

## BUILD champions Affordable Housing Trust Fund

By Beth Connors-Manke

On Thursday, March 17, foregoing their St. Patrick’s Day festivities, a group of 81 citizens attended the Urban County Council Meeting. These 81 citizens, members of BUILD, were there to support the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF).

On the docket that night was a presentation about the AHTF by Commonwealth Economics, a firm hired by the Council to study the fiscal, economic, and social impact of an AHTF in Lexington.

“Housing trust funds are dedicated sources of revenue to help low- and moderate-income people achieve affordable housing,” Commonwealth Economics writes in its report. “In most cases, a government agency—usually an

existing housing agency— administers the housing trust fund and awards grants and loans to local governments, non-profit developers, for-profit developers, and, in some cases, individuals, for a variety of low- and moderate-income housing activities.”

The study found that a local AHTF would, on average, produce approximately 470 housing opportunities each year, along with 150 new construction jobs and 320 rehabilitation projects.

The research also found that “more than 363 new jobs will be directly and indirectly supported by trust fund investment.” Additionally, “more than \$43.3 million of direct, indirect and induced economic activity will be generated from trust fund investment.”

Imagine that: working for equity

can be good for Lexington socially and economically.

### Veteran Action

These 81 citizens (and their BUILD brethren) are veterans of community involvement, in general, and advocacy for the AHTF, in particular. BUILD (Building a United Interfaith Lexington through Direct Action) began working on justice issues regarding housing as far back as 2007. In 2008 BUILD, with other organizations, proposed an AHTF to ameliorate some of the housing inequities in Lexington.

At BUILD’s request, in spring 2008 then-Mayor Newberry agreed to put together a taskforce on an AHTF. The commission, quick on its feet, issued a report by September 2008.

As its yardstick, the AHTF Commission defined affordable housing as “housing that requires families and individuals to pay no more than thirty percent (30%) of their income for housing and housing related costs.” Rent has increased twice as fast as wages, and rental costs will grow by 33% in the second half of this decade, according to the report. To put this in perspective: rents increased by 9% from 2000-2005. In its research, the AHTF Commission found that a two-bedroom apartment in Lexington on the average cost \$533 in 2001. Last year the two-bedroom average was \$775.

Of the rental households in Fayette County, more than 45% currently pay more than one-third of their

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## Kenn Minter’s not from here

Comic artist signing new book at Morris

By Danny Mayer

Around NoC headquarters, we simply refer to Kenn Minter as “the professional.” With a full-time staff comprised totally of donated labor, bi-weekly commitments are tough to come by, and deadlines even more rare. Kenn’s contributions to the NoC comics page have remained steady and on deadline since our eighth issue (Aug 2009), when he began showing strips from his ongoing series *I’m Not From Here* on our back page. Since the beginning of this year, Minter has been contributing a new serial strip, *Fierce Company*, about a superhero with an excitable nose.

“The thing that makes Kenn professional,” I recall layout editor Keith Halladay explaining to me on many a night our first year in print, “is that he knows his space. With Minter you know you’re gonna get product, and that product is gonna be quality, and that quality is gonna fit in a pre-defined area.”

Coming from a layout editor of a print publication, and a generally cantankerous one at that, there is little higher praise.

Of course, Keith only knows half the story. Minter began drawing for publication in the late 80s while still in high school, creating and distributing several zines. Once he got to the University of Kentucky, Kenn struck up space for a comic at the *Kentucky Kernel*. By the early 90s, he had a regular strip in Ace. About six years ago, his *I’m not from here* strip appeared regularly in *Nougat*. If Keith calls Kenn professional, it no doubt owes to the fact that, in one guise or another across four decades, he has steadily churned out quality product comics for readers of local papers to enjoy.

If you want to read Lexington’s public political history in graphic printed form, go hit the Joel Pett archives. For those wanting to glimpse a thick vein of Lexington’s cultural history over the past twenty-five years as it’s passed from the Reagan eighties through the multi-cultural nineties and onto the Obama aughts, from zines to free print weeklies on through to online publication, from fact to fantasy, Minter’s work might be the most consistently visible.

Of course, this is another way of saying that Kenn Minter has contributed to this city’s culture of freely distributed print and online literature for a very long time now. This observation should be enough to get your curious self out to Morris Book Shop on April 2 to meet and thank Kenn, and to buy one of his several moderately priced comic books. But if it doesn’t, please read the below accompanying review of Minter’s newest book, a collection of strips from his *I’m not from here* series.

### On *I’m not from here*: another book of this sort of thing

In 1999, Kenn Minter returned to Lexington after a several year stint in

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## Walking north side streets

City infrastructure on North Broadway and Limestone

By Dave Cooper

After much community discussion and debate, construction will commence this summer on the construction of 1.6 miles of sidewalks on both sides of Bates Creek Road, from the Lansdowne Center to an expensive-sounding housing development called “The Enclave.” The project is supposed to be completed by Fall 2011, at a cost of just over \$1 million dollars. There was initially some controversy about the project, even though the need for sidewalks was

clear from the well-worn dirt path along the side of the busy road.

I’m happy for the pedestrians in the Bates Creek Road area, and I’m happy that the Enclavians can now easily walk to the Embry’s in Lansdowne in order to purchase coats made from the carcasses of small, tortured dead animals. But I feel discouraged that it has taken almost four years from the time that the need for the sidewalks was first identified (via a public survey in 2007) until the time the concrete will be poured.



*Pedestrian troubles in north side need city attention.*

I bike a lot on North Limestone, and I see more pedestrians walking in these neighborhoods than along Bates Creek. But of course, most of them are just poor folks, and they probably just didn’t have the time or inclination to fill out that survey on needed sidewalks back in 2007.

The west side of North Limestone is a series of parking lots and puddles and gravel patches with trash piles in front of neglected businesses and older homes. It’s an uninviting place to walk, to say the least.

But even worse is North Broadway, from New Circle Road south to the Legends baseball stadium. At the underpass for the railroad bridge over North Broadway, the road has been cut through a limestone hill. About six months ago, street maintenance crews came in with backhoes and dug out the drainage ditches along the road, apparently to try and solve the flooding problems that occur beneath the railroad overpass. Perhaps not realizing how heavily this area is used by pedestrians (there are no sidewalks, after all) the crews piled much loose limestone on the side of the road, where a well-worn pedestrian dirt path used to be.

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# The Neighborhood

## Panhandling: a way to make a friend

### Misadventures in the city

By Beth Connors-Manke

Indianapolis, the 1980s: When I was younger, sometimes my dad would say, “Your mother made another friend today.” I have a big family, and few of us have the social skills necessary for intentionally making friends. We’re equal measures congenial, feisty, and reserved.

So, when my dad tells me that my mom “made a friend,” it means that some stranger in line at Kroger or between bolts at Jo-Ann Fabrics just started talking to my mom and wouldn’t stop. Being congenial yet reserved (she’s the least feisty of the bunch), my mom listens and sometimes adds a few comments.

Lexington, earlier this winter: Beth is walking to work, truckin’ on down N. Lime, approaching that bastion of high tuition prices, Sayre School. Somebody starts yelling at me:

“Hey lady! Hey girl! Hey young girl!”

It is not my habit to respond to people who yell at me on the street, so I ignore him.

“Hey girl! Hey girl! Hey girl! Hey girl! Hey girl!”

Now I’m annoyed—enough so that I whirl around and yell back: “What?!!!”

“You got any money for me? A cigarette?”

Nope, I’ve got neither for yeller man, so I keep walking.

It takes me about twenty feet to realize that yeller panhandlin’ man is here to stay, as he begins padding along with me. I figure I have two choices: 1) tell him to bug off, which would create more drama than I want on my walk to work; 2) let him walk with me until he gets tired and peels off to panhandle someone else.

When it became clear that yeller man was going to be my “friend for the day” (that’s what my mom calls them), I renamed him (in my head) “Leon.” Leon had dreads topped by a winter hat with a big yellow bow on it; his face was one of the most beautiful I’ve ever seen. Dark, a bit worn and weary, but wonderfully etched—a face an artist should sketch.

