender children. We are dedicated to helping other parents who are dealing with these issues in their family and in our society. Our meetings provide a safe, non-judgmental place where both attendees and all conversations remain confidential. We welcome friends interested in support, education and advocacy.

On the first Sunday of the month, we meet from 2:00 to 4:00 at the Pride Center, 389 Waller Ave. The third Sunday of the month, from 2:00 to 4:00, we meet at the Good Foods Co-Op, 455 Southland Drive, in the Rochdale Room.

On Saturday, October 16, at 12:00 P.M., PFLAG will present a free film screening of *Straightlaced: How Gender’s Got Us All Tied Up*, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, located at 564 Clay’s Mill Road.

With courage and humor, the film depicts teens who identify as straight,

gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning, as they open up their lives to the camera. Topics covered include the intricacies of choosing a deodorant, handling the locker room and the classroom, and mourning the suicide of classmates. Coming of age today has become increasingly complex and challenging; Straightlaced offers teens and adults a way out of anxiety, fear and violence, and points the way toward a more inclusive, empowering culture.

Check pflaglex.org or call (859) 338-4393 for more information or for any changes in meeting schedule.

For sale: 1970s-vintage Schwinn

Yellow 70s Schwinn Continental, good condition, original headlight but no generator, 18-speed, 24” all steel frame, horizontal dropouts, asking \$120 OBO. Email matthew.heil@gmail.com



Seedleaf

Planting gardens
Growing Gardeners

*For education and volunteer opportunities, visit
www.seedleaf.org*

Homeless and the WEG (cont.)

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that no efforts will be made to harass or round up homeless persons during the games. As of this writing, this promise from the local police seems to hold true.

Still, during the games and the corresponding Spotlight Lexington Festival, Phoenix Park and surrounding downtown areas will be overrun with police and guests, as the main Spotlight Lexington Festival stage is

First, before I delve into the rhetoric of “emergency shelters,” I should note that “emergency shelters,” as a term, designates that the shelter will not be set up for a long period, which means that it does not have to go through all of the inspections and permitting necessary for a permanent shelter. The emergency shelter still must meet certain fire code and building safety regulations. Typically, such shelters are set up in response to natural disasters and other public emergencies;

and begin the journey to find a way home.” Consequently, those who sleep on Lexington’s streets, and who may be wary of social agencies, can learn about services that they may not know they are eligible for. Paragon Medical Group will be on hand to provide medical assistance, and mental health and social work professionals will be available for consultation and referral.

An “emergency” caused by neglect

Certainly, the temporary shelters will help the homeless, but let’s get back to the idea of this being an “emergency.” Exact long-term planning cannot be put in place for a hurricane or natural disaster, which could hit at any time, but Lexington has had nearly five years to plan for the World Equestrian Games. The shelters, announced this week, became an emergency only because the city neglected to think about all of its stakeholders.

An enormous amount of tax money—money that should be directed towards improving the state’s services for its citizens — is being used to support an event that, in the end, will impact very few of our city’s residents. Dressage and stadium jumping are not the same as thoroughbred racing, and anyone who has ever been to the Rolex 3-Day event at the Horse Park knows that these equestrian events, due to the associated costs and training times, are available only to a select few. Local and state government and corporate sponsors, led by Alltech’s Pearse Lyons, have worked to ensure that Lexington will appeal to those who enjoy such sports. If you want to get an idea of how small this event is in the national perspective, look for coverage in national newspapers or, better yet, call five out-of-state friends to see how many of them have heard of the WEG.

At the other end of the social spectrum, the Catholic Action Center and Central Christian Church are assuming the role of sheltering the homeless during the games. As of right now, the Catholic Action Center is also assuming the costs of the sheltering operations; these costs include security for the shelters. While shelter organizers may have hoped that the local government or WEG’s corporate sponsors would help foot the bill for food and security at the emergency shelters, nobody offered anything. The corporate entities making the games possible are not helping with the care of Lexington’s most at-risk citizens who are being displaced by the festivities. The shelters are only made possible by the donations of private citizens.

Since the shelters opened on Wednesday, September 22, which was when festival setup began downtown, the shelters have seen an increase in combined guests each night. On

Friday, September 24, the shelter at MLK & Corral housed 36 guests, and the Catholic Action Center housed an additional eight.

The numbers show the shelters are necessary, but the shelters might also provide the city with a win-win situation during the games. On one hand, they are released from their own failure to come up with a plan for the homeless, and they might be able to avoid the embarrassment of sweeping the park of the homeless.

The Catholic Action Center estimates the cost of the shelters for the 18 nights they will be open at about \$10,000, most of which will go to security costs. Many goods being used have been donated. If they continue to average around 50 people a night at the shelters, that’s a cost of about \$10 per person per night. Saturday night’s opening ceremony at the Kentucky Horse Park was estimated to cost around \$1 million, so for a hundredth of that cost, the event sponsors could have sponsored the emergency shelters for the entire event.

The money was there, but the priority was not.

When the real emergency begins

It will be months or even years before we know if Kentucky’s gamble on the World Equestrian Games pays off. For the sake of all of the stakeholders in the Commonwealth, I hope it does. The reality, played out in other states with similar events, makes me worry that it won’t.

For five years, our city’s vision has been nearly singularly focused on the WEG, which will be over on October 10. Perhaps the end of the games will bring a renewed focus on the real stakeholders in the state and city’s future. Those experiencing homelessness in our community, and those who are at risk of homelessness with increasing utility costs on the way, can only hope that planning for the future considers them. If WEG preparation is representative of how our state and local governments work, then our priorities seem to be skewed.

Public monies are being used to help put on a superfluous event, and private monies are needed to provide basic living conditions for our most vulnerable citizens.

Those individuals staying in shelters during the games will end up back on the streets, and that’s when the real emergency begins. Will our community work to find a long-term solution for its most vulnerable stakeholders? Ideas already exist. If you talk to people working on a plan for an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, you might be surprised to hear that these plans offer a surer economic bet than the games that we have invested so heavily in for the last five years.



