

# NORTH OF CENTER

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2010

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VOLUME II, ISSUE 22

## Corporate creep in UK CEO search

By Danny Mayer

“Organized greed always defeats disorganized democracy.”

—Matt Taibbi

### Meeting 1

On Monday October 25, Bill Shelton, whom the *Lexington Herald-Leader* described as a “former Michigan educator who is now at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges,” informed the University of Kentucky Board of Regents that they should be prepared to pay more for their next president. Less than two months earlier, as a retirement gift to outgoing UK CEO/President Lee Todd, the board had increased his presidential salary at the university nearly \$200,000, to an annual salary of \$511,000. The regents even backdated payments one year.

“You can look for seven plus at this level,” the paper reported Shelton saying. “We now have presidents hitting close to \$1 million.” According to Britt Brockman, the Board hadn’t “even broached the subject of compensation” yet.

### Meeting 2

Two weeks later, the Saturday November 13 *Herald-Leader* reported that Greenwood/Asher would be awarded the contract for conducting the search for UK’s next CEO/President. Greenwood/Asher had been hired by UK a decade earlier for the last presidential search, and they had recommended the business man Lee Todd. Greenwood/Asher are described in pitch perfect corporate speak by the *Herald-Leader* thusly: “Greenwood/Asher has been involved in more than 1,000 successful executive searches, according to UK.” Who doesn’t love successful searches? They’re so vaguely satisfying.

At the Board Meeting, the Trustees created a rough draft list of desired qualities for the job advertisement. “[A] record of outstanding scholarly experience and achievement in education,” “superior leadership skills in management,” a “commitment to a diverse faculty and student body,” and “a commitment to the critical role of public, land-grant universities in advancement of Kentucky, the nation and the world” appeared on the list. Also mentioned:

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## Critical X-Mas

At the end of Ian Epperson’s article on King Coal in the 11/10 issue of this newspaper (“Pressure Commerce Lexington to ditch King Coal”), the author writes: “Let’s pressure Commerce Lexington to end its unhealthy relationship [with the coal industry]...”

However, he made no specific call to action.

To fill this gap, I cordially invite all concerned Lexingtonians to join Santa Claus himself on Tuesday, 12/7

in a costumed bike ride around town to deliver lumps of coal and heaps of embarrassment to the naughty, and bring tidings of joy to those who have resisted King Coal’s influence. This action will be one of thousands across the world as part of Via Campesina’s COP16 Day of Action.

Meet me at Al’s Bar on Tuesday 11/30 at 7 P.M. for an organizational “meeting”. Or text “Santa” to 859.963.5574 to get on my list.

—Santa



Commerce Lexington: naughty or nice?

## Islam, violence and mourning in America

By Betsy Taylor

America’s founding documents speak in the first person plural with such power—“We the People...We hold these truths...We have warned them... We have reminded them...We have conjured them...We, therefore...solemnly publish and declare.” Why has it now become so hard to say “We” as Americans together?

This question has hounded me recently. On August 5, Dan Terry, a dear childhood friend was gunned down in the beautiful mountains of Afghanistan, along with nine others, on a Christian medical mission. Meanwhile, a month later the ninth anniversary of 9/11 brought our festering incapacities into the open, as national opposition to an Islamic Community Center in Manhattan has been justified primarily through a kind of ventriloquy that claims to speak for families who lost loved ones on 9/11.

But who is the “We the People” who mourn our losses on 9/11? Far Right celebrities, like Glenn Beck or Sarah Palin, build unity by drawing a national boundary, saying *this* identity is in, and *that* identity is out. This is a magical and not a rational process. Their boundary around the “hallowed ground” of Manhattan’s Ground Zero jumps around because it is not based on geography or logic, but on the vagaries of psychological need, an imaginary and inflamed border to a national identity that has to appear rigid because it is so weak. This imagined “America” is an unstable, nervous kind of “we.” So, for Palin, big cities like New York City are mostly not the “real America,” yet Ground Zero suddenly becomes the realest, sacredest essence of “America” when threatened by an imagined “Victory Mosque.”

### republicanism and Republicanism

It is true that a few conservative pundits have spoken against

the Far Right. Kathleen Parker has argued that reasoned adherence to the Constitution trumps the concern that an Islamic Community Center would “offend the sensitivities” of mourning 9/11 families. Another conservative, Ross Douthat, has observed that there are two America’s in a creative tension that propels us forward—one America based on abstract law, and the other America a folk bound together by a shared white European culture.

But even these conservative views sideline what is most precious. The “We the People” that instituted this country was made of different stuff. Listen to the capacious and elegant simplicity of the July 4 Declaration. “We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled...do...by Authority of the good People of these Colonies...have full Power...And... mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.” This “We the People” is deeply misunderstood and misrepresented by contemporary movements that call themselves “conservative.” Much of the Far Right claims the mantle of the Constitution, but, in fact, grabs up bits and pieces of old imagery to weave it together in a distorted way that creates a new and dangerous kind of national self-identity.

Twenty-first-century America has largely forgotten that its founding political philosophy was republicanism, which emphasized *res publica*, meaning the things of the public good. The “We the People” of Jefferson’s manifesto, was a (small ‘r’) republican “We”. It was a philosophy in which citizens assembled, debated and acted together to steward the commons.

Eighteenth century democratic republicanism is, in other words, misrepresented by conservative commentators like Douthat. It does not require citizens to construct a common

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Dan Terry at the memorial service in February 2010 of author’s father, Carl Taylor.

## Local hip hop on the big stage

### Devine Carama helps open the Lyric

By Patrice Morgan

The reopening of the historic Lyric Theatre has created a major buzz throughout the city, especially in the African American community. The Lyric, whose stage once hosted artists such as Red Foxx, Sarah Vaughan, and Ella Fitzgerald, is now back in business hosting hip hop artists such as Devine Carama, bringing artistic diversity to this historical landmark.

During its prime in the 1940s, the Lyric was an important pillar in the African-American community; it was the only theater in Lexington open to African Americans and remained a staple in the community until 1963 when it closed. Racial integration of other theaters around Lexington seems to have been the reason for the Lyric’s

closing. Now, the new focus on revitalization and pride in the East End’s rich history has its doors back open, allowing a new generation to experience the Lyric.

The task of reopening this historic theater has not been an easy one. Part of the rebirth of the Lyric included a 1996 lawsuit in which the state sued Lexington for failing to build a cultural center downtown. Part of the settlement required the renovation of the theater.

Upon entering the Lyric, one has the opportunity to experience its rich history through the gallery downstairs that showcases pictures of the renovation process. There is also a hall that can be used for events like wedding

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Up, up, and away!*

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NOVEMBER 24, 2010

# The Neighborhood

## Resonant Hole punch through universe

November 28 Institute 193 show is free for all

By Captain Commanokers

“The one thing that is clear is that it is not clear.”  
—Trevor Tremaine

August 10, 1980

*As I was walking home the other night, past the alley with that flash of scarlet neon light, a Rolls Royce pulled up to me. A woman said “Sonny have you seen a silver poodle with a ribbon on his head?”*

*I thought to myself ‘Man, she’s joking! In this part of town a poodle could wind up at Burger King!’*

*But she looked serious, and so I said that I thought that I might have.*

engaged in the exploration of a universe parallel to theirs. Its genesis was in spring of 2009, a month-long recording session helmed by Robert Beatty (Hair Police, Three Legged Race) at his home studio, also called The Resonant Hole.

The project demanded that the participants use whatever was lying around the room to produce a piece of music, and that they finish working on it roughly by the end of the day. The recording was executed using a home-made microphone filtered through a defective tape echo device, making it impossible for the musicians to hear themselves clearly, interrupting the feedback loop of selfness.

Hey, I’ve got a friend, and you’ve got to meet him.

*So a few days later he comes back with Tisquantum, which they shortened to Squanto. He was even more amazing, spoke excellent English, and started asking everybody where they were from. He knew the streets of London better than they did.*

*Turns out he had been carried off to England by a fisherman in 1605 and lived there for nine years, came back to America in 1613 and was an interpreter for John Smith, hired by the Virginia Company to explore the New England area where he was from. Smith gave him freedom, but then he was kidnapped and taken to Spain and sold as a slave. Later*

*he escaped, went back to England, and worked his way back to New England, arriving back six months prior to the Pilgrims landing..*

“Robert Beatty and I met in junior high, and we’ve always been interested in art that is intentionally incomprehensible—from Dada right up to discovering punk rock and the Residents—where the artists are assuming other identities...or just being anonymous and creating this stuff that sounds like it’s from another planet,” Tremaine says of Resonant Hole. “We always had that in the back of our mind to do

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*She opened the door and said to come in. She offered me a drink and some funny looking powder from her stash. I told her, No thanks, my mother told me don’t except a thing from a stranger unless it’s a check or cash.*

*She said, Who are you not to surrender? A poor kid like you ought to be thankful just being alive. Then she laid down in the back seat, and pulled me into her body heat, and I thought, Man this is my lucky day. That was until I thought I heard her say, Funky Funky Funky poodle...*

Within these constraints, the artists were forced into strange new avenues; collaborations were encouraged. New projects were born, new identities invented...

