

# SNAPSHOTS

Faces and places from around the region.  
by **Alice H. Davis**



## Radio Sounds

“You don’t have to be famous to be on WoodSongs; you just have to be good.” That’s how folk singer/songwriter Michael Johnathon describes the radio show he hosts from a historic Lexington theater.

Guests on the WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour have included country singer Kathy Mattea, Grammy-winning folk singer Odetta, the Blind Boys of Alabama and ’70s icon Janis Ian.

Patterned after shows like the Grand Ole Opry, WoodSongs, now in its ninth season, is thoroughly modern. (There is also a television version broadcast on PBS.)

WoodSongs webcasts go out live Monday nights 44 times a year; CDs of the program are mailed to almost 500 radio stations worldwide and to the XM Satellite Radio Network.

## Rich in Green

The Bluegrass region gets its nickname from *poa pratensis*, a grass that thrives in the area’s rainy climate and mineral-rich soil. Because Kentucky rests on what was once an ocean, limestone and phosphorus enrich its soil. As a result, the native grass helps produce strong-boned horses and cattle.

But is the grass blue? Not really, says Thoroughbred horse consultant Dan Rosenberg. The seed head does have a bluish tint, so if your lawn looks blue, it’s time to mow.

BURKE'S PHOTO BY CLAY JACKSON; BLUEGRASS © JUPITER IMAGES



Joedy Burke is the fifth generation to work in his family's Danville bakery.

## Daily Bread, and Then Some

Patty and Joe Burke are the fourth generation to run Burke’s Bakery and Delicatessen in Danville, a town of 13,000 some 45 miles southwest of Lexington. Grown son Joedy also works in the bakery; Joe Burke’s father, Sam, 81, comes in part-time to order supplies and schedule the bakery’s 36 employees.

Generations of central Kentuckians have frequented the Main Street location for 50 years to buy donuts, cakes, rolls, bread and specialty items, such as the butterflake rolls. (One recent Easter, Burke’s sold 800 dozen of the rolls.) Burke’s sells as many as 100 dozen yeast donuts on weekdays and up to 200 dozen on Saturdays.

Founded in 1922 by Joe Burke’s great-grandfather, a farmer and former bread truck driver, the bakery’s first product was bread. Burke’s still bakes a daily average of 100 loaves of the salt-risen bread.

One specialty item baked about three times a year—a banana roll made with fresh bananas and cream—is so popular that the store maintains a list of “people who just have to be called when the banana rolls are ready,” Patty Burke says.

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## Green Acres: Parks Give Refreshing Pause



Gratz Park

Kentucky architectural historian Clay Lancaster once described Gratz Park as “an oasis of planting tucked into the cityscape.” A “city square” of antebellum houses in Lexington’s downtown, Gratz is one of more than 100 parks comprising more than 4,000 acres in the city. Mini-parks, open spaces and broad boulevards

lend the city a sense of tranquility and history. Several historic neighborhoods include residential parks: Fayette Park, Elsmere Park, Hampton Court and Gratz Park on downtown’s north side; Bell Court, northeast of downtown; Mentelle Park, southeast; and Cherokee Park, south.

Dressing up the roadways are large, open medians like one in the historic Ashland neighborhood, southeast of downtown, which grew out of the estate belonging to 19th-century Kentucky statesman Henry Clay. The sons of legendary landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted laid out the neighborhood that’s home to the parkway.

“These parks are vital to the community, part of our rich history and cultural heritage,” says Bettie Kerr, Lexington’s historic preservation officer. “They are part of our way of life.”

## Fizz with a Twist



G.L. Wainscott made his first batch of Ale-8-One, a ginger-flavored soft drink with a kick of caffeine and hint of citrus, in 1926 in Winchester, east of Lexington. Today Wainscott’s great-nephew and his children operate the company, selling 2 million cases a year. Diet Ale-8-One launched in 2003, joining Ale-8-One-flavored barbecue sauce, salsa, apple butter, even lollipops.

