North of Center

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2011 FREE TAKE HOME AND READ NOCLEXINGTON.COM VOLUME III, ISSUE 20

Ciudad Juárez
Reckoning with feminicide, part 2

By Beth Connors-Manke

Editor's note: In part 1 of this series, Beth wrote about the exhibit Wall of Memories: The Disappeared Señoritas of Ciudad Juárez *by Lexington artist Diane Kahlo. Here, Beth reports more on the feminicide in Ciudad Juárez.*

In 1993, young women began disappearing in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, which sits across the border from El Paso, Texas. The young women, often workers at the assembly plants along the border, are found around the city or in the desert, tortured and mutilated. Many believe that the murders are partially the result of neoliberal economic policies, drug trafficking, and governmental corruption. One can only say 'partially' because the murders have never been solved and the situation in Juárez is a confusing web of violence, drugs, conspiracies, and fear. While many news reports put the number at 350, scores more women are believed to have been killed under similar circumstances.

The murders in Juárez have haunted me for more than ten years. In the last few months, as I spoke with Diane Kahlo about her exhibit, looked at her portraits of the murdered girls and women, researched the situation in Juárez, the haunting has become more acute. Once one knows that brutality like the feminicide exists in the world, it becomes harder to believe that the civil society we enjoy here in the U.S. sits on an unshakable foundation. What we have here is not indelible; it exists only as long as we demand a just body politic and a safe community. When we relinquish safety and justice, society unravels—and very quickly.

This is the case with Juárez. Charles Bowden, who has reported on the city for years, calls it a "black hole in the body politic." A black hole destabilizes everything around it.

Bowden's view on Juárez is bigger than the feminicide: it encompasses the murders related to the drug trafficking—just as torturous as the women's murders—and the economic shift that is slowly, like a cannibal, eating everything in it's path. The environment. Governments. The social contract. Men, women, children. As Bowden sees it, what is happening in Juárez (and in other borderlands) is a new beast, a new war:

"[T]his war I speak of cannot be understood with normal political language of right and left or of capitalism and socialism. It is not postcolonial or precolonial or even colonial. It is life against death. For the poor moving north, it is their life against death. For the ground and the sky and the rivers, it is slow death as human hungers outstrip the earth's ability to feed them."

These hungers exceed the simple need for a full belly. These hungers are vicious, cruel, careless, and they have created a shadow world with its own rules. "There is a new order in the wind," Bowden writes in *Dreamland:*

continued on page 7

Dog on mailbox, CEO Dronez. Photo by Julie Mayer.

Street art
PRHBTN runs 11/11-18 on Manchester

By Clay Shields

"Your expectations will be simultaneously defied and exceeded"
—Myke Dronez, CEO, Dronex, Inc.

The *Herald-Leader* refused to write this article. Now a dirt bag has to do it.

On November 11, Lexington will begin its first street art exhibition, PRHBTN. "Street art" is a catch-all term for art processes and products created in public spaces. More often than not, the phrase refers to unsanctioned work done illegally by individuals as graffiti. The PRHBTN event will showcase both unsanctioned and "legitimate" artists who utilize street art methods.

Since its birth fifty years ago—most notably in the subways of New York and Philadelphia—modern graffiti has been steeped in counter-culture. In a culture where they were otherwise silenced, writers like Taki 183 and Cornbread began "tagging" their names everywhere in an act of defiant self-acknowledgement. Graffiti (and later street art more generally) became an avenue for reclaiming the public spaces of the city through the self-expression of a largely disenfranchised, impoverished, immigrant youth: a bold, simple, "I was here (and here and here and here)."

After roughly half a century, graffiti has finally reached some level of wide-spread cultural interest. In addition to the subversive work being done within the subculture, it has also become commodified in the same way hip hop was—taken from the margins and repackaged by corporations to sell deodorant to the masses. But just like hip hop, many key figures in the movement have remained true to their counter-cultural roots by utilizing this new found popularity to further their own agendas.

Internationally known graffiti artists have their own documentaries and books. Banksy collaborated with (and mocked) the pop-culture powerhouse *The Simpsons*. Shepard Fairey's ("OBEY" in the graffiti world) iconic "HOPE" posters gained official approval from the 2008 Obama campaign. As a result of this increased exposure, society has developed a simultaneous, seemingly contradictory, fascination with and aversion to street art.

Lexington is no exception.

The great Lexington graffiti bust of '11

Less than five months ago, Mayor Jim Gray announced the arrest of ten

continued on page 3

Closing the Kentucky
Labor, river care, lockmasters

By Wesley Houp

In 1985 the state signed a three-year lease agreement with the Corps of Engineers to keep Kentucky River locks open for recreational boaters. The agreement allowed the Corps to place locks in "caretaker status" should the state fail to assume full control by lease termination. Caretaker status, a curious if not ironic designation, would involve "welding the lock gates shut and discontinuing upkeep."

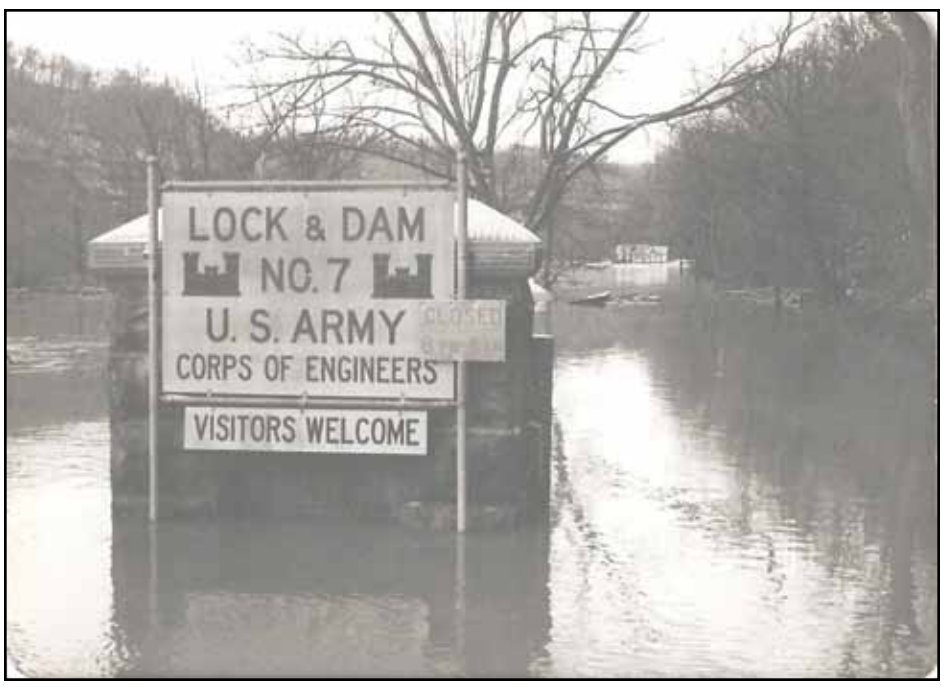
From 1982 to the lease agreement, locks 5 through 14 closed operations, and most of the lockmasters retired, moved on to other work, or took reassignments at the lower locks from Frankfort to Carrollton. In some cases, they moved on to other rivers and lakes.

Roy Berry, former lockmaster at lock 13 in Lee County, transferred to Taylorsville Lake on Salt River and finished out his career as lockmaster on the Green River. In his own words: "I sure didn't want to leave the [Kentucky] river when I did. I didn't think it was necessary to close the river. It didn't cost them much money, wages were so low."

Capstaning it to the man

After a career spanning three-plus decades, Chuck Dees, lockmaster at lock 7 in High Bridge, retired in 1979, two years after a federal district court decided in favor of a suit filed by Dees and 27 other Kentucky River lockmasters and operators demanding back

continued on page 6



Gates at Lock 7 entrance, flood of '72. Photo courtesy Bobbie Jean Johnson.

Tramps like us: Lexington Guerilla Bocce League
Monday nights, 10:00 P.M.

By Northrupp Center

"It is said that all games of bocce begin and end with a handshake."
—Maxim printed on the rules to a bocce set purchased in 2001.

Guerilla bocce is an anarchist variant of the popular Italian lawn game that dates back to ancient Roman times. The game is simple to play. Players take turns throwing two balls at a smaller ball, known as the Jack or the Pallino. Points are earned based upon proximity to the Jack: 2 points are awarded to the player whose ball is closest; 1 point is awarded to the second closest ball. Games continue until the winning player reaches 11 points.

Aesthetically, Guerilla bocce is closer to Free Range bocce than to the more staid and traditional Courted bocce, which is played by teams of two on courts that run to ninety feet long. In Guerilla bocce, players walk their environments to roll their balls on a variety of public, quasi-public and some just downright no-trespassing green spaces. Hooting and hollering is often involved, though it holds no official place in Guerilla bocce rules.

Over the past decade, Guerilla Bocce Leagues (GBLs) have begun to spring up throughout the globe, as people increasingly seek to reclaim underutilized, stolen, or otherwise privatized public space. Fledgling leagues have started in Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Madison (WI), Las Cruces (NM), and Lake Martin and Guntersville (AL). Players have also been spotted globally in Amsterdam and Oulu (Finland).

North of Center editor Danny Mayer, current non-commissioner of

continued on page 3

Contents

Coming soon

Return of Lexington Public

New I'm Not From Here

Introducing Little Jamie D

NOVEMBER 9, 2011

The Neighborhood

Cooking up a business

By Randi Ewing

This article originally appeared in the bilingual publication La Voz de Kentucky. *Grab a copy.*

This past July, when simply sitting in the shade would make you sweat, Maria Hernandez was happily working in the tiny, boiling kitchen at the back of her restaurant, La Cocina de Maria. The restaurant, located on North Broadway and consisting of little more than an enclosed kitchen with tables and chairs set up outside, is aptly named. It is Maria's kitchen. It is also the result of a dream that sprang from years of doing what she loved.

"When I arrived here, I never thought about having a restaurant. I simply cooked," says Maria, who moved to Kentucky 18 years ago.

Living with her husband on the ranch where he worked, Maria would often make tamales and food for the workers on the farm. She received compliments on her food and that was always payment enough. Then, after a trip home to Mexico, she came back with a recipe for tres leches cakes and started making them for parties and for family. People recommended her to friends and before long the orders were coming in faster than her husband could drive her to the store for supplies.

"To be honest, I didn't even know what to charge," she says, adding that she was just doing what she loved.

That love of cooking began when Maria was a child in Mexico, working weekdays in a woman's home during her vacation from school. The woman was a good cook.

"I watched how she cooked, and when I would go home on weekends, I would buy all of the things that she bought to make her food at home," says Maria.

When she moved to Lexington, Maria brought that love with her and when the cake supply store in Lexington shut down a few years ago, Maria felt a change. Suddenly, it wasn't enough to just make cakes at home, filling up a school notebook with the various orders. She wanted her own place.

"I have always been very persistent with the things that I want. Meaning, if I get an idea in my head, I go and go and go until I get it. And when you like doing something and want to dedicate yourself to that, what you have to do is search and search and search until you find where you're headed," she says.

Where she was headed was a little place on North Broadway and into one of the hardest businesses out there. Her husband was skeptical at first. He wanted a house for the family, but Maria's mind was made up. They found a location and started serving food. Then a year after opening La Cocina de Maria the bottom fell out of the economy and Maria learned that loving what you're doing is not always enough.

"That year the economy started to suffer and that was when it was hardest. I felt like I couldn't keep going. It was too much to come to work and see that nothing was selling, that no one was coming," she says.

Those tough days were tempered by the support of her husband. "He would say to me, 'It doesn't matter. You work, and soon people will come.' He was always there. He always encouraged me, because he would say, 'You wanted this, now wait, be patient,'" she remembers.

A little patience, a supportive family and a love of what one's doing—that's Maria's recipe for a successful business. Maria's Kitchen has weathered the economic crisis and she plans to expand into a bigger place soon. Hopefully, one in which she'll be able to bake cakes and serve the restaurant's tacos, tortas and tamales. Until then, she's happy to keep working, because working at something you love, she says, doesn't feel like work at all.

Maria's Kitchen is located at 895 North Broadway, just past Loudon Ave.