March, 1621

*It’s a really funny scene—they’re all sitting there one day and here comes this pretty tall guy, an Indian obviously, and he walks up to them, lifts his hands up and says, Welcome Englishmen, do you have any beer? And everybody looks around thinking, What in the world is going on?*

*Turns out this guy’s name is Samoset. He has learned English from a fisherman who had been around. Samoset said,*

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### UK CEO search (cont.)

continued from page 1

to “articulate the university’s mission and goals” and to “communicate effectively” with diverse groups. Todd insider Everette McCorvey called for leadership skills to be given preference. There was no mention of staff, of local labor forces or even of a place called Lexington, existing as it does somewhere beneath (but in) the state.

It’s at this meeting that the paper records the first public mention of confidentiality. The search committee had gone behind closed doors and chosen search firm Greenwood/Asher from among an unspecified number of search firms. We do know that it took the Board less than one hour to choose the search firm that would conduct the search for the next CEO/President of the University of Kentucky.

Also, the *Leader* reported, no decision had been made as of yet regarding the “possibility of holding forums around Kentucky to seek citizen input.”

#### Meeting 3

Though only two days elapsed between meetings, much changed at the Board’s Sunday meeting on November 14. The draft list of desired qualities has been narrowed to five traits: political astuteness; proven management skills; strong communication skills; creative, innovative leadership; and ability to be a strategic visionary. The corporate language creep has officially begun.

Of the original seven or so desirable traits brainstormed 48 hours earlier, a “record of outstanding scholarly experience and achievement in education” and a “commitment to a diverse faculty and student body” are the only two traits revised out, eliminated. Excised. In their place sits “ability to be a strategic visionary,” a great corporate catchword but not so descriptive,

slipped in between drafts 1 and 2. Looks like McCorvey got his request.

Also at the Sunday meeting, Greenwood (of Greenwood/Asher) confirms Bill Shelton’s original assessment that the UK presidential salary must be raised. The median salary for university presidents is reported to be \$436,111, and Lee Todd currently makes \$511,046. Nevertheless, Greenwood cites Ohio State President Gordon Gee’s \$1.5 million salary—the highest of any university president—as an example of what UK is competing against. The paper reports no other salaries.

The big story of the day, however, is that the search for the next president of the flagship university at the University of Kentucky will take place nearly entirely out of public view, behind closed doors. Or at least that’s the hope. Greenwood (of Greenwood/Asher) informed the board that public scrutiny would be bad for the search. Here’s how the *Leader* reported it. Note the passive verb, the sense of inevitability and lack of agency. This is corporate speak, passivity at its finest, all in all a wonderful lead sentence under the circumstances:

“The University of Kentucky Board of Trustees was told Sunday by its presidential search consultants that there’s one particular consideration driving many searches these days: the privacy of the candidates.” As a way to defer to this need for privacy, Greenwood envisioned a scenario where only one presidential candidate would be forwarded to the Board. She cited the University of Minnesota, a Top 20 university whose previous president (now no longer with the school) set his college’s sights on Minnesota being a Top 5 globally ranked school, as one example of a successful college search ending happily with only one candidate forwarded to the university.

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## UP! Fair at Carnegie

By Natalie Baxter

While strolling around town on an unusually warm Saturday in November, I found myself at the Carnegie Center where they were hosting the UP! Fair, a gathering of self-publishing sequential artists from Kentucky and beyond. I must admit, the last place I would have imagined myself that day (or ever really) was at a comic book convention. Walking in, I didn’t exactly know what to expect.

Tables filled two rooms with work from comic artists of all ages, displaying a variety of aesthetics and genres for perusal. One comic centered on a man who thinks he is the next Jesus Christ, another focused on social life in Lexington. Plenty drew off a classic comic narrative: the young boy or girl who obtains superhuman powers from a freak accident. Some were hand drawn and hand bound, others formatted digitally and printed as a book using online publishing sites. One even used a wood block printing technique.

In addition to the vendor booths, the UP! Fair was also conducting workshops on comic techniques, from a DIY screen printing how-to with

Lexington’s famous Cricket Press to Photoshop Tips and Tricks for people just starting out in the comic scene. On display around the Carnegie Center were drawings and digital images of comic characters created from artists of all ages.

I have little experience on the comic book scene. I am a filmmaker currently studying video in UK’s MFA program. I enjoy telling stories through video and would have never thought to draw connections between my work and that of comic artists, but at the Carnegie Center that day, I realized how similar the two art forms are. The difference is that in the world of comics, anything is possible. You are able to mix reality with fantasy and create worlds that exist only in the imagination.

All in all, I was pretty blown away at the dedication that these artists had poured into their work and the guts they had to get out there and share their passion with other comic fans. I love the concept that in this day and age, with self-publishing sites or with a printer and some artistic instinct, anyone can be a published artist and get their story to a public.



Violence (cont.)

*continued from page 1*

national identity out of a shared language, ethnicity, religion. It does not require, as do Sarah Palin and Glenn Beck, that we forge our collectivity by enclosing ourselves in a hallowed space with defensive boundaries where near-magical icons, like flags or war memorials, carry a sacred essence of common identity.

Rather, the (small ‘r’) republican national identity is what political philosopher Hannah Arendt describes as a civic “We the People”—the bonds between people who pledge to *act together for the common good*. It is the stuff of covenant, not culture or law. The (small ‘r’) republican “We” is more open and less anxious about boundaries. Its strength comes from the civic trust, respect, and equality that arises from working together over time to build and steward actual communities, places, public institutions, public communications media. It is a covenant to both care for the commons and to safeguard individual dignity and agency—to recognize their interdependence.

Manhattan’s Islamic Community Center: a republican act

The proposed Islamic Community Center is a good example of this kind of American collective spirit—despite its surreal caricatures in the Far Right blogosphere as a “triumphalist supremacist Ground Zero mega-mosque,” “terrorist,” “wolf in sheep’s clothing,” etc., etc. (The FAQ webpage of the Cordoba Institute has easily verifiable refutations of accusations, so I won’t bother backtalking wackadoodlism.)

Take, for example, the inspiring life story of immigration and Americanization of Daisy Khan, co-founder of the proposed center. Born in Kashmir, she was early shaped by Sufi traditions in her family. Sufism is a diverse reform movement that emerged in the earliest years of Islam. It emphasizes love, the direct experience of God, and equality. Fifteen years old when she immigrated to Long Island, Khan became a successful interior designer in New York City. But she hungered for more than material rewards.

In diverse civic causes, Khan built up a rich network of civic friendships that brought Christians, Jews and Muslims together. In 1997, she married a distinguished leader in American Sufism, Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf. Together they struggle to create institutions for an American form of Islam and for interfaith dialogue. They helped to found the American Society for Muslim Advancement in 1997, which describes its core values as equality, compassion and mercy, and “cultural and religious harmony through interfaith collaboration.” It pledges “to work in collaboration with others for the common good to create just and peaceful societies.” The group’s core values are not far from the original conception of republicanism.

Inspired by the YMCA and the Jewish Community Center, they began to organize for an Islamic community center to serve both the general public and the thousands of Muslims living in their neighborhood in lower Manhattan, where two badly overcrowded mosques had been for several decades.

The Islamic community center, along with its \$100 million investment, could be a vital contribution to a part of lower Manhattan deeply damaged by the 9/11 attacks—an area of strip joints and abandoned factories. A plurality of Manhattan residents welcome it (by 46 to 36%). In a city with about 600,000 to 700,000 Muslims according to Columbia University researchers, such a center seems past due. And, it is growing organically out of the neighborhood where the organizers and their partners have deep roots. The depth and warmth of these local roots can be seen by looking at the list of partners on the Cordoba Institute website—a veritable Who’s Who of

respected Jewish, Christian and inter-faith organizations in the area.

Why on earth are people upset by this community center, which models itself on the most mainstream of Jewish and Christian civic institutions? The only possible explanation is that the Far Right rather arbitrarily seized upon it when they needed a new ritual of national self-purging.

Dan Terry’s Christian mission

For me, the media spectacle around what Roderick Long calls the “non-

flooded into memorial websites for Dan Terry. Again and again, people speak of his simplicity, infectious joy and venturesome spirit. As Irish journalist and long time friend Michael Semple said, “there was not the whiff of the martyr about him.” And yet, in a real sense, he was a martyr, but a very different one from those of Glenn Beck’s imagination.

