

# LOCAL MUSIC AND MORE

Mar 3: Bobby Lyle “Hands On,” 8pm at The Bijou Theatre in Knoxville. This is a celebration of the pianist/keyboardist’s debut recording. For more information or tickets call 865-522-0832.

Mar 3: *Celebrate the People of Blount County* at the Blount County Library from 9am to 5pm. Starts with bag pipes on the bridge, and then cultural dress, music, bilingual readings, and other cultural displays.

Mar 8-11: The Maryville College Theater Department will perform Shakespeare’s tragedy *Romeo and Juliet*. The performance will start at 8pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> and at 2pm on the 11<sup>th</sup> in the MC Theater. Tickets sold at the door.

Mar 9: Led Zeppelin tribute band Zoso will perform at Blue Cats in Knoxville. Doors open at 9p.m. Tickets are \$8 at the door.

Mar 9: Blues guitarist Chris Beard at Brackins in downtown Maryville. Cover is \$8 at the door.

Until Mar 11: Los Angeles-based artist Seonna Hong’s work is on display at the Knoxville Museum of Art. General admission is \$5. Call 865.525.6101 for hours and more information.

Mar 14: Star 102.1 will be presenting the Children’s Hospital Benefit Concert feature at Blue Cats in Knoxville. Music will be provided by NEW POWER SOUL, and Thoroughfare. Tickets are \$8 at the door.

Mar 16: Blues musician Motor City Josh at Brackins in downtown Maryville. Cover is \$10 at the door.

Mar 22 & 23: Knoxville Symphony Orchestra at the Tennessee Theater in Knoxville. Prices vary by seating. Doors open at 7p.m. Call KSO for purchasing information, 865-291-3310.

Mar 29: The music of Augustana at Blue Cats in Knoxville. Doors open at 7p.m., and tickets are available at the door for \$8.

Mar 30: The Maryville College Concert Choir will have a concert at 8:00pm in the MC Recital Hall.

For More Info:  
Blount County Library- [www.blountlibrary.org](http://www.blountlibrary.org)  
Bijou Theater- [www.knoxbijou.com](http://www.knoxbijou.com)  
Blue Cats- [www.bluecatslive.com](http://www.bluecatslive.com)  
Knoxville Museum of Art- [www.knoxart.org](http://www.knoxart.org)  
Tennessee Theater [www.tennesseetheater.com](http://www.tennesseetheater.com)

| March 2007 |                          | BRACKINS BLUES CLUB |                       | Music Schedule for March 2007                |   |   |
|------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--|---|---|
|            |                          |                     |                       | www.brackinsbar.com                          |   |   |
| Sun        | Mon                      | Tue                 | Wed                   | Thu  | Fri   | Sat   |
|            | Acoustic Jam<br>no cover |                     | Blues Jam<br>no cover | 1 Kevin Gordon<br>no cover                   | 2 Charlie Morris<br>\$5 Cover                 | 3 Cheating Spoon<br>\$5 cover                     |
| 4          | 5                        | 6                   | 7                     | 8 Hollowtree<br>no cover                     | 9 Chris Beard<br>\$10 cover                   | 10 JOBE<br>\$5 COVER                              |
| 11         | 12                       | 13                  | 14                    | 15 Hermosa<br>No cover                       | Motor City Josh & The Big Three<br>\$10 cover | 17 St. Paddy's Party with Jubel Kane<br>\$6 cover |
| 18         | 19                       | 20                  | 21                    | 22 Hollowtree<br>no cover                    | 23 Mojo<br>\$5 cover                          | Albert Castiglia<br>\$8 cover                     |
| 25         | 26                       | 27                  | 28                    | LITTLE CHARLIE & THE NIGHTCATS<br>\$10 cover | 30 Hanover Fist<br>\$5 cover                  | 31 Harper<br>\$10 cover                           |

# March 2007 Blount’s Alternative Voice underground



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Distribution Locations:

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- Grounded Coffee and More
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- Maryville College Library
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- Buzz Thomas
- Emily Winsauer

Special Thanks to:

- Grounded Coffee
- Soul Finger

The Coming Out Party was a Great Success! Thank you to all who came and a special thanks to Grounded for sponsoring the event and to Soulfinger for providing the music!

CORRECTION: The article *Perspective: On Cultural Relativism* printed in the February issue was written by Amy Hill, not Mary Moss. We encourage the audience to read the articles in this issue from both of these writers, where proper recognition is given. We apologize for this error.