Mike Goodlett's biomorphic world

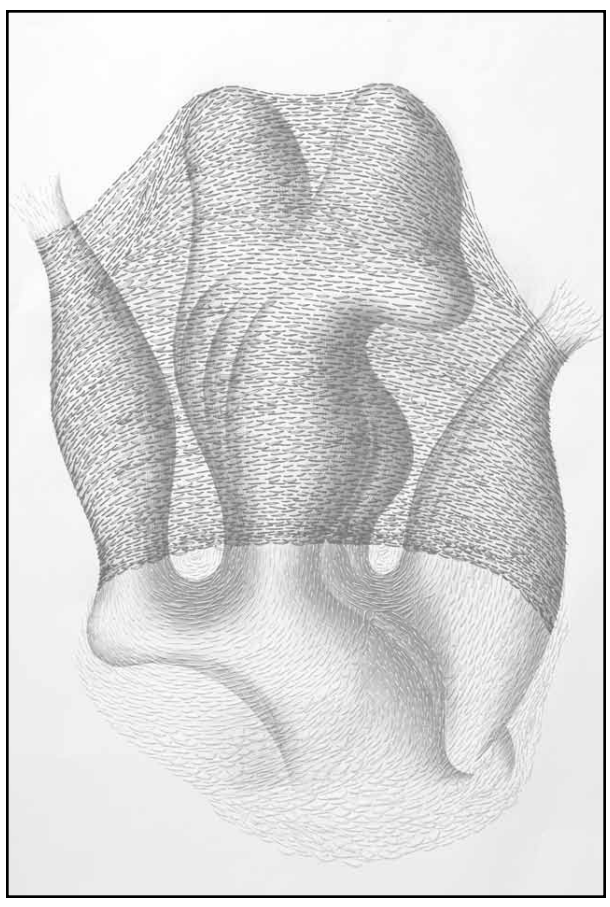
By Ben Durham

In his current exhibition "Dress Socks and Other Diversions" at Institute 193, Mike Goodlett presents three striking new bodies of work that address issues of representation, figuration, and desire. In Goodlett's work art functions as a distorted mirror image of our social selves; our social interactions, frustrations, and desires are reflected back as dream-like manifestations. His mimetic representation is not illustrative of physical likeness or real-world phenomena, but is instead a representation of social and emotional behavior and desire itself.

In his recent body of Sewn Drawings, Goodlett's threadwork binds his drawn forms together, functioning as net-like enclosures capturing and displaying odd moments of apparent bodily interaction. In Goodlett's presentation, desire is anthropomorphized into organic forms, creatures even, as his playful titles seem to suggest. There is a distinct scientific methodology to this approach that brings to mind the studies of Alfred Kinsey, the botanical illustrations of Carl Linnaeus, and the anthropomorphic nature films of Jean Painlevé. From the Sewn Drawings to the wall-sized installation of a dissected and sewn back together figure, the body is depicted through an often-nightmarish lens of desire. Desire here is an obfuscating force, confusing and clouding our view of reality. To this end, Goodlett's practice seeks a breaking down of differentiation. Diverse forms blend to describe a basic human desire to lose our isolated sense of self, our sense of separateness, and gain some sort of connection.Immediately one is struck by the unique and nuanced qualities of Goodlett's draftsmanship and use of material. With both ink and graphite he achieves a balance between Rembrandt's refined sfumato and a doodler's phone-side drawing pad. He references the deconstructed comic book imagery notable in the work of Raymond Pettibon, Philip Guston, and Tom of Finland while maintaining an outsider's sense of distinctly individual style. Graphite depictions of ethereal and surprisingly sensual cigarette smoke, drawings of morphed bodily forms in red Bic pen, and sewn elements referencing fetishized dress socks (or stockings if you prefer) demand a level of careful scrutiny and invested examination that allows the viewer to enter the complex visual world created by Goodlett. Far more than most contemporary artists, he presents an almost awkwardly sincere perspective of the world that renders him vulnerable and very much on view. Although his works do not function as self-portraiture, they are clearly projections of self.

The work at Institute 193 maintains a balance of raw emotion and fluid elegance that mark this as one of Lexington's most dynamic and significant shows in recent memory. Despite the works' personal and almost intimate nature, the show succeeds in connecting and communicating with a world outside of its own. Much like Goodlett's previous Shadow Box works, there remains a distinct dynamic between outer and inner worlds, but the striking beauty of his recent work serves as a thoughtful invitation. In this way, "Dress Socks and Other Diversions" is a welcoming introduction and, for those already familiar with his drawings, installations, and shadow boxes, it is a revealing glimpse further into the depths of Mike Goodlett's biomorphic world.

"Dress Socks and Other Diversions" remains on view at Institute 193 until November 26th. For more information including gallery location and hours, visit www.institute193.org.



"Stroll."

953 Delaware

Richie and Daisy

Daisy and Richie had already moved out of the house at 953 Delaware Ave. They had lived with this couch for 2 years and decided to replace it with a better one during their move to a new home. We were lucky to catch them while they stopped to see if there was any mail delivered for them in their old mail box.

Image and text by Kurt Gohde and Kremena Todorova, Discarded *project.*

Announcements

Gallery Soleil reunion at Homegrown Press

For art patrons of the pre-corporatized downtown sector, Gallery Soleil on West Short Street was the place to be on Gallery Hop night, with lines regularly stretching onto the sidewalk. The upstairs gallery housed between 7 and 10 different studios. Artists like Blake Snyder Eames, Mike Goodlett, Diane Kahlo, Bob Morgan, Claudia Michler and John Lackey (all featured at some point in North of Center) rotated through. In late 2009, as the city touted its downtown artistic resurgence, the building housing Gallery Soleil was sold to ETS Realty out of Charleston, West Virginia, and the artists kicked out. The Dubai-based corporate restaurant chain Shakespeare and Company is set to open in the ETS Building.

During Gallery Hop on November 18, John Lackey will host a Gallery Soleil reunion at his Homegrown Press Studio, located at the corner of Sixth and North Limestone. In addition to the artists listed above, the reunion will feature the work of many other Soleil alum.

***Moby Dick in Pictures* at Morris Book Shop**

November 18 at 4:30 P.M., Morris Book Shop will welcome Matt Kish, a self-taught artist who illustrated every page of *Moby Dick*. His new book, released on October 11, 2011, depicts these unique illustrations and the text that inspired them. Kish states, "I worked my way through the whole book in order, beginning with page 1 and ending with page 552. I didn't work ahead or jump around to the pages I might have liked the most. I started on August 5, 2009 and finished on January 29, 2011. It was 552 pieces of art." Morris Book Shop is in their new location at 882 East High Street.

Volunteer tax preparers needed

The United Way Central Kentucky Economic Empowerment Project (CKEEP) is providing free tax preparation and filing for hardworking families across Central Kentucky who earn less than $50,000 during the tax year. The project is looking for volunteer tax preparers. No accounting experience needed. Free training available. Time commitment up to you. Help lower and middle income families save money by doing their taxes; help them get refunds. For more information, contact Geoff Parker at (859) 233-4461 ext. 300 or email at geoff.parker@uwbg.org.

Graffiti (cont.)

continued from page 1

local graffiti artists in order to publicize an overall "crackdown" on graffiti in Lexington. The press conference came as a response to the growing anxieties of citizens concerning graffiti in the Lexington area. Most notably, the Mayor's appearance was provoked by the efforts of one individual, a Lexington Parks and Recreation board member, Lisa Johnson.

Johnson took it upon herself to investigate and find the culprits responsible for vandalizing Woodland Park, which she claimed was so riddled with graffiti that people were afraid to go to the park. (I say "claimed" here simply because that park is possibly the most popular and crowded park in the city year round, especially during the height of summer when Gray's announcement was made).

Yet during the press conference, the Mayor and his graffiti task force alluded to their own slight ambivalence toward the "art" of graffiti. Officer Ricky Lynn mentioned that the team traveled to Louisville in order to talk with street artists about their work, which gave him an appreciation for the style as an "art form." Lynn went on to advance his hope that the city could find some sort of compromise by providing "legal graffiti" locations to quell the illegal activity.

PRHBTN: 11.11.11. Photo by Julie Mayer.

The anti-graffiti "Buffers" shirts produced by Lisa Johnson ironically employ popular graffiti art tropes: a stylized "street" font, a stencil pattern, and fuzzy over-spray (paint that has sprayed over the borders of a stencil creating a hazy effect). Even Mayor Gray acknowledged that the work can be an art form if it is done with the permission of property owners.

But herein lies the problem. Graffiti is gaining acceptance from culture only by accepting culture's terms: graffiti artists are being asked to assimilate into a world of private property that is fundamentally contradictory to the meaning behind their work—they are being asked to drop the pre-fix (graffiti) to their name.

PRHBTN: 11.11.11

In this sense, a graffiti art show—where the work is removed from its all-important public setting and sold to private parties—seems like the most problematic thing of all. Banksy's documentary *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, now widely discussed thanks to an Oscar nomination, provokes any intuitive viewer to ask how street art is altered and even compromised when it is repackaged in a gallery space for the art world. Even more succinctly, in a lot of ways, this repackaging can be "like castrating your street art," as Lexington graffiti artist CEO Dronez put it.

But this is only one opinion from one member of the street art community (one, admittedly, I tend to agree with); other artists have a range of philosophies and styles. The intersections of art and street art yield a huge spectrum of viewpoints, and many people are less interested in keeping them separated than they are in colliding them together for the sake of seeing what might happen.

Enter Jessica Case.

After her viewing of Banksy's *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, Case felt a renewed interest in street art, which she considers a "real part of the fabric of our everyday lives because it decorates the surroundings of our urban environment." As a lawyer and previous co-owner of Buster's, she admits that she is an outsider to the street art community; but Case hopes to use PRHBTN to foster an increased awareness of the sub-culture in order to share her own appreciation of the often misunderstood world of graffiti. Simply put, "it's all about exposure," she says: for the artists, the people coming to view the show, and for any mutual learning experience that may come as a result.

In an effort to guarantee such exposure, Case booked the popular electronic band Passion Pit to do a 18+ DJ set alongside local acts on the opening night of the event, Friday November 11. Tickets will be $20 in advance and $25 at the door on the opening, but the show will run for another week, free to the public, from 5-10PM. (Events take place at the Warehouse, 1211 Manchester Street.)

PRHBTN, so named for its representation of arts that have been prohibited, will showcase a broad range of street art techniques and artists, including Dronex Inc., Left Hand Wave, Ricstep, Print Mafia, Caper, Chasen Igleheart, Housefire, Katie Blaesing, Kenton Montgomery, Nate Corder, Joe Schubert, Casper, Creep, David Wise, Rick Lewis, Michael Haas, Graham Allen, Kurt Gohde, and Kremena Todorova.

In creating PRHBTN, Case is starting a conversation in Lexington. It is the first time anything like this has been done here, and the results may be unpredictable, but she is just happy to provide the opportunity. And she promises not to stop there. Case hopes to begin a tradition this year and make PRHBTN an annual event.

Ride the wave

The general fascination with graffiti in Lexington seems to be growing. Less than a year ago I participated in a three mural group project spearheaded by Transylvania professors Kremena Todorova and Kurt Gohde. We installed stenciled wheat pastes on Sav's Grill, the Sayre School, and the Hop Hop. Ricstep was commissioned for a mural on the side of LOT gallery and recently had a full show at Taste. Left Hand Wave has since started his own show in the same space.

It's to the point where one is unable to tell which is more important to the term street art--the street or the art in street art. Irrespective of how the cultures are changing each other, it is clear that they will never blend together fully. What's important now is to consider the place of street art in our society: how and where it overlaps and pushes against our preconceived notions of "legal" self-expression. Events like PRHBTN can't answer these questions, but they can surely provoke a broader audience to ask them.

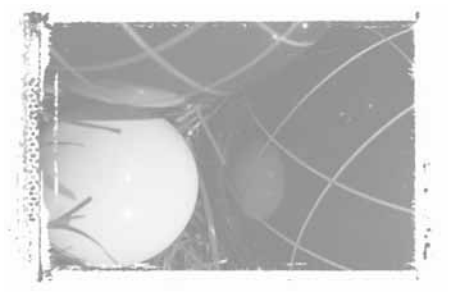
PRHBTN will run between November 111 and November 18 at the Warehouse, 1211 Manchester Street. Opening night will feature performances by some of the nation and region's top dance/electronic artists, accompanied by appearances from trained performance artists and spectacular light installations from 9 P.M. – 4 A.M. Tickets: $20; 18+. Thereafter, it's open daily for free, 5-10 P.M.

