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Echo, 2000-2001

Columbia College Chicago

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ECHO

2000-2001

a publication of columbia college chicago

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designers show you
how to look like a
MILLION BUCKS,
spend a few

chicago **thrif**

plus

on an indie film set

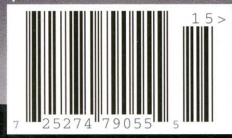
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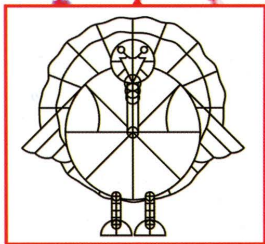


art ■ media ■ music ■ fiction ■ poetry



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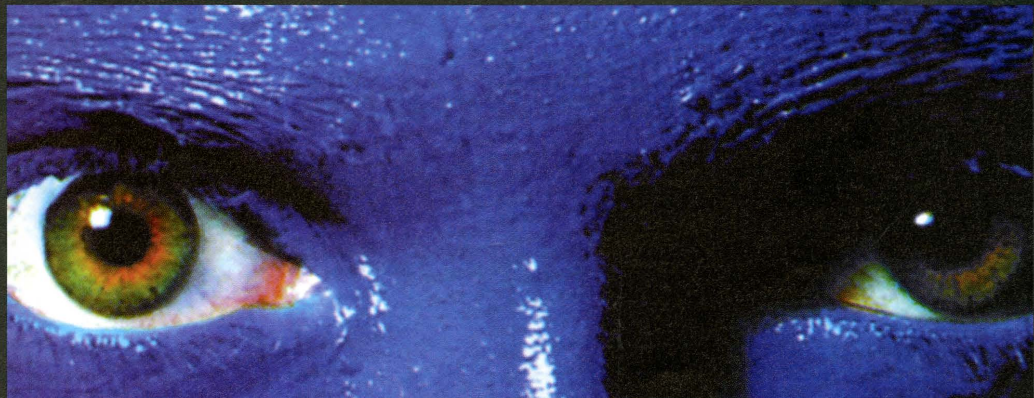
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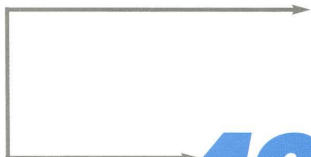
Ask Art 80

Art Vance, man about town, addresses readers' concerns

On the cover

Model Tiffany Addison wears rain jacket from Village Discount; belt from Backseat Betty's; capris and bikini top courtesy of Orenthal White; model's own shoes. Hair by Carrie Cuthbertson. Make-up by Kate Sealscott. Photo by John Armentrout.

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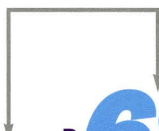
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Chicago performers find joy in entertaining

From the editors

ATTENTION READER: Each page of the magazine you are reading contains the blood, sweat and tears of a group of passionate and dedicated students. Prepare yourself to read the best issue of *Echo* magazine yet.

When asked to be editor-in-chief and managing editor of the 2000-2001 issue, neither of us really knew what we were getting into. Brainstorming, deadlines, photo shoots, editing and broken promises became everyday events for more than two semesters. What an experience it has been for the *Echo* staff, to produce a magazine from a blank slate and watch it blossom into the tangible version you're holding.

We even went to a clairvoyant to see if the future of *Echo* could be pre-

From left: 2000-2001 Editor-in-Chief Marti Yarbrough and Managing Editor Valerie Danner



dicted, and things are looking good. Our reliable source foresaw "an increase in circulation," so we're keeping our fingers crossed.

But with pain comes gain. We have learned valuable lessons that will prepare us for the real world. Changes were made and compromises were necessary to make this issue happen. We are grateful to all who took part in the effort.

Our clairvoyant said that if we could weather the storm of in-house fighting and inevitable problems that arise

whenever a diverse group of personalities work together, we would have a product to be proud of.

We certainly are.

From the advisers

In this year's first *Echo* staff meeting, the promise went out that we would make light work of the Millennium—it was overdone and clichéd, and we wanted only the fresh, new and innovative. (Students chose to write about the new Millennium Park because it encompasses all of the arts and will change the face of Chicago.)

But there was no getting away from it. Although the turning of the century clock was the biggest anti-climax since the '69 Cubs, it ushered in a new age for *Echo*. The look was changed—subtle, but we think powerful. We went online (check out www.echo.colum.edu). And the whole editorial and production process was streamlined.

And what else did the new century bring? Just more of the same (and lots more of it). Hard work, for example. *Echo*'s capable staff worked days, nights and weekends to harmonize its diverse talents and create stories and pictures that speak of a city and a culture.

Of course, it helped that this year's *Echo* had one of the most talented and enthusiastic (read: boisterous) staffs yet. We also were blessed with an outstanding year in Chicago's arts and communications culture. The staff covered its nuances—everything from local bands to the independent movie scene that flourishes here. They tapped into the hot, hot world of fashion designers and the grace and humbleness of the world-class Hubbard Street Dancers. They talked with Chicago's very own music genius Jim O'Rourke. They even invited "Art," *Echo*'s man about town, to speak.

Though *Echo* is produced primarily by students in Columbia's magazine program, they welcomed talent from across the school's curriculum. Student documentary photographer and filmmaker Josh Rubinstein added his photography. A host of writers in the Fiction Department contributed to our literary section. And students in the Journalism

Department's Senior Honors Seminar class contributed several feature stories.

Editor-in-Chief Marti Yarbrough and Managing Editor Valerie Danner were fearless visionaries who kept their talented staff on the straight and narrow. They allowed *Echo* to do what no other Chicago magazine does—honor and chronicle one of the nation's greatest arts communities.

As the publishers of this brilliant piece of work, we can attest that it's been a wild ride, an appropriate complement to a rather staid Millennium passing. So, good-bye to the 20th century. We welcome the 21st not with a bang, but with an *Echo*.

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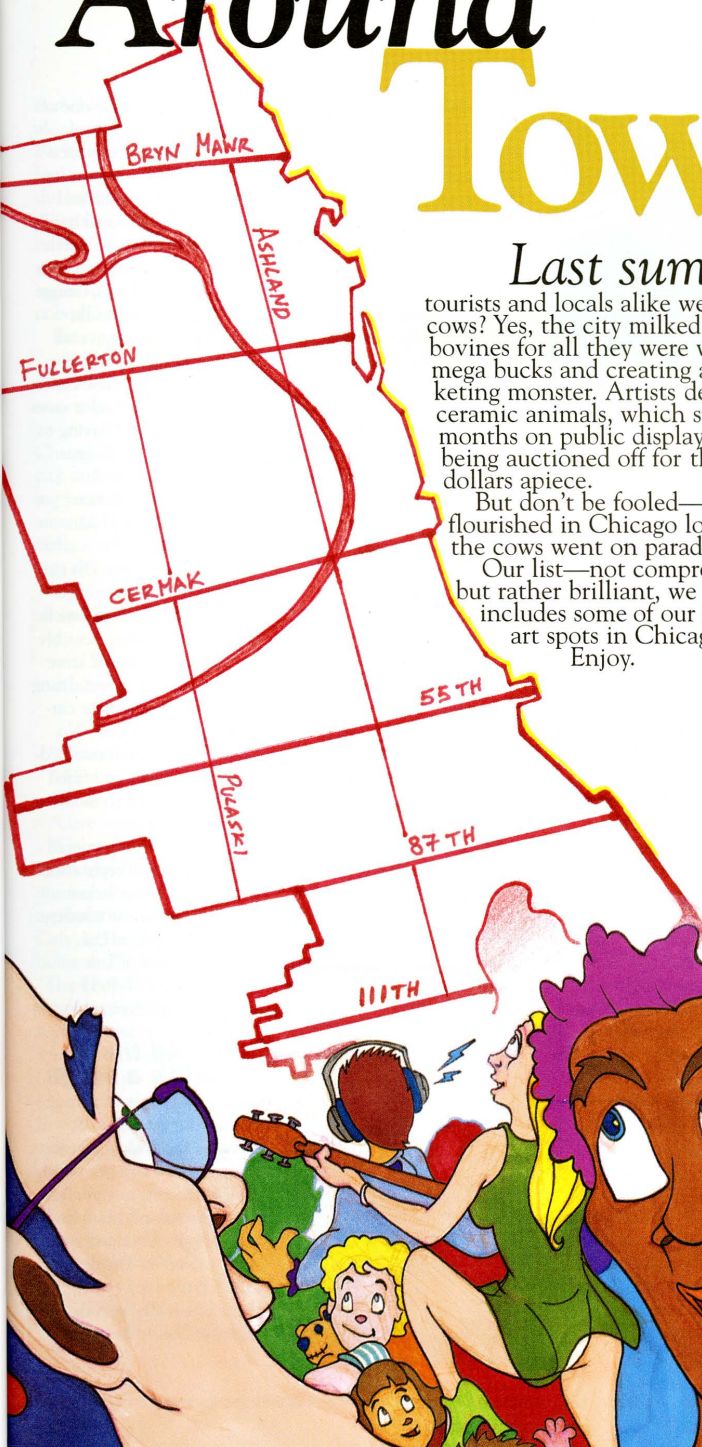
Around Town

Last summer

tourists and locals alike went nuts over... cows? Yes, the city milked its famed bovines for all they were worth, raking in mega bucks and creating a massive marketing monster. Artists decorated the ceramic animals, which spent several months on public display before being auctioned off for thousands of dollars apiece.

But don't be fooled—art has flourished in Chicago long before the cows went on parade.

Our list—not comprehensive, but rather brilliant, we think—includes some of our favorite art spots in Chicago. Enjoy.



Art and Architecture

If you don't have time to check out the entire **Art Institute of Chicago**, stop in the **Museum Store**. It carries prints, cards, books and all kinds of knickknacks for the art enthusiast. For those of us who can't afford an original masterpiece, the Museum Store offers cheap alternatives, such as a Van Gogh work printed on a T-shirt or a jigsaw puzzle of a Picasso.

*Art Institute of Chicago
Museum Store
111 S. Michigan
(312) 443-3533*

Great food, cheap shopping and a fun atmosphere highlight Chicago's architecturally splendid **Chinatown**, where an afternoon trip is like a mini-vacation. In addition to the arch that marks the entrance, one of the finest sights is the On Leong building, Chinatown's city hall. Bring your appetite for Dim Sum at one of the many restaurants. And be sure to try an almond cookie from one of the bakeries.

*Chinatown
Wentworth and Cermak*

No compilation of the arts in Chicago would be complete without the **Museum of Contemporary Art**. The MCA continues where the Art Institute leaves off, and contains a few things the Art Institute surely would love to get its hands on. Focusing on art produced in the latter half of the 20th century, the MCA has compiled an impressive array of highly innovative works in various media.



*Museum of
Contemporary Art
220 E. Chicago
(312)280-2660
www.mcachicago.org*

Face the Music

Anything goes at the **Metro**... Not as large as the Aragon or the World Music Theatre, the Metro manages to maintain an intimate concert setting while still hosting big-name talent. The menu is extremely diverse. One night you might find an intense rock show, the next a wild drum and bass set, and the third could be a gothic-industrial bonanza. Admission is a moderate \$10 to \$25 as long as you buy tickets from the Metro itself and avoid Ticketmaster charges.

*Cabaret Metro
3730 N. Clark
(773) 549-3604
www.metrochicago.com*

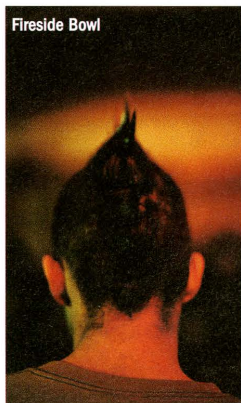
If you've ever wanted to walk into a record store and be astounded by how much music you've never seen, then **Dusty Groove America** is for you. Bringing you the "best in soul, funk,

jazz, Latin, Brazil, lounge, easy, acid jazz and current and old-school hip hop on vinyl and CD." Dusty Groove accommodates the true music fan. Check out its collection of funky 45s. Most of Dusty Groove's business is done via the Web, but the Chicago store is open Friday through Sunday.