Cover photographs by Rebekah Lührs and Holley Roberts

Gallery: A Year in Vietnam

by Jos Meijer





# CULTURE SHOCK

## Review: *What's Liberal about the Liberal Arts*

by Mary Moss

So what is liberal about the liberal arts? And who cares anyway? Michael Bérubé, for one. In his most recent book *What's Liberal about the Liberal Arts*, Bérubé, a passionate crusader against social injustice in academe (i.e., the utilization of underpaid, overworked, unprotected adjunct labor), takes on a new dragon: the neo-conservative claim that academe provides a breeding ground for liberals, who presumably would drop like flies were the hothouse climate of the university less cozy.

I've long admired Bérubé's work, but his latest book lacks the critical finesse of his earlier writing. For one thing, the storyline actually isn't all that new. For most of my academic life, I've heard that (a) liberals are using the academy to take over the country or (b) that conservatives want to stifle free speech by kicking liberals out of the academy by fair means or foul. Former North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms made a career out of calling my alma mater, UNC-Chapel Hill, "Commie Hill." While I did encounter communists there, they were for the most part itinerate speakers who stood on street corners and argued belliciously with everyone. As for the university, I remember participating in a protest because the school had failed to tenure historian David Garrow (reportedly on the grounds that his research on Martin Luther King was insufficiently scholarly—scholarly, in this case, meaning that the subject needed to be dead for a *long* time). And I remember being told by a professor that women had no business pursuing graduate degrees.

While Bérubé is correct in asserting that the latest conservative assault on universities is serious and its claims largely ungrounded, his and his opponents' assumptions about the extent to which liberalism flourishes strike me as overly optimistic or pessimistic (depending on one's perspective).

As a Galbraith-quoting socialist without a party, I think the better question might be "what's liberal about liberalism?" From my perspective, not always that much. On a bad day, I think we are all Republicans now. My nearly thirty years in higher education (both as a student and a teacher) have left me unconvinced that the academy is liberal either in the sense that Bérubé means or that his opponents deride.

To be sure, I know a number of principled academics like Bérubé, who argue passionately for intellectual freedom, diversity, and a critical inquiry about the status quo. Practically-speaking however, too many so-called liberals drop their liberal ideals off at the daycare where they also drop their children—at least when their ideals are inconvenient or clash with their self-interests.

Take, for example, the attempt by Yale's graduate assistants to unionize in the mid 1990s. When the students finally went on "strike" for a living wage, an action the school maintained was illegal on the grounds that student employees are not employees but students, individual professors responded venomously. Hip post-colonialists who had made their reputations criticizing the exploitative conditions of empire quickly jettisoned their intellectual ideals when their own academic empire was threatened. Some of these so-called liberal and leftist professors even pursued disciplinary action against their own individual graduate assistants.

Rather than serve as models for liberal political activism, universities all too frequently mouth the platitudes of free-market capitalism. In the real politik of bureaucratic hierarchy, turf protection, and market branding, the conservative preservation of the status quo trumps political activism.

Educators such as Bérubé, who actively practice in a principled fashion what they teach and preach, are not in the majority. Bérubé is certainly aware of this situation; much of his earlier work explores these contradictions. The real news for both liberals and conservatives is not that the academy is under fire, but that conservatives have so little to fear.



## Women Take the Lead Around the Globe

by Thiago Buchert

March is Women's History Month and this year was a great one for women in politics, particularly in leadership roles. A woman was elected for the first time to the Chilean presidency, and others seem to be gaining more power and prominence.

This is actually a rather recent occurrence as female prime ministers and presidents have only begun to be elected after the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning with South Asia and Israel, every continent had at least one female head of government. It should also be noted that contrary to popular expectations, Muslim countries were well represented in the phenomena as seen in the elections of Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Tansu Ciller of Turkey and Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.

Michelle Bachelet's election to the presidency of Chile in 2006 is notable for more than just her being a woman. In a Catholic society, she is an agnostic socialist whose family members have been tortured and killed by the former Chilean regime of Augusto Pinochet. Ironically, Pinochet derived much of his international support from another female head of state, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Thus Bachelet's election represents not only a victory for feminism, but also human rights; the two often go hand-in-hand. Since her election, she has given free health care to the elderly and sought to advance education.

The first female chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, was elected the year before last, but she now has a new role to play since the European Union's rotating chairmanship has moved to Germany this year. Wielding power over the European Union, coupled with Germany's place at the forefront of economic strength, Angela Merkel, according to *Forbes Magazine*, is the most powerful woman in the world. In Germany, she received a higher approval rating than any chancellor had upon assuming office since Adenauer in 1949 (and that was probably due to the unpopularity of the previous chancellor of Germany from 1933-1945).