Bocce (cont.)

continued from page 1

the newly formed Lexington Guerilla Bocce League (LGBL), first heard about Guerilla bocce from some friends playing in Georgia. "I've been a fan of bocce for a long time. I've got a mini-court in my backyard. Several years back, a couple Georgia rollers told me an apocryphal story of a group calling itself the Columbus Guerilla Bocce League, which played a couple rounds on the grounds of the School of the Americas [a U.S. training facility for Latin American dictators and their militaries that is housed in Georgia nearby Fort Benning]. As the story goes, the military wasn't too happy—Columbus GBL got several dictators to join in the fun and temporarily stop studying how to oppress their people—and so the military slapped League players with 20 year sentences in the stockades."

"I never looked to see if the story was true, but it got me out playing in Lexington. I learned that Guerilla bocce is just plain fun. We walk the city, playing green spaces, and hoot and holler. Last week, we ended up at SideBar for a league nightcap. It's sport, it's activism, it's exploration."



Occu-bocce and two educators' moral imperative

Though the LGBL has roots running several years back, things started really coming together last month when community members began occupying the JP Morgan Chase Bank Plaza on Main Street in downtown Lexington. Mayer and his colleague-friend Michael Benton, both Bluegrass Community and Technical College faculty members who teach writing, film and community engagement, began to think of ways to get complacent Lexingtonians to participate in the movement.

"After the chaotic and thrilling initial push to establish the occupation here in Lexington, we began to think of how we could offer steady contributions to the movement. To do our part, pull our weight," Benton says. "We both have full-time jobs, our own community initiatives we contribute to and a free bi-weekly print paper we help publish and distribute, among other things. Our time is limited, but this is an important moment in world history making. There's no sitting on the sidelines."

"We also felt that, as college educators and faculty members, we had a moral imperative to contribute," Mayer continues. "We are fortunate. We don't make bankster money, but our state jobs provide us flexible schedules, good retirement plans and decent health care. We get a month break in December, nearly three months (unpaid) in the summer, plus all federal holidays. As employees of the state, we're tasked with bettering the Commonwealth. We have an obligation to contribute, to make time and justify our jobs."

Benton continues. "Plus, we teach at a community college. So our obligations are also to our local communities. Unlike professors at the University of Kentucky, who increasingly teach the sons and daughters of wealth, we daily interact with people who have been screwed the most by our nation's economic, social and political choices. So while we teach more than UK professors, have more administrative duties than UK professors, are afforded less resources than UK professors, and make significantly less than them, we feel a greater sense of responsibility to our students and our community."

To ensure their participation, the two BCTC teachers decided, in a sense, to Occupy Mondays. To begin, they committed to spending Monday nights at the occupation. Mayer again: "Michael and I noticed that only a few people were spending the night at any time, and those people were put in the position of having to spend many nights there. They were getting exhausted. It was an immediate place we could contribute."

"Right now, Danny and I show up by 10:00 P.M. and leave around 7:00 A.M. We stay up all night to help give the other regular overnighters a break. I'm 47. He's 36," Benton says. "We're not young. It kills us, but it's one night. Nobody said changing the world is easy."

Around this weekly commitment, the two have started to work on other ways to encourage people—particularly college educators from UK who have not had a significant presence at the occupation—to make their own regular time commitments to show up. Mayer started a People's Media on Mondays (5:30-7:30) with BCTC film-certificate holder Ramona Waldman. Benton is in the process of organizing a regular Monday teach-in. The two do camp clean-up while staying overnight on Monday.

Mayer calls Monday nights "Community night" at Occupy, and has solicited participation on this night from BCTC faculty, staff and students (past, present and future). "Can they drop by for an hour on Monday, offer something to teach, a game to play, music or art to make? Can they spell us Tuesday morning from 7:00-9:00, when traffic comes through town? Those are the sort of small participations this movement needs."

He's also challenged UK faculty to pull their weight, though he hasn't seen much traction from the resource-guzzling State University. "They may be helping, I don't know. If they are, they need to do a better job of publicizing it. They hold a lot of cultural capital in this city and state."

Lexington Guerilla Bocce League

As an outgrowth of Community night at the occupation, Mayer started bringing his bocce balls to play quick games around downtown. Sports, he says, also need to be occupied and re-asserted as a public right. High cost, low access, privatized spectator sports like UK basketball need to be challenged and undermined. The city needs better alternatives and models for gathering together and blowing off competitive steam. The model is less "gold standard" SEC sports teams, and more "community participation" activities like roller derby, bike polo, disc golf, ping pong, chess and checkers.

Out of this, the Lexington Guerilla Bocce League has been formed.

Unlike privatized sports, league play for the LGBL privileges not only "winning" matches, but also regular participation. Players move up in the league standings partially based on how many "points" they score, irrespective of whether they won a match. Show up regularly and participate, and you're already a winner.

"Let's get this straight," Mayer says on the night I interview him, "I don't really expect anybody else to actually join in. This is Lexington, after all, the big town with the lazy mind and a detached state university. People are late coming to things here because they're so uptight, just puckered assholes all around."

As he turns from me and walks away toward the 12 people (out of a city of 300,000) collected together to assert their rights as citizens at Occupy Lexington, he pauses briefly. "But who knows. Maybe lightning will strike and people will join the fold. They're certainly invited. Stranger things have happened."

Currently, the Lexington Guerilla Bocce League convenes at the JP Morgan Chase Bank Plaza, Main Street at the corner of MLK, on Monday nights at 10:00 P.M. If you have them, bring your bocce balls to share. If you don't, show up anyway and we'll find a pair for you. Drinks afterwards at nearest bar for those interested in such things.

Live music to apprehend the divine to: 11/9-17

Wednesday, November 9

moe.
Buster's; 899 Manchester. 8:30 P.M.

For 20 years, the jammiest of the jam bands have toured relentlessly, building the grassiest of grass-roots fanbases. I don't know anyone who owns any of their albums, nor anyone who can even name a particular song, though I'm sure those people exist. Then again, with music like moe.'s, songs and albums are nothing more than arbitrary divisions of the never-ending groove.

Beirut
Kentucky Theater; 214 E. Main. 8 P.M.

This show costs $27.50. I bring this up because even though we don't usually print ticket prices herein—the idea is that the cost of art is irrelevant when considering whether to consume it, and that most shows in Lexington are pretty cheap anyway—this particular price caught me off guard.

Now, I am old, but hear me out: I saw Clapton in an arena, 10-row floor seats, for $22. That's 22 smackers to sit no more than 30 feet from Slowhand himself. This was 1990, on the *Journeyman* tour. Nathan East did

moe.

a haunting "Can't Find My Way Home" on vocals and electric upright bass. Then Eric encored with "Cocaine." $22.

And now some band called Beirut is charging $27.50? Then what's a Clapton ticket these days? $400? A grand? We thought $22 was expensive back then, because we'd only paid $14 to see R.E.M. tour *Green* the year before. $27.50?

Look, I don't know Beirut, but I'm sure they're worth every penny. They've been on TV, and the Kentucky is a pretty swank venue all told, so they're probably great, and they'll pack the place. But just remember: I saw God for $22.

Thursday, November 10

[unknown artist]
Green Lantern; 497 West 3rd. 9 P.M.

Editor's note: this anonymous submission came without mention of the actual band. The editors attempted to contact the author, to no avail. Then they attempted to visit the Green Lantern events page to ascertain the name of the band. Again, no luck. So we don't know who the band is, or if they're actually playing this night. But sometimes you gotta take a chance in life, right?

On Thursday this week a band from Dayton, Ohio will be bringing their brand of indie, synthesizer-driven punk rock to the stage. Their distorted vocals remind me of old seventies punk rock, a real snotty we-don't-give-a-crap-what-you-think-about-us feel. At certain moments their music even seems to take on a very prog-rock sound, with intense melodic textures. I'm especially interested in seeing them live, just to find out how they get all of their interesting sounds mixed so flawlessly. One of the musical influences listed on their web page is video-game music, and you can definitely hear that at times.

At other points there are very haunting reminders of early Nirvana—you know, that underground feeling that hadn't yet been exposed to the MTV glitz and glamor. This band is a definite treat and you should for sure check them out. Local rock stars the American Werewolves will be opening the show to round out a great lineup.

Friday, November 11

Tall, Dark and Handsome
Natasha's; 112 Esplanade. 8 P.M.

Traditional American music that incorporates jazz, country, and folk; later in the evening, Natasha's continues its "Alumni Reunion Party," celebrating 20 years of food, music, and theater.

Jonathan Sexton and the Big Love Choir
Cheapside Bar & Grill; 131 Cheapside. 9 P.M.

Look: I'm no friend of Jesus. My heart is shuttered to the Holy Spirit. The only time you'll hear me intone "I am the resurrection" is when I'm singing along with the Stone Roses in the car. And I like it that way.

That said, sometimes that ol' time religion does provide for some infectious tunes, so maybe it isn't all bad. For instance, it's a truism that the funkiest music available, at any given time, on any given set of radio stations, is to be found on the black gospel channel. And who doesn't love Norman Greenbaum's "Spirit in the Sky?" It's a positive, groovy song that just happens to be about Christ. Not obnoxious at all. Of course, one could argue that Creed's body of work more than makes up for whatever obnoxiousness "Spirit" lacks, but you can always turn the channel.

Anyway, Jonathan Sexton's music, blessedly, resides firmly in the positive, groovy sphere, and as such may be apprehended by you secular humanists with little trouble. Doesn't mean you'll *like* it—just that the religious bits aren't overbearing. The music itself is gospel- and blues-inflected rock, sharing sensibilities with Robert Randolph and Derek Trucks on one hand, and early John Mayer and Dave Matthews on the other. And it's nothing like Creed at all.

Kansas Bible Company
Al's Bar, 601 N. Limestone. 9 P.M.

Despite the name, the Kansas Bible Company aren't shilling for the Savior. They're not even from Kansas. And they have horns, and expansive arrangements. They sound like the lovechildren of Billy Joel and Fee Waybill. Cool.

The Moonshine Millionaires
The Crossroad on Southland; 286 Southland. 9 P.M.

Rockin' country from Louisville. 'Nuff said.

RB Morris.

Saturday, November 12

Chris Knight
Buster's; 899 Manchester. 9 P.M.

Small towns. Beat-up pickups. Rain. Hickory trees. River bottoms. More rain. Freight trains. Freightliners. Still more rain. Home cookin'. Billy gone off to the service. Jenny run off with that ne'er-do-well. Cornbread. Rusted quarter panels. Yet more rain. Chris Knight's in town.

Thursday, November 17

RB Morris
Natasha's; 112 Esplanade. 8 P.M.

Songcraft. That's what this show is about. Many people can't recognize it when they hear it; for them, there's no difference between a disposable piece of pop fluff and four minutes of distilled greatness. *As long as I can tap my foot to it,* the Philistine thinks, *it's plenty good enough for me*. But you know better. You know what emotion can be wrested from the form. You know the power of a perfect lyrical couplet, can appreciate a sublime chord progression, a tasteful key change. For you, there's RB Morris.

Gonzo Jones
The Tin Roof; 303 S. Limestone. 8:00 P.M.

If you're a college student, you're probably gonna be at The Tin Roof anyway, so enjoy the show. If you're not a college student, and you're over 30, and you're planning on being at The Tin Roof, then you're pretty creepy, man.

Which brings me to another point: why do college girls in this town insist on wearing heels when they simply cannot walk in them? Is this a local problem, or a generational one? I seem to remember that when I was in college, girls walked in heels just fine. And when they got drunk, instead of persisting with the endeavor, as local girls do, they simply took them off and walked in stocking feet.

Is it a failure of upbringing? I mean, in the small Southern town where I grew up, girls were taught these things. Guys held doors and said "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am" and girls learned to walk in heels. It was universal; even goth chicks with shoe-polish hair and nose rings could walk in heels like they were born in them. Just another sign of the decline of America, I guess. Will the Occupiers address this at some point?

Chris Knight.

Violence in films

By Michael Benton

"Far from being mindless, violence is usually the cutting edge of ideas and ideologies."

