

Water Water Everywhere Nor Any Drop to Sell

THE Louisville Water Company experienced a \$3.6 million budget shortfall in 2003. 2003 sales declined about \$2.5 million because a rainy summer decreased the demand for water. Earnings on investments were less because effective interest rates in 2003 were lower than forecast. Also, some operating costs were higher than budgeted.

To reduce 2004 overhead, the water company is offering early retirement to senior employees. The Louisville Water Company has 270,000 customers and annual sales of about \$100 million.

Members of Lexington's For Local Ownership of Water (FLOW) have frequently cited the Louisville Water Company as an example of how condemning and purchasing the Kentucky American Water Company would be a major financial benefit for Lexington/Fayette County.

We agree that Louisville Water Company is a well run company. We don't agree that



condemning the Kentucky American Water Company is a good idea. Competing with free water from Mother Nature is just one more risk Lexington's

urban county government and local taxpayers will assume if takeover efforts against Kentucky American Water Company are successful.

Two-Party System an Asset for Louisville Metro

NOVEMBER elections are looming on the 2004 horizon. Local handicappers and political pundits are already talking about whether or not the Democrats will continue to control the Louisville Metro Council.

Thirteen of the council's 26 seats are up for election. Democrats now have a four-seat advantage on the council (15-11). Eight Democrat and five Republican seats are being contested in 2004. A swing on three seats would give Republicans a majority.

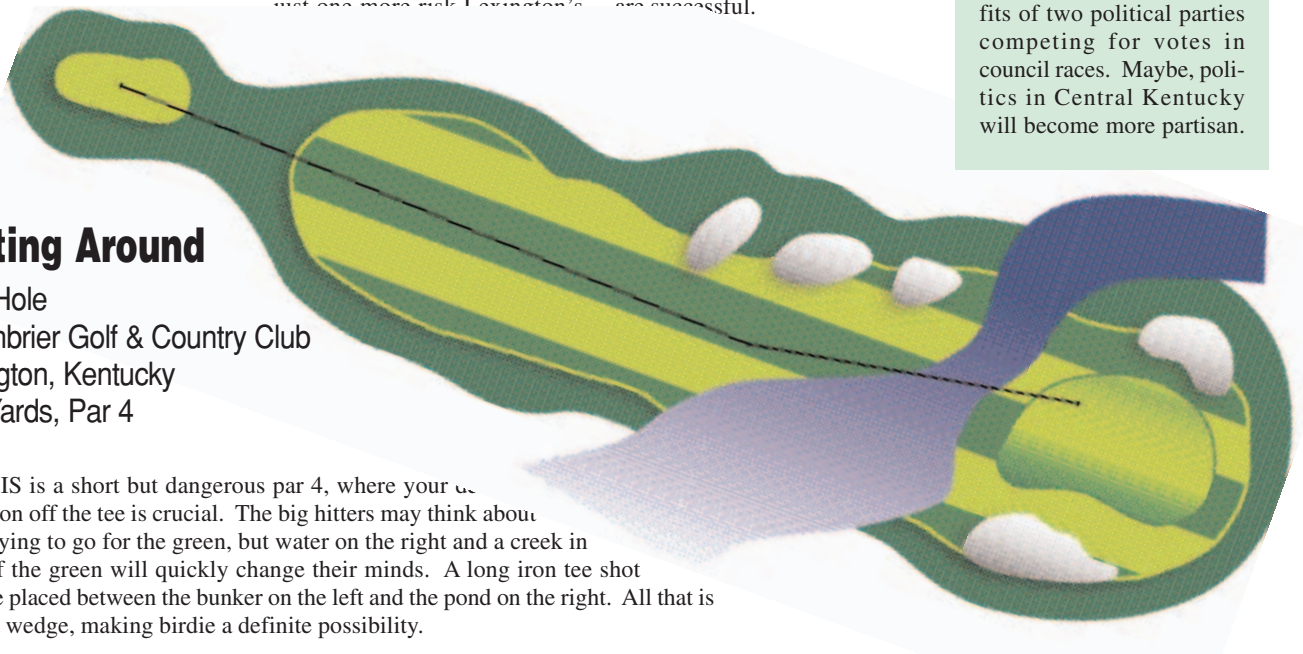
Louisville's two-party system seems to be favorable to Lexington's "non-partisan" council seats in that partisan politics helps voters focus on major philosophical and political issues facing the community.