Women leaders are also associated with strong economic growth. The Republic of Ireland, recently given the nickname "the Celtic Tiger" due to

its economic growth, has been run by women since 1990. In Ireland's last election in 2004, the reigning President, Mary McAleese, was so popular that she had no official opponent. McAleese's origins in Northern Ireland have also influenced her to move forward on Catholic/Protestant reconciliation; she recently took communion at a Protestant church. Under Helen Clark of New Zealand, the unemployment rate has shrunk to 3.6%, and the growth rate is 4.6% in the Philippines under Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

***“Contrary to popular expectations, Muslim countries were well represented in the phenomena as seen in the elections of Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Tansu Ciller of Turkey and Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh.”***

We have reason to be optimistic for the upcoming year as well. The French Socialist candidate for president, Ségolène Royal, has promised to modernize the country and she is quite charismatic. Of course, little needs to be said of the chances of the United States with Hillary Clinton joining the ever-expanding community of nations that have democratically elected a female executive.

Indeed we should all hope for a day when the election of a woman is not something remarkable at all. Rather, it should happen half of the time. And this is not to say that all of the women listed above are near-divine in their leadership; they make the same mistakes and may be guided by the same Machiavellian motivations as their male counterparts. However, great progress should be noted especially when remembering that women did not have the right to vote anywhere only a century ago.

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UndergroundB@gmail.com**

# Could our Religion be in the Way of Peace?

by Buzz Thomas

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was nobody’s fool. Born before the age of science, Wesley was prescient enough to temper church tradition and the teachings of scripture with reason and experience. Twenty-first century Christians are wise to do the same.

I say this because some of our religious doctrines may be getting us into trouble. Evangelical Christian Jimmy Carter reminds us of one such doctrine with his controversial new book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. It is the persistent notion (particularly among Evangelicals) that because Israel was God’s chosen nation in the Old Testament, America should turn a blind eye to her shortcomings today. Many Americans fear that to be on the wrong side with Israel is to be on the wrong side with God, and nobody wants to do that, especially if Armageddon is looming on the horizon. (Some Christians derive this deep-seated, though unwarranted fear from the Book of Revelation where Christ and his heavenly army defeat the Anti-Christ and his Satanic forces on the Plain of Megiddo in northern Israel. Israel appears in the Book symbolically as the home of God’s people in the same way that Babylon appears as the representative of Rome and the enemy of God. Neither reference was meant to be taken literally.)

Christians, of course, lay claim to a new covenant with God. We believe it is one that supplants the old covenant and offers love and forgiveness to all people regardless of their politics or national origin. In New Testament theology, the church is the new Israel. It is God’s primary vehicle for mediating grace to the world. More importantly, it is the poor and downtrodden (the “least of these” as Jesus called them) who now lay claim to the title of God’s chosen people. See The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25.

Carter, arguably America’s finest example of Christian citizenship and our only president to enjoy major success in the Middle East, is nudging us away from our obsession with the War in Iraq to a more global perspective on the conflict that threatens to engulf the entire region.

At the heart of the problem, of course, lies the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians who were displaced in the 1940s to make room for the new Jewish state. Although some Palestinian land was reserved, most of it was seized by Israel during the famous Six-Day War of 1967. And, although Gaza has now been returned, most of the West Bank is still in Israeli hands.

Carter argues that until we resolve this land dispute, we stand little chance of creating lasting peace in the Middle East. Even then, we will have a long and difficult struggle against the Jihadists of radical Islam. But only then, do we have a chance of attracting the moderate Arab support that is critical to winning the War on Terror.

So, how do we do it? First, by pressing Israel to withdraw from most of the West Bank. President Clinton came close to accomplishing this during the 11th hour of his presidency with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. For reasons that will never be entirely clear, Palestinian Authority President Yassar Arafat blinked and failed to seize upon the best Israeli offer in years. The question for Americans is how do we now reapply the pressure to both sides?

