

# ABOUT CO-OP

## Parents' Night is the best house band in town

"Play is the important work of children."  
—www.coopschool.org

Fans of the Fayette Cooperating Nursery School and Kindergarten (commonly known as Co-Op) aren't limited to Lexington's music community; it enjoys a broad base of support among parents seeking involvement, creativity, and diversity in a preschool environment.



Christin & Otto Helmuth, with Ella and Daisy

Cindy Hayden found the Co Op when she saw the signs for it on Clays Mill Road. She says since she'd "worked at a Cooperative preschool in the past I knew I wanted to look into it for my first son, Jack." At her first visit, she says, "I fell in love with the open floor plan. It wasn't just a box with tables, chairs and the ABCs on the wall. There were art projects, experiments, imaginary play and more all going on at the same time." Of those who may find the Co Op a bit unconventional, she says, "To some parents Co-op may seem out there," and adds, "I don't believe there is another place in Lexington that requires the kind of parent involvement you have at Co-op You go outside even if it's raining a little. You get to help kids take apart machines. You let them use shaving cream. And you realize that sometimes getting really dirty is the best way to learn."

Mary Beth Magyar says of her daughter's time at Co-Op, "I felt like I was part of her school experience instead of just the driver that got her there," adding, on a practical

note, "I love the fact that other parents bring snacks, it gives me new ideas and sometimes I find things out like my daughter loves mandarin oranges...who knew?"

Valerie Asbury, a self-described "mom, artist, and always the dreamer" found Co-Op on the recommendation of two friends and her pediatrician. She says, "What an education I have had and will continue to have with my children who will attend Co-op in

the coming years. Also, the community at Co-op is so very supportive. I don't live near my family and they have become family to me. Plus, where else could I get to go and basically play and guide children through such a loving environment?"

Co-Op director Mary Brenzel has "been a part of Co-op for over 12 years, as a parent, a board member, and now the director." She says, "I valued the opportunity I had to be part

**"The 'double dad days' were always a little rowdy, and yes...there were days when we'd brought in the electric guitars."**

**—Billy Quinn**

of my children's education." All five of her children attended the co-op preschool. She adds, "I

believe that my own parenting skills were strengthened through the examples of my children's teachers and the education programs offered almost every month for parents."

And, the Co-Op does enjoy rousing sup-



Avery Alexander

port among Lexington musician/parents. Billy Quinn says, "As happens with friends



Michael Collins

with kids...quite a few of us 30-something rock and rollers found our selves looking for a good pre-school circa 2000. Co-op made sense mainly because of the teachers, philosophy, and parent involvement. Each day involved a different mix of volunteer parents

working with a great teacher. So, there would be days where we'd luck out and I'd pair up



Anna Goulson and friend

with Otto (Blueberries, Slo-Fi), Wendell Rogers (Groovezilla, G-Funk, Rudies) or Robert Schneider (Apples in Stereo). According to Jenny Littrell-Hesselden, the 'double dad days' were always a little rowdy, and yes...there were days when we'd brought in the electric guitars."

"For me, Co-op was a great way to be involved with my kids early school experiences, while also getting a break from the daily grind. My children knew from the begging, 'OK —mom and dad are in this with me,' and it also allowed us to make new friends at a kid-parent level. I 'worked' many days at co-op and enjoyed every one of them. Can't wait for Charlie to get started there soon!"

Otto Helmuth echoes the endorsement, "as the children came along, (Ella's 9; Daisy's 6) we began to look for a local kindergarten where we could be involved with their days and the co-op afforded that. I was friends with a lot of people who were already going there and it made sense...For both of our children it was a great way to get to know how to play and deal with others in a respectful and open way. The ideas were in line with how we believed people should deal with each other, with respect and honesty...We love it and are still involved even though our children are both out of the school." ■

*Co-op is a non-profit, non-discriminatory, independent educational institution established in 1951, licensed by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and accredited by the NAEYC. Rosemont Garden info, 859.276.6350. Clays Mill Info, 859.223.1713. Choices include the Two-Year-Old program, Morning Preschool (3s/4s), Pre-K (4s/5s), and Kindergarten. Camp Co-op is also offered in the summer months with two to three sessions lasting two weeks each. Info, [www.coopschool.org](http://www.coopschool.org).*

# Who's Yer Daddy

Lex's rock royalty raise pre-school funds

By Rhonda Reeves

On a wintry January day almost a decade ago, Otto Helmuth told *Ace*, in a coverstory on the Blueberries, "My brother gave me a present called something like 'The Book of Real Losers' or 'The Big Book of Losers' for Christmas and told me 'don't take this the wrong way.'" Nobody knew what the "right" way was. Helmuth was preparing for fatherhood at the time of the interview and said, "the first time I see my kid even DRAW a picture of a guitar or a drumkit, man, it's LOCKDOWN."