Dan first traveled to Afghanistan as a teenager, when his family drove overland back from India. He fell in love with the land and people and



Dan Terry with a volunteer surgeon, outside the CURE hospital in 2006.

Ground Zero non-mosque” was made more painful because it happened in August as I struggled to mourn the shocking death of my friend Dan Terry. On August 5, Dan was brutally gunned down in Afghanistan; the Taliban claimed responsibility.

Death is always surreal, but his death was bitterly surreal for me. I was born to three generations of Christian missionaries who roamed parts of the world where Islam was a normal part of everyday social life: flawed, admirable and variegated—like anything else human. It was a civic landscape where one’s identity could be curiously and enjoyably open at the edges, where ordinary, everyday life wove together Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians as neighbors, friends, co-workers.

Dan Terry’s parents, like mine, left America after World War II, fired with a certain kind of American post-war idealism. We were raised like cousins in the close-knit networks of missionary families in India. Our families were shaped by the international, broadly humanitarian vision of Social Gospel Christianity. It built upon a hatred of war formed in Christian pacifism, but it also remained boldly hopeful for the moral possibilities in compassionate nation-building.

It’s hard to remember this earlier kind of Christian political imagination. These days, the public face of Christianity tends to be a fundamentalism that wants to shrink government’s role in economic justice and welfare, while increasing its power in war and moral control. The political culture in which Dan Terry and I grew up is one that is almost invisible in American national imagination now, but it drew, I believe, on eighteenth and nineteenth century roots of American life that still smolder and can be recaptured.

Our parents and grandparents fit in well and thrived in post-Independence India, where their tolerant yet passionate faith fit well with Gandhian political values. There was a shared sense of spiritual responsibility to end war and poverty, to build peace, to fight hunger and illness, to humble the rich and proud. Central to this, was the sense that inequality is incompatible with a spiritual life, and a belief that democracy is only possible when citizens can meet under conditions of social equality to debate and act together collectively for the common good.

Mourning Dan Terry

It has been hard to read the hundreds of remembrances that have

built deep networks of community and solidarity, buoyed by Dan’s fluency in local languages. The stories about Dan are legend and filled with his characteristic ways of inciting hope and hijinks around him. He always seemed ready to find the world wondrous, fun, lots of hard work, and tragic—all at once. I believe that much of this flowed directly from his religious faith, his tenacity and toughness in grappling with adversity, his mix of hope and realism with joy-in-life.

My heart was shrouded in sadness in the weeks since his death. But, was I offended when Afghan Muslims sent condolences or held a memorial Iftar, where Muslims and Christians grieved and prayed together for him, in the beautiful gardens of Babur, the sixteenth century Mughul (and Muslim) ruler? No, I wasn’t, though nearby me here in the United States, Rudy Guiliani, Sarah Palin and other Far Right celebrities say that they are “offended” by the idea of Muslims praying so close to Ground Zero.

For me, it is a healing consolation that we can grieve together across the divides of religion! To me, this seems a springing up of hope and new possibility. Dan Terry loved the Afghan people and believed, as he said, that “with any conflict can only come more and more conflict, or a real resolution to the problem. So, it is in the places of greatest conflict where there is hope for the greatest resolution.”

Dan often said, “We are all knotted together in the same carpet.” This dynamic sense of human solidarity, open and creative, seems much closer to the founding vision of America—as a civic “We the People”—than nervous, chest-beating and belligerent pseudo-conservatisms telling us to fear Muslim projects in Manhattan.

Betsy Taylor is co-author (with Herbert Reid) of *Recovering the Commons: Democracy, Place and Global Justice*. She can be reached at [blog.betsy.taylor@gmail.com](mailto:blog.betsy.taylor@gmail.com)



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# Music you need to hear: 11/25 - 12/7

## Lively up yourself

Saturday, November 27

Devin the Dude *with* Natti (of Cunninlynguists) and Nemo Buster's, 9 P.M.

It has been suggested that Devin's beats and rhymes, but especially his beats, are so chill that you must be stoned to truly enjoy them. This is probably true, because Devin was almost certainly stoned when he cut whichever of his records you're trying to enjoy. In fact, I'll lay even odds that Devin will be stoned at his show at Buster's this Saturday, during which he will rap lyrics that mostly involve being stoned.

Here is the conflicted exchange between of two anonymous posters on a well-known music message board, when confronted with Devin's last release, Suite 420 (released this past April 20):

"His beats are extra west coast now. Iono, I may smoke out and give it another shot."

"Fuck, I just ran out of trees today too."

It should be noted that Devin also raps about having sex, and every once in a while you can kind of read in between the lines and figure out that at certain points in the narrative flow he's rapping about having sex while being stoned; it's just a subtext, but it's there.

Please remember that marijuana is classified in Kentucky as a Schedule I Controlled Substance, and its possession is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by law. Make sure you catch Natti before they haul you off. —Keith Halladay

Sunday, November 28

Jessie Laine Powell Natasha's, 7 P.M.

In the '80s, you, like most people, had long-pile carpet in your living room and a glass-doored stereo cabinet along one wall.

The bottom of this cabinet was filled with records, because although CD was out, you didn't have it yet, but you knew someone who did have it and already owned a few CDs that you bought specifically to play at his house. Topping the cabinet was a turntable—a big, wood-sided model with an elaborate record changer and an illuminated oscilloscope—not the low-profile, rugged DJ tables or the \$10,000 Scandinavian designs that are all the rage today.

Remember, after work you took off your shoes, spread out on the sectional, mixed up something strong, put on a record, and relaxed. For months there that record was Anita Baker, wasn't it? Caught up in the rapture of yooouuuu... Mmm. Yeah.

Ha ha, we know you listened to DeBarge too! But nobody holds that against you anymore.

Now it's all Blu-ray and iPods and Pergo, and that's fine, but what you really miss isn't the carpet or the sectional or the illuminated oscilloscope but the mood. The mood created by gold-wood strings, bedroom percussion, and caramel melodies. You don't even know what that means, but that's what you want. And if you take a little Jesus into your heart along the way, well, that's fine too. —Buck Edwards

Saturday, December 4

Same As It Ever Was Cosmic Charlie's, 9 P.M.

If you Google "how to review tribute bands," the first result is a site called Tribute Bands for Hire. There, as you'd imagine, tribute bands are for hire, including one billed as "one of the most popular Beatles tribute bands



Devin the Dude.

in the UK today." Not number one, then, but pretty darn popular—it's a competitive market.

What makes them so popular? Their "attention to detail is extraordinary," according to their online press bio, and "they got the look, the sound, the mannerisms and authentic instruments." Furthermore, "the costumes cover the early Cavern days right through to Beatlemania, Sgt Pepper and beyond." No word as to whether John begins to seem distant toward the end of the show.

So to review tribute bands, you ought to evaluate attention to detail in the areas of look, sound, and mannerisms. Now, to the ersatz Talking Heads known as Same As It Ever Was. Are they, in fact, the same as it ever was?

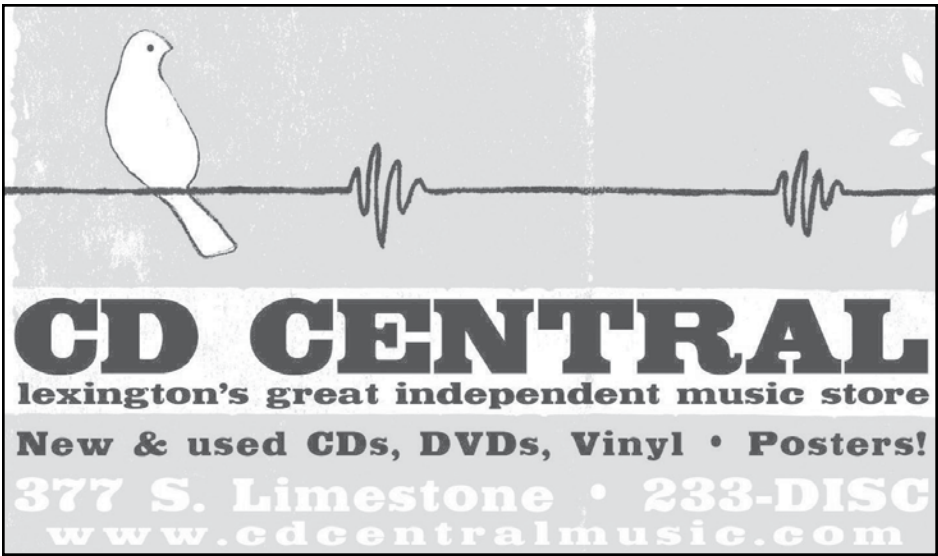
- *Look:* better, actually. David Byrne is kind of a freaky dude to look at. Not looking exactly like him is a good thing.
- *Sound:* Close enough, man, close enough. If we were in the car and you put them on and told me it was a late-period bootleg I'd fall for it, for a while at least.
- *Mannerisms:* David Byrne is Shatner-like in his openness to caricature, but here's the question: if someone took the time to learn all of Jerry Harrison's onstage mannerisms, then reproduced them inaccurately during a show, would anyone in the audience really notice? Like some guy yells, "no, no, no! Jerry *never* tilts his head to the left after a solo—only to the right!" Nah, just have the singer put on the big suit and we're happy.