—John Fraser, in *Violence in the Arts* (1974: 162)

I believe that violence is a necessary part of many creative narratives because it is a part of reality. Violence is a part of the human experience. How can we ignore it?

At the same time, I reject simplistic, cartoonish uses of violence where the heroes are shot at a hundred times, receiving perhaps a scratch, while methodically dispatching every person they face. I think it is irresponsible to repeatedly portray, or think of, violence as simply mindless entertainment.

It is important that we have intelligent, complex explorations of individual and collective violence. In life, there are outbreaks of violence that, when they happen, seem beyond our kin or present understanding. But, usually with time, we are able to grasp their motivations or causes. Likewise, in a work of "art," one can begin to grasp at the reason for the violence and make a sort of sense of it, even if one does not agree with the portrayal of the causes or motivations for the violence.

What is needed is intelligent reflection on the uses or outbreaks of violence. Is it a means to a goal? Is it a frustrated reaction to events beyond our control? A tool for oppression/resistance. Who is using the violence? As a means to what end? Who is/are the victim/s? Why are they chosen? Is the violence random? What are the goals of the perpetrator?

Ultimately, violence in great films cause you to think about the action beyond the visceral sensations. It challenges you to exercise your own judgment, to initiate critical reflection upon the events of the story. For me, this is a defining moment in judging a film or any other work of art.

A scene from Ousmane Sembene's Moolaadé.

Narrative violence

The benefit of some narrative violence is that it makes it harder for audiences to ignore the motivations or beliefs of the characters. This is especially true when we become implicated by our own violent impulses, becoming so wrapped up in the narrative that we encourage the violence—"Do it! Do it!" A good narrative can cause us to reflect on this dangerous impulse. Thus, in the complex cinematic presentation, we are faced with an intellectual quandary in regard to the usage of the violence and the rationale for its usage.

A powerful film will not allow us to stand on the sidelines and retain our intellectual integrity. We have to take a stand, even if it is to condemn the movie. After all, the artist presents us with a work that is intended to shock or affront. (This cuts both ways: it is also hypocritical for the artist to complain when people condemn their work if their intent was to depict acts of violence in a graphic manner.)

Violence historically is employed in the service of power on an individual or systemic level. Our democracy is built on the ignorance of the daily usage of violence to keep some people docile about their situation in life. This structural mask sometimes slips, allowing a glimpse of the true face of that power. Thus, a necessary part of some violent narratives is our understanding of the roots of hegemonic power. Most Hollywood films, as well as many foreign films (see the recent explosion of Asian extreme films), miss this aspect of violence. People facing the threat of actual acts of violence help us to understand human potential. It is not a case of human physicality or oversized phallic weapons. It is an examination of the operations of power in society.

Some violent films to view

Pier Paolo Pasolini's brutal, disgusting and difficult *Salo, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (Italy: 1975) traumatically (for this viewer) explores the victim's complicity as well as the oppressor's degradations in fascist societies. It is a truly painful and wrenching film, but I do not regret having watched it.

The ending of Peter Greenaway's aesthetically beautiful *The Baby of Macon* (UK: 1993) horrified me more than any sophomoric slasher story ever could and, to this day, has left me pondering the meaning of the film. Blocked from being exhibited in the U.S., when we showed it for our film society at Illinois State University, people were crying in the audience. Afterwards, we spilled into the streets and made our way to a pub where we argued into the night about the meanings of the film. As with any difficult film, some of the audience members were angry that we had shown it, and they had reason to be angry. We listened patiently to their complaints even if we believed, ultimately, that the film should be seen.

continued on page 8

Beavis and Butt-head in the new century

By Kevin Martinez

Back in the 1990s, America was prosperous. We weren't in any wars, the economy was awesome, and the animated MTV sitcom *Beavis and Butt-head* ruled the airwaves.

A prime example of how good things were then? Politicians had to look deeply for things to criticize. *Beavis and Butt-head* gave them that ammunition.

Let's face it: when times are good, politicians go looking for villains within our ranks. Back in the 1950s, when the economy was booming, everyone who didn't agree with our government was a communist. McCarthyists began to finger comic books, among other cultural products, as dangerous products that could turn our youth into axe murderers and homosexuals. And when the oppressed youth of the 1950's grew up? Well, they, in turn, became concerned that the youth of the 1990's would become sadistic freaks with bad taste in music because of *Beavis and Butt-head*.

Fourteen years ago, when Mike Judge decided to end *Beavis and Butt-head* to concentrate on *King Of The Hill*, it created a vacuum in the music world. Without these two ridiculous characters telling the world that this band or that singer sucked, we suddenly had a massive output of crap that, while it was just as bad as what preceded *Beavis and Butt-head*, now had no champions calling calling out crappy music for what it was. Before Beavis we had New Kids On The Block and Vanilla Ice. After Beavis we had Backstreet Boys, 'N Sync, Britney Spears, and Ashlee Simpson.

We also saw MTV completely turn its back on music videos and become a reality show channel. In fact, during the 2000s the whole nation dumbed down. We even had a president who was by all accounts just as stupid as Beavis and Butt-head.

I watched the premiere of the new *Beavis and Butt-head* movie on October 27; it was like they had never left. The animation hasn't improved that much, and the voices haven't changed a bit. The plots are still simple, yet there is still something oddly clever about them.

By being as dumb as they are, Beavis and Butt-head tend to cut through the crap and say how it is—which is the troubling part. Now they provide commentary for *Jersey Shore*, a show that I've never watched but about which I now know a bit more thanks to Beavis and Butt-head.

These two actually come off as more intelligent and clever than the cast of *Jersey Shore*, which makes me think that over the past two decades we have become a much less intelligent society.

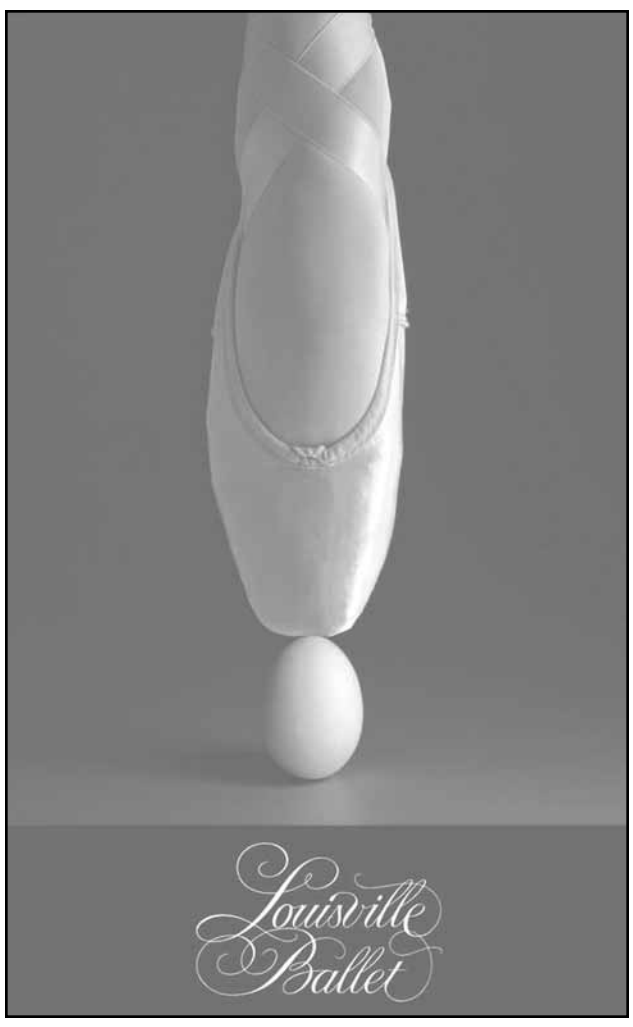
I can only hope that kids discovering *Beavis and Butt-head* for the first time will be elevated to a higher comprehension level about the world around them. To me the simple stupidity of *Beavis and Butt-head* is much better than the gaudy and moronic world of *Jersey Shore*. It's probably because Mike Judge is a smart guy who is playing a part. Snookie and her pals are the same idiots when the cameras aren't rolling.

Beavis and Butt-head return to their couch.

Local film happenings

KET's Kentucky Muse Broadcast Premiere

Kentucky Muse, the KET-produced series which showcases creativity in and from Kentucky, will broadcast its newest documentary on Monday, November 21 at 10:30 PM. The film, *Julius Friedman: Picture This*, follows the career path of the titular artist, a celebrated Louisvillian who is renowned for his work in photography and graphic design. Most widely known for his iconic image of a pointed shoe balanced on an egg (which he produced for the Louisville Ballet), Friedman has exhibited his work throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia. For those interested in seeing the film on the big screen, it will premiere on Tuesday, November 15 at 6:30 P.M. at the Kentucky Center for Performing Arts in Louisville. For more information on the film and the series, please visit www.ket.org/muse.



Julius Friedman's iconic image taken for the Louisville Ballet. Image courtesy KET's Kentucky Muse.

Trickster Makes This World: A Group Show

November's Gallery Hop will feature a group show by thirteen artists from four states and three countries who are pursuing BFA/MFA degrees in Lexington. With an emphasis on "Mischief and Myth in Contemporary Art," the show will feature film, photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, and performance. The show is being organized/curated by artist and performer Theo Edmonds, and will take place at his studio on 261 Midland Avenue between 5:00 and 9:00 P.M.

If you have a film or media event that you would like to announce in North of Center*, please send an e-mail with all pertinent information to lucyjonesky@gmail.com.*

Closing the Kentucky (cont.)

continued from page 1

pay. The efforts to reclaim the back pay were initiated in the early 1970s by Ralph Conway, lockmaster at lock 8 in southern Jessamine County. According to the plaintiffs in a 1974 letter to U.S. Comptroller General, Elmer B. Staats,

"[T]o enable the Corps to operate, maintain and protect the system 24 hours a day year-around with minimal personnel, a lockmaster and assistant were required to occupy and pay rent for quarters within each lock reservation. At least one of them had to be on duty at all times. This required the men, alternately, to work regular shifts plus standby duty up to 24 hours every day, averaging about 40 hours plus 40 hours or more standby duty a week per employee."

The restitution, $2.5 million, was divided among claimants according to seniority. Dees, who began working on the river the year after his discharge from the Army in 1945, received the largest settlement award, $117,000 and Conway the second largest, $91,732. Conway believed that Dees' award was the largest ever conceded by the federal government for back pay. The actual value of their settlement, however, was little more than $50,000 for Dees and $39,000 for Conway. The lion's share, of course, was destined to cover federal and state taxes and legal fees.

The lockmasters felt they had "been shafted." As Conway maintained, "If our claim has merit now, it had merit in 1972. We are being paid in inflated dollars and are not receiving any interest on the money due us. We are not getting any tax break because, with five-year averaging, I will have to pay still more taxes on the money I get."

In 1976 the Corps deemed 24-hour surveillance of locks and dams unnecessary, and lock men were no longer required to reside on lock reservations or work longer than eight hours, thus eliminating the opportunity for overtime pay. But the Corps' evasive legal maneuvers came too late to dodge the court's snag. While both Dees and Conway expressed reservations as to the legality of the Corps' decision to discontinue 24-hour surveillance, noting the strategic importance of the locks in maintaining water levels and supplies, particularly locks 7 and 8, both men called it quits on the river.

After the three-year closure, Dees returned in 1985 to operate lock 7, and in 1986 he began to oversee locks 5 through 9 for the state as part of the lease agreement. Asked if he would find it hard to leave the river again when the lease expired, Dees responded: "I can't put this on my shoulders and carry it with me. Too many people do that, and they end up doing some slow marching and sad singing." His final retirement in 1988 marked the end of an era, what Corps historian, Charles E. Parrish called "the nearly 200 year dream of a profitable Kentucky River navigation system," which "now exists as a testament to the fact that great dreams often become disappointing realities."

A family affair

For Charles Dees, being a lockmaster was more than a job. It had been a way of life for as long as he could remember. He was born in 1923 at Lockport, KY, where his father worked on a relief crew. Later, his uncle, Estill Thomas became lockmaster at lock 2, and his brother, Russell Dees, took over lockmaster duties at lock 1 at Carrollton. "Most of the lock men came from river families in the early days," writes William Ellis in his river history. Like the railroad or the postal service, when it came to getting a job, who you knew was far and away more important that what you knew, and prior to World War II, who you needed to know was primarily another close family member—a father, brother, or uncle.