*Dusty Groove America
1180 N. Milwaukee
(773) 645-1200
www.dustygroove.com*

The **Empty Bottle** offers an annual Improv Jazz festival, as well as weekly shows. Check out live acts such as MacArthur grant-winner Ken Vandermark and his Vandermark Five. But there's more than jazz at the Empty Bottle. Most of the bill is filled with indie rock in one of the most comfortable rock clubs of its size; the sound is usually great, and the air is breathable. Admission is cheap—\$7 to \$10—to accommodate all of its punk rock hipster patrons.

*Empty Bottle
1035 N. Western
(773) 276-3600
www.emptybottle.com*



Fireside Bowl

The **Fireside Bowl** is one of the dirtiest, grimmest and most intimate settings for a rock show. It's become a staple of the punk, indie and ska scenes. One would hardly think that a late 1960s-style bowling alley, complete with manual scoring lanes, orange and yellow striped walls, mildewed tile ceilings and light-blue seats would provide a setting for these bands, but it truly does. And it saves them the agony of having to play in friends' basements.

*Fireside Bowl
2648 W. Fullerton
(773) 486-2700*

Ever wonder where DJs get all those remixes you can never find? **Gramophone** is the place. It's quite possibly the best dance-music store in the Midwest. Specializing in vinyl, Gramophone carries all the fresh cuts. No larger than a small two-bedroom apartment and filled to the brim with so much dancing goodness, Gramophone has garnered an international reputation as one of the best house music stores in the country.

*Gramophone Ltd.
2663 N. Clark
(773) 472-3683*

www.gramophonerecords.com

All the World's a Stage

Beer and movies... can't go wrong! At the **Brew & View at the Vic**, admission is cheap—\$4 will get you a double feature, a triple feature on some nights. Movies range from cult classics to recent releases. Drinks aren't too pricey either, and there are drink specials nightly. Classic movie

munchies are available, along with pizza from Bacino's. You only have to be 18 to enter, but you'll get the lecture from the ticket seller about how you'll all be thrown out if a minor in your group is caught drinking. Usually, though, nobody's watching.

Brew and View at the Vic
3145 N. Sheffield
(312) 618-VIEW
www.brewview.com

Chicago is a big-time movie city, and **Facets** is its crown-jewel. Facets offers an amazing film library that specializes in hard-to-find foreign and independent films. They'll even ship these gems all over the nation.

Facets
1517 W. Fullerton
(773) 281-4114
www.facets.org

"Give us a place."
"A submarine," the crowd yells out.
"Give us a musical style."
"Calypso," they roar back again. And there begins a musical improvisation about a submarine, sung in Calypso. **Improv Olympic**, home to the long-form "The Harold," makes for a hilarious evening. The two teams of improv players square off in a battle (although no one wins except the audience). The Improv Olympic also houses a number of longer comedy shows in its upstairs theater and offers improv classes. Shows run Wednesday through Sunday.

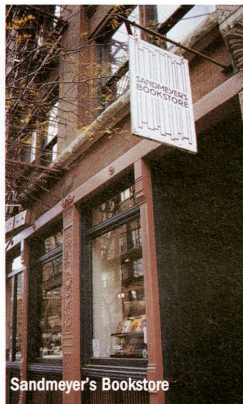
Improv Olympic
3541 N. Clark
(773) 880-0199
www.inprovolymp.com

Bored with all of the predictable Hollywood movies? Try the **Music Box**, where independent, foreign, classic and cult films are shown nightly. If you're really lucky, the movie you go to see will be playing in the main theater, where moving clouds are projected onto the ceiling along with more twinkling stars than you'll ever see in the city sky.

Music Box Theatre
3733 N. Southport
(773) 871-6604
www.musicboxtheatre.com

Book It

One of the largest used bookstores in Chicago, **Myopic Books**, is open the latest (1 a.m. on weekdays, 2 a.m. on weekends). Aside from a large selection of literary delights, Myopic also offers improvised music every Monday night in its basement. Go in with an open mind, as much of the "music" is extremely experimental. The owners and staff are highly knowledgeable, and their love of books is evident. You are just as likely to find a signed first edition hardcover on one of



their shelves as you are a beat-up paperback. Myopic keeps in mind that not all of us are antiquarian book collectors; some of us just enjoy a good read.

Myopic Books
1468 N. Milwaukee
(773) 862-4882

Quaint and quiet, **Sandmeyer's Bookstore** makes you feel cozy, log-cabin-style. You can spend hours browsing the store's unique selection of books, cards and novelties. The friendly and helpful sales associates (usually the Sandmeyers themselves) will let you browse as long as you like, and they're never pushy. Sandmeyer's is a great place for birthday or Christmas shopping, and we won't tell if you buy a little something for yourself, too.

Sandmeyer's Bookstore
714 S. Dearborn
(312) 922-2104

Women and Children First, along Andersonville's shopping strip on Clark just north of Foster, is the little independent bookstore that could. Authors visit for

book signings, and the store sponsors events around the neighborhood. It also carries a vast selection of independent, hard-to-find magazines and publications. As the name suggests, much of the store's merchandise is for or about women and children, but that doesn't mean that men aren't allowed!

Women and Children First
5233 N. Clark
(773) 769-9299

A traditional comic book store, **Graham Cracker Comics** has a convenient downtown location in addition to several others in the Chicago area. Each Wednesday, when the new books come to the Loop store, comic fans young and old pile in to get their weekly fix. The knowledgeable clerks are always willing to lend a helping hand.

Graham Cracker Comics
69 E. Madison
(312) 629-1810
www.grahamcrackers.com

Shop 'Til We Drop

At **A New Leaf**, where good smells abound, you'll go into sensory overload. The store's three locations offer flowers galore, and the 1818 N. Wells location offers colorful candles, pots, mirrors, tiles, glass bottles, vases, baskets and much more. Home and garden items of every color imaginable are for sale at this branch, and there's a greenhouse out back.

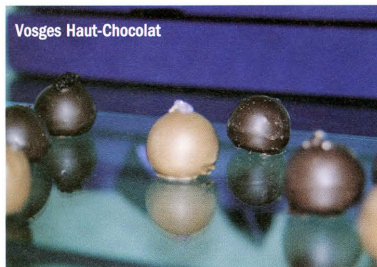
A New Leaf
1818 N. Wells
(312) 642-8553;
1645 N. Wells
(312) 642-1576;
700 N. Michigan, 1st floor
(312) 649-7008



A New Leaf



Hillary's Urban Eatery



Vosges Haut-Chocolat



Paper Source

If Zen is your thing, **Hoypoloi** will help you follow your bliss. The self-proclaimed “uncommon gallery of art and decor” is a feng shui addict’s heaven. Browsing this unique shop is fun, with many items on display for you to play with. Hoypoloi is a good place to find a gift for that certain someone who’s impossible to shop for.

Hoypoloi
2237 1/2 S. Wentworth
(312)225-6477
www.hoypoloi.com

It’s one-stop body art at **Milio’s Hair and Tattoo Studio**. Pierce this, tattoo that and dye your hair a color you never knew existed. They do more conventional hair styling, too, for

those whose jobs or lifestyles don’t allow for blue hair. Half of the fun at Milio’s is observing the colorful staff and clientele. Milio’s knows that good looks ain’t cheap, but if you’re a college student, bring your school ID and they’ll give you a discount. **Milio’s Hair and Tattoo Studio**
959 W. Belmont
(773)549-1461

There are many places to buy paper products, but none is as fun as the **Paper Source**. Buy paper by the sheet to create an eye-catching résumé or fashion homemade cards for your friends. The Paper Source also carries a huge selection of crafty address books, journals, wrapping paper and tons of

artsy knickknacks that you won’t see anywhere else.

Paper Source
232 W. Chicago
(312) 337-0798

If you have a sense of humor, **Uncle Fun** is worth a monthly visit. This shop has the toys you thought disappeared with your childhood, along with gag gifts, grab bags and all kinds of silliness. Where else can you find plastic eyeballs? Browse the vintage postcards and rediscover the lost art of letter writing. Once you explore Uncle Fun, sharing it will be, well, fun!

Uncle Fun
1338 W. Belmont
(773) 477-8223
www.unclefunchicago.com

You Gotta Eat (and Drink)

From the outside, **Corosh** doesn’t look like anything special. But go on in and enjoy the laid-back atmosphere, the art on the walls, and the yummy upscale Italian food. The menus are decorated with collages of photos, so see if any of your friends have been hanging out there.

Corosh
1072 N. Milwaukee
(773) 235-0600

Gourmand offers great drinks and eats in a comfy setting. They serve mostly vegetarian café-style food, including homemade quiches and Mediterranean dishes. Sip a latté and read a paper or have some lunch and watch the people walk by outside. There’s even occasional live acoustic music in the evenings.

Gourmand
728 S. Dearborn
(312) 427-2610

At **Hilary’s Urban Eatery**, aka HUE, the tables come complete with a jar of jellybeans and a spoon for scooping. On weekend mornings you’ll be so hungry by the time a table opens up that the jellybeans will serve as a sweet appetizer for your “scramble” or bagel. The food comes quick, in diner-esque fashion, and the lively atmosphere and colorful decor will get your morning off to a good start.

Hilary’s Urban Eatery
1500 W. Division
(773) 235-4327

True, Navy Pier is one of the city's biggest tourist traps, but don't let that keep you away from **Joe's Be-Bop Café and Jazz Emporium**. The interior is colorful to say the least, and the live jazz will get your toes tapping while you dine on American cuisine that includes its signature barbecue ribs. Since Joe's is right near the Pier's entrance, you won't have to push through the herds of tourists for too long.

*Joe's Be-Bop Café
and Jazz Emporium
Navy Pier
(312) 595-5299*

At **Kitsch'n**, you can play while you eat. Tables have magic eight-balls, Mr. Potato Heads and other silly childhood toys. The decor will remind you of your grandparents' home. There's even a lamp made out of an old overhead hair dryer. The food is fun, too; the menu includes TV dinners and Twinkie tiramisu.

*Kitsch'n on Roscoe
2005 W. Roscoe
(773) 772-5349
www.kitschn.com*

Located in the heart of Logan Square, **Lula Café** serves eclectic Indonesian-influenced food for a fair price. Every other Saturday night it serves Moroccan cuisine, and daily specials vary according to what's in the kitchen. Serving breakfast, lunch, dinner and damn good coffee, this place has it all. Local artists' work is on the walls, and local bands play on the weekends.

*Lula Café
2537 N. Kedzie
(773) 489-9554
www.lulacafe.com*

The **Mashed Potato Club** has so much to look at, you'll forget about the foot-long baked potato you're eating (or the amount of money you're paying for it). The decor is wacky, and who knew you could put so many toppings on a potato? If you're not a potato head, the restaurant

has other selections as well. The club becomes a trendy hangout by night.

*Mashed Potato Club
316 W. Erie
(312) 255-8579*

www.mashedpotatoclub.com

Need some inspiration? Try the **Old Town Ale House**. Many famed writers have graced this bar, as well as some of the alums from Second City, just across the street. There are portraits of writers on the walls and tons of books available if your drinking companion is boring you.

*Old Town Ale House
219 W. North
(312) 944-7020*

Sure, lots of places in Chicago have raw fish. But **Sushi Wabi** serves it with style. The menu claims that "Sushi Wabi has been created to reflect simplicity, non-materialistic beauty, and an ultimate sense of well-being." Once you choose from a huge selection of Japanese delights, your

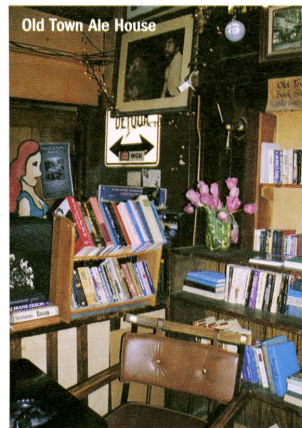
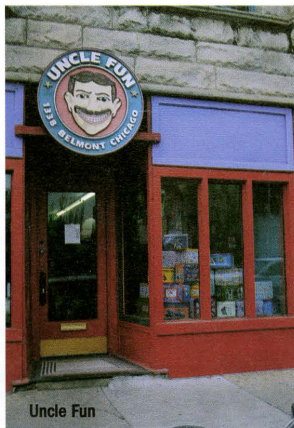
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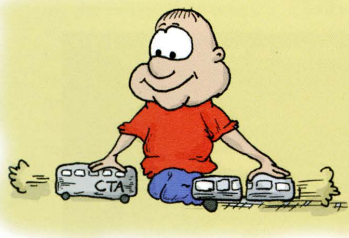
Commuters offer their travelin' advice

Don't have sex while driving

Buzzin' down the Kennedy to school early Monday morning, I noticed the driver behind me. A cute, brown-haired boy sat behind the wheel. He had a huge smile on his face. Not like an "I'm happy" smile, but an "OH MY GOD!" smile.