Man, it's a Talking Heads tribute band. They sound a lot like the Talking Heads. The Talking Heads were awesome. Ergo, Talking Heads tribute band = awesome. —KH

Mondays

Tee Dee Young and the Scandalous Band Tee Dee's, 10 P.M.

It's just that we haven't mentioned Tee Dee in these pages in some time, and that just feels wrong. So, to recap: blues played every which way you can play blues: upbeat, downtown, right side up, inside out, fast, faster, sinfully slow, mad, sad, glad, and baaaaaaaaad, and all delivered with a great big smile. Come on. When's the last time you dropped in? —BE



## Hip hop at Lyric (cont.)

continued from page 1

receptions; the hall leads to an outside courtyard that is enclosed within the walls of the Lyric. The structure as a whole is now double its original size, expanding from 13,000 to 29,000 square feet. It also boasts a 540 seat theater whose atmosphere has the ability to take one back to the days of the great performing artists who once graced the Lyric's stage. One can only imagine how surreal it must be to perform on such a historic stage.

It seems the Lyric has come a long way from the soulful jazz sounds of the artists of generations past and now aims to target a younger audience such as the hip hop generation who, despite their musical credibility, have had a difficult time booking "big stages" in Lexington. Devine Carama, a local artist and a native of Lexington, has made it his mission to promote himself and other Lexington artists who have not had the opportunity to perform at a venue that truly appreciates their creativity. His program, The Devine Experience, served as the culmination of the Lyric's grand opening festivities and featured spoken word, vocalists, and other hip hop artists. Carama aimed to encourage the younger generation's involvement in the Lyric and to establish it as a musically diverse place.

I recently had the chance to talk with Carama about the local music scene and his feelings on the Lyric's reopening. To him, being able to

perform at the Lyric meant "opportunity, more eyes, and that they [the Lyric] care about the community." Describing his feelings about standing on the same stage as so many musical greats, Carama said he felt "accomplishment, pressure, and nervousness."

Carama reflected on his experience of performing and hosting this historic event. To him, the value of local music lies in the fact that the music has a "pure aspect with no label control" and that it's a "more organic form of music." He also credits his love of local music to the fact that "people like seeing people they know doing their thing." This, along with the fact that he has children, may be the reason that Carama hasn't left Lexington. The performer insists that he does not need a record deal—the passion is enough for him.

Carama's passion carries on to the others he inspires and those who shared the stage with him during the Devine Experience. Carama also shared that "I want my little girls to have the same opportunity" to perform at the Lyric, which he says can only be done if the Lyric continues to offer varied programs for people of all ages. Here education is key, and Carama believes that in order for the Lyric to flourish the cultural arts center needs programs that encourage artistic diversity and promote education. This may be the key to the prosperity and longevity of the "grand and re-opened" Lyric.

## Resonant Hole (cont.)

continued from page 2

something like that."

"We've always known we're weirdoes, but now we just have a flag to fly. It's a stamp to put on this thing we've been doing for a long time..."

November 28, 2010

The sounds at the Resonant Holeyday Spectacular event will run the gamut from evil campfire folk and primitive punk to glammed-out synth pop and haunted hills hymnody.

The show will take place at Institute 193, 193 North Limestone Street, Lexington, Kentucky. 8:00 P.M. Free, all ages...

"I really hate rock shows because the bands play too long, I don't want to hear them talk, I don't want to hear them tune their instruments, and I don't want there to be any space in between them. We want to create an over-stimulating, non-stop experience. The idea is that we are going back to the variety show—maybe The Gong Show would be the best example - a constant motion and constant reinforcement of what's going on," explains Tremaine...

September 32, 1788

There is a cobweb right above where I lost my virginity. I am wondering if it was there back then?...

### RESONANTHOLE

**HOLE-IDAY SPECTACULAR!**  
HOSTED BY BENSTANCES

JEANINE VOMIT-TERROR & ED SUNSPOT  
GUILTY FEELINGS  
THE TEENAGERS RESPONSIBLE  
SILVERWARE  
KRAKEN FURY  
DARYL STRAWBERRY  
VIDEOS and more!

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH, 8PM**  
**INSTITUTE 193, 193 N. LIMESTONE**

**WWW.RESONANTHOLE.COM**  
**WWW.INSTITUTE193.ORG**



# Film & Media

## LUNAFEST showcases women

By Mary Ashley Burton

It would be difficult to argue that women receive equal representation to men within the film industry. According to the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, women comprised only 16% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working in the top 250 domestic grossing films of 2009. This marked a 3% decline from 2001. Women accounted for only 7% of film directors in 2009, which was a 2% decline from 2008.

Yet the Center for the Study of Women in Film concludes that a substantially higher percentage of women (24%) work on feature-length films screened at festivals, indicating that festivals are generally a better opportunity for exposure to films in which women have had major roles.

LUNAFEST takes that exposure a major step further. Not only do the festival’s organizers base their selection on films “by, for, and about women,” the festival travels around the country from October to June, partnering with various charities. Its aim, according to their website, is “to simultaneously promote women filmmakers, raise awareness for women’s issues, and support worthy women’s nonprofit organizations throughout the U.S. and Canada.” Since its inception in 2000, Lunafest has raised \$570,000 for women’s organizations, as well as providing a means for women filmmakers to gain a larger audience, and for women within individual communities to connect with one another.

On November 9th at the Kentucky Theatre, Lexingtonians were given a

chance to enjoy an evening of women-centered films, support the Bluegrass Domestic Violence Program and the Breast Cancer Fund, and participate in a discussion of both the individual films shown and the female presence in Hollywood (or lack thereof) led by activist LeTonia Jones.

The debate provoked interesting questions for female filmmakers and audience members alike. Are there particular qualities that dominate films made by women? Are there qualities that are strikingly absent? Is there a greater need to highlight traditional roles, such as motherhood, or should there be a more marked effort to give female characters more dimension in their cinematic representation?

For some participants, this particular selection of films was a testament to the strengths of women filmmakers and their unique attention to emotions, connections and support. The shorts produced a somewhat different viewing experience than most mainstream Hollywood fare which, as several viewers remarked, tends to include more violence and sexually objectified representations of women. Although the films easily could have centered on the woman as victim, they instead focused on the virtues of their subjects. There was dedication in the young table tennis player who practices up to four hours a day. There was bravery in the AIDS victim facing both her own mortality and that of the lover she has infected. There was courage in the the midwife helping expectant mothers through the birthing process.

While agreeing that there was noticeably more focus on emotional connection and positive values, some audience members didn’t think the

films went far enough in their representation of voices rarely heard in mainstream films, particularly minorities. There was no direct representation of the lesbian experience, for example, or even a depiction of singlehood as a rewarding lifestyle choice for women. Those observations, however, raised more questions. Is it reasonable to expect that every film made by or for women attempt to include every experience or give voice to every community that is routinely excluded? At what point will women viewers be able to experience a story simply for what it is, without focusing on what it lacks?

For the female filmmaker, the dominant struggle does not seem to be over choosing which group’s experience to portray on screen, but sheer survival in an industry dominated by males. For this reason, local filmmaker Patti Parsons found LUNAFEST to be most useful: “Filmmaking is a really male-dominated industry. You look at the directors, usually most of the people working on the set, and you look at the actors - there even tend to be more roles for male actors. So this film festival is a good vehicle to get more women involved.”

Local female filmmakers will have an even greater chance to get involved in next year’s festival with the addition of a local film contest. According to an announcement at the festival, one film made by a local filmmaker will be selected to be shown in addition to the LUNAFEST films. While little information is currently available on the Bluegrass Domestic Violence Association’s site, <http://www.beyondtheviolence.org>, details on the contest will be forthcoming and the deadline is expected to be June 2011.

## Film happenings around town

**White Christmas at the Kentucky Theatre**

The Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center will host a special presentation of the Irving Berlin classic on Thursday, December 2. A reception will be held at 6:30 P.M. and the film will start at 7. Tickets are \$10 and will benefit the BRCC.

For more information please visit [www.bluegrassrapecrisis.org/](http://www.bluegrassrapecrisis.org/).