Leon told me the he was staying with his brother, and that his mother was from Chicago, and that he’d been living in Cinci before, and that he was staying with his brother, and that his mother... We cycled through this story innumerable times during our amble. I’d ask questions every once in a while to get clarification or to simply participate, but I couldn’t ever bring him out of the broken record. I don’t think

he recognized that he was circling through the same stories.

When we got to McDonald’s on UK campus, Leon asked me for money and a cigarette again. Seeing as we were still in the same narrative, I said “no,” and he yelled at me again. I kept walking to my office. I’m guessing Leon and I walked a mile together on a chilly morning. When I saw him later that day, he didn’t seem to recognize me. I appreciate what my experience with Leon brought me: a little more compassion, a little less fear, and a sense that sometimes (not every time) panhandling is about something more than money.

There have been some discussions around my neighborhood recently about panhandling; people feel it has become more aggressive, especially around Al’s Bar at Sixth and Lime. I’ve been pressed fairly hard there late at night and sympathize with those complaints, especially when made by women approached after dark. If I walked alone at night (I don’t) and Leon had approached me as he did, the scenario would have proceeded much differently: good chance I would have run or called the cops.

But after my experience with Leon, I’ve been thinking differently about panhandling: it’s a good barometer

of the social tensions in a city. Being approached for money, or approaching someone else for money, puts us face-to-face (literally) with the issues of class, race, and gender in Lexington. Black Leon approaches white Beth in front of rich Sayre. Further south on Lime, white woman panhandles a Latino business man in a suit. Around the same area, haggard white man approaches a family dressed for Rupp Arena. Further south still, black middle-aged man walks onto the Two Key’s porch to ask a group of young white folk for gas money.

Every time these scenarios happen, we have to see what we may want to ignore in our city: that there are racial and ethnic differentials that sometimes also fall along economic lines; that there’s addiction and mental illness so debilitating that it leaves people to wander the streets; that being approached by a stranger can feel dangerous for a woman or for undocumented immigrants.

Some cities aggressively try to eliminate panhandling in order to wipe out evidence of how the community is failing or simply how broken a person can become. But we do need to see our failures and our brokenness; facing the suffering in our city is the only hope we have for ameliorating it.

## Slow Flow Yoga

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## in-FEED



[closing the fresh food gap through the utilization of urban in-fill.]

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## Park Market site selection

### Organization changes mission, meeting dates

By Danny Mayer

*This is the fifth in a series calling on city council to actively facilitate the establishment of five public city farmer’s markets on public park land.*

It’s too bad that, when given the chance in last November’s elections, Lexingtonians chose not to elect a grocer to represent them as one of three (3) at large city council members. Perhaps a former grocery store owner like Don Pratt might have responded with a bit more interest, experience and knowledge to a series of recent articles I’ve written on our local government’s need to actively promote better access to public farmer’s markets.

As it is, the three pieces I personally sent to all city council members save George Myers (whose emails still get returned to me) have thus far yielded two replies. One informed me

that an outside group was looking at the topic and would report back to council at some undefined time in the future; the other refused help, in part because my ideas for having the city host five (5) weekly small farmer’s markets on city park lands scattered throughout Lexington did not constitute an example of “looking for opportunities and working on related issues as they arise.”

So while the people you all voted for mostly haven’t been interested in asking how exactly I envision city participation in starting park markets—even though over the past 5 weeks I’ve sent them three articles totaling 4500 words, all three of which have directly addressed them by rank—some others of you have asked me.

So here it goes. Decide for yourself if these ideas are, apparently, so far-fetched that they have yet to elicit a city council follow-up along the lines

of, “Hey constituent, how would that work?”

#### Problem: (small) Solution

The majority of city funding and resources this past decade have focused on the development of Lexington’s downtown. Recently released 2010 census data, however, indicate that downtown’s population has decreased thirteen percent, and that the greatest percentage of those leaving downtown seem to have been black and hispanic residents. As the city continues to discuss high dollar projects like creative Rupp renovations and bourbon soaked TIF funds, several of the city’s historically poor and marginalized demographic groups seem to be disembarking from the very places the city has directed its money and energy.

These suburban homes around River Hill Park comprise one of the most dense parts of the city—way out by Man O War Boulevard. Density might help sustain a park market.

The primary purpose of park markets is to ensure that increasingly important community sources of food are available throughout the city, rather than in the city’s core, where most Lexington farmer’s markets currently reside. Unlike freakishly expensive downtown projects for private development, locating small markets on public city land may thus act as a force pushing the city to better allocate its capital—financial, social, creative, human—to the needs of the people living throughout its confines rather than to those of the diminishing wealthy few in the city center. Things grow from this concept.

While the goal should be self-funding markets, as it does with TIFF

funds the city can absorb early losses to support a future for places and businesses that the city deems desirable. City leaders direct many millions in public money to maintain Lexington’s expensive competitive market advantages in, say, the horse industry, or the Rupp Arena industry, or the creative class industry, or the Top 20 university industry. In interfering in the as yet uncompetitive Suburban Farmer’s Market market, city funded park markets can also develop, much more cheaply than TIFF, demand for private sector products like tomatoes, butter-nut squash, honey, borage and the like.

In other words, for way less money, the city can more directly impact the lives of Lexington citizens, most of whom do not live downtown, and in the process it can generate new businesses more efficiently.

#### Nuts and bolts in bullet format for policy wonks

**Size:** Small. Two to three vendors at the maximum for the first season, unless unexpected demand and capacity to meet demand both occur. Aiming small keeps the city’s initial monetary investment small, and it doesn’t demand immediate community buy-in and participation. It allows the city to manage markets more effectively, and the community to build trust in the institution. The communities using it are able to weave their needs and products into its growth.

**Days/times:** Ideally, park markets would develop their own operating hours of as a way to supplement, not compete with, other nearby park markets and farmer’s markets. If it were me,



DANNY MAYER

These suburban homes around River Hill Park comprise one of the most dense parts of the city—way out by Man O War Boulevard. Density might help sustain a park market.

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Walking (cont.)

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The loose rock is unstable, and twists and rolls under your foot as you try and navigate the path. Walking in the four-lane street is almost unthinkable, due to the heavy and fast-moving traffic.

I spent about two hours on a recent Saturday morning with a shovel, removing loose limestone rock from the path. Several pedestrians walked by quietly as I worked, a young man in a large black pickup truck yelled something insulting and unintelligible at me as he sped past. It wasn't a fun job, but the path is a little better now.

As I worked, I struck up a conversation with Victoria Oliver and Elizabeth Martin, who live in the Northside Apartments (next to the baseball stadium). Elizabeth was walking to work at the Hardee's on the corner of New Circle and North Broadway, and Victoria was walking with her. I asked them about their commute to work.

"It's too dangerous," said Oliver, pointing to the rocky path. "I trip and fall into the street. It almost gives me an anxiety attack!"

Elizabeth mentioned that a co-worker at Hardee's, Rhonda, had twisted her ankle on the path. "And it's worse when it rains."

They told me some stories about various critters that they've seen

walking along the path: snakes, raccoons and possums, which frighten them. But the scariest thing is the railroad overpass, which has huge concrete abutments that act as a bottleneck for North Broadway. Underneath the bridge, there is no room for pedestrians at all.

"I like to walk—it's good exercise. But it's not very safe," said Oliver. "I have to squeeze through under that railroad bridge." I asked them about installing sidewalks along the road, and they both liked the idea. "I think it would make it a lot safer," said Oliver.

I have even seen mothers pushing baby strollers in the street on North Broadway, because there is nowhere else for them to walk.

A lot of northsiders walk to Wal-Mart and to the bus stops. Some are recent immigrants, some are poor and can't afford cars. It seems to me that the folks that need sidewalks the most—poor folks without any transportation—are being ignored.