Helmuth (with Chad Ward and Andy Mason) played for ten years with the Blueberries, and it was after their third record that he married wife Christin, and they had Ella and Daisy.

And that's who brings us to Friday night, and the "Preschool of Rock" benefit for The Fayette Cooperating Nursery School and Kindergarten (better known as Co-Op) at the Dame. Ella and Daisy are alums of the school. Billy Quinn's Wils and Jack went there, and Charlie's up next. Club Dub bassist Steve Cherry is Co-Op dad of Demetrius.

So forget all the mourning for Lexington's glory days of rock...the Wrocklage...the Bottom Line...the old Lynagh's. No need to wax nostalgic with "where are they now?" sentiment for the disparate dads who all connected the dots from the fondly remembered days of 10 Foot Pole, the Blueberries, Lily Pons, Rabby Feeber, Resurrected Bloated Floaters...We know where they are now. They'll be at the Dame Friday. The rest of the time, you might check out the sandbox.

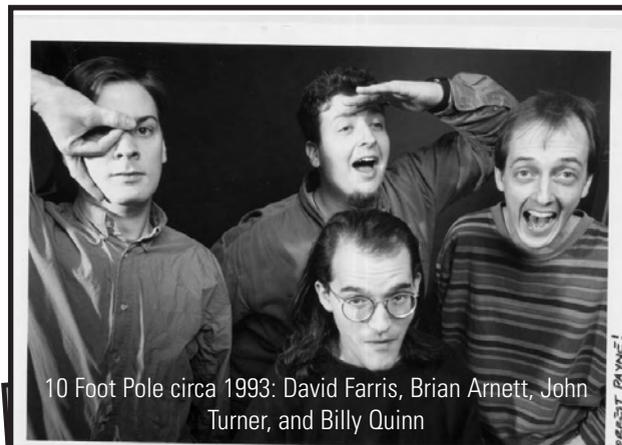
Helmuth says today, reflecting on the changes over the past decade, "the touring had to stop as I never made much money and needed to be closer to my family."

But he never abandoned music, he just shifted gears. He says, "all through the Blueberries, I was interested in recording and began to gather gear, and record" (local luminaries on the roster included the likes of Frank Schaap, Paul K, and many others).

He now has his own studio and also does location audio for television. Recent projects include *Cheerleader U* for the We network (Wednesday nights, profiling the UK Cheerleading squad—and almost, but not quite as good, as the first WE series that followed the Dunbar squad); *The Spirituals* for Das Vatos productions; *The Food Network*; scoring, with Frank Schaap, for

the Hunter S. Thompson project, *Buy the Ticket, Take the Ride* for the Starz Network; and numerous local bands including The Swells, Dijon Wilder, Andy Mason, The Apples in Stereo and others.

As for his own musical path, he says, by way of update, "After the children were past baby world, I began to play music again and the formation of Slo-fi happened." Slo-Fi is Helmuth, Chad Ward (with whom he also has a construction business), and Tim Welch. He adds, "We are in the process of finishing



our first record which we hope to have out in the near future."

Billy Quinn's been busy the past decade too. He remembers, "10 Foot Pole started in '88, and officially came to a rolling stop—I hate to say 'broke-up' in January 1996."

In 1994, Quinn was "called upon by Brian Pulito (Resurrected Bloated Floaters, Rabby Feeber, 9 Lb. Hammer, Yellow Belts), to do some computer programming, for a small company led by Lee Todd, eventually

acquired by IBM in 1998."

He admits, "I never intended to join corporate America..." smiling, "that's what you get for hanging out with the guys in The Resurrected Bloated Floaters." Adding to the tangle of music ties, he says, "to further the nepotism, we wrangled Brian Arnett (Floaters, 10 Foot Pole), to join us at IBM."

And for how he ended up at Co-Op, he fills in the chronology, "Around the same time—1998—the babies started coming." Wils is now 9, Jack is 6 and Charlie is 1.

Jazz in Lexington wouldn't be what it is today without the Farris clan. Drummer Dave Farris also has an educational connection in town, "teaching at the Drum Center of Lexington since its opening in 1993. I love sharing this knowledge with other people."