I visited the West Bank City of Ramallah shortly after Israel began constructing its so-called security fence. I had been invited by a group of prominent Israeli and Palestinian women, including several members of the Israeli Congress, who are part of the Global Peace Initiative of Women. After years of frustration with their male counterparts, these women had decided to take matters into their own hands. Although I had ministered in the roughest parts of New Orleans, what I saw in Ramallah shocked me. The place looked like Berlin after World War II. As I listened to the stories of the Palestinian women gathered at our hotel, the pro-Israel lens through which I had always viewed the Middle East grew clouded. There were stories of the houses and olive orchards that had been bulldozed to make room for the new wall and of the hundreds of checkpoints that had been erected to keep law-abiding Palestinians from getting to their jobs or back and forth from school. I watched with my own eyes as a young Israeli soldier harassed an elderly man who was trying to get his



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# Editorial: Bilingual Nation

by Amy Hill

Growing up in the South means passing at least three churches on the way to school or work, and hearing phrases like “God forbid!” and “Praise Jesus!” roll off the tongue as easily as sweet tea pours out of a pitcher. Christianity is such a large facet of the Southern life that any other building of worship, such as a Sri Ganesha temple or a Muslim mosque, causes wonder for children riding in school buses. Even signs of faith like yamakas or hijabs may as well come with their own flashing neon signs. Like the idiom goes, every exception proves the rule, the minority representation of these religions, which are very prominent in other nations, reinforces the image of America, not just the South, as a “Christian Nation.”

This image goes beyond a stereotype. It isn’t merely given to the United States by outsiders who don’t experience life in America’s cities and towns; the image is actually and most commonly proliferated by American citizens. It would be absurd to claim that the majority of Americans weren’t actually Christian, but it is equally absurd to claim that America is a nation. Absurd, however, under the correct definition, not entirely false.


When a person first immigrates to a new nation, the largest barrier he or she faces is language. Communication becomes a daunting task when a person’s native language is not the one his or her future employer speaks, or even that in which a neighbor says

“hello.” But the language barrier is one that falls easily. So why not view different religions as different languages? If Christianity is viewed as one language, Islam as another, Buddhism as yet another and so forth, it becomes easy to break the barrier between the languages. It becomes easy and interesting to learn about other religions as people understand that different practices are merely different ways of exercising faith, just as “Hallo” and “Hola” are merely different ways of saying “Hello!”

If each religion is merely a different language, then the question of whether or not America is a Christian nation becomes obsolete. In this language of the world religions, each name becomes a term, translated into each faith. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Taoism they all are merely words meaning “religion.” If one wishes to say that America is a “Christian nation”, what is really being said is that America is a “religious nation.”

So life in the South, with its comfortably embellished Christian ways, is not proof of a “Christian nation”, but rather a dialect, or an accent, of the “Religious nation.” Like the Southern accent, so ubiquitous in the South that it’s practically unnoticeable, Christianity here is just a part of life. Much in the same way that a Tennessean turns heads

when he or she speaks in New York City and vice versa, so a Christian would do on the banks of the Ganges River, a body of water that is sacred in the Hindu faith. Yet crosses are not burned in the front lawns of New Yorkers; Yankees and Rebels have laid their guns (for the most part) down in peace. Before the gun can be raised again, perhaps it would be useful for us to become multilingual.



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# Northern Ireland: the Brink of Reconciliation

by *Thiago Buchert*

This year, Saint Patrick's Day might have added reason for celebration. If the Northern Ireland Assembly's election on March 7<sup>th</sup> go smoothly, the world could see a devolved power sharing arrangement between Catholics and Protestants for the first time in history. Although there is some work to be done, there is also reason for optimism.

Sharing in this optimism is Reverend Ken Newell who recently spoke about his experiences at Maryville College's February Meetings. Although he was raised in a segregated Protestant community in Belfast, Reverend Newell quickly realized that communication was necessary to achieve understanding between Catholics and Protestants and end the "troubles." In one instance he mentioned, some members from his denomination killed Catholics. Reverend Newell invited his congregation to meet with the victims' family members. Because of this gesture, those families prevented a possible Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) retaliatory strike against Protestants. No doubt, efforts like these eventually led to the cease-fire in 1994.

The first attempt to advance this cease-fire into a lasting power-sharing peace was called the Belfast or Good Friday agreement in 1998. It stated that all parties would share power democratically while all paramilitary organizations would disarm. Even though it was ratified by the people of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the agreement didn't work initially due to the Democratic Unionist Party's (DUP) refusal to enter into a coalition government with Sinn Fein while the paramilitary PRIA was still armed. Moreover, a member of Sinn Fein was revealed to be a MI5 spy for the British Government and was later assassinated, which further soured the deal.