It’s the original soda that sells far and wide, says executive vice president Fielding Rogers. The company regularly ships cases to U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. “People buy cases to serve at their weddings,” Rogers says. “We’ve even received pictures of people and their Ale-8-One tattoos.”



## Splendor in the Glass

“Poochy Serpentine Striker,” by Stephen Rolfe Powell

When Stephen Rolfe Powell first saw glass being produced, it was “love at first sight.” For Powell, a successful glass artist and teacher who lives and works in Danville, making glass combines it all: a hands-on, very physical activity that produces work full of color, light and movement.

A native of Birmingham, Alabama, Powell came to Centre College and left in 1974 after majoring in painting and ceramics. At age 28, Powell saw glass produced and was hooked. He returned to Centre to teach in 1983 and built its first glass studio in 1985. The college now maintains a state-of-the-art hot glass studio in the Jones Visual Arts Center.

Powell’s work is exhibited in private and public collections around the world, from solo exhibitions to group shows. *Teasers*, his first series, was inspired by the human figure; the pieces bear such names as “Autumn Jealous Cleavage” and “Sticky Fingers Smith.” Last year he began a series called *Screamers*, brilliantly colored, bird-like structures that seem frozen in time.

It’s the movement and the power of glass that first attracted Powell to the medium and keeps him working. “When people ask me what I do, I tell them I’m a teacher,” he said. “My best teaching is through osmosis.”

GRATZ PARK PHOTO BY JOHN STEPHEN HOCKENSMITH; STEPHEN POWELL GLASS ART COURTESY OF DAVID HARPE; ALE-8-ONE PHOTO COURTESY OF ALE-8-ONE

# Meetings—Bluegrass Style



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## Bluegrass Wineries Do Just Vine

Kentucky's wine industry has a long heritage. In 1798, Jean Jacques Dufour, a Frenchman from Switzerland, started the country's first commercial wine vineyard near Nicholasville, about 14 miles south of Lexington. Eventually Kentucky ranked third in U.S. production of grapes and wine until Prohibition forced farmers to switch from grapes to tobacco as a cash crop.

These days, vineyard owners all over the Bluegrass are hoping to return to those glory days, armed with help from the area's temperate climate and a boost from state agriculture officials. Stacia Alford, coordinator of the agriculture department's Kentucky Grape and Wine Council, says wine production in the state has had a steady increase. Production has increased from 68 acres and five wineries in 1999 to 780 acres of grapes and 256 growers today. Last year, approximately 200,000 gallons of wine were produced in Kentucky, Alford says, with 46 wineries producing wine and 35 of them selling it.

Wineries now dot the Bluegrass, such as Talon Winery and Vineyard (the Bluegrass' leading wine producer) and Jean Farris Winery, both in Lexington; Equus Run Vineyard near Midway; Chrisman Mill Vineyards in Nicholasville; and the Acres of Land Winery outside of Richmond.



## Good Fences, Made by Good Neighbors

Kentucky's Bluegrass region holds many hints of early settlers from Scotland, Ireland and England. Among them: the rock fences that still grace the area's rolling countryside.

The fences are often misnamed as slave fences from the common myth that they were built by slaves clearing farmland. Skilled stonemasons constructed the fences, which also line early highways, starting in the mid-1700s. Built without mortar from the limestone that lay underground, the fences stay up through gravity and construction know-how.

With some torn down or damaged by development, the fences are now the focus of state and local preservation laws and efforts. The Dry Stone Conservancy, a national group based in Lexington, trains professionals and laypeople on how to rebuild and maintain the fences, which conservancy executive director E. Chris Harp, calls "symbols of our cultural heritage."

"It's a craft," he says. "And keeping it alive is important."



Dry stone fences, such as these at Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, line many Kentucky roads.