I couldn't help it. I looked again. I wanted to know what the hell was soooo great early in the morning.

I strained my eyes to look in my rearview mirror. Just as I looked up, his eyes rolled into the back of his head. His smile got wider. His driving, a bit questionable. I freaked! I thought he was having a medical emergency. Call 911! Quickly I looked over to the next lane so I could move. I felt bad for the dude, but he wasn't going to take me out too!



Unable to change lanes, I checked the mirror again. There was some movement from the passenger side. Someone popped up beside him. It was a girl. If I was a dude, out that early on a

Monday, and that was my breakfast treat, I would have been grinning just as widely as he was.

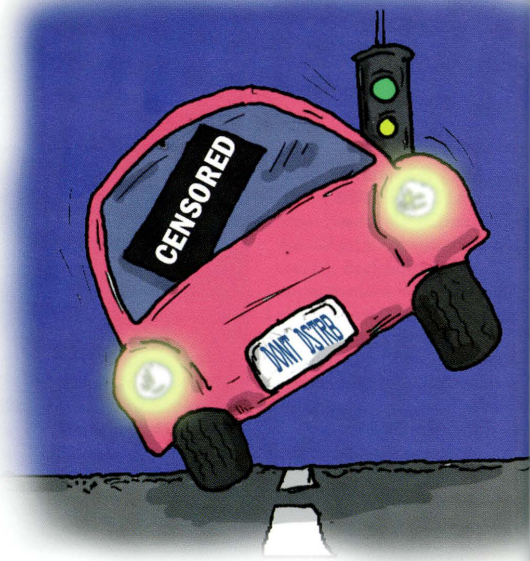
—Amanda Serafin

The CTA is not a toy

I entered the train as the doors began to close. It was morning rush hour and only a couple of seats were open. I decided to stand until I noticed the little nook at the front of the car was free.

As I sat, I leaned my head against the window, shut my eyes to take a short nap. No sooner had I closed my eyes when three young boys started car-hopping. Every time they opened the door, a shot of cold winter air crawled up my spine. After their second trip to the cars ahead, they came back. I stared them down with an evil glare. They moved on, and all was quiet. I leaned my head against the window again to make good use of the 15 minutes I had left.

Right after I shut my eyes, I heard footsteps approaching me. I looked up; it was one of the little boys. He had one hand frantically maneuvering the door to open it, the other covering his mouth. The train was traveling fast rounding the bend as the boy ran out. He



stood over the edge. Then I heard him vomiting—carsick from playing on the El. My stop was next, but it didn't come soon enough. I pushed my way out like I never pushed before. It felt refreshing to breathe the cold air that once chilled me.

—Carrie Brittain

Take a little time to enjoy the view

Because my boyfriend sat in the window seat on the way to Jamaica, we agreed that I would sit in it on the return flight to Chicago. The flight seemed ordinary. The sky was lit up by sunshine and the never-ending miles of clouds were like a backdrop for an airline commercial.

In between the flips of my magazine pages, I looked out of the window and in the distance noticed a rainbow in the midst of my white surroundings. As the plane flew closer to the beams of primary and secondary colors, it felt as though we were flying into another dimension in slow motion.

As we approached the origin of the rainbow I could clearly see the prism in the sky. We were flying right by the center of the rainbow! I felt as though violins should have been playing accompanied by the vocals of angels. I elbowed my boyfriend and yelled at him to get the camera. Once he looked out the window he understood the urgency in my voice. We scrambled frantically to find the camera. The plane was quiet.

I stood up and looked over the back of my seat to see if the other passengers were aware of what was going on. I couldn't understand why they weren't in awe and sticking their faces to the glass like we were. Were they all asleep or did they see rainbow prisms in the sky all the time?

Later that week we shuffled through tons of pictures from our tropical vacation but for some strange reason, we never found the pictures that would be proof of the miracle we saw in the sky.

—Martí Yarbrough

12
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Conspiracies! Killer spiders! Aliens!

The truth about urban legends

Beware... there are spiders lurking in the toilet seats of the women's bathroom at O'Hare. Not just any spiders, mind you—dangerous ones. They smuggle their way here from third-world countries via crates full of clothing and merchandise. Then these exotic, deadly critters somehow manage to navigate themselves to the nearest bathrooms, where they hide under toilet seats and bite unsuspecting people and bam—they're dead.

Of course, the media is cooperating with authorities and covering up the infestation. After all, who wants to cause mayhem at one of the world's busiest airports?

It's true. My sister's boyfriend's aunt's second cousin said it happened to her. Or so the story goes. In reality, the spiders plaguing O'Hare are just one of the gazillion urban legends alive and well throughout the world.

"Today, people are even more cynical," says Richard Roeper, 40, the *Chicago Sun-Times* columnist who authored last year's *Urban Legends: The Truth Behind all Those Deliciously Entertaining Myths That Are Absolutely, Positively, 100% Not True!* (Career Press, 1999). Even though the spider incident didn't make it into the book, Roeper does attempt to explain why seemingly intelligent people fall for these tall tales over and over again.

"They're fun to believe in," Roeper says. "And often they're just plausible [enough to be believed]—especially when we hear

them for the first time."

Roeper has always had an interest in urban legends and has written numerous columns over the years about them. He started writing his book a little more than a year ago; it took him six months to come out with the final product.

Although Roeper says the origins of these myths are impossible to trace, he believes they start with a germ of truth. But the details somehow are skewed as they pass from one mouth to another.

Eventually, it becomes a much juicier tale than the one that originated. In their more modern form, Roeper says these legends have been around for about 40 years, but he says that as long as there have been cities, there have been urban legends.

"The story always falls apart," says Roeper. "You can never find the person who this supposedly happened to because it never happened. But people want to believe they are true. They're good stories—they have a beginning, drama and a twist at the end."

The Internet has only made the traveling of the urban legends that much quicker and easier. Access to a computer and e-mail has catapulted the travel of these rumors to new heights.

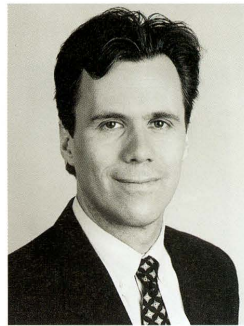
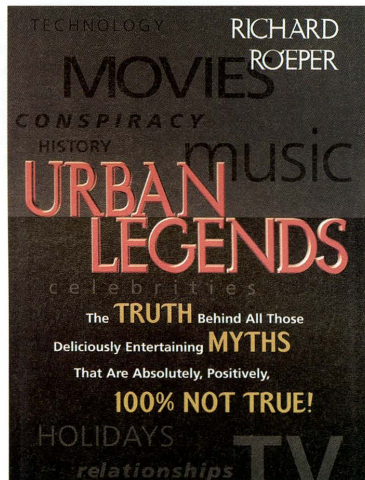
And never ever underestimate the power of Oprah. How many times have psychics appeared on her show, foretelling catastrophes in the near future? Well, one year the world's best psychic, the one who predicted the

Oklahoma City bombing, no less, appeared on Oprah's show, and said that there would be a mass murder on Halloween night at an H-shaped dorm on a college campus. It caused hysteria at many campuses across the country, but as usual, nothing happened. And of course, as

Roeper points out, Oprah's never had such a wonder-psychic on her show. Oops. A minor hole in this otherwise juicy anecdote.

But then there was that one occasion when designer Tommy Hilfiger was on Oprah's show and declared that he was upset that so many African-American people bought his clothing, that they were intended for upper-class whites. The legend goes that, without hesitation, Oprah threw him off the show and ordered everyone to burn any Hilfiger attire they owned. It almost seems believable, right? But Hilfiger never even appeared on Oprah's show. In fact, Oprah released a statement in January 1999 denouncing the rumor, saying she has never even met the designer.

So why poor Oprah? "Oprah is the most popular show in the world," says Roeper. "Before her, it was Phil Donahue or Johnny



Richard Roeper

Carson. Nobody ever says they heard it on Jerry Springer; people want more credibility than that."

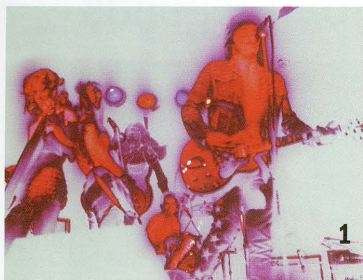
Whatever the case, think twice before you use the bathrooms at O'Hare next time. You never know what could be infesting those toilet seats.

Roeper is currently taking selections for the sequel to *Urban Legends*. Send any anecdotes to rroeper@sun-times.com.

—Valerie Danner

The state of Chicago music

A brief introduction to four rising stars



1. Tara Montana (bass guitar/vocals), Forrest Lonn (drums), Hannah Lulu (keyboard/vocals) and Bobby Stratosphere (lead vocals/guitar) comprise **Bobby Stratosphere and the Blood Club**, a band originally from Las Vegas. All the members (with the exception of Hannah Lulu, who joined the band in July 1999) packed up and decided to test the waters in Chicago, where after four short months they got their first gig.

This sci-fi rock band, which has been compared to bands such as Ministry, KMFDM and Concrete Blonde, uses original lyrics and glam to capture the attention of a gothic crowd. Stratosphere describes it as “an early ’70s glam meets the new millennium superhero comic book type of rock band.”

—Brooke Budwick

2. Back stage, Amy Warren, **Tallulah’s** lead singer, changes into a leopard tutu and grabs a baton. The rest of the band is not nearly as flamboyant. Jim Becker, the drummer, is wearing a suit and tie. Andrea Hayner, the sometimes keyboardist, wears a simple T-shirt and pants. Lea Escholds, guitarist, is in a knee-length skirt and Troy Morris, bassist, wears a Jack Daniels T-shirt and cowboy hat.

Tallulah came together when Amy and Troy, as the band Siren 8, realized they needed another singer. The name Tallulah

comes from Tallulah Bankhead, ’20s film star.

Amy Warren and Tallulah recently received a bit of big-time (albeit minor) recognition when they were mentioned in *Rolling Stone*.

—Amy Wagner

3. “I look forward to being the indie-rock Puff Daddy of the new millennium,” says **David Singer**. Not only does the multi-faceted Singer hail from the beloved Chicago band Kid Million, but he also is a multi-talented musician, having released his first solo album *The Cost of Living*, and, with fellow Kid Million bandmates, owns his own record label and recording studio.

Singer’s songs showcase his interest in science, space and physics—hence the name of his recording label, the Sweet Science. *The Cost of Living* is an indie-rock mix, with clever lyrics, melodic hooks and a taste of music’s future.

With their own record label and studio, Singer thinks it’s a better opportunity for him and Kid Million because “all of our successes and failures will be our own.”

Although he hasn’t abandoned Kid Million, Singer decided to attempt his dream of becoming a solo artist. At the same time, he has been doing a project at Steppenwolf Theater that included a recording of an acting class. He pulled bits and pieces of the instructor’s

lesson and threw them into the song.

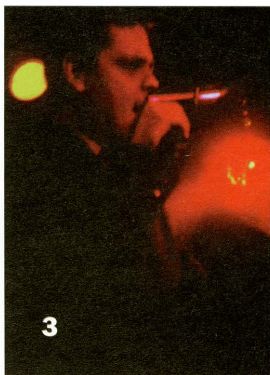
—Brooke Budwick

4. Don’t be deceived by this band’s sugary name. When **JOYGIRL** takes the stage they make it difficult for anyone—even the guy who just came to the bar for a few drinks—to ignore them. Guitarist Holli Haley, drummer Melissa Holt and bassist Melanie Isaksen have been playing as a trio for more than three years, packing such local venues as the Cubby Bear, the Metro, the Empty Bottle and the Double Door (their collective favorite).