Earl Gully, Jr., lockmaster at lock 12 beginning in 1958, recalls an early encounter with Pete Hardin of the High Bridge Hardin's (a river family employed by the Corps). "One of the first things Pete Hardin asked me was 'How in the hell did a foreigner like you get a job with the Corps of Engineers?'" Pete Hardin himself benefited from the "who you know" system. Pete married Ruby Simpson, daughter of Bill Simpson, lockmaster at 7 through the 30s and early 40s. Pete's brother, Cecil Hardin would become lockmaster at locks 3 and 4.

Dees' life on the river spans from the era of steamers like the old tow, Chenoka, to the advent of diesel-powered engines. As a child, Dees remembers when the Chenoka would steam into port at lock 2:

"They had an old cook on there was named Jenny Carter. All of us kids, running around there, we had to go see the boat when it come up. I know back in that time, which was in the late 20s and early 30s, there wasn't none of us I don't guess over 10 or 12 years old. After all the men would set down to eat, Jenny would come out there and holler for us, or some of the deck hands. Everybody would help us, if we needed help, to get on the boat, and take us and line us up around this big table, and we thought that was the grandest thing that ever was. But it was back then, you know. And then, of course, they had plenty left over and fed all of us. Well, we met that boat religiously."

The last packet boats passed up and down the Kentucky during Dees' childhood as well. The last packet boat he recalls came up the Kentucky from Madison, Indiana on the Ohio.

"They made every whistle stop and picked up passengers and livestock and what-have-you. But this old drunk got on in Madison. Well, they started out, you know, going up the river and he goes around to get a ticket, and they went to him two or three times, and all he did…was just waddle his head around and just fall around."

When the ticket agent asked the old drunk where he wanted to go, he replied, "I don't know. I want to go to hell…" The agent told the captain, and the captain said, "Just let him off in Lockport, that's the closest place to hell I know."

In the first decades of the 20th century, over 50 packet and show boats plied the Kentucky, most taking passengers as far up as lock 9 at Valley View. "The old show boats, they'd come in and you'd hear that old calliope. This part of the country it's 'callyope' but—you'd hear that thing for miles back in the hills. I know we used to go…to shows. But that's all probably around early 30s, you know."

Yes, Louisville does suck

Dees went to work for the Corps of Engineers in September, 1945 for the Cincinnati District. The next year, the Cincinnati District, which operated the entire Kentucky River system, was abolished, and in the spring of '47 operation of the fourteen lock and dams was transferred, along with Dees and many other lock men, to the Louisville District. According to Dees, no one at the headquarters in Louisville was all that interested in an operational Kentucky.

"Uncle" Sam Eversole, long-time superintendant of the Kentucky River and one of its champions. Photo courtesy Bobbie Jean Johnson.

The coal and timber industries in the upper stretches and above the forks had all but abandoned the river in favor of a less temperamental mode of transportation, namely rails. The Kentucky River, particularly above lock 4 and Frankfort, was all but dead to commercial traffic by the late 40s and early 50s (with the exception of several short coal booms, the last occurring in early 1975). So from the onset, the relationship between Kentucky River lock men and the Louisville District headquarters was marked with a palpable acrimony.

"Uncle" Sam Eversole, long-time superintendant of the Kentucky River and one of its champions. Photo courtesy Bobbie Jean Johnson.

These men and the ancient, slow-moving river they represented quickly became the unwanted step-children of a parent far more interested in caring for its favorite charges, the Ohio and Green Rivers. In Dees' words, "how they could hate one thing as bad as they hate the Kentucky River is beyond me, and I know it never did one earthly thing to them. Never hurt them in no way."

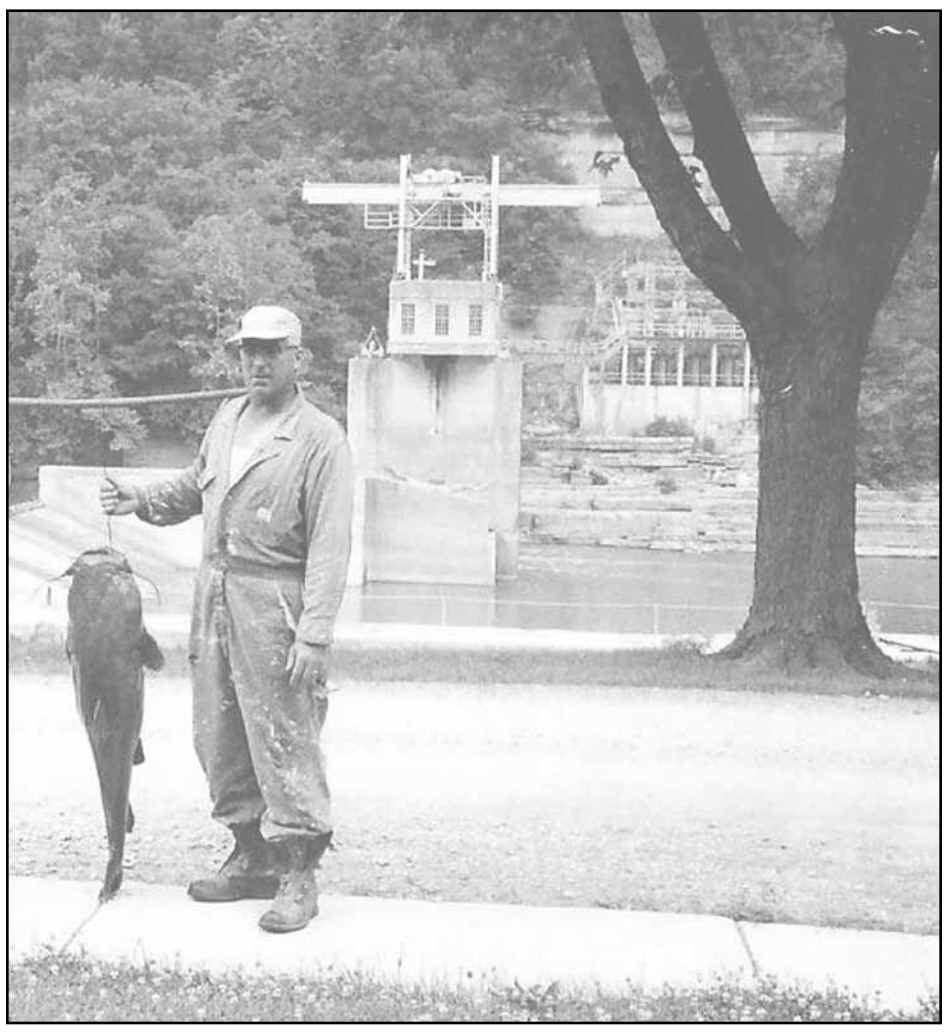
Early champions

It wasn't always bad, though. Prior to dissolving the Cincinnati District, the Kentucky River and its lock men enjoyed more than several decades of genuine attention to needs. Even recreational use of the locks, which had been discouraged by the Corps prior to the mid-30s, found strong support among higher-ups, namely Colonel Roger G. Powell, the Ohio River's first Division Engineer, who in 1936 maintained that pleasure boating on the Kentucky—in addition to barge, tow, and snag boat traffic—should not only be accommodated but encouraged. His advocacy led to a regular operational schedule, expressly directed at public use, so no locks were closed to navigation from mid-May to mid-October of each year. During these peak recreational months, locks could only be closed for emergency repairs and only at his express written consent. And to speed needed repairs, work crews would operate on a 24/7 basis. The river-using public, it seemed, had a champion in Powell.

Within the Cincinnati District, the Kentucky had earlier devotees as well. Prior to Powell, Cincinnati District and Assistant Engineer, Lucien Johnson and Kentucky River Superintendent, Sam Eversole, were keenly aware of needs along the Kentucky. The annual maintenance schedule they developed in the 1920s was based exclusively on empirical data. Early each year, the two would boat from Carrollton to Beattyville, stopping at each lock to gather information, hear the lockmaster's own accounting of needs, and send their diver, Curtis Leitch, down with an ice-pick to assess the condition of the timber cribs and gates. They inspected lock houses and made note of any necessary repairs. During their one-way, 255 mile journey, they'd document all snags in the channel and sound the lock approaches on either side to determine any need for dredging. Assessment complete, they reported to Cincinnati for approval and a repair fleet dispatched to begin work each April.

To a man working 24/7 and raising his family on the river, this kind of genuine attention to his professional as well as personal needs inspired a sort of shared responsibility and pride that carried over to the communities nearby. Just as gravity pulls the river ever onward, the orderliness of the lock and dams was a positive energy emanating to the surroundings. Of course, being a lockmaster on the Kentucky never exempted anyone from the hardships of the times, particularly in these rural stretches of river bottom, but it was steady, guaranteed employment and the focused, comprehensive attention provided by men like Johnson and Eversole, one might argue, was of benefit to the entire watershed—natural and human communities alike.

In part two, Wes will look at the communities sustained by lockmaster labors, and what the state's "caretaker status" means today.



Pete Hardin at Lock 7 in '40s. Photo courtesy Bobbie Jean Johnson.

VOLUME I

OCCUPIED LEXINGTON HERALD

ISSUE 2

The housing bubble

How we got here

By Austin Parker

By now, the bare facts of what happened in what's commonly-known as the "Great Recession" are widely known. Unfortunately, these facts are little reported on by most media, here in Lexington as elsewhere. So in the interests of due journalistic diligence, here's some information on what is meant when leaders refer to the housing bubble: how it happened, and how it contributes to our current depression economy.

The housing bubble

Colossal private banks, made even larger through decades of deregulation and lax oversight by the government-run Securities and Exchange Commission, pumped billions of dollars into the housing market worldwide. As they did, leading opinion makers (many of whom worked for, or were funded by the housing/banking industry) reinforced the need for Americans to by homes.

Then-president George W. Bush spoke of creating an "ownership society." Then-Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan concurred. After the economy entered a recession following the 9/11 plane hijackings and the Enron financial scandal, Greenspan lowered national interest ratesto spur consumer borrowing and thereby grow the national economy. This was reflected in historically low mortgage rates, which spurred home-buying and refinancing of home loans. By 2004, Greenspan also publicly endorsed Americans' growing reliance on subprime mortgages, mostly Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMS) whose interest rates (and mortgage payments) "adjusted" according to the Fed's whims. In a speech that year to the Credit Union National Association, he claimed that such mortgages, which were higher risk and normally targeted to poor communities and people of color, provided Americans an innovative money-saving method to purchase a home.

Greenspan and Bush were just two of the most powerful and well-known American figures reinforcing the need for Americans to buy property at cut-rate deals. Real estate agents, bankers, mortgage brokers, media figures and politicians of every color all talked about houses as sound "investments," brick and mortar bank accounts that contained equity (cash) that homeowners could use to pay for cars, vacations, braces, college or whatever else they desired. Bankers and mortgage brokers approved questionable loans. Cable networks followed marginally employed baristas as they received questionable loans and made bank on the enterprise known as home flipping: TLC's "Property Ladder" and A&E's "Flip this House" (not to be confused with TLC's "Flip that House") stand out here.

Two things happened when our media, politicians and certified experts told us to all buy homes, and when the financial services industry began to push alternate, more risky, methods for purchasing such homes. First, supply and demand: with demand stoked by fiscal, political and media outlets, housing prices soared throughout the 1990s and 2000s, pricing many people out of affordable homes. Second, Americans went increasingly into debt as they attempted to buy into the inflated market. Between 1990 and 2007, the ratio of debt to disposable personal income rose from 77% to 127%, much of this increase mortgage-related.

A popped housing bubble and a global depression

The dirty little secret, of course, is that bubbles eventually pop. Even the protestations of such economic luminaries as Alan Greenspan and every realtor between here and Boca Raton couldn't stop the fact that this insane blood-pact of spiraling home values and risky mortgages would eventually wind up collapsing.

The banks, however, were smart. First, they divested themselves of the crappy mortgages they sold to unwitting home-buyers. They did this by packaging together large amounts of mortgages that were held on their books, and then selling them as a single "product." Generally, these new products were referred to as derivatives because their value was "derived" from somewhere else—the ability of individual homeowners to pay the inflated loan values on the original mortgages. More specifically, the derivative products were known as "securities," a term also used as a verb: Wall Street banks securitized their individual mortgages to be sold on the unregulated derivatives market.