However, neither party gave up on peace. Sinn

Fein did eventually disarm and, the DUP agreed to share power, which resulted in the St. Andrew's Agreement. The agreement stipulates that if Sinn Fein, the political wing of the PIRA, agrees to cooperate with the police, then the Protestant DUP will agree to share power with them in the Northern Ireland Assembly. This agreement would give the Catholics the representation they desire and the Protestants the security they desire. Moreover, this is also the first time that the two most partisan political parties in Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein and the DUP, have come to an agreement beyond a general cease-fire.

Despite this, the election's results are actually far from predictable. Although a majority of Northern Ireland is Unionist, the competition between the two Unionist parties the DUP and the Ulster Unionist Party (which is more moderate) may split the Unionist vote enough for Sinn Fein to gain a minority government and thus the ability to name the First Minister. However, this is less meaningful than it might sound considering that the assembly is a proportional representation system, which is designed to promote the rights of the minority party.

Thus, peace in Ireland—a vision that many touted as impossible as peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians—is on the brink of being achieved, barring some unforeseen catastrophe. So on this St. Patrick's Day, when we're all engaging in the proud tradition of pretending

that 1/32 Gaelic descent makes us Irish, give a toast to people like Ken Newell who work in the tradition of St. Patrick's Prince of Peace.



**Reverend Ken Newell**  
Photograph by Rebekah Lührs

## (Religion Cont.)

donkey cart through one checkpoint. I wanted to throw up.

One story in particular stood out — probably because the young woman who told it reminded me of my own daughters. The woman, in her early 20s, had recently graduated from Birzeit University and moved to Ramallah to pursue a career in accounting. Days before my arrival, she had come home to find Israeli soldiers occupying her apartment building. They told her that suspected terrorists lived in the building and she would not be allowed back inside. Despite her protestations and pleas (finally just to retrieve her personal effects and pictures of her dead father), the four-story building was destroyed. Her furniture, clothing, even her accounting license, were gone. "I am young," she said, "and I will recover. But for my landlord and his eight children, this building was the only thing they had. Now, they have no choice but to go to the camps."


As I lay in my bed that night, I reflected on those eight children and their parents now forced to live in a tent. Even if the Israelis had captured their suspect, most likely there will someday be at least eight young recruits to take his place. Like our ill-fated War in Iraq, Israeli

policy seems to create more terrorists than it captures or destroys.

We turned our former Nazi enemies into friends by helping rebuild their war-ravaged nation. Palestinian roads, hospitals and schools have been destroyed. Would we not be wise to try the same strategy with them?

If God is on anybody's side in this mess, he's on everybody's side. Yes, he is moved to compassion for the jittery Israeli soldier who fears that the next person through his checkpoint may be wearing a bomb. But if the New Testament is correct, he is even more heartbroken by the callous treatment of the Palestinians. "In so much as you did it to the least of these," Jesus said, "you did it unto me." The wretched poor squatting in the rocks and refugee camps are God's chosen people, too. It's time we follow John Wesley's advice and start viewing them as such.

*Oliver "Buzz" Thomas is a minister, lawyer and author of an upcoming book, "10 Things Your Minister Wants to Tell You (But Can't Because He Needs the Job)."*



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

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# The Benefits of Shopping Locally

by Rebekah Lührs

Being a global citizen is an issue that is constantly addressed by the *Underground*, but being aware of decisions made locally may have just as much, if not more, of a direct effect. In the same sense that being aware of the outside world has its benefits, knowing the influence of simple decisions, such as where to grocery shop, can have a

mass produced on a local scale they are more likely to be of a much better quality and made under more sustainable working conditions. Local shopping also provides sustainable economic support for the community, as well as helps build community.

In Blount County's case, the ever-growing and developing areas are creating ample opportunity for chain restaurants and markets to move in. With a second Wal-Mart coming into the county, it might be a good time to step back and evaluate the actual benefits and losses that come with building a large super-center such as this.

A main argument that has circulated

about large businesses moving in is that they bring jobs into the communities, but studies have shown that in the long run, corporate businesses such as Kroger and Wal-Mart end up putting

more people out of jobs than they offer. The Arizona Chain Reaction says that, on average, for every two jobs an incoming corporation creates, three are lost. With such a concentration on consumerism, local places that may offer better quality items at lower prices are overlooked.

Furthermore, the Public Policy Institute of California conducted a study that looked at 3,094 Counties across the U.S. following the opening of Wal-Mart and its effects between 1977 and 2002. The study found that on average 180 jobs were lost, while each store created only half as many. Though the immediate effects seem to be grand, the underlying ones are often missed as local and (cont. on page 11)



Photographs by Rebekah Lührs



monumental impact.