He describes his dad as "a seasoned pro who's played with Jerry Lee Lewis & Little Enis" and "an accomplished jazz musician who still performs."

Carrying on the family tradition, he says, "I've played in various jazz groups since about 1987 (20 years. Damn)."

Farris joined 10 Foot Pole in 1989 and "stayed with them

to play for Eddie Palmieri; tabla and general Indian classical music with local musician Raj Pandya. With the Pandyas I was fortunate to travel with them across the country to play in one of the many seasonal festivals from India-Navratri (Nine Nights)."

As for "where is he now?" he says, "I'm still dragging my carcass around and plan to do so until my carcass decides otherwise."

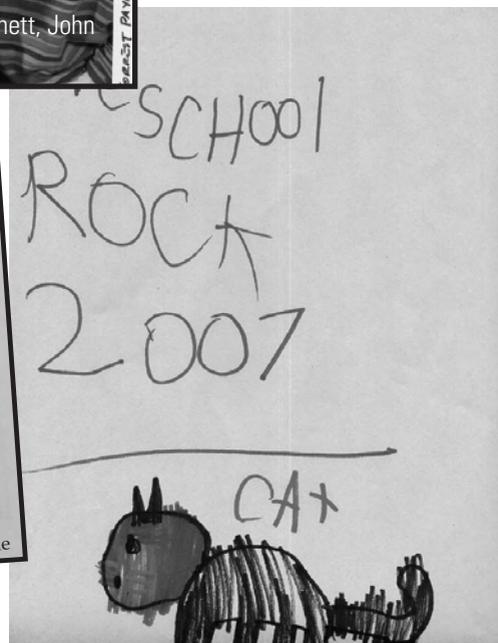
Scourge of the Sea (Andrew English, Justin Craig, Robby Cosenza) may be the only band in Friday night's lineup without a direct parental connection to the Co-Op, but Christin Helmuth helpfully outlines the internecine genealogy of how the Lexington music community connects (if you follow closely): "Scourge of the Sea recorded in Otto's studio with third band member Robby Cosenza" (of Pontius CoPilot, Paul K and the Weathermen, the Apparitions, Tar Box Ramblers...)

And then, "Our friendship with Paul first exposed us to the wonders of Robby (he was 18 and a born-again touring Europe with Kopasz). Later, Pontius Copilot recorded with Otto; Otto joined the band as a bassist; Robby moved to Louisville but came back to Lex to housesit for us; became a man without utilities and our two dogs during the icestorm; ended up staying in Lex; joined the Apparitions; became our star babysitter; started Scourge with Justin and Andrew and so on..."

So why is Scourge playing the Friday benefit?

She says, "Our children love Robby, and Robby loves our children and it is fun when he picks them up at school because he's a colorful character with lots of ambiguous tattoos. So I guess Andrew and Justin are doing this for Ella and Daisy. What generosity. Bless their hearts."

And that brings us back to where we started almost a decade ago—and despite all the big talk at the time, Co-Op kids seem to be freely drawing guitars and drumkits, with ample encouragement and no sign of the threatened "lockdown." ■



to the nebulous end." He helped found Lily Pons in 1990, and also played in "various Joey Broughman incarnations." In 1995, he joined Catawampus Universe. He also joined the 90s incarnation of Og Pots, and Big Fresh in 2002. He's played in Club Dub since 2000, and TallBoys.

He says, "I've studied Ghanian Ewe music with Madawo Gideon Foli Alorwoyie when Syncopated Inc. was still around; Bata drumming with Anthony Carillo who used



CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

# Diary of a Lex Rock Vet

By John Turner (10 Ft. Pole, Lily Pons, etc )

**H**onestly, I could write a book about this whole crazy adventure of mine (but what crazy fool would want to read that?) Hopefully I will write the book someday with proper entertainment/anecdotal genius in display. Some part of me sez I'm waiting til I go deaf for that.

**1990:** Met and briefly jammed with 10 Foot Pole shortly before graduating from UK School of Music with a lucrative music performance degree. Disillusioned by the idea of any career path associated with my degree, I decided to quit music and trumpet. Left Lex for Nantucket MA. By August I was going insane without music in my life and singing strange things loudly as I walked the cobblestone streets—disturbing the tourists basically. One day my boss said, “that’s a cool song. What is it? I wasn’t sure but after thinking for a minute I realized it was a 10 Foot Pole riff. I called one of them (who?—I’m not sure) and he said, “JT, we’ve been looking for you. Do you want to be on our record? We’re recording it in two weeks.” I hitched a free ride to Lex “temporarily” to check it out. Recorded two songs for the first 10 Foot album. One thing led to another and I never returned to Nantucket.