Maybe nothing can be done about the bottleneck under the railroad bridge, but there definitely need to be more sidewalks on North Broadway and North Limestone. Contact your LFUCG city council representative and Mayor Jim Gray, and tell them that the north side folks need sidewalks more than the Enclavians.



This is not a safe pedestrian thoroughway.

Minter (cont.)

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California. By this time, the graphic illustrator had already authored several comic strips for a variety of publications. *I'm not from here* grew out of Kenn's relocation back to the bluegrass.

"At first it was just sketches from my sketch book, and I had this title, 'I'm not from here,' but nothing to place it on," Minter recalls. "I thought what the hell, I'll do an autobiographical comic strip and call it I'm not from here."

The title reflects a certain distance and unease with his adopted city. Minter first moved to Lexington from Indiana (by way of Delaware and Louisville) with his family while still young. He grew up with a strong sense of not belonging, of not being from here. "We moved to Lexington when I was 11. It was just so different from everywhere else we'd lived. Maybe it was because I was going into my teenage years, too, but I never really felt like a Lexingtonian."

"I was too much of a freak," Minter continues. "There's this 'turn a blind eye conservatism' about Lexington...I can't grok with it." (Possibly related sidenote: Minter seems to have been let go—fired—from every local publication gig he's held.)

As a recurring strip developed over ten years on his online blog, *I'm not from here* riffs off the genre of autobiography; the content plays with the immediacy of sketchbook writing and often humorous feelings of displacement as it glides over the daily life of white, male thirty-something Kenn.

We meet family members, friends, acquaintances, neighbors. We see the comic writer at parties, driving in the car, walking around town, heading to a strange uncle's place, taking a trip through the southwest. Peppered

in liberally are breaks and reminders of the reality and fantasy of writing: Kenn getting writer's block, Kenn contemplating ending his autobiographical strip, Kenn wondering about the social makeup of gnomes, Kenn sketching a new line of eccentric comic superheroes. The effect is to pull the reader into an immediate world of fact and fantasy.

*I'm not from here* also speaks, often humorously, to a different sort of dislocation. Minter has grown up a white southern male during the age of multiculturalism. His comics tend to emphasize a certain sort of cultural disconnectedness amidst all the plugged-in connections developed over the past 20 years. Minter goes to many parties, travels the streets of Lexington and beyond, but his observations are often detached, taking place somewhere else. It's as if the strips navigate the learning curve for a new many cultured age.

*I'm not from here* might be considered as a sort of grown-up *Seinfeld*, filled with observant characters who attempt to navigate the new realities of different cultural authorities not subservient to the default white, male perspective. The joke is often on Minter himself as he learns—being mocked for feeling uneasy about attending an all gay party, displaying poor parenting skills, not following protocol at a tex-mex burrito place staffed by a hispanic female—though not always.

Unlike *Seinfeld* Minter doesn't just go for the joke. Peppered into his strips are daily moments of connection and missed connection, of getting the joke and obstinate refusal. Some days Minter seems to capture minor successes, moments of clarity and communication and resolution. Others, he's content to just note that the guy walking on the street, about whom he

BUILD (cont.)

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gross household income on rent. This means that these households are not affordably housed. Worse yet, 18% of renter households pay more than half of their income for housing, leaving these neighbors in danger of becoming homeless, according to the Central Kentucky Homelessness and Housing Initiative.

For two years after he commissioned the report, then-Mayor Newberry publicly refused at BUILD's annual Nehemiah Action to support the funding of the AHTF. Twice he told BUILD's large assembly—and residents who benefit most from more affordable housing—"no."

Believing in the necessity and the community benefit of a local AHTF, BUILD members and their allies have continued to champion the cause. At the March 17 council meeting, eight citizens testified to the need for an AHTF. One speaker, Mary Alice Pratt, held up what appeared to be Mayor Jim Gray's campaign materials and, firmly but courteously, asked the mayor to remain true to his pre-election promises. Among the other speakers were three pastors from local churches as well as citizens from across the city. Councilmembers Chris Ford (first district) and Diane Lawless (third district) both spoke in support of the fund. Lawless affirmed that the AHTF would uplift not just individual families, but entire neighborhoods. As a member of the original commission, Ford has long been a proponent of the fund.

**Broad Benefits**

The proposed revenue stream for the AHTF is a local insurance tax. Commonwealth Economics analyzed three rates: a .5% increase, a .75% increase, and a 1% increase. By it's estimates, the impact per household would be between \$15 and \$35 annually, depending on the rate of increase in the local insurance tax.

Acknowledging the potential negative aspects of an AHTF (the tax itself, administrative costs for the fund, and impacts on the insurance industry), the economic impact analysis found that the city's investment in an AHTF had broad benefits. Not only would it yield economic stimulus in the construction industry (at an average 8:1 leverage ratio, it would yield "\$24 million of annual direct spending on construction activities" and approximately 161 jobs), but it also would benefit related industries such as insurance and real estate.

And then there are the social benefits of securing affordable housing for our community.

In terms of health, the report found that "housing trust fund

investment in both new construction projects and the rehabilitation of existing housing, which is often dilapidated and hazardous, has the potential to move Lexington families out of dangerous, unfit living situations." By making housing more affordable, families can devote more of their budgets to nutritious food and health care. Better access to affordable housing can also reduce residential overcrowding, thereby limiting the spread of infectious disease.

The study also noted that "a stable and decent housing situation has been shown to play a major role in creating a much more conducive and positive environment in which to raise children." In other words, affordable housing can also mean more stability for families, which can affect children's education: "studies have continuously shown a strong correlation between the frequency of moves during childhood and below-average performance in school." On a related note, affordable housing can allow the victims of domestic violence to escape abusive situations.

BUILD members have long been convinced of the value of investing in an AHTF, and now two reports, one commissioned by former-Mayor Newberry and now one presented by Commonwealth Economics to Mayor Gray and the Council, have also shown the broad benefits of an AHTF for the entire community.

**Still Committed**

At the March 17 council meeting, the Council agreed to send the AHTF to the Economic and Community Development Committee for further analysis and consideration. Firmly committed to the fund, BUILD has asked the Mayor and all Urban County Council members to attend the organization's annual Nehemiah Action.

BUILD's large assembly, the Nehemiah Action is where BUILD holds public officials accountable for justice in Lexington. Last year, more than 1,300 people attended the event. In addition to housing, this year BUILD has been working on issues related to health care for uninsured adults, youth with drug offenses in the court system, middle school suspension rates, payday lending, and access to employment for ex-offenders. Clearly, there's lots of work for citizens to do here in Lexington. Roll up your sleeves.

*BUILD invites all to attend this year's Nehemiah Action, which will be held Monday, April 11, at Imani Baptist Church (1555 Georgetown Road). Doors open at 6:15 P.M., and the Action starts at 7 P.M. It is recommended you arrive early and car-pool, if possible. If you have questions, call the BUILD office at 859.367.0152.*



and his companion have been talking while they pass by in a car, is simply hooked on too many meds.

*Minter's first collection of I'm not from here strips, 2007's Slightly embellished, collected many of his sketches produced between 2001 and 2004. His second, the newly released another book of this*

sort of thing, captures the strip's next five years, from 2004-2009. Kenn will be signing his new book at Morris Book Shop on Saturday, April 2, 6:00 PM. Morris Books is located on Southland Drive. You can catch Kenn's Fierce Company strip in this paper's comic section, or online weekly at [www.comicrelated.com](http://www.comicrelated.com) to check out new strips of I'm not from here.

MARCH 30, 2011

Music

Live music to get yo’ freak on to: 3/31-4/8

Thursday, March 31

Idiot Glee *with* the Butchers  
*Al’s Bar; 601 N. Limestone. 9 P.M.*

Those of us actually old enough to remember when cassettes were the primary portable music medium do not look back on that time with fondness. For your ten bucks in the record shop you got crap sound and the promise that one day—maybe not tomorrow, but soon, and when you least expect it—you’d be fishing miles of magnetic tape out of some tiny crevice between your deck’s play head and eject mechanism, praying to the music gods the tape wouldn’t snap, and then snapping it yourself because you got so fed up with the damned thing.