At one point or another most people have heard that shopping locally has its benefits, but what exactly are they and how does the Blount County Community specifically benefit from local buyers?

The first, most obvious advantage is that shopping in local markets, such as the Horn of Plenty and the Farmer's Market, directly supports families in the community. Purchasing from large corporations like Kroger and Target, on the other hand, often means that the incoming funds are going to the company itself. Buying locally keeps the money in the area, as it is recycled back into the community. This also includes the tax dollars going into these businesses. By shopping locally all of the tax dollars stay local to assist in road improvements and the school systems. In corporate chains, the taxes go to the company headquarters.

Another benefit, according to the Home Town Advantage: Reviving Locally Owned Business, is that every dollar spent locally has three times the impact on the direct community. Also, since products are not



VS



## (Private Prisons Cont.)

Of the 11 private prison companies that gave in elections, CCA lead the pack with nearly \$466,000 direct in contributions, \$483,000 through affiliated lobbyists, and \$194,000 in private donations. Clearly, CCA does seek to maintain a steady flow of consumers to take advantage of its correctional services.

Of all states, Florida's candidates ran into the most cash from private prisons, nearly \$650,000, which made up almost 20 percent of all contributions. Florida is working on its sixth privately owned and operated prison, and has privatized most of its juvenile system. Yet Florida ran into some trouble in 2005 when the state's Department of Management Services conducted an internal audit revealing that public funds had overpaid private prison operators by \$1.3 million.

New Mexico is under an especially watchful eye—it is one of the most vulnerable states due to its economic challenges and poverty rates. Governor Bill Richardson accepted more contributions than any other politician that ran for state office. These contributions have a boomerang effect. The private company GEO Group is soaking up millions from new contracts in New Mexico, running the Lea County Correctional Facility, which has an annual operating budget of \$25 million (and those dollars are public).

While state legislation continues to fight crime by locking more and more of the population behind bars, prison corporations are in the background scheming their fortunes. And although some claim that tougher laws and longer sentences decrease crime rates, perhaps these methods are not the best means of attaining a peaceful society. As long as dollars from powerful corporations wield influence in the political sphere, towering walls and barbed wire will continue to divert our attention from the real causes—and solutions—to the problem and violence of crime in our society.

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## (Shop Locally Cont.)

pre-existing businesses end up having to lay off people due to lost business caused by new arrivals.

As we look around Blount County, it seems that a new chain store opens up every time we turn our heads. Yet this thought doesn't cross our minds as we think of where to get lunch during the busy weekday. Subway may be good, but Subs and Such offers the same services locally. And sure, people love their Starbucks, but Grounded Coffee and More is just as good, if not better. The hours may differ when comparing Kroger to the Horn of Plenty, but these are only small issues to consider on a much grander scale.

As we watch Blount County grow, we do not want to lose the hometown feel to corporate America. By shopping locally we build stronger communities that support each other in the long run. The benefits are numerous as it directly supports local families, tax benefits stay in the area, money is recycled back into the community, higher quality products are offered, and it is much more sustainable in the long run.

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# Prison Expansion: Let the Markets Decide

by Sarah Hailey

Three years ago, the United States Justice Department announced that over 2 million people were serving time in correctional facilities. This number pushed the United States past Russia for incarcerating the highest percentage of people, making us number one in the world. With 705 out of 100,000 US citizens behind bars, the United States imprisons its citizens at a higher rate than not only its developed Western counterparts, but even the most impoverished and authoritarian nations.

This record-breaking event is a landmark after two decades of hard-line legislations such as the War on Drugs and the “three strikes” laws that led to more prosecutions and longer sentences, all on the premise

*“If the ultimate goal of private prisons is the same as any corporation, to maximize profit, what happens when the demand for the product—prisoners—is not a matter of consumer preference but of legislation?”*

that it was time to “crackdown on crime.” These measures have contributed to the continual rise in prison population since the mid-80s and with no perceivable end in sight.

With this sharp increase of prisoners, the state quickly became burdened with the high costs of inmate crowding and facility construction. Coupled with the political shift of the Reagan administration and its legacy of pushing public services to the private sector, state governments began contracting to private companies for prison construction and management. The goal was to combat the burdensome costs with the efficiency of the private sector.

While the private prison industry accounts for only a fraction of all prison facilities, the trend is growing. Last year saw an 8.8 % increase in privatization of prisons, which will likely continue into the future.