## BY THE NUMBERS

117

Countries represented by students at the University of Kentucky

34

Equine organizations that have their headquarters at the Kentucky Horse Park

17

Number of U.S. cities and towns named Lexington



Lexington, Kentucky's rank in size and population

10

Lexington's rank on a 2006 list of most educated large U.S. cities

7

Number of NCAA championships won by the UK men's basketball team

1,500

Varieties of roses in the rose garden at The Arboretum, the State

ROCK FENCES PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DRY STONE CONSERVANCY

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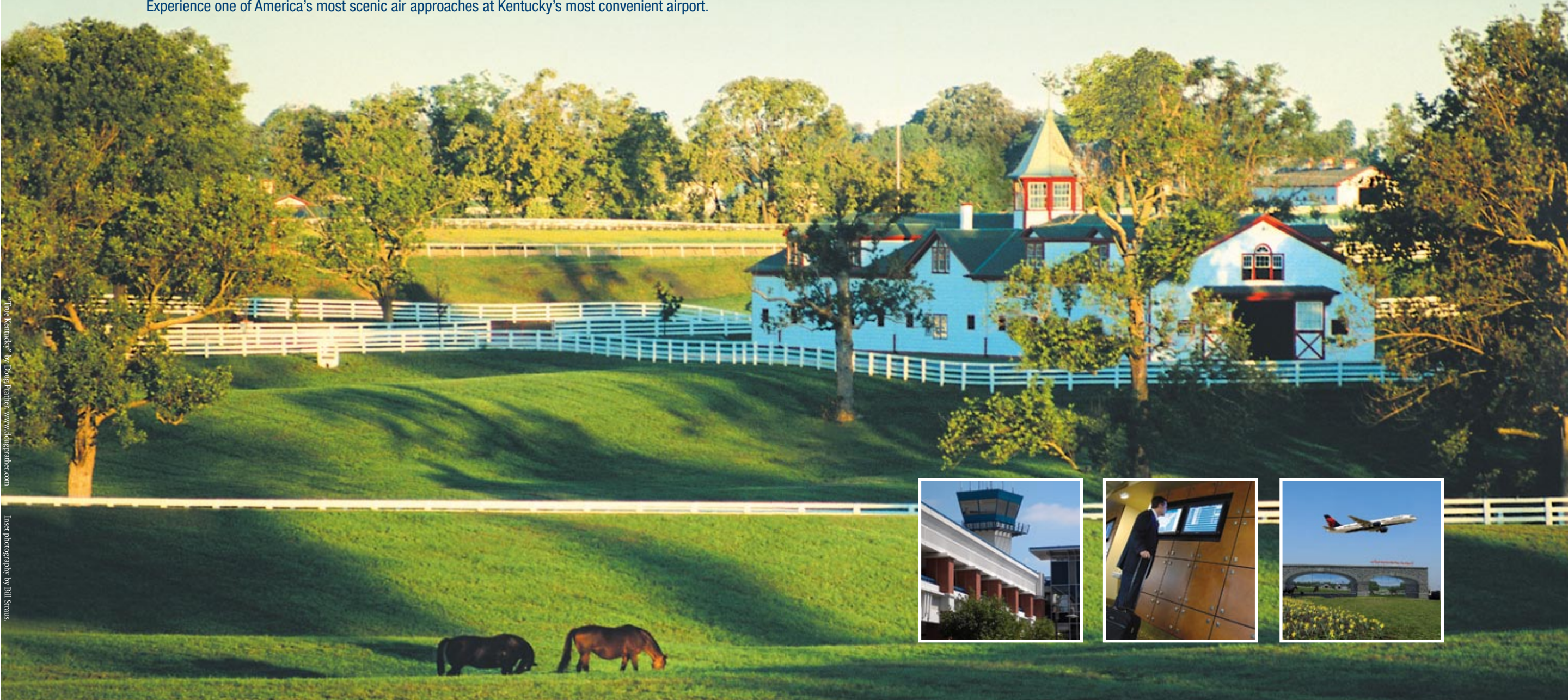
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