Then you had two options: get out the cellophane and try to splice the tape back together, or just chuck the cassette in the trash and sit around and for CDs to show up. And god help you if you left a cassette in a hot car; I’ll never forget the anguish of discovering my Memorex copy of *Run-D.M.C.* turned to Hershey’s syrup one torrid July afternoon, a quarter-century ago.

That was the one redeeming attribute of the cassette: if you owned a dual deck it was easy to make copies of other cassettes, which vexed the record companies (if they could only have seen the future!), but even that advantage disappeared with the advent of the CD burner. So, to paraphrase Sam Jackson, yes the cassette deserved to die, and I hope it burns in hell.

But now the cool and trendy kids have “rediscovered” the cassette, and evidently they’ve even begun releasing their cool, trendy music on this godforsaken medium. I’m sure there’s some functional reason that I can’t quite grasp, like...no, can’t quite grasp it. But you people must know something.

So obviously Idiot Glee is releasing music on cassette, else the discussion above would have been pointless. And what’s on these cassettes? Strange, unearthly sounds. Abstract emotions made (a)tonal, really. Some tracks are sort of ecstatic, and others are narcotized...there is even fear sometimes, of loneliness maybe, of the void and what’s beyond it, but there’s beauty and wonder too, a *joie de vivre*, a reveling in a world gone mad:

A world that resurrected the audio cassette.

Friday, April 1

G-Funk All Stars  
*Buster’s; 899 Manchester. 9 P.M.*

Now, G-Funk play the kind of music that you *used* to get on your cassettes. I mean, a whole generation of folks had their Prince on nothing but pristine eighth-inch polyester film. But since these days prices for Prince tickets start at \$147,625.00 before surcharges, it’s a lot more economical to go see the G-Funk All Stars, who will play a range of previously cassette-only tracks for your bootie-shaking pleasure.

Michael Locke Band  
*The Crossroad; 286 Southland; 9 P.M.*

Michael Locke is a veteran guitarist out of Dayton with a well-oiled blues machine behind him, but what I’d really like to promote is the venue itself, which has been around for more than a few months and may have escaped some readers’ attentions, given this paper’s geographic focus.

So if you don’t know it, let me tell you: The Crossroad is pretty great. First there’s the menu, which is heart-attack inducing all the way, but...man, they put bacon in their pulled-pork sandwiches. That’s worth an angioplasty or two. Add an airy-yet-warm atmosphere and solid acoustics, and you’ve got a sweet place for music. Go, if you haven’t yet.

Saturday, April 2

The Felice Brothers *with*  
The Diamond Doves  
*Buster’s; 899 Manchester. 9 P.M.*

Prior to audio cassettes the world



Run-D.M.C.



Memorex high-bias audio cassette.



Saint Bernadette: “boozy, erotically charged.”



Jessica Lea Mayfield.

had vinyl and 8-track, and those mediums frequently communicated the music of Dylan, Donovan, and Simon & Garfunkel. You couldn’t duplicate unless you had reel-to-reel, and most folks didn’t, so you couldn’t make anything like a mixtape. This gave rise to K-tel collections, which, we sometimes forget, were immensely popular throughout the 1970s and into the ‘80s.

And that’s a bit like listening to The Felice Brothers; it’s as though you’re listening to a folk-leaning K-tel collection circa 1972, but instead of “Scarborough Fair” and “Jennifer Jupiter” there are all these songs that sound familiar, even though you’ve never heard them before.

This isn’t necessarily a good thing. At times, listening to their recorded work, that the band seems to be channeling a whole swath of Vietnam-era bands, moving from “in the style of...” to “in the style of...” on successive tracks. Their adeptness at it makes it tolerable, and even inviting, and they do throw in enough ironic dissonance to keep things sounding fresh-ish, but you wonder if they’re still searching for a sound of their own. Come to Buster’s and help them find what they’re looking for.

Thursday, April 7

Saint Bernadette  
*Natasha’s; 112 Esplanade. 9 P.M.*

I make no secret of the fact that we in the NoC music department have no special connections or contacts in the local or regional scene, that we are too lazy to develop any, and that all we do when constructing this biweekly calendar is browse through venue calendars and band web sites, which is something you could well do for yourself, but are perhaps yet lazier than we are, and thus find this little exercise useful in some small way.

So when decided to select Saint Bernadette for a preview-ette, understand that we only did so because we were surfing the Natasha’s site and ran across the following passage:

“Led by femme fatale vocalist Meredith DiMenna, the quintet offers a boozy, erotically charged aural accord that meshes a disparate template of psychedelic-meets-arena rock, with a peppering of jazz, all candy-coated with sing-along choruses.”

Since we perk up mightily at phrases like “femme fatale,” we began frantically image-searching speedily discovering more about Ms. DiMenna’s musical vision, which, as it turns out, does encompass something resembling arena rock, and alternately mines the same sort of dozy, seductive bedroom pop Mazzy Star exploited so effectively a couple of decades ago. So imagine a bastard child of Hope Sandoval and Lita Ford and go feel the charge.

Friday, April 8

Jessica Lea Mayfield *with*  
Daniel Martin Moore  
*Cosmic Charlie’s; 388 Woodland. 9 P.M.*

Look, it’s late. We chose this show because Jessica Lea Mayfield is a truly interesting musician with an uncommon take on American music, but there’s no way anything useful is gonna get written at this hour. Therefore, for our convenience, and yours, we’ve presented you with the following free-verse summary of key descriptors appearing in her official artist biography:

Mature; forthright.  
Dangerous!  
Minimal, unadorned,  
bare-bones...insinuating.  
Guarded: dark.  
Upbeat?

And since we’ve still got some space to fill, here’s Daniel Martin Moore’s bio in haiku:

otherworldly good  
fresh spiritual classic  
family-friendly

That’s poetry, working for you.  
—Buck Edwards

# Film & Media

## Getting off on the *Shortbus* American sex and sexuality

By Michael Dean Benton

It is a common truism that reality can't be copyrighted, but it can be manufactured, packaged, and marketed. Increasingly in our interconnected and digital world we are confronted by a plethora of images designed to influence us to buy certain realities. No images are more prevalent or artificial than the images of sex as products that circulate throughout American culture. From marketing pitches, to romance novels, to feature films, to internet peep shows: we are a prudish society that feeds on illusions of sex.

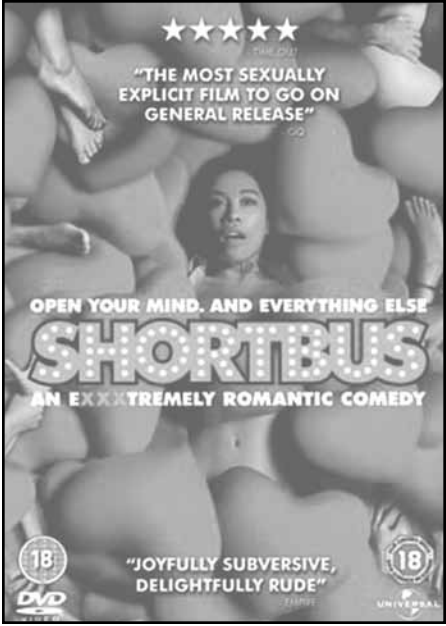
In these circulating narratives, from the idealistically romantic fairytales of Hallmark and Hollywood to the mindless sexual Olympics of contemporary pornography, sex is represented as a skill to be mastered in an individualistic quest to be number one. Interpersonal relations are psychological mind games which involve prescribed "rules" for success, and the pursuit of sexual fulfillment becomes a modern variant of bucket-listing as we check off various acts necessary to feel good about ourselves.