JOYGIRL’s name comes from a character in a play, and their music often is compared to Mary’s Danish, a band none of them had ever heard until these comparisons surfaced. Their sound is ultimately their own mixture of influences ranging from Led Zeppelin to L7 (“I think they inspired me ’cause they were such bad-ass chicks,” says Haley), bluegrass (Holt plays the washboard in a bluegrass band) to “everything from hardcore to southern garbage” (Isaksen’s description of her past bands). The result is a conglomerate of haunting harmonies and distinctive melodies, with strength drawn from each member’s vocal and instrumental talent.

Listen to the band and look up future gigs at www.joygirl.com.

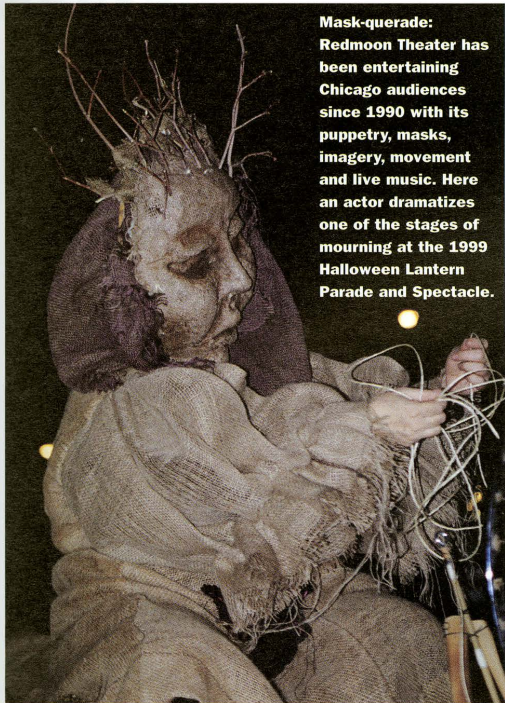
—Ashley Willard



Dead men walking

Redmoon Theater brings dead to life

Mask-querade:
Redmoon Theater has been entertaining Chicago audiences since 1990 with its puppetry, masks, imagery, movement and live music. Here an actor dramatizes one of the stages of mourning at the 1999 Halloween Lantern Parade and Spectacle.



A crowd stands in a circle around garbage cans of fire watching men and women with red-painted faces dance. The smell of burnt ashes and smoke fills the air.

Welcome to Redmoon Theater's fifth-annual Halloween Lantern Parade and Spectacle. This year's show represents the stages of mourning: anger, shock, denial, grief and acceptance.

The crowd comes on foot, in strollers, on bikes and on rollerblades to see the dancing skeletons, performers in rice-paper hoods, fire breathers and drummers. Some attend casually dressed, while others are decked out in full Halloween gear—ghosts, angels, devils, cats and witches. "They just perform an incredible spectacle," Meg Groves, a viewer, said.

organizations in the Logan Square neighborhood, where it produces two seasonal shows, the Halloween Lantern Parade and Spectacle and the Winter Pageant. Redmoon supports two long-running outreach programs in Logan Square, the Dramagirls and the Redmoon Theater Children's Company, which provides a creative theatrical playground for children in the community. In 1999, this was supported by a grant of \$31,500 from the National Endowment for the Arts, the largest grant in Redmoon's 10-year history.

Redmoon's plans for 2000? It will present an adaptation of the Hunchback of Notre Dame for the Steppenwolf Studio Theater and then tour to New York as a part of the International Puppetry Festival.

—Paula Davis

Oh, Oprah!

My love affair with Oprah Winfrey recently ended due to irreconcilable differences. As a fiction writer and a generally intelligent TV viewer, I can't stomach her Book Club anymore. I was a closet Oprah fan for years, and her "Remember Your Spirit" segments once warmed my heart. But when she launched a book club three years ago that caused her mostly female audience to clear the shelves of every library and bookstore in America of the books Oprah recommended, she created a trade paperback monopoly monster.

Don't get me wrong. It's great that this brilliant businesswoman wants to promote literacy and boost the careers of great writers such as Wally Lamb, Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison. But isn't it nauseating that Morrison sold more books because of Oprah rather than for her Nobel Prize in literature?

Maybe it's big business that I'm rebelling against, like Starbucks selling Oprah's current selection along with mocha lattes, or a Chicago New Age bookstore displaying these money-making novels even though the place specializes in self-help nonfiction books. No one can deny Oprah's power in the publishing world. When I contacted an employee of a popular Chicago bookstore, she didn't want to say anything negative about Oprah or her Book Club for fear she'd damage her store's business relationship with Winfrey. When I asked other fiction writers for their opinion, they stated that Oprah's doing them a service, and I shouldn't complain.

Am I taking this too seriously? Well, maybe it's a good thing that Oprah chooses these novels for her audience all by herself. She's stated several times that no publisher can influence her decisions. Clearly Oprah has every right to pick the novels that the country will run out and read.

Sure, I'll just see people buying her selections as mindless sheep, and I'll sit around and hope that I have a better than a million to one shot that Oprah will choose me as her next featured author, sending me into a whirlwind of praise and phenomenal book sales.

—Amy Formanski

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Spinning a web of its own

Chicago plays hardball with Silicon Valley

by CARRIE BRITAIN

Think back—back to when the Internet existed, but you didn't know about it. No one knew about it except the government, the military and the super duper computer geeks.

Now imagine one of those computer geeks grows up and enters college at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His father grows concerned because he thinks his son is in with the "bad" crowd—a computer crowd.

The kid, now a junior in college, drops out of school and talks his dad into lending him some money. Oh, you know, chump change—\$50,000 worth.

His father, a successful employee benefits consultant, isn't pleased that his son drops out of school, yet starts to think there may be much to be explored in the computer industry.

With the help of his father's loan, this computer geek starts a small company that begins making digital music for the Net. Then it evolves somewhat, and focuses on creating Web pages for businesses. Since his father is a business consultant, it would only make sense to collaborate with him.

Well, this new Web design company, Neoglyphysics Media Corp., located in Chicago, soon becomes one of the hottest design houses in the country.

Now bring yourself back to the present day. The Internet is huge, and advertising on the Net is even larger.

The college kid, Alex Zoghlin, who started Neoglyphysics, sold it in April 1998 to Renaissance Worldwide for the small fee of \$60 million. Not too shabby for a kid who fell in with the wrong crowd and ended up borrowing 50 grand from his pops.

Chicago is known for many things:



Chicago-style pizza, Michael Jordan, the Sears Tower—but Web design?

According to Len Strazewski, coordinator of computer-assisted reporting at Columbia College Chicago, there are three main reasons that make Chicago a hub for design houses.

First, Chicago is the nearest big city to the University of Illinois and their National Center for Supercomputing Applications. "Some of the people who are leaders in the current Internet business came out of U of I," Strazewski said. "Marc Andreessen is the most obvious example. If you were in school in a computer program in Champaign, you would naturally think of Chicago as where you would go set up a business."

Andreessen is the co-inventor of the first graphical Web browser, Mosaic, which he helped create as a student at the University of Illinois. Later, he cofounded Netscape Communications Corporation, a leading Internet provider.

The second reason, according to Strazewski, is that the Midwest comprises several high-tech centers. Places such as Argonne National Laboratory and Fermi Lab have helped develop various kinds of technical applications.

Finally, Chicago is a major commercial, manufacturing and retailing hub that funnels lots of advertising dollars and commercial dollars into the Internet.

"That's a major reason, for instance, that Proxicom, a major Internet design house, had to open a location in Chicago," he said. "If they're going to be in the business of developing e-commerce, they need to be where the companies are who will eventually use e-commerce."

Sima Zliser, marketing manager for Proxicom Inc. and a former employee at Neoglyphics, said, "I think there are so many [Web] agencies in Chicago because of this town's roots in advertising. Big consumer brands were some of the first to tackle the Web with brochure-ware sites. In order to keep that piece of the pie, many ad agencies either created or purchased Web shops."

According to Zliser, Proxicom has completed more than 750 successful

Internet engagements for clients such as General Motors, Disney, Merrill Lynch and Mobil Oil.

One of Proxicom's large competitors, not just nationally but citywide, is Giant Step, a prominent industry leader in Web design and interactive media. In 1991, twenty-something brothers Adam and Eric Heneghan established Giant Step.

The company didn't start off in Web design, and it also wasn't originally located in Chicago. The Heneghans, both of whom were fresh out of college, began their careers in Iowa City, Iowa, in video. They started out experimenting with CD-ROM-based QuickTime movies.

Leo Burnett & Co., an advertising powerhouse located in Chicago, was looking to start new-media accounts and needed someone to produce them. Burnett took interest in Giant Step. In 1994, the Heneghans moved the com-

"[Web design is] not just about making pretty pictures; it's really about creating messages for people."

Eric Bailey, Web designer for Giant Step

pany to Chicago because they spent the majority of their time meeting and consulting with Burnett. In 1996, Burnett bought Giant Step, making Eric CEO and Adam president.

Currently, Giant Step is a full-service Internet solutions provider. The company covers online media/advertising, which consists of the visual representation of a company's product and involves Web design; consulting, consisting of the best strategy and direction a business should follow; and serving, allowing Giant Step the ability to support all of the business solutions being created.

"We're looking to be a turnkey solution in this industry," said Eric Bailey, a Web designer for Giant Step. "[Web design is] not just about making pretty

pictures; it's really about creating messages for people."

Some of Giant Step's clients include Maytag, Arthur Andersen, Phillip Morris, United Airlines, Microsoft and Proctor & Gamble. Giant Step designs sites for many of Burnett's clients, but the company also functions as an independent agency and recruits its own clients as well.

According to *CyberAtlas*, "The Web Marketer's Guide to Online Facts," Web site development has grown to a \$10 billion industry. *CyberAtlas* also reported a study done by eMarketer revealed that \$3.1 billion was spent on Web advertising in 1999, and will grow to \$4.82 billion in 2000 and \$13.3 billion by 2003.

"That's huge," Strazewski said. "It's only maybe 10 percent of the ad spending on TV, but even so—on something where there was virtually no ad spending three or four years ago. It's starting to be comparable to the other major media."

So, will Chicago continue to be a leader in Web-design houses? That's the question of the hour.

"I think there hasn't been a lot of activity in Chicago compared to the coasts, so people are just starting to realize how important Chicago is from a strategic stand point," said Bailey.

The Illinois Coalition, a private organization established in 1989 that promotes the growth of science and technological firms within Illinois, reports that from 1992 to 1996 the number of Internet-related firms doubled. In '92, there were 3,226, and in '96, the number rose to 6,150. Also during this same period, Internet-related employment surged 40 percent and added more than 2,000 new jobs.

Strazewski feels that Chicago has much competition in the Web-design industry. He says that the virtual business doesn't need a center in order to survive; therefore, the team of designers and programmers never have to leave the office.

"In general, I think unless Chicago does something to really enforce itself as a center and really nurture that, then the edge that we have will eventually be lost," Strazewski says. **E**



Virtual romance

Looking for love in all the dot-com places

by BROOKE BUDWICK

The phone rang at 10:30 p.m. It was my 31-year-old brother Mark, bubbling over with excitement about a girl named Robyn he'd met in an Internet chat room. They had instantly clicked. After just one night of chatting online, they began speaking on the phone. This was an expensive hobby, considering they lived thousands of miles apart. After two months of desperate phone calls and phone sex, exchanging vows of love and pictures, Mark decided to quit his job and move from Chicago to Arizona to be with her. He had fallen in love, and so had she. My mouth dropped to the floor.

I had heard of online relationships before but figured they never worked. What was he thinking? Would he be the next topic on "Jerry Springer"? What if this "girl" turned out to be a guy—or a killer? How could he fall for someone he

had never seen? I begged Mark to think it over, but nothing could change his mind. He was going off to be with a stranger he claimed to love. Could this really work?

There are two ways to meet a person online. The most common—and risky—is a chat room, which allows people to meet through common interests. Casual browsers are allowed to view conversations in chat rooms and decide if they want to participate. Relationships built in chat rooms are more likely friendships than love relationships, but there are exceptions.

The other, more serious venue is a Web site that specifically focuses on relationships, such as relationships.com. Such sites allow one to narrow down the prospects by age, gender, religion, education, height and weight. Some sites even ask about smoking and drinking. Many are free.