Clients at emergency homeless shelter.

in front of the district courthouse. Vendors will be set up in Phoenix Park and in the temporary vendor tent-city on the undeveloped CentrePointe plot. Streets will be closed and traffic rerouted, making it impossible for volunteers to feed the homeless in Phoenix Park.

An “emergency” situation

The Street Voice Council (SVC), an advocacy group made up of men and women who are experiencing or have formerly experienced homelessness, realized that the games would present an emergency for their brothers and sisters on the streets.

On Tuesday, September 14, the SVC announced that during the games temporary shelters will be set up to house the local homeless. Central Christian Church and the Catholic Action Center have teamed together to offer additional shelter space. The Central Christian Church shelter at the corner of Martin Luther King Boulevard and Corral Street will be open nightly; the Catholic Action Center at Fifth Street and Chesnutt Street will be open 24 hours a day to handle overflow needs.

When the *Herald-Leader* covered the SVC’s announcement on September 15, their headline declared, “Emergency shelters for homeless will open during WEG.” The headline begs the question: whose emergency is it? Why is it an emergency?

in Lexington, for example, temporary shelters were set up in 2005 for people displaced by Hurricane Katrina. The designation of these shelters as emergency shelters actually helped to ensure that they could be open in time for the games.

My problem is not with the shelters. For those experiencing homelessness in Lexington, these temporary shelters will be helpful. They provide a safe retreat from the downtown area that will be turned into a festival site for two-and-a-half weeks. Individuals struggling with alcoholism will have the opportunity to be away from the festival scene, where open container laws will be temporarily suspended, beer in abundance, and temptation high.

At the shelters, volunteers will be on hand to discuss social services available to those struggling with homelessness. In an informational packet aimed at shelter volunteers, the Catholic Action Center describes goals for the shelter: “During the time of the Shelter on MLK/Corral, we hope to connect with men and women who may be eligible for programs (like From the Streets to a Home) or other resources to give them a hand up; to understand their stories and give them non-judgmental care and compassion . . . The ultimate goal is that these normally isolated men and women will develop relationships with the volunteers

Storm drains (cont.)

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appreciative. And it’s across the board. It’s Cadillacs and BMWs and it’s clunkers and bicyclists; it’s motorcycle gang guys. Young, old.”

As the artists describe the drains—“It’s not high art, it’s happy art”—our conversation opens up to some of the seemingly age-old questions about the

function of art. Who has access to it? Who can afford it? What’s popular and what’s pure? Recently, a friend new to Lexington said she wondered what people considered to be the aesthetic value of the decorative horses. She didn’t pronounce judgment on Horse Mania, but I do know a number of people who have scoffed at the horse invasion for reasons political and aesthetic. After

having talked to Eames and Michler about their project, though, I’m wondering if we’ve all missed the boat in these conversations about public art.

I asked the artists why they thought so many were responding to the color.

Eames: “I think that everything is getting so grey and so concrete. And it’s us doing it — even if we’re not physically doing it, it’s our need that is creating all this concrete and asphalt.”

Michler: “The automobile, actually.”

Eames: “I think that we’re not necessarily able to diagnose the

problem until something breaks it up. Until something is right in your face saying: ‘Look at me.’ Just in that way, they’re realizing, *Oh, I want this, I need this.*”

In other words, the popularity of Made You Look! may be as much about the value of public art as about the way we’ve degraded our habitat.

In part two on the Made You Look! storm drain art, Beth takes a trip down Lexington’s flooded and sometimes foul memory lane.



Made You Look! artists Blake Eames and Claudia Michler.



Blake Eames touches up a design.

Music you need to hear: 9/30 - 10/7

We check their myspace pages so you don't have to

Thursday, September 30

The Muggs
Green Lantern, 10:00. 21+

Detroit. Rock city. A little more than a decade ago I was smitten, as it happens, with a young woman way out my league. This was in Portland, Oregon, and the young woman in question was fresh in from DTW. Don't remember why she'd come, but she'd moved with several friends who all knew the saxophonist in a local jazz-funk outfit that I road-managed for a time, who'd also moved to Portland some years prior, after taking a music degree from Wayne State.

She was beautiful, so much so that when she told me one night over drinks that basketball player Grant Hill, then with the Pistons, had once made an unsuccessful play for her affections, I absolutely believed her. She was a bit tipsy at the time, and this was her beautiful-woman way of rejecting my own advances: *I've turned down millionaire NBA stars, honey; don't embarrass yourself further.* I took the hint.

But we became friends, and the relationship was mutually beneficial, if sexually frustrating. When we went places together I felt the envy of other men, which is of course nice—maybe I had money, or maybe she doesn't see well—and she obviously enjoyed the conversation and my indulgence of her beautiful-woman whims. And her company gave me VIP status everywhere: wanna go backstage at the big show? *You're with her? No problem.* Hot new club being tough at the door? *Come right in.* No tables available? *I'm sure we can find something for you.*

So it was okay, except for the no sex thing, and one other problem of even greater severity: she listened to KISS all the goddamn time. I mean, you wouldn't think it, but we'd get in the car and the CD would start and suddenly there's Paul Stanley telling me he was made for loving me. Or her, I guess, but you get the point. KISS in the daytime, KISS at night, KISS round the clock.

I tried to get her to play some Nugent; I'm not a huge fan, but you know, something besides damned KISS. Didn't work. Mitch Ryder? Nope? Motown? Too old, I guess. Ditto Wilson Pickett. At one point I tried to play the ace in the hole, namely Stevie Wonder. Her mom, apparently, liked that stuff. After that I didn't even bother trying jazz.

We moved on with our lives and eventually lost touch, but a couple of weeks ago she contacted me through Facebook, and after exchanging some tentative pleasantries, I thought to try an experiment of sorts, and so posted on her wall a simple, timeless phrase: "DETROIT ROCK CITY!"

Her reply flabbergasted me. She said still listened to KISS now and again, but that she'd of late really gotten into another Detroit act, a band by name of The Muggs. "You mean," I responded once I'd found my bearings, "if we hung out now you wouldn't make me listen to *Destroyer* anymore?"

"Nah," she posted. "I still like to rock, but I've gotten more sophisticated. And the Muggs are kick-ass."