The process of securitizing allowed banks to hide many of their bad loans. It also made it difficult for pension funds, individual retirement accounts, school boards, and others buying the securities as AAA rated investments, to understand what was contained in them. Alan Greenspan and most other financial wizards endorsed this practice as another modern financial innovation, though a slew of recent lawsuits against the banks more commonly cite it as white collar fraud.

After selling off their bad mortgages, banks then issued, purchased, traded, and otherwise mangled a new class of derivative financial instruments known as the CDS (credit default swaps), a fancy way of saying insurance. The colossal investment firms essentially bet the spread. If your home loans performed well (that is, if you did not default), banks stood to reap untold trillions off interest and fees on the loans. If your loans failed and crapped out the packaged securities sold to investors, banks could call in their "credit default swap" insurance policy. They won either way.

If this doesn't sound absolutely insane to you, then you have a bright future in investment banking ahead of you.

The aftermath of the collapse of the housing bubble was a gut punch to the global economic system. As the banks started to unwind their books and revealed the depths of their exposure to subprime loans, the enormity of the crisis only became more in focus. At the height of the housing bubble, most banks were leveraging each dollar in deposits nearly ninety to one. (They had 1 real dollar for every 90 borrowed dollars.) The CDS market was valued over six times the value of the mortgage market in 2008.

Foreclosures soared. The recession led to employers cutting millions of jobs, and many of the new homebuyers saw their payments skyrocket as the rate on their ARM jumped. Refinancers and "flippers" were suddenly stuck owing thousands more than expected, or having a bundle of houses in their name, having been paying interest only on the properties without paying down principal. In many cases, people simply walked away from mortgages they couldn't pay, which helped collapse the value of existing homes. These events have put tens of thousands of homeowners underwater on their home: the value of their home has sunk below the amount they still owe on their mortgage.

So, yeah, pretty bad stuff. Right?

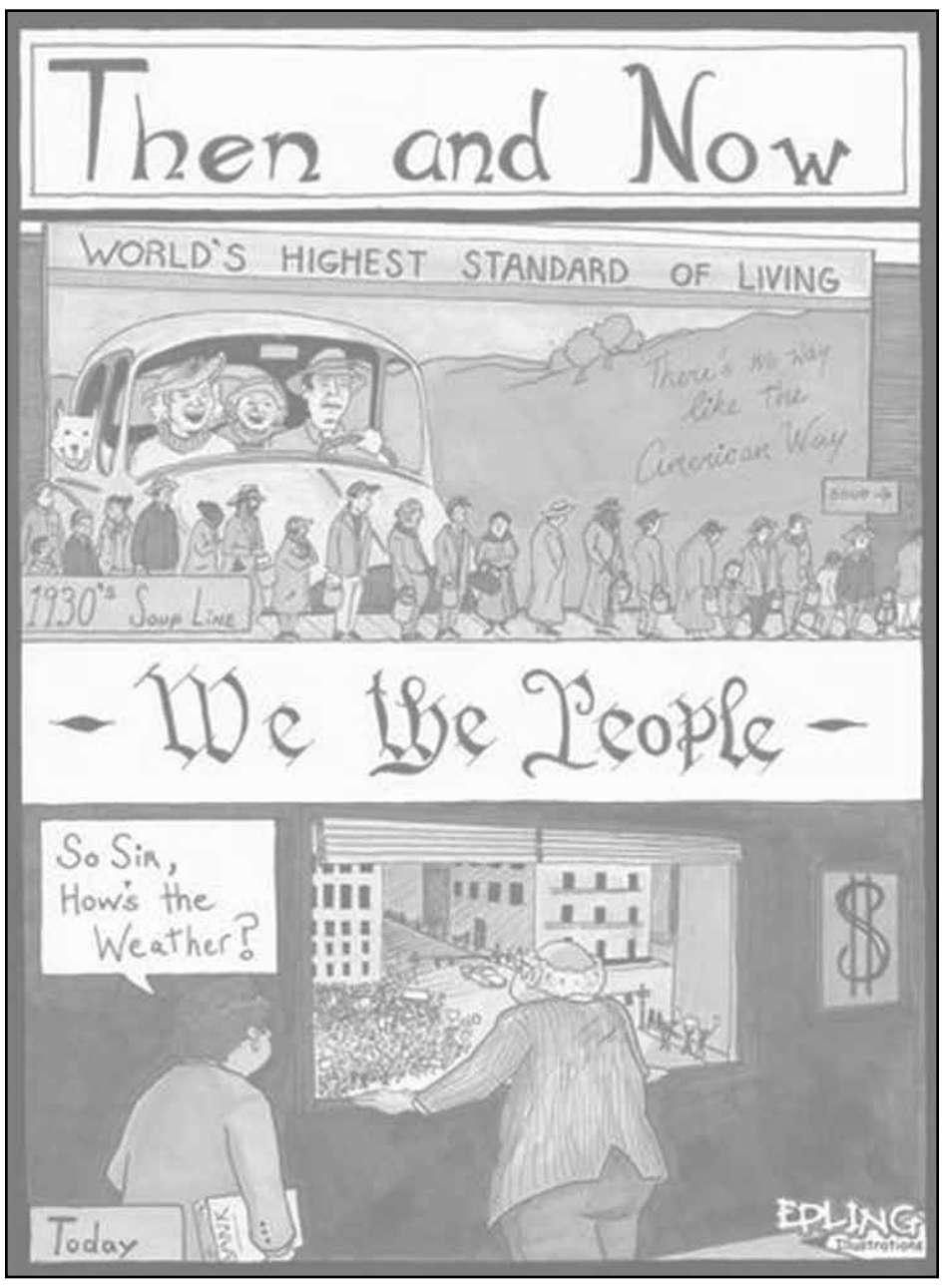


Illustration by Christopher Epling.

Two jobs and some classes

Letters from 99ers

To the gentleman that yelled "Get a job" at me while I was protesting Wall Street yesterday: I do have a job, thank you—two jobs, in fact. I also go to school full-time. There was a time when I didn't, though.

I was unemployed for nine months once. I lost my job while Bush was in office, and a month after my wife, stepdaughter and I moved into our first home. Two months later, I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. Then my health insurance dropped me and my medications went from 20$ a month to 200$ a month. You see, my body does not produce insulin; therefore, I will die without my medication. My wife, who does fairly well with her job as a hairstylist, had enough saved and was able to keep the roof over our family's head. When it eventually became clear that I was not going to find a job before my unemployment and our savings ran out, I decided to enroll in grad school, partly to ensure a job in the future, but mostly because I needed the health insurance and loans that school provides.

In order to keep our home, pay my medical bills and save some small bit of money before our second child is born, I work 30 – 40 hours a week as a manager at a local restaurant and substitute teacher while also taking out my full share of student loans. My wife also works around 40 hours a week, on her feet, while carrying our second child.

It is a shame I am not as fortunate as you, dear sir, with your newly washed sport utility vehicle and freshly pressed suit. I suppose from your perspective it is my own damn fault to be where I am, but I was much like you once. I too worked in insurance and financial services. I too imagined having a fancy car and nice clothes. But then I lost my job because I wasn't bringing in enough new clients to invest their money with us. Everyone was understandably frightened by the falling market in 2007 and was more interested in holding on to their money for fear of the crash to come.

I didn't expect to end up where I am. I was a bit more optimistic then. I truly didn't understand how an intelligent person with a liberal arts degree and extensive experience in management could eventually be struggling to feed himself and his family. But we live in a system that values profit over people; a system that won't insure me because they know I require routine medical care and will probably die before I am 60; a system that requires my family and I to go into debt so that I can eventually make an honest living, a system that values war over education, wall street over main street, building factories in China over building bridges in America. We belong to a system that benefits the top minority rather than the bottom majority; a system that will kick a family out of their home and reward the corporations that made it impossible for that family to keep that home. Who got bailed out? The banks got bailed out. Who got sold out? We got sold out. We are the 99%.

Your fellow American,
Billy Petot

Letter to Occupiers

I moved to a local bank a couple years ago ("Too big to fail, too big for me," October 26). The Big Bank had torpedoed my IRA, given bonuses to their fat-ass execs and then taken Bail-out money. That was too much; there's no dealing with thieves. The local bank pays only about 1%, but I had to stop the bleeding, and it's a good thing.

Bruce Williams

The *Occupied Lexington Herald* wants you!

The *Occupied Lexington Herald* is looking for photo coordinators, artists, events coordinators and writers to help cover the movement. Interested? Contact us at olky-herald@googlegroups.com

Occupied Lexington Herald

The better business model

Be good to each other

By Ian Epperson

We have a bad habit of taking Jesus and molding him into someone who agrees economically with what we already believe. We do this with the Bible too. A die-hard opponent of welfare can find the passage "if a man doesn't work he doesn't eat." A socialist or communist can find "no one considered anything to be their own but shared everything in common." A charitable person can find John the Baptist saying, "He who has two tunics should give to him with none, and the one with food should do the same."

There is a problem, however, with our desire to mold Jesus into our economic ideologies. He then becomes unable to change us, since he stands only to reinforce our already held beliefs.

When we take the scriptures as a whole, we can't find any popular economic model today that Jesus would endorse. What we find instead is a consistent message that has to do not only with economics, but also with our more intimate lives. That message is simple and can be summed up thusly: "Love your neighbor as yourself." In other words, be good to each other. So let me not drone on about the pros and cons of any particular economic system but instead talk about being good to each other, and being good to each other as a business model.

We all have a picture in our head of what it looks like to be good to each other in a business setting. We think of a small community bank giving its customers a break when hard times come along, renegotiating loans after a medical emergency or a cut in hours at work. It is not necessarily the best business model if your only goal is to make as much profit as possible. But if you are interested in the being-good-to-one-another business model, it's the only thing that makes sense.

Companies abiding by this business model are the stuff of legends in many American cities and small towns. In my hometown, for example, there's a funeral home whose founder never let a poor farmer pay for a funeral during the depression; eighty years later, we still remember how this business treated the least of these in those hard times.

Sadly, as a company grows it has to be accountable to shareholders who are located further and further from the smaller communities that gave rise to the business. It must be tempting to stray from the being-good business model and toward the model whose over-riding interests involve maximizing profits. In that race to the top, as the number of customers increases and those customers who were once names and faces become numbers, the pursuit of profit gradually overrules and overwhelms the desire to be good to our neighbors.

As businesses have increasingly moved away from providing a commerce based (at least in part) on neighborly relations in favor of one based primarily on economic ones, we encounter many of the world's most pressing problems: sweatshops, climate change, the concentration of wealth in so few hands. The problem is not which economic system we adhere to. It is that regardless of the economic system, we have forgotten how to be good to each other. We have forgotten how to love our neighbor as ourselves.

As we stray from this basic relationship that Jesus provided us, any number of rationalizations begin to seem reasonable. As the be-good business model diminishes and the maximizing-profit business model takes hold, the result is often a frenzied rush to secure greater and greater profits, a race to the top that disregards anything that doesn't generate an attractive return on investment.

As the pursuit of profit takes hold, should we then be surprised that the symbol of Wall Street is a 3,700 pound bronze bull at the corner of Morris and Broadway in downtown Manhattan, eerily reminiscent of the golden calf the people of Israel built in Moses' absence as they wandered the desert for forty years.

Once Moses stood up to Pharaoh it didn't take long for the people of Israel to get out of Egypt. But it took forty years to get Egypt out of them. In the same way, a conversation is happening in cities across the world as we discuss how to get out of Wall Street, and more importantly how to get Wall Street out of us. We hope you'll come join the conversation. We hope you'll come out and stand up with us for the be-good business model.

Invest in Kentucky

Occupied Lexington News

Invest in Kentucky is a grassroots initiative calling on the Kentucky State Treasurer to reinvest the Commonwealth of Kentucky's public funds into a financial institution that is headquartered in Kentucky. In 2011 Kentucky's accounts were moved to J.P. Morgan Chase, a financial institution that contributed to the financial collapse of 2008, has taken part in numerous unethical business practices, and has displayed a pattern of untrustworthy and unethical behavior.