[Also in 1990] Became a founding member of Lily Pons (long story there—basically it was an attempt at the ultimate side-project, i.e., everyone was always in other bands.) Made many guest appearances with 10 Foot Pole, eventually becoming a full band member. Much wacky mayhem and good times ensued... also a bunch of really good music and sweat soaked gigs.

**early 90s:** more of the same. Totally cool scene going in Lex then—I’d say there were maybe 20 good bands going at any given time back then—an amazing percentage per capita for a town the size of Lex. For years, I stored a mental list of them in my head in case anyone ever cared to ask. For me, the defining feature of lex music at that time was good folks respecting and enjoying each other even if the music styles differed. Too much cross pollination for me to properly sort out right now. Other than gigs, I had a nice, interesting part time job with the Lexington Public Library.

**Mid 90s:** Lily Pons breaks up and reforms several times. Chaos was part of the point of the band anyway, so it kind of made sense. Did a few national tours and eventually a movie with Love Jones from Louisville (transplanted to LA and signed to BMG). This was based on a mutual respect bond between LJ, TFP and LP. Eventually TFP broke up in a mutually respect-

ful manner. Recorded a ridiculous 4-track rock and roll solo album, released on cassette—a completely different direction from TFP or LP—even sold a few at Cut Corner and Bear’s Wax. Was awarded a KY Arts Council Al Smith fellowship for music composition. The grant was for more experimental music, not Rock and Roll.

**1997 and on:** Moved to NYC. Worked a

time became a founding member of Baraka Orchestra, house band for Baraka Foundation Records (an indie label). Performed with Umar Bin Hassan of Last Poets. Band and JT Solo albums both released in 2001. Solo album was titled *Horn Resounding*. With blessings from the label, turned down a recoupable studio budget and



Billy Quinn, John Turner, David Farris, and Brian Arnett

variety of silly jobs. Eventually won an audition to play trumpet and keyboards with a minor league major label pop act (Atlantic Records, then they switched to Sony.) Had the same management team as Metallica, Smashing Pumpkins, and Madonna. We were the “baby band” on the roster. Played the exact same 35 minute show for 18 months, but was well paid. Disillusioned, decided that any future musical activities would be for love of music above all else.

**1999-2001-ish:** Joined the dot com revolution—internet radio. Worked very hard trying to become a fake stock option kazillionaire. Was eventually laid off with no severance pay, benefits, nothing, approx one week before the company died. Around the same

began recording a follow up solo album in my home studio.

**2002-ish:** approx two weeks before turning in final mixes for new solo album, Baraka Foundation went out of business. Rescued close to 1000 copies of *Horn Resounding* from a dumpster in Brooklyn. I mostly use the CD boxes as furniture, but I still sell a few here and there. Solo Album #2 is still languishing in the vaults.

**2003-ish:** Became a street musician in NYC, playing 20s-40s swing jazz material including several forgotten Fats Waller

tunes I’ve rescued from obscurity thanks to the NY Public Library Performing Arts branch at Lincoln Center. Great fun ([www.johntrumpet.com](http://www.johntrumpet.com))

**2004-present:** I split my time between a totally rewarding job as retail buyer for an Indie yet chic Soho bookshop (<http://www.mcnallyrobinsonnyc.com>) and as a musician with AfroBeat vs. Jazz vs. Punk Attitude band, Kokolo (<http://www.myspace.com/kokoloafrobeat>). It’s a perfect situation for me. Granted, there’s not much money to be had playing with Kokolo, but it’s a great source of fun and free plane tickets (the UK a bunch of times and also Sweden, Lithuania, Holland, Belgium, Spain and Italy...wait, I forgot Canada). In summer 2007, we’ll be repeating many of these places and adding France, Poland and Russia to the list. Good Times!

At this point I’ve been in New York almost as long as I was in Lex (ten years.) I love NYC and intend to stay here as long as I can continue to con my way into pretending I can afford it—or until it becomes too annoying.

I have personal experience with musicians from all around the world and in my opinion, Lex has an unprecedented stock of world class musicians who have consciously or unconsciously chosen to enjoy the ride and do what they do regardless of where they happen to reside and play.

In my experience, I think Lex has witnessed more secretly great local music than most places can dream of boasting about. Above all—and regardless of any perceived outcomes, I think that the sheer joy and talent involved should be celebrated. It’s a rare, wonderful thing. ■