This was a sea change, and despite the years and the miles between us, I couldn't help but try another little

experiment: "If I fly out to see you next week, will you have sex with me?" Came her inevitable reply: "Grant Hill." Some things never change. —
Keith Halladay

Friday, October 1

Zoe Boekbinder
Al's Bar, 9 P.M. 21+.
"Just because I'm dead," Zoe Boekbinder sings in "Funeral," the third track on her 2009 release, *Artichoke Perfume*, "doesn't mean I can't love." Yeah, that's pretty weird. And that's not the half of it. Try scanning the lyrics to "Adventures of Turtle and Seahorse." Now try it again with hallucinogens—no, make that nitrous oxide. This is whippet music. Back in college my buddy Pete and I spent a lazy afternoon listening to Ween's "Push the Little Daisies" while splitting a box of whipped cream propellant, and we just about lost our minds for good. I no longer have enough brain cells to be fooling around with that stuff, but if you think you do, go for it.

Lexington's Ford Theatre Reunion opens, and happens to cite Boekbinder's former band, Vermillion Lies, as an influence on their own music. So that's another box of whippets, right there. This show is gonna mess you up. —
Buck Edwards

These United States
Cosmic Charlie's, 9 P.M.
When has a band "made it?" What's the definition of success for a pop act these days? Do you have to collaborate with Will.i.am before you can say you've made it, or is the bar somewhat lower?

Time was, you knew you'd done well for yourself if you could make a living with your music, without having to work a day job to make ends meet. This could be accomplished in more or less three ways: first, you could sell a whole mess of albums, and if your record deal wasn't too unfair you'd



These United States.

option has certainly become more difficult. It really can't matter much to U2 if you pirate their latest, but for bands grappling with the question of whether to quit the day jobs and go for it full-time, the buck or two they'd make off a CD or MP3 sale can mean a lot. And touring year-round isn't as lucrative as it once was, as skyrocketing ticket prices for the big acts and festivals leave fewer consumer dollars for the lesser-known road warriors. Songwriting can still pay well, but the ability to pen the perfect three-minute pop or country track is but one sort of musical accomplishment, and if a songwriter's genius is better expressed in more complex or inaccessible forms, that option may not even be available.

It's sometimes surprising to learn that musicians haven't yet been able to quit their day jobs. In late Spring of last year a friend and I ventured to Uncle Pleasant's in Louisville to catch a multiple-act metal show. The well-known death metal act Soilwork headlined the evening, while fellow Swedes Darkane and California thrash band Warbringer provided support, along with several regional acts.



The Muggs.

make at least a middle-class living that way. Or you could tour relentlessly, selling enough tickets on Tuesday night to buy enough gas to get to Wednesday's gig, and then (hopefully) cashing in big on the weekends. Or you could write a great song, get somebody else to perform it and have *them* sell a whole mess of albums, thereby funding your own efforts with songwriting royalties.

In the last decade or so, the first

and Darkane the next-largest, with the rest being split among the other five bands on the bill. Surely the two tour buses cost a lot to keep running, and then meal money, and then strings, picks, sticks, heads, tubes, and the various necessities of playing amplified music, and then the road crew's pay, and whatever cut the club got, and so on. All from a \$12 ticket, times 200.

Record sales? Semi-obscure Swedish metal band don't sell that many records, and while I can't find exact figures, Amazon ranks their last effort, *Demonic Art*, as the 227,658th best selling record on their site. Songwriting? Well, stranger things, but it seems unlikely Maroon 5 will be soon covering anything from the Nuclear Blast catalog. So, day jobs.

The touring schedule of These United States, who play their sometime hometown Lexington on Friday, suggests they must have quit their day jobs some time ago, but the economics of touring hard are the same for them as for any band of their stature. Their latest record, *What Lasts*, is something close to an indie-rock masterpiece, but hasn't yet cracked the top 200,000 on Amazon. The songs are gems, earning critical acclaim from all corners of the media, but Lady Gaga has yet to pick one up (again, stranger things). So have they made it?

Well, here's what you can do to help: go to Cosmic Charlie's with few friends, buy your tickets, buy a shirt, buy the CD, and then when eventually they collaborate with Will.i.am and become wealthy, you can say to yourself with no small satisfaction, "I helped them get where they are." Good for you. —*KH*

Thursday, October 7


Dan Deacon w/ Lightning Bolt
Buster's, 9 P.M. \$12. 18+

Dan Deacon, a rogue musician from Baltimore, is a must-see performer. He's not your typical musician with stunning good looks, a melodic voice, and a low-key temperament on stage. Actually, he's quite the opposite. Deacon has been known to deck himself out in anything from a gray, full-body sweat suit to a tiger costume with a little red bow tie, but always rocks his super-nerd glasses.

His music is captivating, to say the least. He creates electronic beats with the aid of a small keyboard, a mixer, and other computerized instruments. He uses vocal distortion technologies to offer lyrics such as, "My dad is so cool, he is the coolest dad in dad school."

He also incorporates audience participation into his live performances. This man can get even the biggest stiffs movin' and shakin' to his jams. I guarantee you will be dancing by the end of the show.

No matter who you are, no matter what you like, you need to see this show. It could be a life-changing experience, or at the very least a few laughs, a nice buzz, and a good time. —*Rebecca Fear*



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Film & Media

Reel life, at home

On the Lexington set of *Hitting the Cycle*

By Jennifer Miller

“It’s somehow symbolic of Hollywood that Tara was just a facade with no rooms inside.”

— David O. Selznick

It’s 3 A.M., and I sit at the computer, trying to describe just how hospitable filmmaker Richey Nash found local friends and strangers to be during the production process for *Hitting the Cycle* (www.HTCmovie.com). Then my friend Lucy calls from a show at Buster’s and asks whether she can bring a touring punk rock band to sleep at my house, since hotels are fully booked for the World Equestrian Games. Of course, I say. And then I have my metaphor.

The punk quartet can now tell other bands that Lexington is a place with quality professional venues, talented artists, and caring local people. And the *HTC* cast and crew can take the same message back with them to Los Angeles.