If we fail to perform to the level of these constructed fantasies then there is a new pharmaceutical pill (for a price) to make us hard, to renew our vigor, or to chase away our anxieties. If we feel our interpersonal skills need polishing there is always the advice of a new guru, in a multitude of packaged forms, presented for a fee, available to ease your anxieties.

Unrealistic body images, as destructive as they are in the development of our self-image and self-confidence, are doubled in their effect by the unrealistic expectations of contemporary sexual myths. In American society, sexuality is often understood as a private and sacrosanct aspect of

our identity. Fragmented, separated, isolated, impermeable, we become easier targets for unrealistic myths and romantic fantasies.

John Cameron Mitchell's 2006 film *Shortbus* is an honest exploration of a society that fetishizes sex, but rarely truthfully addresses issues of human sexuality. Despite the uncensored trailer's emphasis (easily googled), the very real sex in the film is minimal, although very explicit. Instead, *Shortbus* is a powerful exploration of our psychosexual hang-ups, our collective/individual pain (the setting is post



9/11 New York City), the need for a candid exploration of human sexuality and, most importantly, the redemptive power of human engagement.

The first ten minutes are sexually explicit and, even though I was watching it at home the first time, I felt myself blush intensely (verified in a bathroom mirror). It is as if Mitchell is throwing down a gauntlet and challenging us to engage the most banal sexual mythoi that circulate in our mindscapes. Then, once these are operating,

as the multi-character scenes climax (so to speak) he begins his critique of individualized, fragmented sexuality.

The film is a powerful visualization of collective exploration and discussion of sexuality in many ways. Most importantly, it is enacted through the actual visualization and production of the overall project. Coming off the cult success of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), Mitchell decided his next project would be a collective exploration of sex and sexuality in America. His production team advertised the project as the "Sex" film and encouraged interested participants to send in a ten minute tape in which they describe an important sexual experience.

In one of the DVD documentaries you can see the tapes sent in by the actors and notice how their actual personalities are infused into the roles they play in the film. In the extras we see Mitchell and a collaborator picking up the tapes as people in New York City are protesting the impending invasion of Iraq. This fearful, deranged, post-9/11 panorama becomes incorporated into the subconscious of the film.

Mitchell did not write a fleshed-out script until he had auditioned actors and made the selections of who would be participating in the project. When he had a set cast, they began to improvise and develop their individual roles as an understanding of the collective project began to develop.

Some of the actors dropped out of the project because they feared the damage that it could do to their burgeoning careers. Perhaps they were afraid of being typecast or labeled by the Hollywood system as an actor who performs in "those" types of films. Other actors were unable to continue because they eventually became

*continued on page 8*

## Local film happenings

### UK Cultural Diversity Festival Presents *Hokkabaz*

The film portion of the University of Kentucky's Cultural Diversity Festival will conclude on Wednesday, March 30 with a screening of *Hokkabaz* (translation: *The Magician*). The 2006 film tells the story of Iskender, a failed magician who decides to take his act on the road in a last ditch effort to save his career. But, like any good road movie, things don't go exactly as planned. The screening is sponsored by the Turkish Student Association, is free, and starts at 7 P.M. in the auditorium of the William T. Young Library.

### Kentucky Theatre Screening of *The Wizard of Oz*

Can't wait for the Kentucky Theatre's Summer Classics Film Series to begin? Get a jump on your vintage viewing with a March 31 screening of *The Wizard of Oz*. The special event is a fundraiser to benefit the Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the door or via the BRCC's website, at [www.bluegrassrapecrisis.org](http://www.bluegrassrapecrisis.org). The screening starts at 7 P.M.

### World Premiere of *When Happy Met Froggie*

If you remember the local television phenomenon "Happy's Hour", or if you just want a good dose of 1970s era nostalgia, join documentary filmmaker Michael Crisp for the premiere of *When Happy Met Froggie* at the Kentucky Theater on April 6. The new film chronicles the making of the hit children's television show as well as the impact that it had on an entire generation of Lexingtonians. The screening will start at 7:30, tickets are \$8, and the movie will be followed by a Q&A with Michael Crisp and the reunited cast of the original series. For more information, please visit [www.whenhappymetfroggie.com](http://www.whenhappymetfroggie.com).

## Five underrated films of the millenium DVD suggestions for those who won't spend \$8.25 on *Sucker Punch*

By Lucy Jones

For most people (ie: the normal and functioning among us) Spring is a time to rejoice. The weather turns warm, the flowers are in bloom, folks can finally return to the great outdoors. But, for those of us who would rather sit in a dark, climate controlled room and watch light flicker on a screen (ie: me), the outlook isn't quite as rosy. As any movie lover knows, Spring is a traditionally slow time at the box office. The limited release Oscar contenders from winter have all rolled out, and the giant blockbusters of summer are still a season away.

So what's a cinema junkie to do when her supply runs out? She has to find her fix elsewhere. This means substituting the small screen for the big. Now, to be totally frank, I'm not a fan of watching films in a non-theatrical environment. Generally, I like to cross my fingers that the classic films I haven't seen will one day make their way to a revival screening. There are movies that I have put off watching in just this spirit of optimism.

But there are plenty of films that, due to lack of interest the first time around, probably won't have a second shot on the big screen. Many deserve to be relegated to bargain bins and late night cable obscurity, but some don't. These rarer films number among the criminally overlooked and woefully underrated, making them prime candidates for a DVD rental. Here are some of my favorites from the last 11 years:

### 5) *Running Scared* (2006)

No, I'm not talking about the 1980s Gregory Hines film of the same name. The *Running Scared* in question is a 2006 release by director Wayne Kramer (also not to be confused with the guitarist from the MC5). While

the name of the film and director may remind you of other things, the film itself won't. This is an entirely original and audaciously over-the-top take on the traditional fairy tale. Imagine snatching the Brothers Grimm from the 19th Century, securing them to a chair a la *A Clockwork Orange*, and then inundating them with a non-stop orgy of hyper-violent Japanese gangster films. Hand them a movie camera, and this is the film you would get.

The movie came and went, which I blame (as I do most things) on Paul Walker. The trailer for the film was Walker heavy (he stars in the flick but, fortunately, is surrounded by more interesting folks like Vera Farmiga and Chazz Palminteri) which I think was off-putting to anyone interested in seeing a movie that didn't suck. Of course, for people who respected his work in *The Fast and the Furious* and wanted more, a cerebral and reference laden genre bender was probably a little confusing. The movie cost 17 million to make and grossed a little under 7 at

the box office. I say we try to close that gap. *Running Scared* deserves a 2nd...or, let's face it, 1st...look.

### 4) *Envy* (2004)

People hated this movie. I can't for the life of me figure out why. It has a 7% on Rotten Tomatoes which puts it in the exact same numerical camp as *Glitter* and *Gigli*. As someone who sat through both of those films (and have the cinematic scars to prove it) I find its inclusion in that company to be downright scandalous. *Envy* is a well paced, tight, and clever satire that effectively pokes fun at the corrosive power of brash consumerism on the American psyche.

Tim (Ben Stiller) and Nick (Jack Black) are neighbors whose friendship is tested when Nick's latest get-rich-quick scheme unexpectedly becomes successful. Tim had a chance to get in on the ground floor, but had scoffed at the idea. Now he has to deal with Nick's ever accumulating and increasingly grandiose displays of wealth. The

funniest part is watching how Nick and his wife, Natalie (the always brilliant Amy Poehler), decide to spend their millions. The movie is totally fun and 100% Ben Affleck free. Take that, *Gigli*.

### 3) *The Fall* (2006)

It breaks my heart that this film isn't on everyone's top 10 list of the last decade. Music video director Tarsem spent a personal fortune to get the movie made. Because so much of it came out of his own pocket, it's tricky to get figures for the exact budget. It suffices to say, the film lost a bundle when it barely pulled in 2,000,000 in US box office receipts.