**A Story of Floating Weeds at the Downtown Arts Center**

On Saturday, December 4 LexArts will present a treat for film and music lovers alike. Grammy-nominated guitarist Alex de Grassi will perform an original live score alongside a screening of Yasujiro Ozu’s classic silent film *A Story of Floating Weeds*. The event begins at 7 P.M. and tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students with id.

For information on reserving your ticket, please visit [lexarts.tix.com](http://lexarts.tix.com).

**KET series Reel Visions seeking submissions**

Want to see your short film broadcast on television? KET is seeking submissions for the 2011 season of *Reel Visions*, a 30-minute program that showcases Kentucky filmmakers. Each season, *Reel Visions* airs a collection of experimental, documentary, and narrative films which range in length from one to 25 minutes. All entries must be received by January 1, 2011.

For information on how to submit your film, please visit [www.ket.org](http://www.ket.org).

# Bringing Hollywood to Kentucky

## Indie network provides support for local filmmakers

By James Smith

Sure, Kentucky has had a few movies made here from big budget companies like Sony and Paramount (*Seabiscuit*, *Dreamer*, *Elizabethtown* and *Secretariat* to name a few) but there is actually a whole other world that exists beyond that. That world is the independent film circuit.

Many independent feature films are being made right here at home. Some films are self-distributed and can be viewed via the web or by ordering from the filmmaker’s website. Others get distribution deals and can be rented at Movie Gallery and Blockbuster. You can search Netflix, for example, and find independent films such as George Bonilla’s *The Edison Death Machine* as well as other titles from Kentucky’s ZP International and Cinline Productions.

Hollywood, in recent years, has failed on so many levels at providing movies that are decent and worth watching. Most companies have resorted to remaking classic movies because the idea pool has become shallow. On the other hand, independent filmmakers here in the Bluegrass are pumping out movies with meaning-films with feeling-and Hollywood is starting to notice. Recently, an

independent company, Tuckywood Productions, released a film that was picked up for distribution. Their film *Stash* is already available for rental, and their next film, *Red River*, is set for release on February 1, 2011.

Most of these independent films are premiered at the historic Kentucky Theatre in Lexington with surprising turnouts. My company, DBC Entertainment, recently premiered our 3rd full-length feature, *Point Pleasant*, at the Kentucky to a crowd of more than 60 people. *Point Pleasant* is a horror/thriller shot in first-person, following in the steps of films such as *The Blair Witch Project*, *Cloverfield*, and the *Paranormal Activity* franchise.

“The more people that know we are actually making professional feature films in Kentucky, the more pull we will have in the industry.” Says Stacey Gillespie, owner of Eclipse Entertainment. “Kentucky people really seem to stand behind and support things that are state related.” Mr. Gillespie is currently in production on his medieval fantasy film titled *In the Eyes of Darkness*.

A lot of the better known independent companies join together to help one another produce each other’s films. “It’s very difficult to make a movie,” says Gregory W. Brock of Silver Chain Films.

“No body really understands the difficulty of it until they try it for themselves. Having these different companies band together is a wonderful thing.”

Recently two mobster films have emerged from the indie community.



The Red River crew shoots in the Gorge.

*Mountain Mafia*, by JustUs League Films, was premiered in Lebanon on October 1 during the Darkwoods Convention. *Shoot the Moon* debuted back in June 2008.

When I came into the independent scene back in late 2007, all I had was the script for *Shoot the Moon* and nothing more. I didn’t know anyone, nobody knew me. But they all gave me a chance and, soon after the original casting call at the Cantuckee Diner in Winchester, we began rolling film.

The local actors and actresses are wonderful. Very talented, very dedicated. The best part of indie filmmaking is that it allows anyone with the dream to have the opportunity to experience it.

For someone wanting to become a filmmaker, there are a few things you need to know. First of all, keep in mind that independent means “low budget.” You do not have to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to make an indie film, although a fixed budget is a wonderful thing to have. Always ask permission before filming anywhere, and be sure to print off waivers and agreements to be signed by the talent as well as location permission. This will help in the future

just in case someone tries to back out down the line.

For any help you may need, the Kentucky Film Office in Frankfort is a great tool to use. They can help secure hard-to-come-by locations.

We here at DBC Incorporated (DBC Entertainment, DBC Music, DBC Family) have had the privilege of working alongside many other companies. More importantly, we have all established a certain bond. It’s not only professional, it’s personal as well. That’s where the DBC Family comes in. Being able to establish such a friend/family type of atmosphere has enabled all of us to go at the entertainment industry in a whole new way. Doing anything alone is a lot harder then it is having millions of hands there to catch you if you happen to fall.

*James Smith is the director of Point Pleasant and the founder of DBC Entertainment. Other DBC films include Shoot the Moon, Room 110, The Runaway, and Hate the Living...Love the Dead. Future projects either in current production or pre-production include Perfect Skin and the television series Insecurity. You can learn more about DBC Entertainment by visiting: [www.wvix.com/j\\_mackey/dbcfilms](http://www.wvix.com/j_mackey/dbcfilms).*





# ROCK slaps Skins

## Why roller derby is far more sport than football

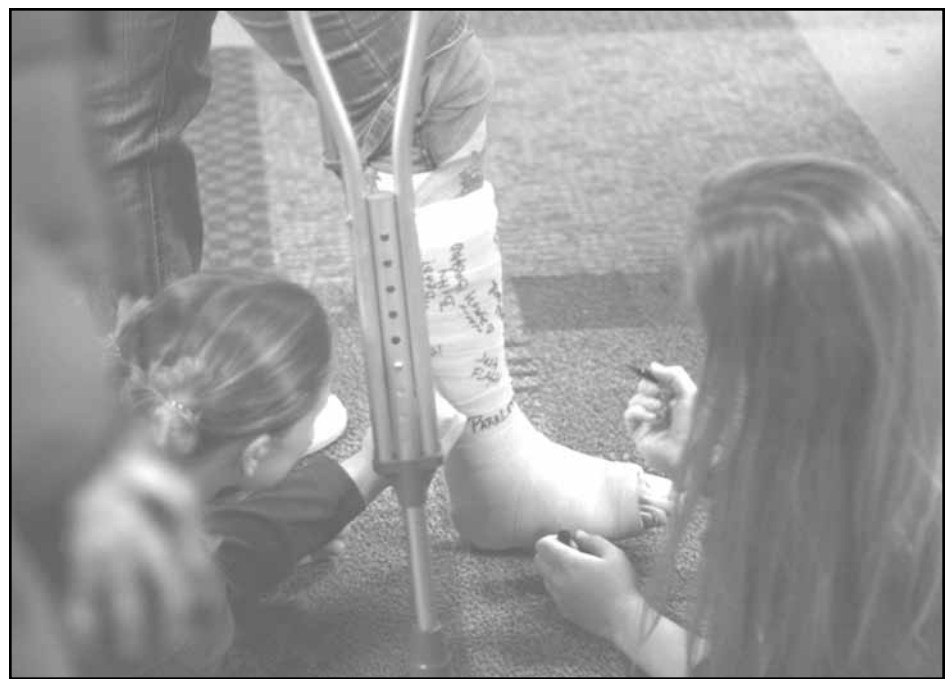
By Troy Lyle

Most anyone who knows me would say I'm a sports nut, a junkie for all things requiring skill or physical prowess. A real freak for competition. That is until recently. For more than a month now I've been reexamining my relationship with sports. It's no coincidence that my once beloved Washington Redskins stink. Exhibit A—the six TD shellacking laid out in week 10 by Michael Vick and the Philadelphia Eagles. The smack down by our division rival hurt, but even more painful was the news leaked shortly before the game. After the drama filled debacle

I fully realize the absurdity of modern sports—the ludicrousness of paying someone \$20 million to simply run, jump or pass; the preposterousness in glorifying self centered, prima donnas; the futility of expecting uneducated idiots to be role models. But beyond the above realization, what hurts the most is sports have always represented the ultimate escape act, the perfect mindless activity to lose myself in. But alas my ideological awakening has overtaken my desire to suck back six packs in front of a 52” plasma TV. Now that I've seen the light I find myself at a turning point. Do I abandon sports altogether? Or do I con-

anything on Sunday afternoon. Beyond the breakneck action and hard, hits it's roller derby's “smallness” that makes it the ideal in sport. Let me explain. For one, roller derby is still in its infancy. The sport is self promoted and personally funded. The same women who seek to bash each other to death during a bout pay for their own practice time, all their equipment, their travel and their promotion. Compare that to big time sports like NCAA basketball or the NFL. These athletes are catered to like royalty. They receive travel stipends, hotel rooms, free meals and various other perks far too numerous to list here.