For the band Easy Action, it was a no-brainer to follow headliners The Meatmen to a gig in Lexington. In Nash’s case, a generous offer from Lexington Legends President Alan Stein clinched the decision to base *HTC* production here in his hometown. Nash lined up key talent in L.A. then travelled cross-country, optimistic he could fill a strong roster—on both sides of the camera—for three weeks of shooting at a dozen locations beyond the ballpark. Nash’s hometown *HTC* team exceeded his expectations in skill level and dedication. Plus he ended up with rich, authentic sets a Hollywood studio could not easily replicate.

In the early scenes of *Hitting the Cycle*, Nash’s character Jimmy “Rip” Ripley plays for the Lexington Legends. The *HTC* crew first filmed actual games between the Legends and the West Virginia Power. When the Legends went on a road trip, the *HTC* team enjoyed three nights of full access to Applebee’s Park, as well as use of Legends and Power uniforms for *HTC* actors.

In the story, Rip hopes to return to the Major Leagues, but is instead released by the Legends. Lexington is a cinematic stand-in for the fictional Sayreville, the hometown Rip has not seen for more than 15 years. In the film, he faces his estranged family members and charts a life after baseball at “Sayreville” locations filmed throughout Lexington: Lafayette High



Actors Courtney Henggeler and Richey Nash prepare for a scene during an overnight shoot in a hallway at UK’s outpatient Kentucky Clinic.

School, Chevy Chase Inn, public parks and private homes, to name a few.

On the lookout: Lexington locations

Several of us on the production team spent the summer scouting locations with Nash, who said, “Lexington is such a beautiful place, and I knew from growing up here that there were great filming locations available. This city has changed quite a bit over the years, and the number of options for places to shoot has grown considerably. There were just so many excellent choices. In many cases it was difficult to narrow down.”

At several locations, overnight shoots enabled the *HTC* cast and crew to use facilities outside of regular business hours. Nash and his team knew that scheduling scenes in a working hospital would present a particular challenge, since patient care could not be delayed for a film crew.

Kristi Lopez, the Director of the University of Kentucky’s Medical Center Public Relations, explained the creative response to the request from *HTC* producers: “We immediately knew two things—[that] we wanted to help out and be a part of this project, but that it would be nearly impossible to have a crew in patient areas of UK Chandler Hospital.” Lopez and UK HealthCare administrators reasoned that, though the adjacent Kentucky Clinic is “overflowing with patients, health care providers and UK students weekdays...the building and its hallways are nearly vacant by late in the evening. We soon realized that it was the perfect place to turn into a movie set.”

Local residents Derek and Heather Wingfield provided a more personal movie set, with their house (and the belongings and even artwork of their sons Duncan and Griffen) doubling as the home of Sayreville nurse Samantha Worth and her son Billy.

Derek Wingfield, who along with Heather also spent an afternoon in front of the camera as extras in a scene shot at another location, was impressed. “I have always been interested in the film industry, but have never had an opportunity to participate in it. My wife and I double-checked with the neighbors about an overnight shoot, and all were very excited about the prospect. It was amazing to see how many people are required for a ‘simple shot.’”

A few blocks away from the Wingfields, the home of Ron and Vicki Mitchell became the set for the Ripley family house—in both present-day and flashback scenes. Local designer Barrett Hudkins and realtor Sara Morken made several rooms and hallways fit the well-defined Ripleys.

“It was interesting to think of the interior sets to the last detail from the perspective of a character rather than a client,” Hudkins noted. “I particularly loved thinking through what each piece said about the space, even though most are seen for only a split second.”

A Kentucky crew

In addition to essential part-time volunteers like Hudkins and Morken, Kentuckians also filled a majority of the full-time *HTC* crew positions. Nash said, “For some of them, it was

their first time working on a feature film set, so there was a feeling of uncertainty going into that first week. But everyone really pulled together, and the more experienced crew helped bring the rest up to speed. It didn’t take long before we fell into a really good rhythm.”

As *HTC*’s Assistant Director, local filmmaker George Maranville oversaw the technical crew, several of whom he had supervised on other movies. Los Angeles-based Director of Photography Lincoln Lewis is a Louisville native, and film Editor Harry B. Miller III grew up in Lexington (as did his brother, Associate Producer John Winn Miller). Associate Producer Charlee Heaton worked for two decades at Kentucky Educational Television (KET) and brought former colleagues on board.

Some of the more novice *HTC* crew members and production assistants were recommended by Video Editing Service’s Arthur Rouse, and trained through programs that Rouse co-founded to nurture Kentucky’s film industry. In 2002, Rouse and two Hollywood screenwriters created the Kentucky Film Lab at the urging of the IdeaFestival’s Kris Kimel. Rouse explained, “we offer hands-on workshops, bring in interesting people from the industry, promote Kentuckians around the industry and generally try to make things happen in the cinematic arts in KY.”

Rouse has also developed the Filmmaking Certificate Program at Bluegrass Community and Technical College, from which half a dozen *HTC* crew members and PAs had earned certificates.

“I was amazed how many local people worked as film crew, wardrobe, make-up and craft services,” said Margo Miller, whose home was used for several days of shooting. “In addition to the professionals, I observed how local people rolled out the red carpet. Lexington people were incredibly generous with gifts of their time and location access.”

Lisa Fryman, for example, contributed during pre-production many ideas and connections for both locations and casting. Once filming started, she and her college-aged daughters volunteered on-set, as production assistants, still photographers, and background actors (“extras”). Fryman said, “I grew up in L.A. and know that movie making is a process, but I now appreciate more the virtues of collaboration, patience, and humor. This work is long hours and some of the shoots are tediously repetitive, but this group was fun and committed to the job they were doing.”

Nash’s own family pitched in for many aspects of the production. His parents Julie and Cotton Nash made the cast and crew feel at home, plus connected us with key resources. His brother Patrick and sister-in-law Christy organized dozens of children, teenagers and parents for multiple baseball practice and game scenes shot at Veterans Park (with the assistance of youth leagues based there). And a few young Nashes made their silver screen debuts for their Uncle Richey.