Filmed in 18 different countries, *The Fall* is a sweeping, gorgeous, epic film that is anchored by a very sweet and simple story. Outside of early 20th Century Los Angeles, an injured stuntman (Lee Pace) befriends a little girl in a hospital. In an effort to coerce her into sneaking him morphine, he begins to tell her a story which blends his own biography and the people they know with larger than life characters and exotic locales. I don't want to say much more, but the film is so artfully crafted that I'm blown away every time I see it. It is often referenced alongside *Cinema Paradiso* for its emphasis on storytelling but, quite frankly, I think this is a superior film. And that says something.

### 2) *The Baxter* (2005)

First of all, how could a movie that was written and directed by *The State's* Michael Showalter be anything other than brilliant? I love everything about this comedy. It begins with the classic romcom cliché of the wrong-for-each-other couple at the altar. Their life of misery is about to be legally sealed when the dashing hero, the guy our

*continued on page 8*



From Tarsem's *The Fall*.

# Don't fish harder, fish smarter

## Shootin' n' Snaggin' with the Frugal Fisherman

Have you ever been walking to your mailbox and seen your neighbor making a beeline out their front door and straight towards what appears to be you? Probably not. And if you have you probably wouldn't think twice about a passing conversation with someone of such close proximity. I mean they're your neighbor, right?

I wish my neighborly relationships were as solid as most. But alas I'm the evil stepchild of the southwest end of Monticello. El Diablo himself. The dude who plays his music too loud, walks around in cut off jean shorts with no shirt and a High Life can in his hand and appears to be in a constant state of inebriation. And in all truthfulness that's me to a T.

So I don't feel like I'm going out on a limb when I say my neighbors hate me. I know they do. I can see it in the whites of their eyes. I'm an affront to everything they're trying to instill in their children. An assault on the very fiber of their ideologies. A bad, bad, bad man.

Just this past week I once again stood in fear as I rifled through the week's bills curbside. My neighbor pulled up just as I closed the mailbox. Before I could casually wave and make hast for my garage, she opened the door of her van and with god speed made an undeviated path right at me.

I thought to myself, what did I do this time? Was it my music again, my late night howling at the moon to AC/DC's "For Those About to Rock" in celebration of the coming of spring? Or maybe it was all the beer cans that came rolling out of my car in front of the kids the other day as they played wiffle ball in the neighborhood court and I unloaded yet another 30 pack of High Life, dragging everything in my car with it.

Much to my surprise it was none of the usual complaints. She wanted to know how such a tall man (I'm 6'3") could fit into such a small car. To say the least I was aghast. And after gaining my composure for a second or two I responded by saying that my car is actually quite roomy. I drive a 2005 Scion xB. The old body style before Japan rounded all the edges. A toaster on wheels, the Milk Wagon as my friends call her.

Smiling, my neighbor began telling me how she never feels safe in small cars, how she likes to drive a larger vehicle because if she were ever in an accident she would be the one to live. You know, with all that hulking metal between her and her helpless, small car victim.

She and her husband both drive behemoths, one an extended body Ford E-series van with an extra bench seat in the rear. This thing could easily haul an entire youth baseball team with room to spare. The other vehicle is another van, smaller than the Ford, but in comparison it hovers over my ride like the tower of Babel loomed over the plains of Shinar.

I told her, "The Milk Wagon is not only roomy, it gets great gas mileage. I mean, who doesn't like 30 plus miles to the gallon?" I asked, offering to show her the inside of my Scion. She deferred saying she needed to get food started for the family, and walked back



The milk truck.

inside. I knew she'd seen all the beer cans. I knew she wanted no part of it.

Amazed at the events that just unfolded, I returned to my garage. I couldn't help but think about what that already cash strapped family spent monthly on gas alone. It had to be well in excess of \$200, with all those kids and their sports, leagues and organizations, not to mention church activities and the occasional joy ride.

That's when it hit me. With current petrol prices in excess of \$3.60 a gallon, how does one get the most out of every drop of gas?

### Walk more, bike more and eliminate unnecessary trips

The above may seem like common sense, but I can't count the number of times I've jumped into my Scion just to run down to the local market for some groceries or a Redbox movie. On paper it sounds asinine. And in all truthfulness it is. We all need to walk more and drive less. Not only will it do our hearts some good it's absolutely the best method for saving at the pump. And if you own a bike than such trips

are all the easier. Plus, biking in many cases is just as quick as driving.

If you must drive, try combining several trips into one outing. With a little planning you'd be surprised how an entire week's errands can be condensed down to one carefully organized shopping spree. And anytime you can eliminate a trip here or a trip there you're saving gas.

### Steady driving

To start, try moderating starts and stops at traffic lights. The faster you accelerate, the more gas you use. Flooring the gas pedal the instant the traffic light turns green does get you

going faster but also wastes a lot of gas.

Another helpful tip is to not always come to a complete stop as you approach red lights. Try slowing down at a greater distance from the light in an attempt to catch it as it turns green. I usually look over at the opposite crossing light as I slow down to see when it's changing. If it's moving from green to yellow to red, you know your light is about to change as well. And if you haven't come to a complete stop it's much easier and economical for your car to accelerate starting at 20 mph than 0 mph. Not to mention this coasting technique saves an enormous amount of wear and tear on your tires and brake pads.

When in traffic, instead of pressing the gas pedal to move closer to the car in front of you, try taking your foot off the brake, allowing your car to ease forward on its own. Anytime you can move forward without pressing the gas pedal you're saving money.

If your car has cruise control, use it, especially on road trips and for highway driving. No matter how good you are at regulating speed, your car's

computer is in almost all situations better. Even on short 10 mile highway trips, the cruise control can save pennies on the dollar.

Driving the speed limit is also a great way to save gas. Not only does it help avoid unnecessary speeding tickets, but most speed limits are between 45 to 60 mph. This is often referred to as the "sweet spot," or the speed at which your car gets the best mileage.

Drive in this speed range and you'll save a ton over the next year.

Idling unnecessarily does nothing but waste gas, so find CDs, read maps and adjust mirrors before turning on your car. And don't start your car on a cold day and let it idle in the driveway for 10 minutes just so you don't have to experience the bitter cold. That 10 minutes could easily be 10 miles or more of driving.

### Car maintenance

Keeping your car in good working condition is as important to its longevity as it is to getting a gallon to go further. Most cars recommend changing spark plugs and wires every 50,000 or so miles. That and a general tune up can do wonders for your vehicles performance and ability to operate properly, which in turn saves gas.

Keeping your tires properly inflated and at the correct psi, which is usually posted on the tire or the inside of your driver's side door panel, is yet another tool to making every drop count. Under-inflated tires, even 5 psi, can rob you of as much as 1 to 3 mpg.

Using the correct oil and regularly changing your air filter will help reduce friction within your vehicle's engine, as well as extend your car's life. Most cars recommend an oil change every 3000 to 5000 miles. Refer to your owner's manual to see at what intervals such maintenance should occur. And follow the guidelines outlined within most manuals which highlights the when's and where's on maintenance. A well maintained car is an efficient car, and an efficient car gets better gas mileage.

By no means are the above suggestions exhaustive. There are several other theories ranging from washing and waxing your car to removing bike racks that can improve gas mileage. The most important thing is to be aware. Not only will you have more money in your pocket at the end of the year, you'll be doing more than you know to reduce your overall carbon footprint.

# Go Cats! Go Cats!

By Danny Mayer

I was reminded on two separate occasions last week that public perception might be that I'm anti-Cats.

The first occurred online, at Barefoot and Progressive, where after I stated "I hate it when Wildcat basketball gets confused with politics and leadership," I was called (among other things) "the most humorless person on the face of the earth," "the Rodrick Rhodes of Lexington media," and (the crusher) a piss-poor pothead role model.