Lexingtonians are watching the success of Louisville Metro's merged government and the benefits of two political parties competing for votes in council races. Maybe, politics in Central Kentucky will become more partisan.

Putting Around

12th Hole
Greenbrier Golf & Country Club
Lexington, Kentucky
297 Yards, Par 4

THIS is a short but dangerous par 4, where your decision off the tee is crucial. The big hitters may think about trying to go for the green, but water on the right and a creek in front of the green will quickly change their minds. A long iron tee shot must be placed between the bunker on the left and the pond on the right. All that is left is a wedge, making birdie a definite possibility.



Mad Cow in the U.S.

Another blow to Kentucky agriculture, or potential opportunity?

IN light of the discovery of mad cow disease in Washington state, many economists and farmers are wondering what the impact will be on Kentucky's beef industry. Fears of drastic drops in demand and profits are not entirely unfounded, but if we look at what happened in England and Canada, there doesn't seem to be too much to be worried about.

If mass-media news reports are to be believed, store owners are not seeing any significant change in meat buying habits. The only place where any significant impact is currently being seen is in beef futures.

Also consider that we are only talking about one cow. And that one was actually detected and recalled, albeit a bit late.

Add to this the fact that, according to the Department of Agriculture, most of the beef raised in Kentucky is raised on grass, hay and corn; not on "engineered" feed. If we pay attention, this might even present a decent opportunity to market our beef products even more strongly.

"Fed only natural feeds" could become an excellent selling point for the Kentucky beef industry if we can establish a way to confirm

and monitor what the herds are fed. If FDA/USDA regulations are being followed, this is already happening to some degree anyway, since the feed bill records were used to track down the origin and birth date of the infected animal.

When you consider all this, the conclusion is obvious: Buy beef futures when the price hits bottom. Consumer demand doesn't seem to be changing much and that means store prices probably won't change too much either, meaning larger profit margins for those who own futures. . .

—Tim Hunt

Restaurant in Review

Bistro La Belle

121 East Main Street
Midway, KY 40347
(859) 846-4233

LOCATED in Midway's historic downtown district, Bistro La Belle offers a dozen delightful entrees nightly, ranging from Railroad Street Hot Brown (\$14) to Skillet Blackened Fillet of Beef Tenderloin (\$29) and the Daily Fresh Catch. Entrees are accompanied with unusual side dishes like chive and lobster grits, cannellini bean cassoulet, and Yukon gold potatoes with wild mushrooms.

Bistro La Belle is open for dinner Wednesday through Saturday and for brunch on Sundays.



Merging Lexington's Economic Development Efforts

SINCE 1998, *The Lane Report* has advocated the merger of economic development initiatives for Lexington/Fayette County into one entity. The success of Greater Louisville Inc. in repositioning and stimulating economic development for the Metropolitan Louisville area has aptly been demonstrated.

The merger of the Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce, Lexington United and the Lexington Partnership for Workforce Development will provide companies interested in expanding or developing business operations in Lexington with a user friendly, authoritative, one-stop source for economic development assistance.

The board members and executive managers of these agencies deserve recognition and credit for engineering the merger and enhancing the ability of Central Kentucky to compete on a regional basis for economic development.

Life in Kentucky

BY BRAD VELEY



"On the other hand, Governor Fletcher, I believe it's equally important to catch your employees doing something **RIGHT** and complimenting them for it. Boy, does **THAT** ever mess with their heads!"