As for me, I stayed behind the camera during our 12-hour days on the *HTC* set. I’m proud to have been an ambassador for Lexington on the *HTC* team—helping introduce visiting cast and crew to diverse professional resources, talented local artists, and colleagues who value innovative artists. From now on, however, I plan to draw the line at hosting any more hardcore punk bands.

Jennifer Miller (jenniferbethmiller@insightbb.com) is a Lexington attorney and community activist, the Cruise Director of March Madness Marching Band, and an Associate Producer of Hitting the Cycle (www.HTCmovie.com).

Review: *I’m Still Here*

By Brandon Cayot

One and one-half years ago, Joaquin Phoenix walked onto the set of “The Late Show with David Letterman” and shocked the world with the announcement that he was retiring from film and pursuing a career in hip-hop.

With that announcement came a wild new look and disposition that was just as bizarre as his newly declared passion for hip hop music.

During the interview with Letterman, Phoenix was withdrawn and seemed to have no interest in being on the show at all. He essentially threw the movie he was supposed to be promoting under the bus by claiming to not have seen the film clip that was going to be shown. Bizarre behavior from a man that always had a reputation of being a committed and serious actor.

Here was a fat, shaggy, mumbling character who seemed oblivious to the fact that he was looking like a shadow of his former self. Had he been watching *The Big Lebowski* a little too much, or was he having a mid-life crisis?

I’m Still Here chronicles Phoenix over the last year as he pursues his

“new career” in hip-hop music. The film brings us into the ambiguous genre of a mockumentary where we, as the audience, have no idea if anything we are seeing is actually real.

Sacha Baron Cohen’s *Borat* and *Bruno* are good examples of this hybrid style of reality/mockumentary film that makes us question if we are watching reality or just very good acting.

Throughout the entire film, I asked myself, “Am I really watching Joaquin Phoenix snort cocaine while calling up prostitutes?” His antics in the film are so wild and pathetic that it’s hard to take him seriously. And yet, the sense of realism is quite strong.

I’m Still Here is hilarious and interesting regardless of its truthfulness or lack thereof. For once, we actually get to see the lifestyle—jet set, fast paced lifestyle where money and time are no objects—many of us imagine when we think of how celebrities live.

It’s almost like the ultimate reality show. Who else would you rather spy on then an international superstar actor? The film is not trying to make some profound statement on the role of reality television in our society, but is instead suggesting that it itself is a

reality show. Is this going to be a new trend in film where we see superstar celebs bring us into their lives?

The film comes off light-hearted and pretty funny. Phoenix does show some pretty dark sides of himself, but these moments are generally accompanied with genuinely comedic comments. The key to watching this film is not getting wrapped up in feeling like you’re being tricked, but to just laugh and take it in.

As the movie closed, I gathered that Phoenix was definitely acting. He transformed himself into this character for the film and got all the publicity he desired. Was it worth it? I don’t think so, but doing this film won’t hurt his career: it was essentially a year-long role lived offscreen as well as onscreen. And now it’s over. He has already shaved the beard, lost the weight, and been seen rubbing shoulders at Cannes.

Whatever it is, I enjoy it. This genre is a refreshing new way to experience film for anyone that enjoys the time they spend in a theater letting the images and sounds affect their emotions. Phoenix will not win an Academy Award for *I’m Still Here*, but it’s worth a watch and a laugh.

Winning day at Riverhill

But a lost evening at Winchell’s

By Northrupp Center

The stoner walk comes early at River Hill, a dense patch of second-growth honeysuckle that huddles up to Man O War on the approach to hole two. After an opening bogey on hole one and an errant first throw, a high-sailer that was knocked down 100 feet into its flight toward basket number two, I was relieved to find a reprieve. And so I sat, passing a small hollowed out piece of wood back and forth for a few moments with a good friend, letting a couple other groups pass us by, and enjoying the clearing, finally cool skies.

Thirty minutes earlier I had been on my bike, three discs, a gram of smoke and water bottle in tow, pedaling down Fincastle to Chinoe and across Alumni toward Tates Creek High School, past Armstrong Mill onto Crosby and eventually into River Hill Park, a compact mix of public sports surfaces—ball field, basketball court, tennis courts, playground—paired with an open rolling grass field and a 9-hole disc golf course mostly cooled by a mature stand of elm, maple and oak trees.

Officially I was here for disc golf. Unofficially, it was to check out another well-used suburban Lexington park. True, whitey owned the disc golf fairways, I begrudged to my friend at hole two, but the basketball courts and baseball field—filled with neighborhood kids playing a kickball game—featured plenty of color.

“We’re all white,” my friend observed, seemingly looking at himself as a white disc golf player for the first

time. “All of us. And we all drive Jeeps, four-door, for chrissake.”

“Not me,” I said. “I biked here. But never mind about that. You’ve got a tough second shot coming up, requiring a serious hyzer, to pull out a bogey for this hole.”

“Why the hell would I care about that,” my friend shot back, exhaling. “This is *disc golf*.”

He was right, as it turns out, and to better prove the point we each bogeyed our first three holes. Not that we minded. By the time we hit the understory canopy that shades holes four through seven, the game had shifted, as it often does with us, into a nature walk plotted according to our errant tee shots. If golf has been described by famous, serious journalists as “a good walk ruined,” disc golf provides a sane countervailing force, a good walk enlightened.

At River Hill’s short well-maintained course, my friend and I chose to be enlightened twice. By happenstance the second time round also helped improve my score from a +6 on the initial nine holes to a +3 for the final round, thanks mostly to a birdie on hole one (and no smoke break on the way to hole 2). Of course, nobody cared.

Our game done, a combined 18 holes, 2 gleaned bur oak nuts conjoined by a twig, and 1 smoked bowl in an hour and a half, I bid my friend farewell and hopped on my bike for a more passive sporting experience at Winchell’s off Southland.

Four days earlier I had bumped into my old friend Gortimer T. Spotts roaming around the CentrePointe

fields, “scouting out the WEG intoxicants of choice,” as he put it then.