And it doesn't stop there. These women get together after a bout and share a beer and a meal with fans as well as the opposing team. I can't count the number of times I've sat at Buster's in amazement, watching two women who minutes earlier were trying to crush each other on the track, now sit side by side and share a Pabst, a bowl of gumbo and a laugh. Everyone, and I mean everyone, opens their homes to fans and fellow skaters alike. They help pay for each other's travel, gear and even doctors bills when times get tough. There's a common understanding among everyone that “we are all in this together.” Compare the above roller derby



The Rollergirls are all heart...



...but they know how to have a good time.

resulting from Skins QB Donovan McNabb's benching in the final two minutes against pigskin “powerhouse” Detroit, the Redskins decided to save face and reignite the team by signing McNabb to a five year, \$78 million contract hours before Monday night's kick off. And how did McNugget respond to the new contract? Nothing close to his six pro bowls, 32,873 yards and 216 TDs he accumulated during 11 years in Philly. Not even close—he went 17 for 31, threw for 295 yards and 2 TDs, with 3 interceptions. Compare that to Michael Vick, who is being paid slightly more than \$6 million for the 2009-10 seasons. Vick went ape shit, completing 20 of 28 passes for 333 yards and 4 TDs. Just for shits and giggles he added another 80 yards on the ground and another 2 rushing TDs. I'm not bitter. Even though I have reason to be. If anything the ebb and flow of such a pock marked season has me refocused, reinvigorated and revamped. For the first time in my life

tinue to watch but with a keener eye? The reality here is sports aren't the problem. It's society's glorification of athletes. It's disproportionate pay. It's 24 hour media coverage. It's a whole host of things far too convoluted to approach here. There are no easy answers. But there are ways to enjoy sports and maintain some sensibility. A perfect example—the Rollergirls of Central Kentucky (ROCK). To me these women represent what sports should be. Like any other athlete they train for hours on end throughout the week. They skate to build strength and endurance. They practice scoring strategies and techniques. They encourage team work. They sweat. They ache. They win and they lose. All for the love of the sport. And for those of you who say roller derby isn't a real sport, come to a bout. You'll see how all the preparation and training throughout the week comes full circle in the form of mega whips and bone crushing hits that rival

These indulgences have created professional athletes who are vastly over paid and completely spoiled. It has led to uneducated, prima donna idiots: men and women who think they are privileged and who perceive themselves as entitled. You'll never see this in roller derby. These athletes skate for the love of the game, not the personal (and financial) accolades. Beyond being personally funded and self promoted, roller derby remains community oriented. And it's this community orientation that allows the sport to still be approachable. These women work where we work. They eat where we eat. They are among us. There's nothing more gratifying for me as a fan than to see little girls walking up to Ellie Slay, Rainbow Smite or Kitty O'Doom to ask for an autograph. And what do Slay, Smite and O'Doom do? They open their arms in a huge hug, snap countless photos and take more time than any professional athlete ever would to show their appreciation.

experience to their professional counterparts who play in tax funded, colossal arenas, where the athletes are so far away that fans need binoculars; who enter and leave the venue via secure underground tunnels; who ride in limos to and from their swanky homes in guarded, fenced neighborhoods; who'd rather slide down a 100-foot razor blade into a barrel of alcohol than have to spend 15 minutes with a fan. I could go on and on about why roller derby is more sport than any professional offering and how you'd vastly enjoy a derby bout over any Redskins game, but you need to see it for yourself. And it's not just roller derby building sport and camaraderie in our community. There's intramural soccer, Latino baseball leagues, disc golf, bike polo and a hoard of other fabulous offerings right in our backyard. So get out there and enjoy. You won't be sorry you did. And you just might be pleasantly surprised just how much more “sport” some sports can be.

## UK CEO search (cont.)

*continued from page 2*

How would the candidate conduct an interview? Greenwood was asked. Interviews are unimportant, came the response. Any potential candidates can be “interviewed privately or off-site to avoid community speculation and media scrutiny.” Candidates shouldn't be hassled like that by their public.

### Corporate creep

The *Herald-Leader* has already laudably come out against the proposed privately run candidate search. But there's more to this than simply asking the state U to come clean and open. The policies that Lee Todd, who was hired at UK because of his business and not his academic acumen, enshrined at UK have largely been policies that have helped enable a certain corporatization of the university. Though it's taken far too long, Todd's stepping down has opened the Top 20 rationale to scrutiny. Thus far, however, the story about the Top 20 Plan (and Lee Todd) has fallen along the lines of “good plan, good man, economy tanked, entrepreneurialism is great, the Kentucky

legislature sucks balls, and Kentuckians are just stupid enough. Tough job.” These may seem like a dynamic range of views, but taken together they also provide a misleading narrative of what's gone wrong with the college. All views of what went wrong seem to blame bodies of people—the legislature, for example—while failing to scrutinize the policies of the one person nearby for whom we have access and to whom we can put a face to policies. Todd's policies may be beneficial, or they may not, but they haven't really been debated, which is strange considering how over-riding “Top 20” has been to the raison d'être of the university throughout the past 10 years. The Board of Trustees, who gave Todd straight A's all 9 years he was in college, certainly liked the business models Todd worked under. From where things stand now, they will pick from a potential candidate pool of one (1) candidate. That lone candidate will be chosen by the same search firm that hired the last business-world candidate. We can guess that, left to their own devices, whichever candidate gets chosen at UK will hold many of the same business values and practices as Todd (and the Board and Greenwood/

Asher). He or she may look different, younger, fresher, more multicultural. But the CEO mentality will be a prime reason for whomever's selection. Thus far, most public comment has proceeded from the assumption that the Top 20 Business Plan was a fine document, though ultimately doomed to fate of those education-hating scumbags in Frankfort and a ‘whoops-didn't-see-that-comin’ bad turn in the economy. Such sentiments, of course, leave the more central question unasked: was Todd's business plan flawed? Are business plans for things like “Top 20” universities inherently flawed? Are they destructive? What the fuck does Top 20 actually mean? These things haven't really been asked much, so we're going to start asking. We'll look at some Top 20 claims, national trends, workforce divisions, building sprees and many other things. The assumption by most is that universities are hotbeds of liberal activity. My experience has always been the opposite: that while it's got liberal spectacles for us all to consume, at its core the university of today is a thoroughly conservative shill for (state and federally supported) private business interests. But more on that later.

### ACT Scores & low rankings

*The contents of an unanswered September 10 email to Lee Todd:*

At the September 8 news conference announcing your retirement, you stated that ACT scores played a major part in UK's low undergraduate ranking. I believe you suggested these low scores factored into both the US News rankings and UK's own Top 20 rankings. I'm curious to know how large a part ACT scores play in both rankings? Do they comprise, say, 70% of the rankings? 50%? I'm also curious to know what changed regarding Kentuckians' achievement on ACT scores between the years 2005 and 2010. I've chosen these dates as they correspond to your nationally recognized Top 20 Business Plan and your statement regarding low Kentucky ACT scores at your press conference. Was the ACT score criteria unknown to you at the time of your Business Plan in 2005? Danny Mayer Editor, *North of Center*

Opinion

The WEG confidence game  
An NoC equine-sporting report

“I was writing this commentary about the World Equestrian Games, and after several false starts, I realized why it was difficult to put into words the single most important benefit of the event. It’s because we gained something that you can’t quantify in an economic impact study: confidence.”  
—*Business Lexington*

Since landing the World Equestrian Games earlier in the decade, our city leaders have taken part in a pretty creative feedback loop. They have spent considerable amounts of their time, money and media space convincing the Lexington population that the far greater amounts they would spend of their time, money and media space on WEG would yield great returns for the city.

The loop has had at least two defining themes. First has been an early emphasis on the sound (theoretical) business sense for holding the Games in Lexington. City leaders took pains to remind city residents that WEG was a huge international event (though, curiously, one that nobody had ever heard of before). It would be, nearly all large media outlets and talking heads proclaimed, the biggest sporting event in Kentucky history. Lexington was smart to “leverage” its horse industry to land the event, they told us.

The proliferating use of “leverage” and other business-seeming words gave this claim an air of validity. So, too, did Louisville economist Paul Coomes’ impact study (financed by the WEG foundation), which claimed a positive \$167 million boost from holding the Games.

The second looped theme was the idea that WEG signaled Lexington’s entrance onto the world stage, and that this new global stage signaled great things on the horizon for the hometown folks. Writing in January of this year, for example, Tom Eblen proclaimed that “[t]his year could be a turning point [for Lexington]... That’s mainly because of the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games, which will focus international attention on Lexington from Sept. 25-Oct. 10.”