Two days before Mark was scheduled to leave, the truth began to surface with

a single phone call. Robyn wasn't 24; she was 37. The kids that were screaming in the background weren't Robyn's brother and sister; they were her children. The picture she had sent was taken years ago; she was now 30 pounds heavier. To top it off, she was married—and had been for 18 years.

Robyn assured Mark that she would leave her husband. He worked 12-hour days and was in bed by 8 p.m. She wanted to be loved. She wanted something new. Mark was in love with her attitude, her voice on the phone. In his eyes, she was still beautiful. As far as their future together, though, he wasn't sure.

"I was nervous about meeting her," Mark said. "Inside it felt like it would only last a month. But at the same time, we had each other wrapped around our fingers." He didn't care if they had to live in a cardboard box, as long as they were together.

Mark gathered his things and was off to meet his love for the first time. If all

went well, he planned to marry her next Valentine's Day, six months away.

Mark arrived late to their first meeting at Robyn's house and felt a little awkward. Robyn's brother was hanging around and wouldn't give them any privacy. Their meeting lasted only half an hour, because Robyn's kids were due home shortly after Mark arrived. But they parted with a kiss, and Mark thought there would be a happier tomorrow. He was unaware that his first meeting with her would be his last.

"She had told me to come by around 9 a.m. I called first, and the phone rang and rang with no answer," Mark said. "So, about 10 a.m. I arrived and knocked and knocked and knocked some more. I went to the nearest store and tried calling her again. The phone rang and rang. Still no answer. I returned. Again and again I knocked, pounded, beat on the door, yet there was no reply. So I left, headed home, bummed and sad."

He tried to call her later that day, but the phone was busy. When he finally got through, Robyn's daughter answered and said her mother wasn't there. It was obvious Robyn didn't want anything to do with him.

Be wary whenever an online companion...

1. Asks for money.
2. Uses vulgar language or asks inappropriate questions.
3. Talks about or wants you to describe sexual fantasies.
4. Tries to tell you how to conduct your life.
5. Seems bent on speeding up the pace of your friendship.
6. Always speaks romantically.
7. Makes "true" confessions.
8. Blames past partners for failed relationships.
9. Tells stories filled with inconsistencies.
10. Urges you to compromise your principles.
11. Admits to being married, separated or recently divorced.

Source: "Romancing the Net: A Tell All Guide to Love Online" by Richard Booth and Dr. Marshall Jung (Prima Publishing, 1996)

An acquaintance of Mark's, a 30-year-old dental hygienist named Jayme, had done some dating on the Internet herself and couldn't believe Mark's gullibility. She tried to advise Mark based on her experiences.

Jayme was in a healthy relationship with Chris, a man she had met on the Internet. Jayme and Chris were good-looking apart, but adorable together.

A single mom with two kids and a full-time job, Jayme tried online dating because her busy schedule didn't make it easy to meet people. She had enough blind dates from the Internet to formulate a couple of rules, including: If he asks what you look like in the first five minutes, he's no good. If he starts calling you sweetie or honey, bad news. And if he asks you out on a second date while you're still on the first, get rid of him. A precaution that Jayme swears by is to never give out your phone number; she always called them.

Jayme made the first move on Chris, who was observing the conversation in a chat room. She checked out Chris' profile, and found that they were born the same year. She put Chris to her test, and he passed. They hit it off so well that within a week of their online introduction, they met for a date.

Jayme felt so comfortable with Chris that she let him pick her up at her apartment. Chris and Jayme also exchanged pictures, so neither was expecting any surprises. Their first meeting, unlike Mark's, was like any other first date. Chris took her to a steak house for dinner, and the conversation was the nervous chit-chat of a first date with an extra sense of comfort because they already knew so much about each other. After dinner, they went dancing. Ever since, they've been inseparable. How could something be so perfect for one person and so impossible for another?

Jayme was quick to point out that "not everyone is an evil monster." But she, too, had her share of horror stories, one of which ended her marriage.

The first online relationship Jayme had gotten involved in was with a man that had filled her mind with false hopes and dreams, assuring her that her future would be better with him than with her

husband. She had been new to Internet dating and was gullible. He had lied about his marital status and age, among other things. For their first meeting, they spent the weekend at a little bed and breakfast. At 2 a.m. Jayme's mother, two brothers and three police officers pounded on the door. Her companion was stupid enough to leave a paper trail—a \$1,500 phone bill his wife had found. She called Jayme's husband. Today Jayme realizes she was lucky to escape such a situation, especially when the only truth he told her was his name.

With Jayme's advice in mind, I decided to give Internet romance a try. I sat down at my computer and went into a chat room, simply observing other peoples' conversations. Men still seemed to be out for sex—something I was not willing to give a stranger.

A couple of days later, I tried again, this time joining a Web site that specialized in introducing people online. I filled out the profile—honestly. Within days, my mailbox began to fill with letters from Chicago-area men. Some asked what I looked like right away and said they were looking for a serious relationship. A couple of guys that seemed genuine and honest complimented me on my honesty and seemed interested in getting to know me better. After about a week of dull responses, I came across a man who seemed to deserve a second look.

David and I chatted for about two weeks online, and I started to think that Internet romance was possible. I used Jayme's test, and he passed. He was my age, tall, athletic, had a career—and lived 15 miles from me. His e-mails were long and informative, and he seemed honest. After the first week, I actually started looking forward to hearing from him; we hadn't exchanged phone numbers yet. Then I received an e-mail that said he was looking for a serious relationship, not an e-mail buddy. He said he was ready to meet and get to know me on another level.

My heart pounded as I typed my response. I hoped he would understand that I didn't know him well enough to get involved. Weeks passed, and I kept writing him. But I never received a response. E

Birth of a Newcity

Brian Hiegelke takes *Newcity* from the drawing board to the forefront of Chicago journalism

by VALERIE DANNER

For Brian Hiegelke, it seems like only yesterday that he was sitting with his wife Jan and his younger brother Brent at Edwardo's in Printer's Row, eating pizza. It was November 1985; the Chicago Bears were on their way to a Super Bowl. Meanwhile, the Hiegelkes were planning their own remarkable endeavor—*Newcity*.

That was more than 10 years ago. Today, *Newcity* is published once a week and circulates more than 70,000 copies in both Chicago and the suburbs. Not

able to live in—imagine investigating your family." Although they still live in the South Loop, the Hiegelkes decided to expand their publication to include more of Chicago. That's when *Newcity* began to grow into what it is today.

Hiegelke first got the idea for an alternative weekly while in New York City. He fell in love with the more alternative papers such as the *Village Voice*. Hiegelke felt that kind of voice was missing back home. Chicago had the *Reader*, but Hiegelke felt it wasn't aggressive enough in its coverage.

And so *Newcity* began. "We had to take the risk," Hiegelke says. "If it flopped, I could always go back to Wall Street. Otherwise, I would never know and I'd always be wondering."

Hiegelke was only 23 when the newspaper started. It took seven years to finally make money. The Hiegelkes started with very little, but eventually had to raise/invest more than a

half million dollars. The money mainly came from Hiegelke's job at Goldman, Sachs & Co. (a global investment banking and securities firm), loans and private investors. He kept his job at Goldman Sachs to support his growing family.

But by 1988, Hiegelke quit his job and took on *Newcity* full time. As the publication became successful, Hiegelke started *Newcity.com* and the *Newcity* Network, a hub for young adults, and a national network of alternative city and content sites. *Newcity* also spawned *Newcity* National Sales, which sells ads to a national market for more than 100 alternative weeklies throughout the country. In fact, *Newcity* is the leader; it generates 50 percent of the ads—in 1999, the business pulled in \$12 million in ad sales alone.

Today, Hiegelke's attention is

focused on revamping *Newcity*'s Chicago Web site, www.newcitychicago.com, to include more comprehensive, interactive listings. The site, which has been on the Web since 1995, is updated five times a week and is more of a sibling than a twin to the hard-copy version of *Newcity*. The national *Newcity.com* site offers everything from free e-mail to advice on love and sex. The main goal is to continue to tap into *Newcity*'s 18- to 34-year-old market. The *Newcity* Network currently gets about a million visitors a month.

"Alternative publications are the best way to reach the young adult audiences. The Internet will become our biggest business," Hiegelke says.

Although Brent no longer works with *Newcity*, Jan and Brian are still the backbone of the paper. Twenty years of marriage and three kids later, they are still reinventing the publication that has been their livelihood for the past decade.

It hasn't always been easy, building a marriage while working together—especially during the initial stages. However, Hiegelke says there have always been more positives than negatives, both professionally and personally. "I have a terrific relationship with Jan—we know our mutual strengths and weaknesses, and work hard to complement each other," Hiegelke says. They still work in the same suite every day, but since she runs the paper and his job has shifted to running the Web business, there isn't as much interaction as one would think.

Hiegelke says that people who want to start a publication need to possess two things—a fearless attitude and lots of the green stuff.

"You can only fall so far. If you have the human capital to make something successful, you'll still have those skills when you're done.

"It takes an amazing amount of fortitude and tenacity, especially in the early years. You're in it for the long haul."

Now, 15 years after that dinner at Edwardo's, the Bears are nowhere near another Super Bowl win. However, the Hiegelkes' keep winning big time. **E**



Brian Hiegelke,
Newcity founder

bad for a publication that was started by three individuals without any background in journalism.

Hiegelke says he had an instinctive knack for journalism. Of course, his background in economics didn't hurt either. (He received his BA from the University of Chicago in economics as well as an MBA in finance.) In fact, it gave him the business savvy to keep the publication running.

"We didn't have any specific plan," remembers Hiegelke. *Newcity* originally started as a South Loop paper because that's where the Hiegelkes were living at the time. By the time the second issue came out, they had already made enemies of their South Loop neighbors.

"It was a happy and friendly neighborhood," says Hiegelke. "We ruffled feathers by asking questions. It was uncomfort-

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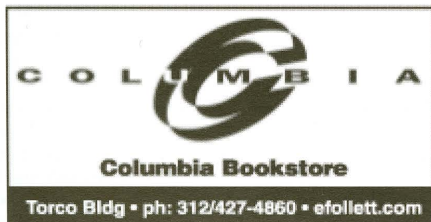
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No longer child's play: Chicago media take

prep sports

to a new level

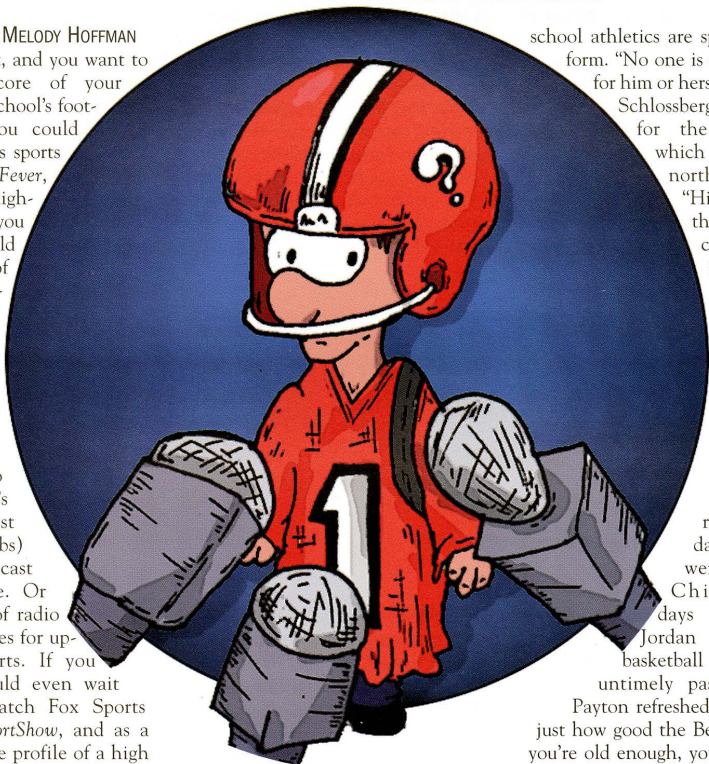
by MELODY HOFFMAN

It's Friday night, and you want to know the score of your favorite high school's football game. You could turn to CLTV's sports show *Friday Night Fever*, and get in-depth highlights of the game you missed. Or you could watch a variety of local network newscasts at 10 p.m., such as Channel 2, where you could see Tim Weigel land his helicopter at your high school's game.