You are invited to send our Kentucky State Treasurer the letter below, asking him to publicly consider where the state's money should go. Just tear and send.

Office of State Treasurer Todd Hollenbach
1050 US Highway 127 South, Suite 100
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dear Kentucky State Treasurer Todd Hollenbach:

I am writing to ask you to move Kentucky's Public Funds out of JP Morgan Chase and into a bank headquartered in Kentucky.

Kentucky's public funds should be invested in the state of Kentucky. Banks lend idle funds, and Kentucky's public funds, if they were located here in the Commonwealth, could be used by our local and statewide banks to provide loans to Kentucky small businesses, prospective homeowners, and entrepreneurs that wish to create new jobs or expand their existing businesses here in the Commonwealth. In solidarity with Occupy Lexington, we demand that our tax dollars are taken out of Too Big To Fail banks like Chase and placed in a financial institution that will invest in Kentucky.

Sincerely,

_____
Signature

_____
Printed name

Photo by Al Marzian. Found on the Occupy Lexington Flickr site.

What's going on

Occupy activities at JP's plaza, Main Street

Please contact occupylexky@gmail.com to add an activity to the calendar. Unless otherwise noted, all meetings at the Occupation site, 201 E. Main Street.

Every day
6:30 P.M.: *General Assembly.* Come take part in consensus decision-making as to how the Occupation in Lexington should proceed.

Wednesday, November 9
7:30 P.M.: *Technology Working Group.* Regularly scheduled Technology Working Group Meeting

Saturday, November 12
Noon: *Drums for Peace.* Drummers, dancers, hoopers, jugglers, or other movers and shakers invited. There are usually extra drums, rattles, shakers, and other noise makers. Even if you think you don't have rhythm, come and enjoy the music and energy, or just hold a sign for the Occupy Group.

7:30 P.M.: *Technology Working Group.* Regularly scheduled meeting.

Sunday, November 13
1:00 P.M.: *Study and Teach-In Group.* The Study and Teach-In Group provides opportunities and resources for in-depth studies of issues important to the Occupy Movement. Meetings are in Room C at the downtown public library, across from J.P. Morgan Plaza. Contact Michael Benton (mdbento@gmail.com) for more information. Website: http://olkyeducation.blogspot.com

3:00 P.M.: *Knit-in.* As winter approaches, Occupiers will need warm scarves and hats. Love to knit? Want to learn to knit? Come join us for a wonderful afternoon of knitting and chatting! Ample yarn, needles of all shapes and sizes, and instruction will be provided.

7:30 P.M.: *General March.* A weekly march held directly after General Assembly. Starting at the Occupation site and traveling throughout downtown.We want to engage our immediate community who might not otherwise pass by our site.

Monday, November 14
5:30-7:30 P.M.: *People's Media.* BCTC film certificate graduate Ramona Waldman and North of Center editor Danny Mayer will be on hand to produce and help foster citizen media. Tell your own story of hard times and high hopes on camera to Ramona. Pencils and paper provided for anyone wanting to write a letter to the editors of the *Occupied Lexington Herald*. Visitors are invited to share working drafts of news articles, letters to the editor, or other media publications.

10:00 P.M.-7:00 A.M.: *Community night.* Bluegrass Community and Technical College professors Michael Benton and Danny Mayer invite BCTC students, faculty and staff (past, present and future) to join them in spending the night downtown. (Other members of the community are invited, too.) Mayer will bring bocce balls for the Lexington Guerrilla Bocce League.

Wednesday, November 16
7:30 P.M.: *Technology Working Group.* Regularly scheduled meeting.

Saturday, November 19
Noon: *Drums for Peace.* Drummers, dancers, hoopers, jugglers, or other movers and shakers invited. There are usually extra drums, rattles, shakers, and other noise makers. Even if you think you don't have rhythm, come and enjoy the music and energy, or just hold a sign for the Occupy Group.

7:30 P.M.: *Technology Working Group.* Regularly scheduled meeting.

Sunday, November 20
1:00 P.M.: *Study and Teach-In Group.* The Study and Teach-In Group provides opportunities and resources for in-depth studies of issues important to the Occupy Movement. Meetings are in Room C at the downtown public library, across from J.P. Morgan Plaza. Contact Michael Benton (mdbento@gmail.com) for more information. Website: http://olkyeducation.blogspot.com

3:00 P.M.: *Knit-in.* As winter approaches, Occupiers will need warm scarves and hats. Love to knit? Want to learn to knit? Come join us for a wonderful afternoon of knitting and chatting! Ample yarn, needles of all shapes and sizes, and instruction will be provided.

7:30 P.M.: *General March.* A weekly march held directly after General Assembly. Starting at the Occupation site and traveling throughout downtown.We want to engage our immediate community who might not otherwise pass by our site.

Monday, November 21
5:30-7:30 P.M.: *People's Media.* BCTC film certificate graduate Ramona Waldman and *North of Center* editor Danny Mayer will be on hand to produce and help foster citizen media. Tell your own story of hard times and high hopes on camera to Ramona. Pencils and paper provided for anyone wanting to write a letter to the editors of the *Occupied Lexington Herald*. Visitors are invited to share working drafts of news articles, letters to the editor, or other media publications.

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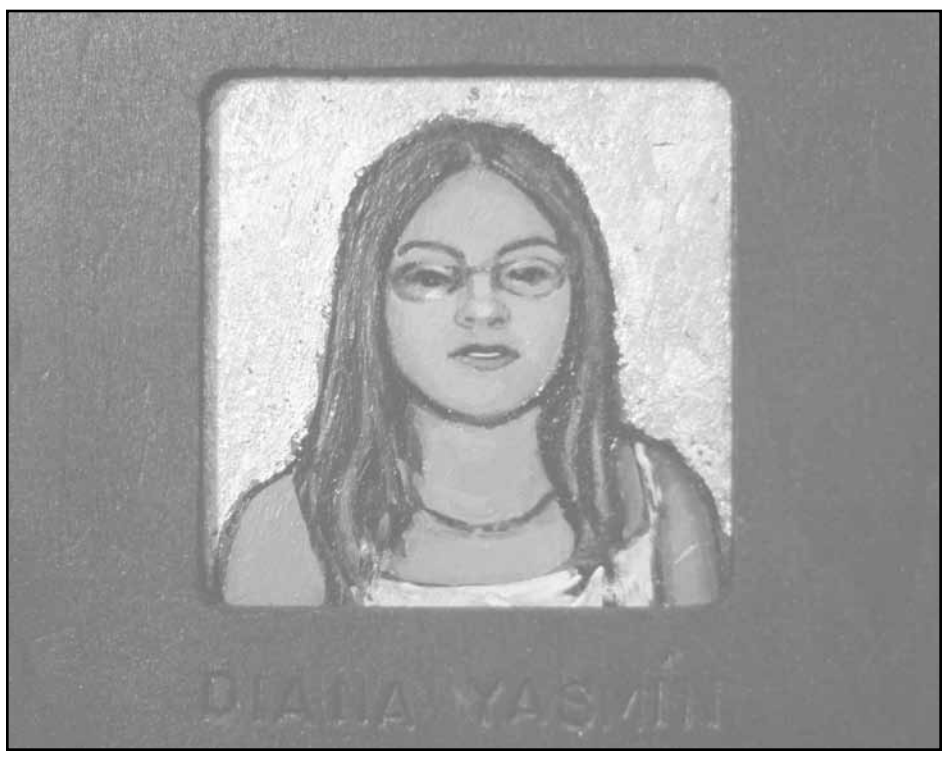
Opinion

Ciudad Juárez (cont.)

continued from page 1

The Way Out of Juárez, "and it looks like chaos but it is not. There is a new order in the wind and it sidesteps government, or, if pressed, steps on government. There is a new order in the wind and it cannot be discussed because any discussion might threaten the old order now rolling in the dirt."



From The Disappeared Senoritas of Ciudad Juarez. *Photo by Brian Connors-Manke.*

Altogether different

I sat in a sparsely populated room watching the 2001 documentary *Señorita Extraviada* by Lourdes Portillo. *Señorita Extraviada* tells the story of Juárez in a way that is now relatively common: a new economic order has made poor women targets of sinister violence. As much as I already knew about the feminicide, the film was still a blow. Portillo's documentary presents terrifying and gut-wrenching testimony from the families of disappeared women. We meet mothers who investigate and demand justice. We see a government that will not or—worse yet—cannot intercede.

The documentary's perspective is in line with much research on the situation. Scholars such as Mercedes Olivera note that poverty, unemployment, migration, and the disintegration of the peasant economy in Mexico became more acute after President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-94) accelerated neoliberal policies. With these problems came more violence against women. To put it concretely, factories along the Mexican-U.S. border have drawn poor migrants to cities like Juárez. Women take jobs at these *maquiladoras* and engage in other low-wage, temporary work. In a culture of conservative gender roles, this ruffles men's feathers.

After watching the documentary, though, that explanation didn't seem sufficient. Portillo's film reveals the sadism involved in the murders of the women—and suggests that the brutality is *planned, organized*. For instance, one family found that their daughter's factory work schedule had been changed the day before her disappearance, leaving her unable to travel to and from work with family. At that same factory, the women were regularly photographed on payday. This girl's photograph showed her beautiful and model-like, and the film speculated that she had been chosen based on her photo.

From The Disappeared Senoritas of Ciudad Juarez. *Photo by Brian Connors-Manke.*

Another woman, who had been taken but avoided death, told of photo albums kept by the kidnappers of the women and their torture, rape, and murder. *Planned, organized, documented*.

This isn't the type of violence one tends to see from men trying to control women. This isn't on par with the aggression used to put women back in their "rightful" place in the home. This system is altogether different.

Conceptualizing feminicide

Because Juárez defies conventional thinking about the serial murder of women, we have to find a new way to see the situation. That "new order in the wind" that Bowden perceives needs to be seen through a new lens. If we don't stretch, if we don't have the courage to really look at what is going on, if we don't see Juárez on its own terms, we have no way of combating the degradation and brutality that threatens everyone in Juárez and all of us connected to the border—and we are all connected to the border in one way or another.

Unfortunately, since 1993 when the disappearances began, conventional thinking has been the order of the day, a way to create red herrings to shield the real perpetrators. First, the women themselves were blamed for the disappearances ("they are prostitutes"; "they are bad girls"). Then, there was speculation about a single serial killer; an American expert was even brought in to give theories. Then, it was a satanic ritual; then, it was gangs. With as many women as have disappeared at this point, any of these people or groups could have joined the rampage. However, many doubt that the root of the feminicide lies in any of these explanations. This large scale, systematic killing suggests something more.

Scholars and activists conceptualize the widespread murder of women in Juárez, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and elsewhere by using the term *feminicide*. Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano define feminicide as "the absolute degradation and dehumanization of female bodies," arguing that it is a crime against "women's life and liberty." Other scholars go as far as to say that feminicide is a type of genocide against women.

It wasn't until recently that sexual atrocities were even recognized as part of genocide. During the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, it came to light that Serbian forces had implemented a system of mass rapes and killing of women as part of the "ethnic cleansing." To see some justice done, Natalie Nenadic, now a UK professor of philosophy, and Asja Armanda, a philosopher and Croatian-Jewish women's rights advocate, intervened. They brought international attention to the issue through a lawsuit against Radovan Karadzic, the head of the Bosnian Serbs and an architect of the genocide. The lawsuit accused Karadzic of genocidal sexual atrocities, making this the first time sexual atrocities became legally recognized. Before this landmark lawsuit, it was simply accepted that war meant rape, and that everyone did it. Nenadic and Armanda essentially said, "No, that is not what we see here."

Russian nesting dolls

In some ways, genocidal programs work like Russian nesting dolls: they are wars inside wars. For the twentieth century, we rely on World War II as fullest example of this process. "With regard to the Holocaust," Nenadic says, "initially people didn't see it as a distinct crime within all the atrocities that were happening during World War II. They saw the mass destruction of war. But this was a particular type of 'war' within a war. It wasn't something being carried out by all sides to the conflict; it was a concerted policy committed by one side only, a policy to destroy a particular ethnic group. That needed to be made visible."