The main player in the private prison industry is the Nashville-based Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). The CCA prides itself as the founder of the private corrections industry and leading provider of detention services to the state, housing roughly 70,000 inmates in 64 facilities across 19 states. CCA has proven

to be successful in its field. *Forbes Magazine* recently reported that in the fourth quarter of 2006, the CCA saw a 37 percent profit increase. For the entire fiscal year the company doubled its revenue to \$50.1 million.

Certainly this growing industry has its share of critics. Those on the highest moral ground are fighting the private prison industry strictly on the very principle of it. “What is the world coming to when corporations can make whopping profits by incarcerating criminals? Regardless of the outcomes, the system itself is corrupt,” say the Marxists, Roman Catholic Priests, and hippies.

Perhaps this argument intuits the larger implications of what this growing industry could bring. We go to the marketplace to buy apples and oranges, but have we gone too far when we extend it to include services to prisoners? If the ultimate goal of private prisons is the same as any corporation, to maximize profit, what happens when the demand for the product—prisoners—is not a matter of consumer preference but of legislation?

The obvious answer is the correct one: lobbying. When profits depend on filling cells, corporations work to keep the demands high. The Montana-based Institute on Money in State Politics posted a report on corrections corporations and election giving, concluding that during the 2002 and 2004 elections, private prison companies and related players gave a total of \$3.3 million to candidates and parties in over 44 states.

Edwin Bender, the executive director of the institute, notes that private prisons were more generous toward states with the toughest sentencing laws. For example, prison companies gave \$2.2 million to campaigns in 22 states that had “three strikes” laws, compared to only \$1.2 million to the 22 that did not. The report further observes a strong tendency to donate toward candidates with the most power to directly influence and veto legislation.

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# Stopping Domestic Violence

by Diane Hicks

Every 15 seconds in the United States, someone is the victim of battering. About 95% of these victims are women. The truth is, more than 50% of all women will experience some form of physical violence in an intimate relationship, and for many of these, it will happen on a regular basis. Some will die from it. Many will feel powerless to prevent or escape it, and not know where to turn for help.

Domestic violence is a topic which few people are comfortable talking about, and one which most people don’t even want to think about. Its victims are usually women. It can happen anywhere, and it is happening here in Blount County. An abuser may be of any age, race, educational or socioeconomic background, religion, or even gender. Domestic violence also requires great courage, support and education to prevent, diagnose, treat, and overcome.

Domestic violence is about one person gaining and keeping power and control over another in an intimate relationship, through the use of fear and intimidation. The abuser may be a dating partner, a spouse, former spouse, or even a live-in lover. Although physical abuse is often the most recognized, domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence. As a result, some women may not realize they are victims. Abuse may also be sexual, emotional, or even economic. Sometimes it takes the form of psychological threats or actions that intimidate and influence the victim to give the abuser control, such as behavior that frightens, intimidates, manipulates, humiliates, blames, or insults. This may then escalate to physical abuse. All forms of abuse are destructive and harmful.

You or someone you know may be a victim of one or more of the following types of domestic violence:

**PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Grabbing, pinching, hitting, slapping, shoving, hair pulling, biting, not allowing medical care or treatment, forcing alcohol or drug use, or using a weapon to cause injury or death;

**SEXUAL ABUSE:** Forcing or attempting to force sexual contact. This includes rape, forcing sex after beating, and attacks on sexual body parts;

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE:** Constant criticism, name calling, damaging the relationship with children or other important family members, belittling abilities, undermining sense of self worth;

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE:** Causing fear by intimidation, threat of physical harm to victim or

children, destruction of property or pets, isolation from friends, family, school or work;

**ECONOMIC ABUSE:** Attempting to force financial dependence, such as maintaining control over financial resources, withholding access to money, forbidding the victim to work, attend school, or other source of money or means of support.

Where can a victim of domestic abuse turn for help?

First, a protective order to prevent further abuse may be requested from the Blount County Clerk and Master’s Office at the Justice Center, (865) 273-5500. An Order of Protection may require the abuser to leave the house, or pay child support, and prevents stalking or harassment. An abuser who violates an Order of Protection can be arrested.

Emergency shelters are also available. Victims and their children can go to Haven House, (865) 982-1097, or Safe Haven Center, at (865) 522-7273. The Family/Parenting Info Line is (865) 681-9741, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline is 1-(800) 799-7233. On the Internet, WomensLaw.org is one of many sites with good information and links.