If you wanted, you could turn to AT&T Cable's Channel 3 (northwest and southwest suburbs) and watch a rebroadcast of the entire game. Or tune into an array of radio stations and Web sites for up-to-the-minute reports. If you were tired, you could even wait until Sunday to watch Fox Sports Net's *Preps Plus SportShow*, and as a bonus catch a feature profile of a high school athlete.

Media coverage of high school sports has become big during this last school year. Dave Bernhard, host of AT&T Cable's *SportsZone* and *Game of the Week*, both weekly high school sports shows, says, "You go to any game and it's not just cable stations out there. You've got two, maybe three, lead sports anchors there."

But why have high school sports become so attractive to sports directors and editors in the Chicago area? One reason is the city's lack of success in professional sports—so much so, we're looking elsewhere for sports entertain-



school athletics are sport in its purest form. "No one is out there playing for him or herself," says Howard Schlossberg, a sportswriter for the *Daily Herald*, which circulates in the northwest suburbs.

"High schools have the ultimate team concept, whereas in college, kids are playing to improve their draft positions and get noticed by a scout, and the pros are playing to improve their contracts."

Most fans can remember the days when they were proud to be Chicagoans—the days when Michael Jordan dominated the basketball court. And the untimely passing of Walter Payton refreshed our memories of just how good the Bears used to be. If you're old enough, you can even recall when the White Sox and Cubs were teams to be proud of. Yes, we used to be spoiled sports fans, but now...

"People aren't nearly as interested," says Lannigan, "but they still have that same passion for sports. They get sick and tired of the Bulls losing by 30 [points]."

But the Chicago area is the home to many other sports teams. The Chicago Wolves is Chicago's International Hockey League team. We have the Kane County Cougars, a single-A league baseball team. The Chicago Fire MLS soccer team has a growing crowd every year at Soldier Field. Northwestern University's football team competes in the Big Ten

ment. "Now that the Bulls and Blackhawks aren't so entertaining," says Tim Weigel, sports reporter at WBBM-Channel 2, "this certainly makes room for high school sports."

Bob Lannigan, producer of Fox Sports Net's *Preps Plus SportShow*, says another reason is pure profit. "If a station manager can make some money, he's going to jump on it," he says. "They're going to show two cockroaches climbing down the street if it's going to make them money."

A third reason for the surge in media coverage is that many fans believe high

Conference, and many basketball fans look forward to DePaul and UIC's season.

Why, then, are high school sports seen by many as the savior? Simply put, there is money to be made.

Roger Connor, executive producer at AT&T Cable Services, formerly MediaOne, says broadcasters are discovering that it's popular and it's cheap to produce. "Here's a popular sport [football] that people want to get more information on and the broadcasters don't have to put much of an investment in it.

"They don't have to buy sponsorships on high school games like they would for a Bears game. If you want highlights for NFL games, you have to pay fees." Most stations are just sending out their photographers or free-lancers to get highlights of a game; sometimes they don't need to stay more than two quarters.

Advertisers are also realizing that high school sports are an untapped niche. Television prep sports shows, newspaper articles and Web sites cover a wide range demographically. "If you have a high school show on, you'll get junior high kids watching their heroes," Bernhard says. "And we know junior high kids go to the malls more than anybody else, and in a couple of years will be the teen-agers who spend tons of money in the malls.

"The high school kids will watch their friends, boyfriends and girlfriends on TV. They're the ones who are going to go out and spend money because everyone is working now. Then you have [the athletes'] parents who obviously are going to watch the shows, and they have better incomes."

Cheering for a favorite athlete, team or school is an emotional experience. Marketers build on this and want to be the ones who help fans express their loyalty and emotion. According to Schlossberg, "Most fans' emotional attachment to sports is phenomenally strong. How much do you want to bet that your allegiance to your high school lasts longer than your marriage?"

Marketers and advertisers are hurrying to devour the opportunities presented by high school sports—so fast, it could be mistaken as exploitation. "Nike, Adidas and Reebok need quality athletes to endorse their products so they're out there prowling high school campuses for the next Michael Jordan," says Schlossberg.

"They're looking for high schools that they can supply with free equipment in exchange for athletes wearing their logo or putting it on their scoreboard. It always comes down to the money, I don't care what business you're in," he says.

"How much do you want to bet that your allegiance to your high school lasts longer than your marriage?"

Howard Schlossberg, sportswriter for *Daily Herald*

Marketers want to reach consumers at a young age to build loyalty. "These are not stupid people," Schlossberg says. "They know what they're doing. They know when you start to formulate your choices.

"More [newspaper] managements believe that to reach younger readers they [need] to cover things the electronic media doesn't cover. High school sports are something they read. This is where we can get an edge to attract new readers so they will buy our newspaper."

"Getting an edge" is the key because competition for sports attention and sports dollars is fierce. Bob Vanderberg, the *Chicago Tribune's* assistant high school sports editor, says the *Tribune* only feels competition with other newspapers, not sports programs, because the Tribune Company owns CLTV and WGN, which are two television stations that devote a lot of time to high

school sports. "We try to keep tabs on what [our competitors] are doing."

The *Tribune* dedicates a lot of new space to high school sports. This past football season, 30,000 readers of the *Tribune* received a special four-page wrap on the Naperville cross-town rivalry football game in the Friday and Saturday editions, a game that attracted more than 10,000 people.

Bell says TV also covers high school football and basketball, but "they only do a minuscule portion of what newspapers do." Though there is a "keeping-up-with-the-Jones" rivalry among all of the local suburban papers and between Chicago's two urban dailies, newspapers stick together in their animosity towards television prep sports outlets. The *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune* have dedicated news space to high school sports since the early 1990s. Newspapers contend this is nothing new, and that they have always been there.

Schlossberg remembers the time when he didn't have to stand in line after a game to get a quick quote from an athlete. He thinks it's wonderful that television is showcasing more high school sports, but usually the games aren't broadcasted live for local access.

By contrast, says Schlossberg, "My story is coming out tomorrow morning it's 10:15 and I have an 11:30 deadline. Excuse me, you want to push me aside when you're going on [television] Tuesday and I'm going on tomorrow morning? I don't think so. We've been there all along. If they're on live, fine, grab the kid and do your interview, but don't tell me you got dibs on this kid because you're the cable TV company."

Though many television stations seek bragging rights for the best high school sports coverage, none of them feels as if they are in direct competition with each other. Each show fosters its own uniqueness. *Preps Plus SportShow* doesn't go head-to-head on Fridays and is more of a recap on Sunday mornings.

"Our show is heavy on features that give you a chance to know the [athletes]," Lannigan says.

Roger Connor, who produces a game every week at his station, says, "A live spot on Channel 2 from a high school game is not going to impact an audience who wants to watch the entire game."

CLTV also has a Wednesday sports show called *Sports Page* that spotlights high school sports. Rob Goldman, a sports producer at CLTV, says they do it better than anyone else. "I'll stack my high school coverage against anyone's in the city."

Communities support local sports. Media, management and marketers caught on to this a long time ago. Bruce Snyder, 40, is manager of security for AT&T Cable Services. He is a Bolingbrook resident who is a high school sports fan even though he doesn't have any kids competing at the high school level. "I live in the community and I like to support the community any way I can. Sports are a good outlet for young men and women, so I go to games to help support them and show that people actually care that they're out there playing. For a lot of kids, high school is the last step."

"Edgy" Tim O'Halloran works for Rivals.com, a Seattle-based Web company. He worked in high school recruiting and scouting for 12 years. Two years ago he put out his own Web site about local high school sports. "I had no sponsorship; it was a sick looking Web page." Through word of mouth, local support (and Rivals.com's sponsorship), O'Halloran's Web site has now expanded to cover state-wide high school sports.

"My nephew played football in Texas, and his parents would think nothing of driving six hours on a Thursday night across the state to see a game."

Illinois has been recognized as a premiere "basketball state" by national sports analysts, partly because so much talent from the Chicago area has gone on to the NBA, and because Chicago

public league schools are so competitive and entertaining. But many think Chicago is close to maxing out on football coverage. However, compared to "football states," such as Texas, Chicago hasn't even reached a scale for comparison in football coverage.

For example, the two competing newspapers in the two-city area known as the Metroplex in Texas are the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. They're locked in competition and go to great lengths to win and keep sports fans. The *Star-Telegram* fields a full-time sports staff of 90 people with fully one-third devoted to high

"High school sports have a real good feel to them. It's a real clean kind of all-American pastime. Very much a Norman Rockwell-type thing."

Bob Lannigan, producer of Fox Sports Net's *Preps Plus SportsShow*

school sports. They also assign a full-time reporter to each of the area's 13 high schools. At the start of the prep football season, both papers put out 100-page-plus special sections.

Another reason for the high school boom? It's still affordable. According to Bob Sakamoto, a *Chicago Tribune* sports writer, for a family of four to go to a Bull's game, it costs about \$200. It costs only \$30 to go to a local high school game. "You could watch a bad team lose or pay much less and watch kids that are playing 110 percent who have a genuine quality about them."

The nostalgia for high school sports is also great. Many people can relate to it, because while a huge number played sports in high school, very few played college or professional sports. "At the University of Tennessee, I don't know that people feel they have a lot in common with the star quarterback," says

Lannigan, "but I think they do at Mt. Carmel because the kid is going to class just like everyone else. High school sports have a real good feel to them. It's a real clean kind of all-American pastime. Very much a Norman Rockwell-type thing."

Sports writers also agree that high school athletes today are much better than they were 10 years ago. Girls and boys are playing at a higher skill level, thanks to better coaching, weight training and year-round conditioning. "I think a lot of what you see now athletically in high school, you saw 10 years ago in college," Bernhard says. "Now you have some kids out there that can really play, so it's worth your three bucks to go out on a Friday night and see some really great athletes do their thing."

Sakamoto agrees that prep athletes are immensely talented and entertaining to watch. "You get a chance to see them at an earlier age, much cheaper."

However, many subtle messages are sent to a 16-year-old quarterback or to a 17-year-old softball pitcher when, after a game, three TV stations and two newspapers are lined up to speak with him or her. Is it possible for the media to carry their coverage too far and harm an athlete, team or school?

"Too much [media coverage] of one kid could take away the team concept," says Schlossberg. He tries to avoid this by asking the "star" which of the other players were big contributors to the game; then he goes and interviews them. "Let him name them. If it's the star running back, get him to talk about his offensive line."

How well defined is the line between scrutiny of professional athletes and high school athletes? There is so much new media attention in the prep sports niche that sports writers may forget that these athletes are still kids. AT&T Cable Services Sports Announcer Dave Bernhard says he has to make constant decisions about what

he wants to say but shouldn't because the athlete is only a junior in high school. "When a phone call comes into the show, there are things in my head that I would say if this was a professional athlete or even a college athlete. I would say it and not think too much of it because he's twenty-something years old, and he can take it."

Bob Lannigan, Fox Sports Net's *Preps Plus SportShow* producer, says one of the taglines used to advertise their show is, "High school sports, big league coverage."

"Yes, you're getting the same coverage on Fox on the same place people see the Bulls and the Bears and Cade McNown and Elton Brand, but high school kids are not subject to the same criticism," he says. "We [the media] all understand that because they're amateur athletes, they shouldn't be scrutinized in the same way. It is an unwritten rule. It's common sense."

In this day and age of extensive recruiting, kids are watched from farther away than ever; this puts a lot of pressure on these athletes. According to O'Halloran, "Kids can't move without being watched. Recruiting has just blown up. Exposure now compared to 10 years ago is ten-fold."

Steve Williams is a senior at Bolingbrook High School. This past football season he played inside linebacker for the team and was highly recruited. He said he felt pressure all the time. "You have to play a good game every game and if you mess up [the media] are quick to blast you. Everyone doesn't have a good game every game."

Connor says that too much media coverage of just some sports could be harmful because you neglect others. "If you glamorize high school football, basketball and baseball even more than it already is glamorized, what does that say to all the other student athletes out there who are participating in gymnastics, soccer, golf, track and everything else?" At his station the sports that aren't on *Game of the Week* are covered

on the live show *SportsZone*.