Among other things, Spotts is an NFL Football fan, an early season optimist if ever there was one. A Redskin fanatic from his early days watching John Riggins sucking oxygen tanks in Super Bowl XVII, on this early-season Thursday just outside CenterPointe, with Applebees cars being driven illegally along the sidewalk by lazy motherfuckers, Spotts was in good spirits. This year’s draft had gone well. That bum Jason Campbell was ruining the Raiders now, and the Skins finally had a good coach in Mike Shanahan.

Yes, things were on the up and up, Spotts assured me. The defense was strong last year, and with the new QB under center, this would assuredly be a playoff year for his team from DC.

I’ve heard the same thing from Spotts for several years running, and he’s been spectacularly wrong every time he’s promised me “the Skins have put it together this year,” but then again that’s what being a fan means: eternal, stubborn optimistic stupidity.

He invited me to Winchell’s on the upcoming Sunday to watch the Skins paste the Rams. It was a great place to be a football fan, he claimed. Camaraderie. Win or lose, at Winchell’s you were around football fans, he assured me, and that meant all the world.

He had me hooked. On my bike ride from River Hill to Winchell’s—crossing New Circle via Chinoe and then veering off onto Pepperhill, Montevista and then Landsdowne (across Tates), eventually meeting up with Jesselin Drive to cross Nicholasville Road and onto Southland—I half expected to walk into a Redskins route. I entered confidently, scanning for Gortimer and his crew.

“Can I help you?” the hostess asked. I craned my neck, looked around at the multi-colored showing of white men in colored pro uniforms, and gave in. “Yeah, I’m looking for some Skins and a Buc,” I said. She scanned the jerseys before pointing to the very front of the bar, just in front of the flat screens, to where Gortimer sat, hunched, in a heated argument with the Frugal Fisherman, a like-minded Skins fan, and Tommy Helmers, an unfortunate Tampa Bay Bucs fan. They saw me and gestured over, spilling a half-filled pint glass in the process.

Per usual, Gortimer had arrived to Winchell’s in time for the first ESPN airing of NFL Live, several hours

before the first kickoff. Now nearly eight hours later, his team was losing to the Rams, his optimistic bloody mary’s giving way by now to shots of Laphroig chased with cheap light beer.

“I’m never coming back here,” Spotts greeted me. “We suck. The season’s over. If you can’t beat the fucking LA Rams, you shouldn’t be playing in the NFL.” I looked up. Third quarter, late, the Skins down 24-16 to the Rams.

“Aren’t they in Saint Louis now?” I asked. Spotts ignored me. Frugal stormed off, cussing the entire District of Columbia for being a sad sack of losers. Helmers laughed, cynically, a true Bucs fan. “Hell, we beat the Saints last year,” he said. “And look how sorry my team turned out. It’s too early to tell anything.”

“Fucking awful. Why am I here?” Spotts moaned. “I’m not doing this next week. I’m staying home.”

It was quite a flop from three days ago, so of course I had fun with it. “But you don’t have Campbell. And you’re defense. And the new coach. I thought things were on the up and up. Seems kinda early, game three, to throw in the towel and jump shit.”

Spotts looked up at me, his eyes eventually focusing on my face. “One and two. You know how many teams have a chance when they stand at one and two?”

Blank stare.

“Twenty-one point five percent. Historically. That’s how many come back to make the playoffs. My season’s fucked already, and I’m not even out of game three. How do we lose to the Rams?”

“What about the camaraderie? Tommy and Frugal and all these sports fans here.” I gestured out at the rabble guzzling beers and checking fantasy updates on their ipods. “How can you leave all this?”

Gortimer suddenly got very quiet. He righted himself at the bar and straightened his back. “Rupp, I think you should leave now,” was all he said. I shrugged, ordered another round of Laphroig and light beers for the group, and walked back out into the seventy degree day, the sun now starting to fall below the horizon.

As I was mounting my bike, Spots exited the bar for a quick smoke. “This isn’t fun,” he said. “I mean, it’s nice out here....outside. How ‘bout we hit WEG next week. Do it up right.”

What could I say? Sporting fellow that I am, I agreed on the spot.



The parking lot in front of Winchell’s where the Frugal Fisherman was last seen.

Lexington local sports updates

By Troy Lyle

Area Disc Golf Tournaments

The Bluegrass Disc Golf Association (BDGA) is still accepting new members. This fall BDGA will participate in a number of regional tournaments, and it’s not too late to join them. The group is still taking applications for all of its upcoming tournaments. If you’d like to enter a tournament, become a BDGA member or learn more about disc golf in general visit www.bdga.org.

Here’s a list of upcoming tournaments:

- Oct. 2 - PDGA Greater Louisville Open, Louisville
- Oct. 9 - Clash at Catalpa III, Richmond
- 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 II at Ironworks Hills, Winchester

ROCK’s season coming to a close

The Rollergirls of Central Kentucky (ROCK) will compete in their last bout of the year on Saturday Oct. 16 against Radioactive City Roller Girls (RCRG). It’s a road bout for the girls of ROCK, who are set to take the

Paducah Expo Center track at 8 PM. Doors open at 6 PM. Tickets are \$12 at the door. For more information or directions to the bout visit www.radioactiveverg.com.

ROCK is still looking for a permanent practice facility in the greater Lexington area. If anyone has any suggestions or ideas on where ROCK can organize its local activities, please contact the league at www.rocknrollergirls.com. Finding nearby practice space will help ensure our local rollerderby team stays in the local area. They assemble and dis-assemble the track before and after each practice, so the space doesn’t need to resemble a roller rink.

ROCK is also making its new uniform logo available to the public as part of its upcoming fund raising efforts. If you’d like to purchase a T shirt, hoodie, bag or coffee mug in support of the team once again contact the girls at www.rocknrollergirls.com.

Correction

We’d like to apologize to the girls of ROCK and Black-n-Bluegrass (BBRG) for the incorrect heading reported on September 16. BBRG are from Florence, KY, not Louisville as the headline incorrectly stated.

And Bertha Knuckles informed us the it was she, not QD, who knocked the wind out of Sugar Shock in the ROCK v. Black-n-Bluegrass match. Bertha is glad Sugar is okay.