In Yugoslavia, this war within a war included the killing of women in ways as vicious as the Juárez murders. While the sadism exhibited in the Serbian camps and in the Juárez borderland echo each other, another aspect of the violence seems strikingly different: Juárez isn't in the midst of "ethnic cleansing." Some of the targeted women are peasants from other regions of the country and some are indigenous, but this doesn't seem to be a state-sponsored campaign against them. (According to Marcela Lagarde y de los Ríos, who was on a Mexican special commission about the feminicides, if the state is sponsoring the one-by-one massacre in Juárez, it is through the impunity it has granted the perpetrators.)

If genocide is partly about the systematic extinction of a group, then Juárez doesn't seem to be genocidal. In fact, this feminicide wants the opposite: it wants a continual supply of women so that it can use their deaths to support other ends. Even if we can't call Juárez a genocide, we can say that there is a war going on—and that the feminicide is "nesting" inside another larger war.

A legacy

While neoliberal economic policies are blamed for the violence in Mexico, there's another element that plays a part: the legacy of Latin American repressive military regimes. State terrorism, abductions, and torture—of both women and men—has not been uncommon during Latin America's civil wars and repressive military reigns. When women activist-citizens were taken off the streets, their torture was sexualized and especially misogynistic. This type of political culture reinforced a social system that made violence against women normal. Additionally, amnesty laws in countries like Guatemala later let the perpetrators off the hook, creating a culture of impunity. In Mexico, a similar situation occurred when police officers in Mexico's Dirty War of the 1970s went on to become high-ranking officials in Chihuahua, the state where Ciudad Juárez is located.

Add to this a drug cartel war over distribution zones and control of drug markets flowing into the U.S. According to Olivera, "Narco-corruption is so great that official security structures have had to be continually replaced as gang members penetrate or bribe the police." There's a war over power, and the Mexican government is losing—if it hasn't lost already.

Still, though, how do the hundreds of disappeared women of Juárez fit into the picture? The cartel wars have plenty of casualties—men and women involved with the drug trafficking—but that doesn't seem to explain the feminicide, whose victims are not necessarily connected to cartels. The motivation for killing a double-crossing drug mule is different from snatching Silvia Arce, who disappeared in 1998 while collecting money for jewelry she'd sold to dancers.

As her mother Eva Arce tells the story, Silvia was waiting for her husband to pick her up when a white Cavalier took her away. People around the area knew that Silvia was a "good girl," but none would help Eva find her daughter. When she went to police and the DA's office, it seemed eerily as if officers and officials knew what was happening to Silvia. One said: "Ma'am when your daughter comes back, you will have to take her to a place for her to recover." Another told her: "We're just waiting for the order to go get her." They seemed to know something but refused to aid Eva.

Eva believes that "all of them knew where she was being held, and they never rescued her." A shadowy game was being played, and Silvia was a disposable pawn that allowed the game to continue.

The second state

When Bowden writes that "[t]here is a new order in the wind and it sidesteps government, or, if pressed, steps on government," he suggests that power belongs to organized networks that function largely outside the law. They act furtively yet boldly; they take people off the street in daylight; they photograph young women and then choose among them; they torture woman after woman, girl after girl with impunity.

Anthropologist Rita Laura Segato believes that Juárez has a "second state," an underworld that is "acting and shaping society from beneath the law." The act that creates and sustains

continued on page 8

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

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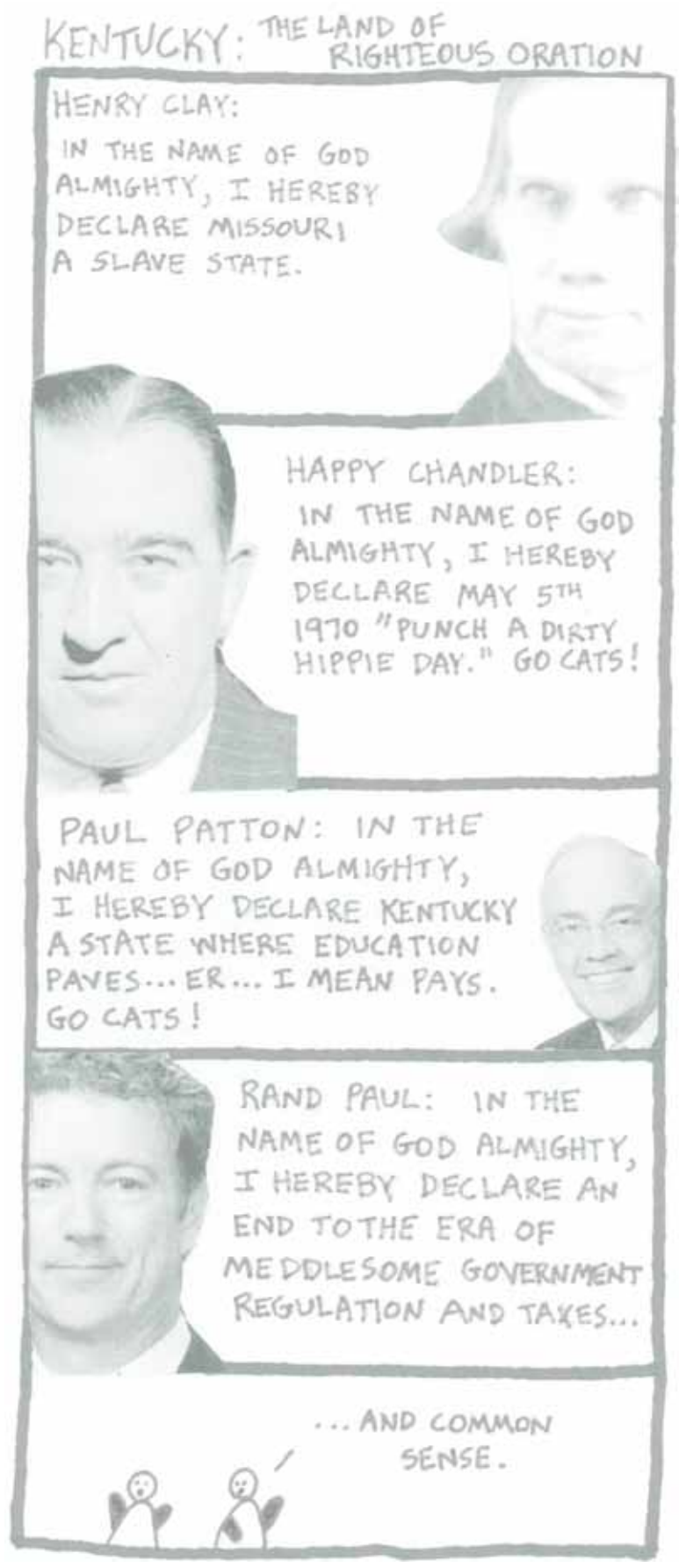

NoC Fundraiser Update

The NoC fundraiser was a learning experience. We raised $400 and secured a new friend while at Al's who sold these mini-ads on post-it notes to bar customers for an additional $32. (Hint, hint, others. You can do this, too: NoCeditors@yahoo.com). Thanks Charles, and thanks all of you below and everyone else who donated their hard-earned time, money, energy, voice, mind and body. We hope to roll out a form of community sustained journalism next issue. We're also always looking for interested ad partners interested in supporting our form of print media.

"You can't dismantle the masters house with the masters tools." —*Audre Lorde*

Thank you *North of Center* for creating a space to share stories, inspirations and struggle.

xoxo
Ondine Quinn

Support Independent Movements! Occupy.

Support Independent News! *NoC*.

Enku Ide

Future K!dZ
We would like for you to support unsigned music and like Future K!dz on Facebook and visit our youtube channel @ NotAverageTV
Matthew Ward and Chris Gilley

Greg Capillo

Will Rush

Film violence (cont.)

continued from page 5

If you believe that a disturbing portrayal is important and should be seen, you should respect contrary, disturbed and angry reactions. This is what you expected the film to do, therefore you should address its effects on those audiences. Do not dismiss these humanistic responses, engage in a dialogue that art demands of its audiences. Do not become complicit in the further mystification of experience. Directly engage with audience members' fear/confusion and, in the process, your own.

A problem with the usage of violence in contemporary film is that it has become an effect used to entertain and titillate. This is the ultimate failing of a filmmaker like Quentin Tarantino. He so desperately wants to be understood as a serious filmmaker, while also doing everything he can to be one of the cool kids. In order to remain popular, his films do little to understand the violence that is liberally spread around like party favors.

A critic of these types of films produced one of the most powerful and disturbing films of the last few years. Michael Haneke's *Cache* (France/Austria: 2005) explores the after effects of repressed systemic and individual acts of aggression/violence. It is minimalist and subtle in its presentation of violence, but the impact is long-lasting, reverberating in my mind still, causing me to question the impact of individual and societal repression of violent histories. It forces us to reflect on our own societal repression of historical violence and our individual role in this repression. Perhaps even more devastating is the subtle portrayal of the long-lasting, generational effects of violence.

Instances of violence can also cause us to focus on what gives life dignity and what is noble and ignoble in the human condition. The legendary Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène's last film, *Moolaadé* (Burkina Faso/Senegal: 2004), demonstrates how cinematic art has the potential to change the world. Its portrayal of structural and individual violence speaks to audiences around the world. In protagonist Collè's struggle to speak out and stand up against tradition-bound violence, it presents an imaginative opportunity for the audience to consider its own society and its stance within it.

The violence of war

A recent BBC/HBO film, *Conspiracy* (UK/USA: Kenneth Branagh, 2001), has led me to consider how problematic the violence of war is when represented in films. Any representation of the actual battles of warfare, even in explicitly anti-war films, becomes an opportunity for people to glorify the heroics of the participants. Former marine Anthony Swofford, in his memoir *Jarhead* (2003), called these films "War Porn" because they were used to pump up new recruits for the Gulf War. They didn't watch nationalistic celebrations of war as good, like John Wayne's *Green Berets* (USA: 1968). Instead, they screened traditional anti-war films like *Apocalypse Now* (USA: 1979) and *Full Metal Jacket* (USA: 1987).

This is where *Conspiracy* is different from other war films. It delves into the inner world of power kept hidden in traditional narratives. It goes into the legal process of the 1942 Wannsee Conference in which NAZI military and officials negotiated the "Final Solution" for the perceived problem of the Jews. The film powerfully engages us in the use of pens and words as weapons against peoples. At the same time, for me, it provokes a consideration of our own current legal minds that institute "torture memos," "secret prison camps," "extraordinary renditions," and "assassination policies." This is violence perpetrated on a massive scale.

A last thought. Legitimated violence—sanctioned by the state, or other social forces--usually is a clear indicator of the boundaries of society: what is permitted, what is forbidden, and who controls these boundaries. Always reflect on what those boundaries are, who they benefit and who suffers, and how they are masked/legitimated as normal.

Ciudad Juárez (cont.)

continued from page 7

loyalty to this mafia-like brotherhood is the mutilation and murder of women. In order words, these young women are sacrificed in order to maintain the underworld of the second state. When these men (sometimes with female accomplices) abduct, rape, and leave the women dead in the desert or in empty lots, they are proving that they belong to the world that haunts and now controls civil society in Juárez.

This seems to be the root of the sadism. This is why the feminicide isn't a genocide intent on eradicating poor, racialized women from the borderlands; rather, it needs a continual supply to bind men to this other world of power, cruelty, barbarism.

To return to the metaphor of wars structured like Russian nesting dolls: the disappeared women of Juárez are that tiniest doll around which all the other dolls form their contours. The dirty war of earlier decades, the cartel wars, the war against equitable economic structures all "nest" around the violation of these women. The biggest war, though, is between this second state and civil society. Segato writes, "I understand these to be crimes perpetrated against us, addressed to us and for us, the law-abiding citizens."

As Bowden points out, this is the war we have difficultly perceiving. Because if we recognize it, then we must admit that our old order—a society that guaranteed safety and a measure of political, personal, and economic freedom—is "now rolling in the dirt." In the new order, there's no firm distinction between the U.S. and Mexico. There's simply a continuum from south to north, along which there is a struggle of life against death.

So when political candidates propose a higher, bigger, better wall along the U.S.-Mexican border, you know that they don't recognize the new reality—or that they don't want you to see it.

Castlewood Neighborhood Tree Planting

November 12 & 19

Meet 9am at the Loudoun House
Bring a shovel or a rake

Questions: call 335.4753