The second occasion happened a couple nights later, last Saturday night, when Tommie the bartender at Johnathan's accosted me at his bar. "You need to quit writing all that bad shit about the Cats," he said before even having the bare decency to offer me a drink. Tommie and I go back, Keene days, and so I know him to be a misanthrope and general hater of Cats basketball. I looked up at him in surprise. "I'm serious. You're giving them good

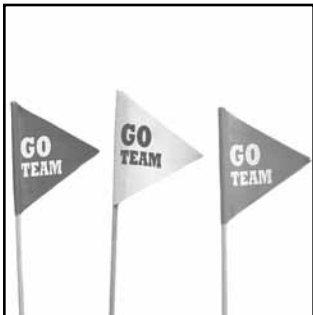
mo-jo by allowing them to play off your bad mo-jo. You gotta cut that shit out, man." Over the course of my wine and dram of Frugal Scotch, he reiterated the same point twice more.

I didn't put the two incidents together until the next night, after the victory over UNC, while I was heading down Euclid, that readers of this paper must get the sense I'm anti-Cats, and by extension, that this means I'm

not rooting the team on into March (er, April) Madness. I'll confess, my normal preference is for an exciting and closely fought Cats loss, whether that be against Athletes in Action in the pre-season, Alabama in the SEC season, or

West Virginia in the tournament season. But there comes a time, usually around the Elite 8, where you just say fuck it, switch allegiances, and go with it for the payout at the end: the collective celebration.

I'm not a fan of UK basketball, but I am a fan of massive gatherings of people in the streets. There's a certain



freeing and collective joy that comes with being surrounded by mobs of people unified by a general purpose, whatever that purpose may be. In addition to the burning couches and stumbly drunk folk, what you should note when you waste all your time perusing the oncoming you-tube clip onslaught of Cats celebrations, are the looks of collective, ecstatic joy and satisfaction on everyone's face.

This is not unique to sports celebrations. Take a look at all those faces and songs and dances collected on you-tube of the sit-ins at the Wisconsin state capitol building. For weeks, people laughed, danced, ate, sang,

high-fived, chanted and ate together in solidarity. I've noted similar smiling faces in WTO protest photos and MTR gatherings, among H.O.R.D.E. and Bonnaroo festival goers, and at Civil Rights marches in Washington D.C. and in Kent State protests at UK. Whether it's shutting down Euclid after the Cats take it all or shutting down the WTO after taking Seattle, taking over the streets as a part of a large (mostly) civil group is nearly always a precious thing to behold and experience and be a part of. (Nearly all positive street takeovers, it should be

continued on the next page

# Opinion

## Cats! (cont.)

*continued from the previous page*

noted, attract much police attention. Expect the chopper and homeland security gear to be on full display this weekend.)

Would I rather all those UK fans get their collective rocks off instead by shutting-down, say, POT to demand greater public access to the UK Presidential hire—a disobedient “sport” for which there is, arguably, no offseason? Yes. Does the payoff of going to the final four and potentially winning it all in any way validate the vast misuse of athletic department capital? Not even close. Should politicians of all stripes quit using Cats-allegience to sell products. No doubt. Will I alter my “hope for a closely fought loss” stance next season? I highly doubt it.

Having said that, for this weekend at least I’ve switched to rooting for a closely fought Cats victory. To be clear, I’m not rooting for them because Josh Miller swindled me out of two bets on this year’s Cats squad—first tricking

me into buying the Cats regular season stock at inflated prices, and then playing to my vanities to get me to sell him that same Cats stock at below market value after the Princeton Panic. I’m also not rooting for them because I think my doing so will reverse UK’s general mo-jo. And I’m certainly not doing it because I consider myself a fan.

I’m rooting for the Cats because I want to make the walk from my house down Limestone and over to Euclid, and to melt into those crowds and look around and smile and laugh in and with and at them. I’m rooting that some of those Cats fans will remember that great feeling of collective joy and sense of victory—and that in some recesses of their body, they will want more of it. Because lord knows, there’s a lot more of that stuff bottled up—from roller derby and bike polo matches to Appalachia Rising and immigration direct actions—if only they have the right eyes and hunger to look for it.

## Park Markets (cont.)

*continued from page 2*

I would look to early evening hours, 4:00-6:00 or 5:00-7:00, weekdays, as a way to attract workers getting off work and locavore freaks roving the city for fresh veg daily.

*Beginning? Ending?:* As smaller markets, these should begin later and end earlier than the larger markets. June-early October, perhaps, when the night darkens sooner.

*Whose food you selling?:* This is one of the main reasons why city council support is vital for developing park markets. Conceivably, finding producers willing to sell their produce at city markets outside of downtown might be difficult, or at the very least require certain inquiries from certain people.

But there are producers to ask. The Lexington’s Farmer’s Market has over 65 vendors who sold \$2.7 million dollars of products last year. The Bluegrass Farmer’s Market on Richmond Road has developed a network for local, and sometimes micro-scale, producers for over five years now. UK’s South Farm and its sustainable agriculture graduates might be of help. BCTC’s Peace Meal Gardens is already committed to providing fresh produce. If advertised and supported, perhaps some efficient backyard growers looking to start a side-venture might be tempted to turn their backyard into okra and tomato or asparagus and cilantro fields.

Next year, the city could employ its own rural parks to grow food for the market. The increased profit margin accrued from city park producers not having to pay lease on the land, ideally, could be funneled back into the necessary administrative and infrastructure costs necessary to continue growing market access to all citizens. Long term, markets should encourage a class of nearby growers to supplement the market.

The point here is this: there are lots of potential producers out there to satisfy demand for 2-3 stalls at 5 different locations in the city.

The problem is, if I tell people to grow extra veg to get ready for a market, I’m just a schlub with his own paper. I’ve got no credibility. Having a city council member declare council support for supporting new markets on city land, much like Gray seems to be doing for the Rupp re-do, that sort of thing has a different sort of credibility. Yet with a little advance warning and planning, park markets could act as the minor leagues of Lexington farmer’s markets, growing the next generation’s hot agricultural prospects, farmers who dream of one day being drafted into the “Bigs” and selling under the rooftops of the hallowed Fifth Third.

*Costs?* In starting small, costs remain small. Human capital might include someone charged with oversight to be present on market days, chief organizers for each location who report

directly to council, staffing to aid vendors and some sort of community police authority. Human labor could be paid in produce (encouraged) or if necessary in dollars, as a portion of market income. Ideally, labor will comprise a mixture of community, producer and city participation. Certain non-barterable monetary outlays include advertising (photo-copied fliers delivered to residents located in a pre-determined area) and other miscellaneous expenses.

Mostly, though, costs to council should be minimal. We’re talking two (2) to three (3) vendors apiece to start at five different locations. For something this small people mainly just need a place, minimal but committed organization, and a group working to drumming up customers and interest.

### Site selection: Duncan Park and River Hill

Lest this discussion get overly and unnecessarily abstract, let’s look at two potential park market sites: Duncan Park and River Hill Park.

Sitting on the corner of North Limestone and Fifth Streets, Duncan Park is my neighborhood park. It has a number of things going for its use as a park market. The park’s small size and urban-residential location make it well-suited to pedestrian patronage. The park is highly visible from a number of pedestrian boulevards running north/south along Limestone and MLK, and east/west down Fifth.

The MLK, North Limestone and William Wells Brown neighborhoods that the park touches provide the market with a large and diverse potential customer base. Discounting the UK campus, Duncan Park is located within walking distance of four of the most dense urban tracts in the city, according to recent census figures. Those same figures also show that these same tracts are undergoing a stark transformation as predominantly white residents (me) with more spending money move in and displace older residents whose smaller incomes had dictated the earlier flight of private business from the neighborhood. .

Duncan Park, in particular, sits at a crossroads of this shift. To its south, new money has moved onto streets like Johnson Drive or the 400 block of MLK; to its east along Fifth Street heading toward Shropshire, poorer residents inhabit weather worn rental homes. Placing a market at Duncan would have the twinned benefits of providing fresh food to poorer residents to the east and north, at the same time of catering to the the more hopeful gentrifying desires of nearby streets and its wealthier hinterlands like Gratz Park and Castlewood. (But that’s just walking distance. Duncan Park is within easy commute for the bike communities surrounding UK, along Jefferson Street, and in the punk retirement community of Kenwick.)