Frugal Fisherman goes missing

Terrible Redskins provoke NoC icon

NoC News

Due to an incomprehensible, unfathomable and outright unspeakable rift in the sporting cosmos, the Frugal Fisherman has reportedly gone missing. He was last seen stumbling out of Winchell’s on Southland around 7 PM this past Sunday, moments after the Washington Redskins laid an egg against the lowly Saint Louis Rams. Eyewitness accounts report he was extremely inebriated, displaying fits of anger and screaming wildly, “Who lets Rams ass fuck them?..The Skins are toasted dog shit!...Fuck football! Fuck America!!”

One offended bystander observed, “The man appeared to have lost all sense of identity and place.” Another described him as “enraged” and “suicidal.” The ruckus became so overbearing that cops were called to the scene and several children were evacuated for fear Frugal would break out in a berserk rage at any minute.

A key eyewitnesses at Winchell’s that afternoon, who fearing for his safety remained anonymous, said he

had never seen a man so disoriented, so drunk and out of his mind.

“It’s as if the man had just found out his entire family had completely disowned him. You know ... that look one gets once they’ve given up on life. You could see it in his eyes. Nothing mattered anymore. Just rage on top of drunken rage.”

As of this printing no new information has surfaced as to Frugal’s whereabouts. In the meantime, due to a lack of any hard incriminating evidence local police have dropped the case.

If you have any information as to the whereabouts of the Frugal Fisherman, please contact us at North of Center at noceditors@yahoo.com.

For its part, the paper has issued the following statment: “Seeing how the frugal fisherman represents this paper and its contributors, we apologize to all who were offended by his recent uncouth and foul-mouthed actions. Once found, we will punish him to the fullest extent of our abilities—by making him continue to contribute to this paper.”

Opinion

On Tea Party honor

By Joe Anthony

“What,” asks Shakespeare’s Falstaff, “is honor?” There is no practicality to it. It “hath no skill in surgery,” he discovers. It is a mere word. Air. “Honor is a mere scutcheon,” he concludes, prompted mainly, it’s true, by his cowardice. Honor breaks bones though it does not set them. He will have none of it.

Falstaff’s quest for a definition of honor comes to mind because I, too, have been wondering lately about this word “honor.” It’s in the news so much lately. What is its substance? In particular, what do the tea-partiers and Glenn Beck have in mind when they say things like , “Let’s bring back honor and let’s take back the country”?

On the web, which is where I go for substance these days, the Declaration of Independence is often quoted—substantially—by the tea party crowd. Usually it’s just hung out there as if any analysis connecting it to present circumstances was superfluous. *A people have a right to rebel.*

Even Jefferson, I feel tempted to point out when reading these declarations to the Declaration, gave a list of particulars as to why a people felt justified in rising up. Even Jefferson listed all those ways he found George III tyrannical. But except for mutterings about Socialism, overreaching, and taxes, it’s hard to figure out exactly what everyone’s talking about. And I’ve looked. What did those tens of thousands at Beck’s nightmare rally mean when they said take back the country (from whom?) and return to a time of honor?

Here are my poor gleanings from the dawn’s last light:

Hatred towards the poor

Disdain for the poor, of course, is as old as our Calvinistic Pilgrim patriarchs, as American as Mom’s apple pie. (Am I the only one whose Mom never made an apple pie?) Surrounded by progressives who cite only the inadequacies in Obama’s health bill, I forget that many people think it gives a great deal to the poor, the undeserving poor, though undeserving is a superfluous word and not used. To tea partiers, all the poor are in some way undeserving; they wouldn’t be poor otherwise. As one blogger put it: “Work all your life at McDonald’s and expect first-class health care? Give me a break! “ These people are mad as hell and not going to take it anymore.

Of course, one could argue that they’ve been taking all along and what they’re mad at is the idea of somebody else taking some, but that’s not how

they see it. Their “logic” runs something like this.

You make it and you get the rewards. You don’t make it and you get shit and that includes bad or no health care. Obama is trying to change the rules and hell, we’ve been winning by the old rules. Socialism! I believe in charity but this smacks of rights for the poor. And that is un-American.

They have a point. It kind of is. The poor are always with us. As my Jersey dialect would put it: whadyagonna do? Well, what you’re not going to do is actually do something about it. That’s what they mean by Obamacare. That’s what is meant by all the worry about taxes that are actually lower than when Reagan was president. Billions for Iraq, but don’t be helping the poor get help. Taxes are just a symbol. Tea party, get it? George III could have sent coupons with his tea and they would have thrown that overboard, too.

Nativism, racism, not-one-of-us-ism

The tea-partiers are getting awfully sensitive about this point, parading out all sorts of respectable blacks who speak their language—not native speakers, maybe, but fluent enough. *Martin Luther King. Oh, he was the man. (Thank the Lord, though, he’s not around. Forty years dead should be safe enough.) You and I both know that a black president goes against nature, the natural order of things, but the liberal media jumps all over us when we mention that. Enough of that. People misspeak.*

Even Beck admitted he mis-spoke when he called Obama a racist. Obama doesn’t hate white people because he’s black, Glen tells us now. Obama hates, and that includes you, bro, all *real Christians*. Obama *says* he’s a Christian, but he’s a strange Christian. He’s a very, very strange Christian.

Shit, he’s practically a Muslim. Anyway, he’s not one of us.

And you know, here I have to sympathize a bit—or at least I understand that feeling. Obama is a strange duck. I think of the presidents in my lifetime, even ones I truly despised: Reagan, the actor-cowboy, Nixon, the sleazy corrupt evangelist, Ford, the empty-headed Chamber of Commerce

booster, and though I disliked (and in Nixon’s case, hated) them, they were all American types. I knew who they were. But Obama? The intellectual, unflappable, cool guy with the athlete’s stance and the odd middle name. Well, hell. Who is this guy? And have we been introduced? I’m not sure we have.