Some sports writers feel they contribute to a kid's exaggerated sense of self-importance. Vanderberg says, "Kids calling their own press conferences... that didn't happen 20 years ago." He was referring to senior basketball player Andre Brown from Leo High School in Chicago who announced his decision to attend DePaul University via press conference. For recruiting purposes Brown also has his own Web site.

Williams has been receiving recognition from colleges and the media since he was a junior. Nicknamed "Big Cat," he has since committed to

"The chance for these kids to speak on television and conduct themselves in a professional manner cannot be taught from a textbook."

Larry Bernard, Bolingbrook High School athletic director

Indiana University (which sent press releases to all the local media). "Not to say that the team would lose without me, but I thought I was the best player on the team because all of the [media] focus was on me."

While many say that media coverage of prep sports can be harmful in the extreme, not everybody echoes this feeling. Taylor Bell, a pioneer in prep sports writing, believes you can't go too far. The *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter says, "It's good to show good things teenagers do. Sports are it. It is an opportunity for kids to get off the streets." He declares that you can't learn everything in school and sports make kids well rounded. "The educational process entails more than education."

Bolingbrook High School Athletic Director Larry Bernard agrees that exposure has its benefits. "The chance for these kids to speak on television and con-

duct themselves in a professional manner cannot be taught from a textbook."

Matt Senffner, athletic director at Providence Catholic Academy in New Lenox and head coach of their varsity football team, thinks media exposure for athletes is a great learning tool. He believes it gives them the chance to carry messages about their school to the public. "It motivates my team and they're actually disappointed when they're not on TV."

Senffner is one of the few high school coaches with more than 200 victories—so he's used to media coverage. He rates the coverage of his team as excellent and fair, except for one time when he said he was placed on the hot seat. Two years ago when he won the state championship, some kids lit up cigars given to them by their parents outside of the locker room. Two days later a photographer published it in the local paper. "He could have used the pictures of us celebrating or praying before the game, but he didn't. I caught hell."

Bolingbrook High School Football Coach Phil Acton has had a successful team for more than 20 years. He says he can only remember one time when he was not happy with the media coverage of his team. "A field goal was missed in the last seconds of the game and we lost by one point. The next day the newspaper printed a picture of the kid missing the goal and the caption said the kid lost the game. That puts a lot of weight on a young kid."

Maybe it's a no-win situation for the media. As long as coverage for high school athletes stays within the boundaries, athletes, schools, coaches and parents are happy and welcome exposure for their kids.

"All across America there are families piling into cars to go down to a local high school game and watch Jimmy or Suzy play," Lannigan says. "Just like the parents did 50 years ago. It's a good core to sports. All we do in the media coverage is reflect that." **E**



Lost in the Mix

Clockwise from top left: Scott Silz, Ralph Rosario, Farley Keith, Mickey Oliver and Kenny Jason

by REBECCA ORTIZ

You thought it was dead. You even mourned its absence. But whoever told you disco died was lying. Well, they weren't necessarily lying—they were just misinformed. You see, disco never died; it just descended. Now you might be asking yourself what could the bellbottom-wearing, afro-fabulous, *Saturday Night Fever*-living times have “descended” into? In one sentence? One of the greatest elements of Chicago's history—house music.

Although it has been rumored that house music was co-invented in our sister city New York, make no mistake, Chicago's style and sound combination took people on the wildest rides of their lives and claimed an identity all its own.

And although several artists contributed to this advanced genre of dance music, there were five individuals who laid some serious groundwork. Despite confusion about who was the original team, too many replacements and the vendettas that surrounded the industry as a whole, these five remained strong—strong enough to leave a mark in the city of Chicago.

They may not have parted “best friends”—or even as business associates—but they made Chicago house music and the lifestyle that surrounds it what it is today. These five individuals were the premier DJ team in the world. Ladies

and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the Hot Mix 5.

The early '80s were a time of leftover disco beats lingering in clubs. Electronic drums and sampling began recycling old tunes, and Lee Michaels, the program director at 102.7 WBMX-FM made six appointments that would change the way music is played forever.

After noticing the demand for dance music and the popularity of local clubs such as the Music Box and the Warehouse, Michaels decided to bring the club sounds to those who dug the funky beats. After a three-week run of playing



LEE MICHAELS: PROGRAM DIRECTOR,

WBMX: After more than 35 years in radio, Michaels is no longer involved in the business. Still in touch with the 5, Michaels has said that at one time or another all five of the original members said they would do a reunion show for him. Today you can find Michaels running a Web design/Web hosting company with partner Sal Lapore.

ARMANDO RIVERA: This part-time radio personality brought on by Lee Michaels stayed at WBMX till it's doors closed. He eventually made the move to WGCI. Today he is the Music Director for Chicago's 103.5, *The Beat*. He is also known as the man responsible for keeping the house music family together.

FARLEY "JACKMASTER" FUNK: AKA Farley "Funkin" Keith in his early days, Farley knew he was hooked after hearing the sounds of fellow Hot Mix 5 member Kenny Jason, who persuaded him to make a tape to pass on to WBMX, which was playing random mixes at the time. Jumping back and forth between WGCI and WBMX, Funk looks back on his days as part of the Hot Mix 5 as some of his fondest memories. Known as one of the creators of House music, he is recognized as the godfather of house. Today you can find him producing (with his main focus on Gospel music) and mixing all over Europe and the United States.

KENNY "JAMMIN" JASON: It was while mixing at Disco DAI and doing remixes for WGCI that Jason met Lee Michaels in late 1981. Looking back on his Hot Mix 5 days, he says, "I'd like to say that all of us [Hot Mix 5], as a whole, set the ground rules and foundation for what we have today." After leaving WBMX and mixing on WGCI for 11 years, Jason has been a Chicago Police lieutenant for the past 15 years and also a volunteer firefighter. In his spare time you can hear him mixing on 103.5, *The Beat*. He also has his own syndicated radio show that plays hits and dusties in more than 15 stations across the United States and Mexico.

RALPHI ROSARIO: The youngest member of the Hot Mix 5, Rosario was only 16 at the peak of their success. He made the switch to WGCI and left a few years after to pursue a career in music production. He also studied communications at Columbia College Chicago. Rosario is best known for his records "You Used to Hold Me" (released on the Hot Mix 5 record label), "I Cried the Tears" by Jomanda and "Keep on

mixes from local DJ's on late Saturday-night time slots, Michaels knew he had stumbled onto something big. The phone lines at WBMX never stopped lighting up. Every bedroom DJ listening crawled out of the woodwork to find out where to send his tapes to be played on the radio. After a mere six weeks of playing random mixes, Michaels selectively picked six local DJs to offer a permanent position playing mixes from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. on Saturday nights at WBMX. This perfectly blended show would appeal to all and bring the club sounds to the homes and cars of people all over the city. But in the end, it had a far greater destiny than anyone could've dreamed.

Farley "Jackmaster" Funk, Mickey "Mixin" Oliver, Scott "Smokin" Silz, Ralph Rosario and Kenny "Jammin" Jason all arrived for a meeting planned by Michaels to discuss his idea for a house-mix show. The sixth interviewee, Jeff Davis, failed to show. During this meeting they talked of this "team/corporation" they were forming. They were the Hot Mix guys, which was the generic term given to the group before members were chosen by Michaels. The final result was the Hot Mix 5.

Chosen to host the show was part-time WBMX radio personality Armando Rivera. It wasn't long after the 5 were formed that the show developed a personality all its own. "It's the 'Saturday Night Live Ain't No Jive' mix show hosted by Armando." Each week the switchboard would light up with requests and comments about their favorite of the 5. Playing the latest in house sounds, Farley appealed to the African-American audience, Rosario to the Hispanic audience, Oliver and Jason represented the streets of Chicago and Silz

**Ralph Rosario**

the suburbs. For scheduled guest appearances they would pack venues with thousands of people, sweat would be dripping from the ceiling and sometimes the cops would come and close the place down for violating fire codes.

"Driving down Rush and Division [in downtown Chicago] on the weekend was like listening to a giant ghetto blaster," recalls Michaels. "It didn't matter what creed you were or what kind of car you had—everyone had the 'Saturday Night Live Ain't No Jive' show on—it gave me chills."

Their success seemed to be larger than life. They were in demand around the city, getting paid unprecedented amounts of money to play an hour-long set. If they played a record on Saturday night, Sunday morning kids would be at the record store eagerly waiting to buy it. But with all this fame and fortune came trying times.

By popular demand, after only three months of airtime, a Friday-night mix show was added. Now it was no longer the 'Saturday Night Live Ain't No Jive' but also the 'Friday Night Jam'. The months to follow would add the 'Hot Lunch Mix' and also 15-minute mini-mixes throughout the day. The demand for the men was getting stressful. Aside from turning in two weekly mix tapes for radio play they were playing events and parties on Friday and Saturday nights at their contracts with WBMX dictated. Plus they were expected to live their own lives. At the time Rosario was only a freshman in high school. After four years on WBMX, the show was about to reach a turning point.

Through the years, Michaels served as the "unofficial manager" of the group. Helping the guys understand the technical side of their contracts and deal with their popularity, he also encouraged

**Armando Rivera**

them to pursue their own musical careers. Making up to thousands of dollars an hour, they would agree to play clubs and throw their own parties. Record deals were offered to the men, even offers from other radio stations to lure the 5 away from WBMX were made. Their egos began to grow, along with their wallets. Soon animosity between the 5 began to grow as well. And in 1984, things reached a breaking point.

After claiming that he couldn't take the attitudes and egos, Scott "Smokin" Silz left the group. Although other stories for his leaving have circulated through the group, Scott says, "We were five different guys from five different backgrounds who wanted different things. We were never really friends—just business partners. It was bound to happen over time. I just felt my time had come, so I moved on to bigger and better things." Silz's leaving marked the beginning of the end for the 5.

Frequent guest mixer Julian "Jumpin" Perez filled the fifth slot after winning a city-wide DJ Battle. And after only a few months of Julian's arrival, Funk decided to leave the group to go to their competing station WGCI in hopes of finding more money and success. "I wanted to get away from the other guys," says Funk, "and just being a big-headed DJ at the time, it was all about me."

No formal replacement procedure was made after his departure—the fifth slot was left open for guest mixers and the Hot Mix 5 name stayed the same. Sharing time in the fifth slot were guest mixers Steve "Silk" Hurley, Frankie Knuckles and Frankie "Hollywood" Rodriguez. Farley began mixing as part of the "Jackmasters" on WGCI along with



Bad Boy Bill

Mario "Smokin" Diaz, Mario Reyes, Mike "Hitman" Wilson, Fast Eddie and Bad Boy Bill. Looking to follow WBMX's successful universal mix show formula, WGCI began beating them in ratings and in October 1985 lured Lee

Michaels, father figure and creator of the 5, to the program director position at the competing station.

The group felt his absence. WBMX was losing listeners to WGCI and conflicts between the Hot Mix 5 and executives at the station began to develop. In an effort to make a statement in July 1986, the three remaining original members of the Hot Mix 5 (Jason, Rosario and Oliver) walked out on WBMX, leaving behind only guest mixers and new Hot Mix 5 member Perez.



Steve Hurley

Leaving the station without a mix show and relocating to WGCI—new home of Lee Michaels—the family would be reunited. Unfortunately, it wasn't that simple. According to Rosario, WGCI didn't pay what it promised and didn't give the airplay desired or promised

—except on the a.m. show. WBMX also filed a lawsuit against the three for breach of contract. Although no money was collected, the result for them leaving before their contract was up was they were not allowed to play on any other radio station except for WBMX until their contracts had expired (one month remained).

Without the Hot Mix 5, the air time at WBMX was filled by Perez and several of the guest mixers such as Bad Boy Bill, Rodriguez and Wilson.

Funk, Jason, Silz, Oliver, Rasario and Mario Diaz mixed as the Hot Mix 5 at WGCI. Also going on at that time was the short-lived record label 'Hot Mix 5 Records' started by Oliver, Jason and

Making me High" by Unyque. Now with more than 20 years in the industry, he continues his musical career in DJing and producing.

SCOTT "SMOKIN" SILZ: Getting his start in mixing in 1977, Silz spent a year at Illinois State University studying business. He left to pursue a career in music production at Columbia College Chicago, and by that time had gotten his name out in the clubs and landed his spot as part of the Hot Mix 5. Since his Hot Mix 5 days, he started a mobile DJ company (Hot Mix Entertainment), was a part of the Club 107.5 mix show, and for the last year has been the producer for the 102.7 FM (former home of WBMX) show the Mond Squad and Mini Concert.