Eblen’s turning point resonated both culturally and economically. WEG promised to showcase to the word a new progressive Lexington: urbane, sophisticated, multicultural, unafraid of the big time. It also promised to be a catalyst for the city’s economic emergence into the global marketplace (of horse sporting activities). Economically, it would provide a vital and timely tourism boost to city businesses, who had been sharpening their gouging knives since before the 2008 crash. Pulling off such a huge international event would give the city a “civic confidence” that could not be priced in dollars, proclaimed Eblen.

The way for Lexingtonians to express their civic confidence, Eblen and others suggested, was to not be negative, to deal with the construction hassles of preparing for the Games, to blow their hard-earned dough on attending the Games, and to sell the city as good little tour-guide residents should. Lexington Mayor Jim Newberry summed up best citizens’ role in all this: sweep off your front porches, especially if you might come in contact with a WEGer. And don’t be a fucking pessimist and ruin our city’s chances for success.

This was the compact that the feedback loop sought to enforce: city officials and private business leaders would put on one king-hell of an international spectacle, and in return we Lexingtonians would be expected to shut up, drink ourselves silly for two weeks and otherwise participate in the festivities, based on the assumption that we all want to be part of a new, better Lexington...sponsored by Alltech and Fifth Third Bank. Think of it as the 2008 message of hope and change, rung through many piles of

steaming competition-grade horse shit and sold back to us at inflated organic prices.

WEG context: horse racing is tanking

Though less discussed, WEG support by city business leaders should be looked at primarily in the context of the one horse industry not a party to the Equestrian Games: thoroughbred horse racing.

It is the thoroughbred horse industry that has ruled the inner bluegrass region over the past century. In the early 1900s, Lexington branded itself as the racist southern alternative to the then popular thoroughbred centers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In the 50 years since the ending of Jim Crow, Lexington has managed to maintain its privileged position at the tracks, but the racing industry ain’t what it used to be.



Zenyatta bumps aside, thoroughbred racing, a niche sport run by wealthy folks who really dig breeding lines and/or money, is becoming less popular. Kids don’t play it, and it requires vast amounts of capital to get involved. WEGers have banded about the need to leverage the Games for Lexington’s benefit, but what they hope to leverage is the region’s thoroughbred horse infrastructure: its vets and farms and stables, its work-force and restaurants and government buy-in to its continued existence as a regional economic goliath.

Unfortunately, it’s the thoroughbred industry that’s all leveraged out. Since 2008, thoroughbred farms have been going bankrupt at a noticeable clip, as the economic bubble in horse futures—lineage, bloodlines, purchases at the annual horse sales—crapped out about the same time other leveraged, which is to say debt-funded, assets traded around the world began to fall as well. In Lexington, Stonewall Farm has gotten the most press. “Stonewall attorney John Hamilton said the bankruptcy is setting up as ‘a battle of the banks,’” *Herald-Leader* writer Janet Patton reported on August 12, “between Fifth Third, which lent money on the broodmares, and JPMorgan Chase, which lent money on the stallions.”

More recently, November 8, Patton reported on what she described as “the complex ClassicStar mare-lease litigation,” essentially a \$500 million fraud case involving the swapping of mare leases for oil investments with the publicly traded energy company Gastar Exploration. Part of the fraud by Gastar employees seems to involve the fact that some of the mares attached to the traded mare leases didn’t even exist.

A couple of days ago, Alicia Wincze Hughes continued with the down news. “For a third consecutive year,” she reported, “the Keeneland November sale suffered downturns.” Overall gross during the fall sales was down 7.7 percent from 2009. Nationally, betting at horse tracks is down 7.2 percent for the year. Globally,

the rich have recovered and are going gangbusters. They’re just not buying thoroughbreds like they used to.

But hey, this is capitalism. Things always work out. Creative destruction works.

With the city’s signature sports racing industry on hard times, city leaders seem to have decided that broadening the region’s equine base is key to the city’s continued economic development. It’s Lexington’s unique embrace of progressive multiculturalism: in addition to thoroughbreds, we can now celebrate and accept as economically exploitable all kinds of equine types and bloodlines. Fuck *horse racing*; our new brand’s simply horse.

The thinking is so old school that it might almost be considered forward thinking: the term horse and buggy used to signify outdated business models and a stubborn, head-in-the-sand

mentality...back in the 1950s when capitalism was really swinging. But here in sophisticated Lexington in 2010, the horse and buggy is trumpeted—literally—as a key to our city’s economic future.

This would be fine were horse and buggy-riding presented, say, as an alternative to petroleum-addicted farming practices, but it’s not. WEG, after all, isn’t about making the horse and buggy industry useful. It’s about promoting a sport—a sport by its own accounting ruled by princes and sultans and other multiculturally pampered sons and daughters of fortune—out of horses, buggies and the aestheticized movements of agricultural labor. It’s slow, it’s boring, and it has no use value at all other than the fact that a few very rich people seem to like it. Unfortunately, this also describes Elephant polo.

Oh yeah, and the city and state and nation ponied up \$40 million for an indoor arena for it, \$25 million for an outdoor arena for it and \$14 million for roads and sidewalks for the far away suburban grounds that house and promote it. Remember that the next time you look to the city for \$69 million in development funds. You’ll find it instead in the growth industry known as eventing horses.

Misplaced priorities

The nearly \$70 million in public funds directed to the Horse Park have been described by the press as tangible investments in the city’s equine future. That is, of course, one way to look at it. Another way would be to describe it as a massive state-funded subsidy—welfare—directed to a particular niche industry that’s filled with already well-off players. We prefer to call it an egregious example of misplaced priorities for a city dealing with the weight of a severe global economic contraction. It was either stupid to the bone, or obscenely obtuse.

The Horse Park upgrades are not the only physical reminder of Lexington’s misplaced priorities. An August 1 *Herald-Leader* article pointed out that the cost in public expenditures

totaled \$258 million. This number included close to \$150 million in projects that were sped up to be finished in time for the games. Since several projects were “waiting” for several decades, one might reasonably conclude that these were not normal “speed up” projects, but more accurately described as new projects.

Comparatively, the private foundation tagged with organizing the Games, the paper reported then, would only need \$70 million to operate. (It is unclear if Alltech’s \$35 million contribution is part of the \$70 million figure.) These figures don’t even take into account things like increased pay for security and police forces and other costs of hosting an 18 day event.

These WEG projects and money have a particular geography to them. They are all located in one of three places: (1) in the six block space between UK and Transylvania University (ie, the downtown Horse Mania zone that WEGers would party in); (2) at the Horse Park, located at the northwest outskirts of the county with few residents living nearby; (3) on the Newtown Pike corridor connecting the Horse Park to downtown. That very few Lexington residents live in any of these sectors—corridors, as the city’s business folks like to describe them—and that downtown and the horse industry are already heavily supported by the city and its citizens, seems to have escaped the notice of most Lexington commentators on WEG.

Of course, one can see misplaced priorities in more than brick and mortar projects. It’s also found in places that do not get funding. Walk on streets north of Third Street—Loudon’s a good example but not the only one—and infrastructure projects more dire than Main Street’s beautifying exist. The Legacy Trail, which connects the northern tip of downtown with—wait for it—the Kentucky Horse Park by way of a bike path, was built in the run-up to WEG. Isaac Murphy Memorial Park at the corner of Third and Winchester? Not finished. The Town-Branch bike trail, begun before the Legacy Trail, which sits next to downtown nearby both residential neighborhoods and the city’s hoped-for bourbon district? Not finished either.

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*North of Center* is a periodical, a place, and a perspective. Read on to find out what that means.