I don’t mean, of course, that we actually knew who these presidents were. Nixon’s dark soul was beyond Milton’s understanding; Reagan’s biographer almost had to concede that, in Gertrude Stein’s conclusion about Kansas, that, no, there was no there there. Even my hero, FDR, had an inner nature that continues to elude us. But they all had a public persona that the people could gather round: love, hate, despise. Obama doesn’t seem to. I wish he’d cozy in for a nice fireside chat, or even a Bill Clinton touchy-feely love fest. But it doesn’t seem his style. Alas, I guess I’ll make do.

Dial-one-for-English-true-American-rash

Press 1 for English? Why the fuck should I press 1 for English? Whose country is this, anyway?

It has lots and lots of causes, this rash. Rashes are hard to pin down which any dermatologist will confirm. Of course all those Mexicans running around are a main irritant. And they’re all Mexican. As a Brazilian student of mine told me, she is constantly asked what part of Mexico Brazil’s in. (Right next to the Mexican Argentine is what she tells them.)

It’s also dishonorable to talk about torture and American war crimes. Torturing is not the problem. They hate the admission that the war we’re just getting out of, Iraq, was a mistake and a waste. They know that, but lie and wave the flag. That’s the honorable thing. They think, and Glen Beck leads the charge on this, that any criticism of America is hatred of America. Our country right or wrong. (They never quote the second part: that if it’s wrong let me help make it right.) They hate all the talk about global warming. It’s that word global that

grates. They know we’re just after their SUV’s. (Well, we kind of are.) Some of them, in the manner of Castro claiming Osama bin Laden is a CIA plant, even suspect that Obama is behind the BP disaster and the latest oil rig explosion. All a ploy to pick on big business.

As if we needed ploys. So now we have this black president who isn’t like any black in my neighborhood who helps the poor in an un-American non-condescending way. We have all these new rights and all our old hates and a terrible recession, too.

Hell: bring back America. Honor. Now I get it.

Only I don’t. Not really. Some of them are talking about treason, the extreme of patriotic dishonor. The extreme among them (and that extreme is egging closer and closer to the Republican center) talk about the president being treasonous. Firing squad solutions are mentioned. (I kid you not: look it up.)

It brings us back to step one in this discussion: what are they talking about? I understand anew why the only crime the Founding Fathers felt it necessary to spell out was treason: two witnesses and concrete action. They somehow understood people would start throwing treason charges around once the going got hot. They didn’t want it like subjective beauty, in the eye of the beholder. They wanted it defined. They wanted it confined.

Kind of like that word honor. It’s not that I don’t know it in the negative. I thought Richard Nixon so devoid of it that you could have poured all the honor stored in Lincoln and King down past his Cheshire Cat grin—and he still wouldn’t have made it to a baseline honor-level. I just find honor’s meaning elusive when crowds of the well fed chant it while denouncing health care for everyone. I guess references to old racist-sexist-homophobic times when honor reigned supreme somehow evade my understanding. It’s a word Shakespeare has Mark Antony use sarcastically about Brutus and Cassius as he whips the mob into a frenzy. It makes me want to run away and hide when sleazeball Glen Beck employs it on his own mob.

I’m with my main man Falstaff on this. He couldn’t stomach the word, either. He knew, as I suspect, that honor, like patriotism, is the last refuge of scoundrels.



Don Pratt (cont.)

continued from page 2

These are certainly not endorsable actions, according to our various media of record.

The bottom line

This paper will not do endorsements during this political season. You all should be thinking human beings, and we place that responsibility on you to get to know your candidates, though of course we highlight in this paper issues that you might want to consider.

But I can tell you that I will place only one unambiguous vote in this election cycle, and it will be for Don Pratt. And it’s not just because Don Pratt delivers 150 of our papers to rich Bell Court residents every other week. It’s because the things he’s advocated for this past half-century are the very things we in this paper advocate today: local ownership of resources; a society not bent on using economic might to trump moral right; active engagement voiced by “ordinary” citizens in local government. In a just society, these are not the positions of an agitator; they are the positions of a leader.

Truth be told, for the past 50 years, Don Pratt has been a Lexington

treasure, though the city’s political class likes to think otherwise. As a young man, he beat the *Leader* to the punch on civil rights (by 40 years) and took a principled stand on the Vietnam War—for which our local paper harshly criticized him, along with Louisville native Muhammad Ali (who is now celebrated by the same city paper for his appearance at WEG).

There are political reasons to elect Pratt, of course. As the most progressive candidate on the bill, you should want him on the council pushing Gray or Gorton or Kay to do the right thing. As a measure of where Lexington stands as a progressive city, it would be criminal to have a decriminalization (hey, they’re doing it in California, Colorado, and a host of other “progressive” states) candidate with a deep history of anti-war actions lose in a city with three voting college student populations (and the supposedly liberal anti-war faculty voters to complement those students).

In many respects, Pratt’s candidacy is a referendum on Lexington: is it what it says it is, or is it just a city bullshitting itself by consistently choosing safe candidates and then

wondering why it consistently wins the race to the safe, boring middle?

These are all good political arguments, but I’m voting for Pratt based on more intimate reasons, ones that should jive with all the advertising schlock Lexington seems to take seriously.

I’m voting for Pratt because unlike most of the creative class that Tom Eblen interviews periodically in his “what Lexington needs” columns, Pratt really did come back to Lexington as a young man, and he’s worked the rest of his life—as a private businessman, loving foster-father and politically engaged citizen—to make this city a better place. He hasn’t given his money to do this because he didn’t come back here to make money; instead he’s given much more: his time and labor and energy—his democratic life.

I don’t know if Don Pratt will be a great councilman, and to be sure I will vote for other Lexington candidates, but I do know that to not give him the opportunity after his half-century of engaged service to this city, region and nation would be a slap in the face to the things that I—and supposedly, in word at least if not in deed, Lexington—holds dear.

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

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I'm not from here by Kenn Minter

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SO...

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POP?

YEAH?

COLOR
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A BIT
EXTRAVAGANT.

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WEEKS LATER..."


IT'S A
COLOR TV...
WHY DID
YOU SWITCH
IT TO
BLACK N'
WHITE?

WHAT?

DID HE
THINK HE WAS
GOING TO
SAVE ON
HIS
UTILITY
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