For physical abuse, a criminal complaint may be filed with the magistrate. Contact numbers include the following: Blount County Sheriff (865) 273-5000, Domestic Violence Unit (865) 273-5116, Blount County DA’s Office (865) 273-5600, Alcoa Police (865) 981-4111, and Maryville Police (865) 981-1370.

Some victims seek help, only to return to the abuser. This is partly due to lack of self esteem from being abused, lack of funds or family support, criticism by outsiders, religious teachings or pressure, self loathing, or fear, to name a few. Another explanation may be that violence usually comes in cycles, rather than being constant. Tension builds, battering takes place, followed by apologies, promises, gifts, or loving behavior. The victim may believe the abuser’s promises not to do it again. However, the cycle of violence continues without intervention.

Education is the first step to stopping abuse. Young boys need to be taught how to properly relate to girls and express anger and frustration appropriately. Help stop domestic abuse. Learn about your legal rights and options, and where to get help. Don’t suffer in silence. Call someone and talk about it. Get involved. The life you help save may be your own, or that of someone you love.



## Local Artist Profile: Tricia Wilhoit

by *Holley Roberts*

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of my car and onto Tricia Wilhoit's property was the scenery. Tree-covered hillsides surrounded me, and her modest log house sat comfortably basked in the light rainfall before me. Her's is an atmosphere of natural serenity a mere half hour's drive from Maryville College.

We greeted and began trekking up one of the many slopes behind the cabin. Once in her art studio, I experienced a pleasantly surprising sense of color overload. Pastel pink walls blend into cream colored borders and shelves. Her paintings, vibrant portraits of children, men, women, pets and wild animals, inundate the space.

Tricia is no typical artist. She has very little formal training and no college degree in the field. Life experience defines her more as a self-taught realist than a product of strict methodology. Her pencil drawings, watercolors and oil paintings are mostly portraits rendered from photographs.

While experimenting with various mediums as the whim strikes her, she prefers depicting people rather than landscapes and particularly enjoys recreating images of children. Most of her clients are either family friends or community members who hear of her by word of

mouth.

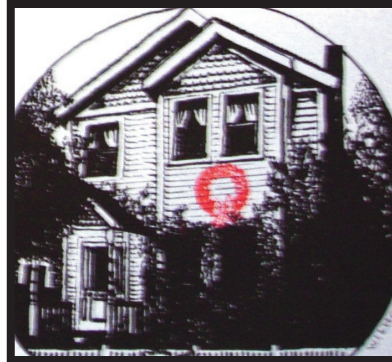
When asked why she came to be an artist, she said, "I do everything that comes to me from inside to do. Whatever I am inspired to create, that is what I do."

Tricia grew up peacefully in a small town in New England. When she was 17 years old, her teacher at the private boarding school she attended told her she had no creative ability and that she should stick with sports like tennis and swimming.

Needless to say, it took a few years before she regained confidence in her natural abilities as an artist.

In fact, she did not attempt to draw again until after she married and had three children of her own. One day she drew a picture of a tennis shoe one of her sons left lying in the floor. She has not stopped drawing and painting since.

Tricia moved out to California when she was in her twenties and took the



*Photographs  
by:  
Holley  
Roberts*

### (Tricia Wilhoit cont)

certification classes she needed to teach art at a community college. She taught for five years and sold her work on the side as means of income. During that time, she also learned a bit of pottery, a practice she still dabbles in today.

"A teacher gets out of teaching that which is her passion in life," she explained. "While teaching in California, I was just one step ahead of my class. My inspiration was good for them, more so than my skills." Now that her professional teaching career is passed, Tricia teaches children in her family whenever they visit.

She and her second husband moved to Tennessee in 1988. Charles is a native of the area and works in politics. The couple owns more than 100 acres near Townsend, and every year they host a huge family reunion on the property, which is covered with hiking trails and places to camp.

Tricia loves this region of the country. She says, "I spend much time in silence, I paint, garden, take naps and read books." Life has afforded her a wealth of experiences, and now she seems content to combine her art work with quiet reflection.

Her personal philosophy is an intriguing one. "I tell people that there is passion in everyone, and if we can just listen and do what that passion leads us to do, art will come to us. I want people to have hope that they can be artists, however art shows itself in their lives," she said.

Tricia's comments stem partly from her strong interest in the thoughts of Deepak Chopra, who writes that every individual has the ability to serve humanity in some valuable capacity; without focusing on success as the world defines such a thing, one need only focus on his or her unique talents and subsequent offerings to the human community.

Tricia's work is displayed in Townsend and in her studio at home. She can be reached for more information about portraits or lessons at 865-448-6493.