DANNY MAYER

*The Duncan Park neighborhood has seen a revival in yuppies moving back to the city to live in large homes. These social deviants can, at the least, help support a market directed to the entire neighborhood.*

The Duncan Park neighborhood has seen a revival in Yuppies moving back to the city to live in large homes. These social deviants can, at the least, help support a market directed to the entire neighborhood.

The park also has other benefits: two years ago, North Limestone activist Marty Clifford organized the construction of a music stage on the park grounds, so the area already has an established meeting place and a nearby champion of the park in Marty. Perhaps city leaders could use Marty, the stage, nearby bike organizations like Broke Spoke, and a media outlet like North of Center to help establish a weekly market in a location that has been openly referred to as a food desert, and that has been covertly allowed to gentrify (and be celebrated for it).

Moving outside of downtown, River Hill Park off Crosby Lane would make for another good park market location. Decidedly suburban in its southeast Lexington location just inside Man O Wa, River Hill nevertheless sits in one of the most dense tracts of the city. The park is a hub for the area bounded by Bates Creek to the west, Man O’War to the south and east, and Armstrong Mill to the north. 2010 census data indicate that, at 6600 people per mile, this part of Lexington has greater density than downtown. Outside of UK, only the Duncan Park census tract has a higher population density, and unlike downtown, this part of Lexington—including the Hartland census tract and the new construction around nearby Veterans Park—is attracting new population demographics. The area around the park has grown 5% in the past decade, with black, hispanic and multi-racial residents making the most gains (and whites leaving the precinct at a 7% clip).

Situated amidst a diverse number of middle class 1960s era suburban ranch homes, new large homes on small lots, and (directly across Man O War) a luxury apartment complex, the market would potentially most benefit residents of a street like Red River Drive. The street runs behind the park and has a number of 1000 square foot homes, some backing up to the park, with average property values at below market values of \$80-100 thousand. Bolstering the buying power of these neighborhoods, ideally, would be the money spent at the market by the wealthier residents of the luxury apartments across Man O War.

Like Duncan Park, River Hill also has other benefits. Council Member

George Myers, district rep for the area, has spent time working on revitalizing River Hill. His website used to feature him, clad in a hard-hat, working on the park’s playground equipment. His efforts have paid dividends, at least during my trips there playing disc golf, when I’ve seen a number of neighborhood kids from nearby homes and apartments play games in the baseball diamond and upon the basketball courts, as well as upon the playground. Tapping into CM Myers interest in the park could provide the market a public champion.

Other potential contributors might include members of the Bluegrass Disc Golf Association, who hold occasional gatherings at the park. Linking regularly scheduled, weekly markets with (potentially) regular weekly disc golf gatherings could draw in a new market audience for both the BDGA and the LFUCG. One might play a round and leave with their fresh veg for the week; or maybe mom plays a round while dad shops with the kids.

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

**Editor & Publisher**  
Danny Mayer

**Features**  
Beth Connors-Manke

**Film & Media**  
Lucy Jones

**Sports**  
Troy Lyle

**Music**  
Buck Edwards

**Design**  
Keith Halladay

**Illustrations**  
Noah Adler

**Contributors**  
Michael Benton  
Andrew Battista  
Dylan Blount  
Wes Houpp  
Kenn Minter  
Captain Commanokers  
Tim Staley

Please address correspondence, including advertising inquiries and letters to the editor, to:  
**noceditors@yahoo.com.**

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Fierce Company (Part 6) by Kenn Minter

WHAT SORT OF PALE, SOFT WHITE MAN'S EXCUSE...

IS THAT?

YOU DON'T KNOW? JUST WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!

IT WAS AN HONEST MISTAKE.

YOU DON'T WANT TO UPSET HIM.

YOU PATHETIC, ENTITLED... RAAR!! ALSO, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I'M CUBAN!

IT ONLY MAKES HIM BIGGER.

DANG.

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FRIDAY 4/1

GENERAL DALLAS: HISTORY ENDURES... BY: WESTERN

SHOULD I BE MORE WORRIED THAN I ALREADY AM?

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT COMPANY.

THAT GUY LOOKS FAMILIAR IN A HISTORICAL SORT OF WAY...

AHOY! I BROUGHT SOME DRY GUN POWDER, BOYS. WE'LL BLAST THAT DEVIL BACK TO...

I'D KNOW THAT MANGLED HAND ANYWHERE. THAT'S MY GREAT, GREAT, GREAT, GREAT UNCLE J.R. SHAW. HE BLASTED MOST OF THE WELLS IN JESSAMINE COUNTY. BUT HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR WELL OVER A CENTURY...?

YIKES!

Shortbus (cont.)

continued from page 5

incapable of mentally separating themselves from their roles and allowing the characters to develop collectively.

We can see in the development of the film the intense feelings and emotions that circulated throughout these workshops and improvisations. Through their hardships, the cast and crew became more of a unique collective family or affinity group. This brings an authenticity to the performances that is generally lacking in the casting of strangers to perform in a film.

Is *Shortbus* pornography? When asked, I usually field responses before replying, wishing to develop a collective understanding of pornography and its role in our society. Most people follow the famous judicial claim that pornography is the portrayal of sexual acts bereft of any actual artistic or culturally redeeming manner. In other words, if you removed the sex, would anything be left?

I follow a more complicated understanding. Pornography is a fragmented portrayal of human society which emphasizes the individual parts over the holistic beings, that denies the humanity of the participants, and that turns sex solely into a product for consumption. Pornography is all about impermeable sex: penetration without connection, orgasms without feeling.

*Shortbus* is the opposite of pornography. It is actually a film about permeability. The three main characters

are in search of genuine human interactions. Yes, sex and sexuality are vitally important to them, but it is contextualized in a fuller landscape of human connection and interaction. Impermeability is a dangerous dysfunction. It is the mindset of those who are not open to others, whether they are individually unfeeling or culturally closed. It is solipsism—individually or collectively. Permeability is the willingness to be open to new experiences and new ways of seeing the world. It is not necessary that you live your life as these characters do, it is more of a willingness to not view the new or different as dangerous.

Of course, the film is about sex and, in its unflinching exploration, it will challenge many people. I am amazed at people’s willingness to sit through the most brutal acts of violence and destruction, yet they become agitated and disturbed by honest portrayals of sexuality. I have witnessed people walk out during certain parts of *Shortbus*. I also have had people get angry at me for suggesting the film to them.

For me, it is one of the most powerfully emotional films of the 21st Century. I usually cry during certain parts of the film because I empathize with the struggle of the characters. The power of the film is that it views the answers in the collective community rather in the authority of “experts” or the prescriptions of the pharmaceutical industry. It is a deeply utopian film that calls us to get off on life.

Underrated films (cont.)

continued from page 5

prospective bride was always *meant* to marry, comes in and saves her at the last minute.


This film asks: hey—what about that other guy? The poor schmuck that got left behind? What happens to that poor dude? The next 90 minutes answers that question. Elliott Sherman (Showalter) is what his grandmother refers to as “The Baxter”—the safety guy that the girl winds up with because she can’t have who she really wants. The film is a heck of a charmer, referencing classic Howard Hawks and Preston Sturges while simultaneously bringing something new to the genre. Plus it provides a parade of *The State* regulars, which necessarily gives it two extra stars in my book.

1) *Happy Accidents* (2000)

I love *Happy Accidents* for many of the same reasons that I love *The Baxter*. It’s a traditional romantic comedy in some respects, but it pushes the genre in a new direction. Ruby (Marisa Tomei) has had a string of bad boyfriends, which makes her new relationship with kindhearted Sam (Vincent D’Onofrio) so refreshing.

Everything proceeds swimmingly until Sam confides that he is actually a time traveler who has come from the year 2470 on a mission to find her. Is Sam a straight up lunatic, or is he telling the truth? The film explores the relationship between trust and love in a smart and compelling way, making it totally worth the rental fee.

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