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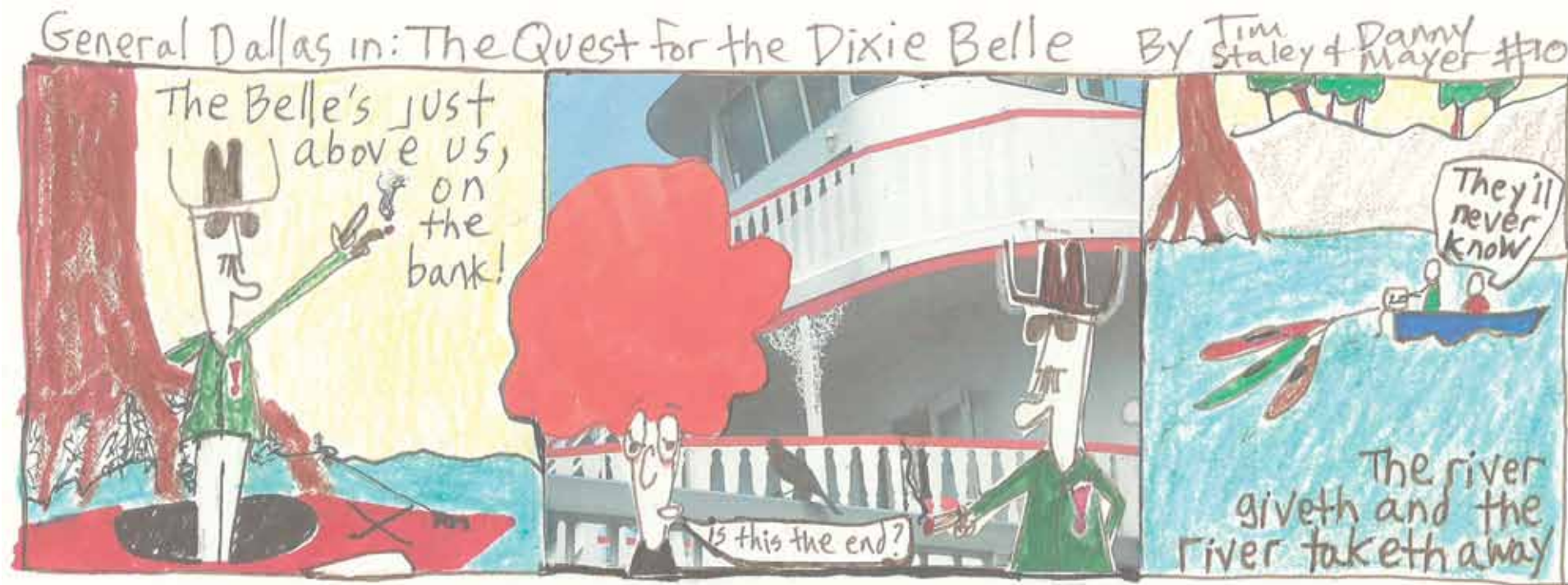
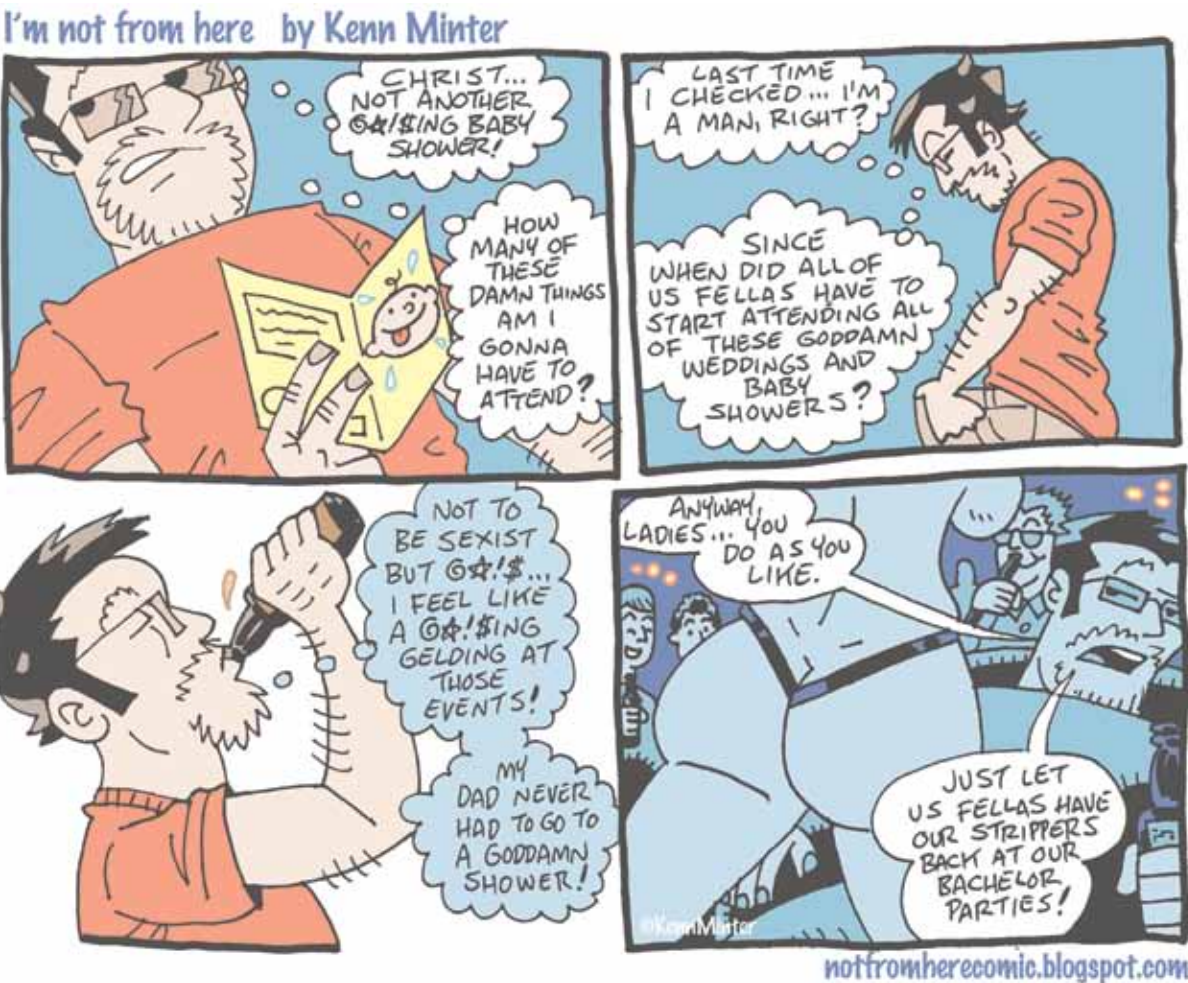
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## WEG (cont.)

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The focus on WEG, it seems, provided a roadmap, a poorly drawn and inefficient roadmap, for city projects. Put more bluntly: WEG actually set the city back in terms of city projects and funds. Neighborhoods and projects, we'd guess many, were set back, put on hold, for WEG. (And we're not just talking about a 3 week hold during the events.)

### All we are saying, is give coverage a chance

On Tuesday, September 28, the California Cowgirls stormed onto the front page of the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. Amy Wilson relayed the heart-wrenching story of a group of California friends who fundraised their way to the Games to participate in a show for the General Admission guests. As all of Wilson's stories, the writing was superb, the story an interesting page-turner.

At the same time, though, Wilson's story highlighted a larger theme of the *Leader's* coverage during WEG (and, indeed, from about mid-August onwards), when the paper suddenly turned into a WEG booster after a couple semi-investigative stories. During the Games themselves, nearly all local coverage reflected a WEG intersection. Copley and Tunis on WEG Arts and music. Davis and Eblen and Wilson columns and stories. Even John Cheves wrote an excellent surreal piece on the Bahrain tent that had us in stitches. The *Leader* even sported a humorously small WEG "pull out section," mostly consisting of a feel good story, big pictures, and medal and gate counts. Coverage was fantastic.

Except of course, WEG was a sporting event that had very little relevance as news, and it seemed designed—like the entire event itself—to market to outside tourists. It was an event because the *Leader* said it was

an event, and because the city spent shitloads of money on it. But it held no real intrinsic longterm value to Lexington residents.

When the California Cowgirls were on the front page (of the entire paper, not just the 4-page WEG special pull-out), for example, on page A-3 the headline read "Kentuckians among 100 arrested in Washington protesting mountaintop mining." It was about the Appalachia Rising gathering in D.C., a national gathering of activists calling for a halt to the practice of mountaintop removal mining.

The protest had been planned, announced, organized and advertised many months in advance. Several Lexingtonians and many Kentuckians living within the *Leader's* delivery area were arrested participating in the events. The protest itself was several thousands large. And yet not a single *Herald-Leader* writer covered the event. The write up was a Staff Wire report.

There may, of course, be no connection between the inordinate superficial attention to WEG coverage of out-of-town eventing celebrities and nobodies, and the diminished attention to Lexington residents engaged in the practice of civil democracy. Maybe the *Leader* would not have chosen to cover it even if they had not dispatched most of their writers to cover the Games.

But it sure seems emblematic of a city more interested in catering to the needs of a transient global elite sporting class than to the citizens living there on a day to day basis, or to the spectacle of little black haitian kids rolled out for the cameras and writers every third day at WEG than to the very real continuing disaster that is Haiti and our inadequate global response to it. Like funding, in choosing coverage, choices are made all the time.

It seems odd that, less than 2 years after a global financial collapse,

the "new direction" Lexington leaders want to take us looks a lot like the old direction: chase the rich for fractional crumbs, hope they stop in Lexington

every now and again to drive in from their horse farm compounds, maybe have dinner and drinks downtown, give a nice big tip.



*The Militant Pedestrian and Captain Commanokers spied this new piece of art on N. Limestone near Fifth. They loved it and are here (probably illegally) reproducing it. We'd love to know who did it and its official title. Email noceditors@yahoo.com or post the Truth on noclexington.com.*