MICKEY "MIXIN" OLIVER: As part of the original Hot Mix 5 team, Oliver only lasted a short time after the group made the move to WGCI before moving out of state with his wife and children. Oliver went on to having a successful career in contracting million dollar homes in Phoenix and is now in the telephone business. Even though he left his DJing days behind, Lee Michaels and others believe that with the amount of talent Oliver had, no amount of time could ever stifle his skills.

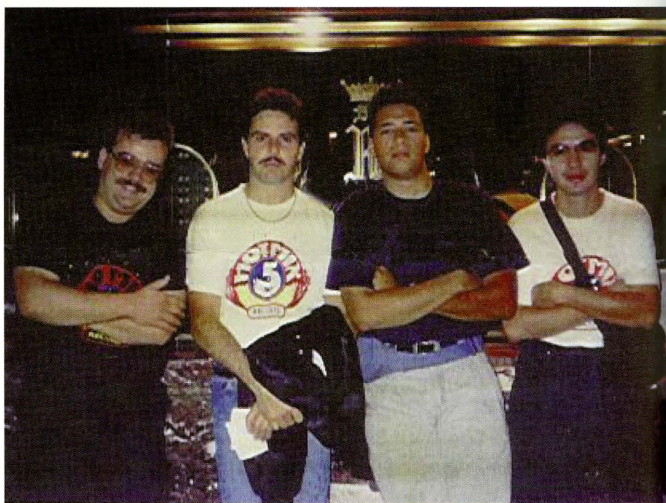
JULIAN "JUMPIN" PEREZ: Getting his start at the age 14, Perez worked as part of a mobile DJ company. A few years later he met and became friends with Hot Mix 5 member Scott Silz, eventually meeting other members and doing guest mixes for Silz. Ironically he won a DJ battle to replace Silz when he left the group. He was left behind one year later when Hot Mix 5 left for WGCI. Perez stayed at WBMX until they closed and later was offered his own mix show on 96.3 WBBM-FM in 1989. Perez recruited Bad Boy Bill, Brian "Hit Mix" Middleton, Tim "Spinnin' Schommer, and Frankie "Hollywood" Rodriguez. Twelve years later, Perez remains successful at the same station. Today you can listen to him week nights on B96 as well as on the weekend Mix Show.

STEVE "SILK" HURLEY: Inspired by the sounds of Disco DAI, Hurley started mixing at age 16. Earning a residency at a local club, he eventually found himself doing guest mixes for WBMX. After Scott Silz' departure he made it down to the final cut where Julian Perez beat him in a battle for the fifth slot. Although still doing guest spots on WBMX, he made his way to WGCI as a part of the "Jackmasters" and left to pursue his own music production and group

J.M Silk, later forming Silk Entertainment. Today Hurley has much to celebrate. Aside from making the classics "Jack Your Body" and "Music Is the Key," he has also done remixes for such artists as Michael and Janet Jackson, the artist formerly known as Prince, Mary J. Blige and Madonna, just to name a few. He also was nominated for a Grammy in 1999 for remixer/producer of the year.

MARIO "SMOKIN" DIAZ: Diaz began mixing in 1979. After doing a few guest mixer spots on WBMX, Diaz found a home as part of the "Jackmasters" on WGCI and remained there when the Hot Mix 5 made their move. Due to the lawsuit filed by WBMX, Jason, Oliver and Rosario were not allowed to mix on any other station until their contract expired (one month remained) leaving Diaz to carry the mix show. After the month passed, they all mixed as The Hot Mix 5 until the show ended in 1990 (which would later return as Club 107.5). Diaz also was involved with the Hot Mix 5 Record Label. Since his Hot Mix 5 days, he has become involved in law enforcement and also started his own business. He is still involved in music and says he has some mix tapes here and there and plans on getting more involved in music in the near future.

BAD BOY BILL: Bill began mixing in 1984 and recalls standing on a pedestal all night long to catch a glimpse at the Hot Mix 5 and Julian Perez at a club called Dillagaf. Those days are long gone. After landing guest mixing spots on WBMX via Funk and also as a resident "Jackmaster" on WGCI, Bill moved to WBMX when the Hot Mix 5 walked out and remained there until they closed in 1988. Soon after he was recruited by mentor Julian Perez to mix on B96, which he did for 10 years and became a household name and also 1998's DJ of the Year at the Winter Music Conference. During that time Bill released several mix compilations and did remixes for various artists such as Paula Abdul, Simply Red and Kool Moe Dee. He also has founded his own multimedia company in 1995 called Mix Connection Multimedia (MCM) with partner Michael Ryden. Housing five record labels (IHR, Contaminated, Moody, Canvas and Feeling Groovy), MCM also releases mix compilations such as the B96 Mixmaster Throwdowns as well as his own compilations *Bangin' the Box* volumes 1-4.



Members of Hot Mix 5 record label, from left: Jason, Oliver, Rosario and Diaz

Rosario. Diaz, who helped with the label prior to its end, claims it ended due to an offer made to the Hot Mix 5 by EMI/EPIC.

According to Diaz, in order for EMI to follow through with contract procedures they had to stop production with Hot Mix 5 records for two months. Following the deal made with EMI, at the end of the two-month period, the executive promising the deal left EMI, and his replacement refused to honor his promise. Rosario says that the label wasn't following the direction he had hoped and that was the reason for its end—conflict of interest between the Hot Mix 5.

For the month remaining on their contracts with WBMX, Diaz carried the show himself. Shortly following the group's relocation to the new station, Funk returned back to WBMX. But Funk's return was short-lived. In 1988 WBMX was sold, and due to internal stockholder conflicts, closed its doors forever. Looking back on the situation Funk explains, "What [WBMX] did really upset me because they paid me big bucks to come back and all they wanted to do was get the ratings back up, and once they did, they sold it, and then I

was out of a job."

Funk eventually returned to WGCI a few years later, where Rosario, Jason, Silz and Diaz mixed as the Hot Mix 5. Funk quit in early 1999. The remaining members were Silz and Jason. A few months after Funk's departure, the Club 107.5 mix show was canceled.

Although the five have a great amount of respect for each other and still talk, they wouldn't consider each other close friends. Just five individuals who shared a life-changing experience that changed not only themselves but also the city of Chicago and music.

What started out as a small idea by a man named Lee Michaels, the Hot Mix 5 still live as the pioneers of the house music nation. This was the premier DJ team in the world, playing music that transcended all racial and ethnic barriers. Despite animosity, egos and money, the 5 laid the groundwork that developed the Chicago street flava that draw people from around the world. They were the infamous Hot Mix 5. And although you might not be able to name the original 5 if you aren't a native to the Windy City, their sound is unmistakable, and once you hear it, you'll never forget it. **E**

"They paid me big bucks to come back, and all they wanted to do was get the ratings back up."

Farley "Jackmaster" Funk

The Old School method

A small piece of global village on Lincoln Avenue

by MARTINA SHEEHAN

Thirty-something Bridget O'Brien squeaks away at her Irish tin whistle in the Old Town School of Folk Music's main lobby. "I'm going to get this if it kills me," she says between breaths. Her rough and choppy rendition of the Kesh Jig finally ends in

a discordant, glass-shattering high note and a burst of giggles from this enthusiastic musician to be. "I'm the worst in the class," she concedes proudly. "But I've got to learn this song."

This weekend, O'Brien will visit her 90-year-old grandfather. "He's as good as deaf, but I want to play him this jig," she

says. The old man, now bedridden, emigrated from Ireland in the 1940s. His love for traditional Irish music has motivated O'Brien to have a go at it. But with just a few days left to practice, she's sure to put on a performance that only a grandparent could love.

Many students such as O'Brien come to the Old Town School in hopes of learning something about their ethnic histories through music. Others come simply for fun or to learn more about different types of acoustic music. Accordingly, the school provides an increasingly diverse catalog to keep up with students' changing interests. Once focusing primarily on American folk music, the catalog now includes everything from Tahitian drumming to Jewish harmonica and Middle Eastern belly dancing. With all the new world music classes, an entire global village seems packed into this two-story brick building overlooking Lincoln Avenue at Wilson.

"The shift toward offering more ethnically diverse music courses was a conscience decision we made in the '80s," says Bob Medich, the school's public relations liaison. "At the time, there was a revived interest in acoustic and world music. We also started to see more people emigrate from places like Tibet, Bosnia, India and Pakistan, and we felt our catalog should mirror that change. Our classes offer a bridge between the school and members of these communities."

O'Brien's tin whistle instructor, Larry Nugent, is one such bridge. Like many of the school's instructors, it isn't the modest salary that keeps him teaching. His enthusiasm for the whistle dates back to early childhood when he would play for friends and family in County Fermanagh, Ireland. Since emigrating to Chicago several years back, the All-Ireland Flute and Whistle champion has maintained his ties to home by sharing his talent at the weekly whistle class as well as by playing traditional music sessions at area bars and clubs. But Nugent is just one of the many well-respected names associated with the school. In addition to the talented staff, several



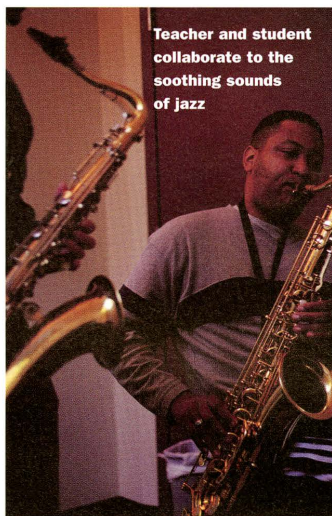
An Old Town student serenades passers-by

students have gone on to enjoy success as well. John Prine, Steve Goodman and Peter Seeger are just a few.

When Win Stracke originally co-founded the Old Town School of Folk Music more than 40 years ago, he envisioned a sociable place where people of all incomes, ages and skill levels could come together to learn music. It all started when, in 1957, Stracke met a talented young guitar player named Frank Hamilton at the old Gate of the Horn folk club, located at Chicago and Dearborn. At that point, a folk-loving Oak Park housewife named Dawn Greening was letting Hamilton teach guitar in her living room to supplement the paltry income he earned by performing. When Stracke heard this, he says he had "a hunch" that folk music instruction was in growing demand and decided he and Hamilton should have a go at it. By Dec. 1 of that year, the Old Town School of Folk Music officially opened its doors, welcoming several hundred enthusiastic students.

From the start, Stracke wanted to preserve the intimate feel the living room lessons had offered. He always stressed the "folk" in folk music, and the school stands by that. Old Town constantly updates its course catalog to reflect the changing ethnic face of Chicago. In addition to incorporating a new range of global sounds into the catalog, the school ensures inclusivity by keeping tuition at an affordable \$115 per two-month session. For those who don't have the money to purchase an instrument, the school's Different Strummer music store rents instruments for almost any class at reasonable rates. But for those unable to afford even this modest sum, an honorary Stracke memorial scholarship fund carries out the founder's commitment to making music accessible to all.

It is this accessibility that has allowed a variety of people from different backgrounds to convene here in the name of good music. For example, Wednesday nights, a group of enthusiastic flamenco players haul their guitars into one of the school's basement class-



Teacher and student collaborate to the soothing sounds of jazz

"Art and music are kind of a fun way to get to know yourself and where you have come from."

Chirag Thakkar

rooms. The class doesn't start for another 15 minutes, but this band of students cannot wait to start the session. A 29-year-old computer programmer tunes up for tonight's session as he explains his interest in tonight's class.

"I've always loved Latin music. On weekends, I play with a jazz quartet and I like to work some Latin sounds into what we do," he says. "But as a musician I'm always wanting to learn something new." Down the hall, Chirag Thakkar, a 25-year-old graphic artist from the East Village neighborhood, makes plans to sign up for next semester's tabla course. He feels the art of Indian drumming may help reacquaint him with his cultural history. "I'm second generation so I don't have that many direct ties to being Indian the way my parents did," he says. "Art and music are kind of a fun way to get to know yourself and where you've come from."

To continue down the school's halls is to absorb a discordant symphony of music from around the globe. The fusion of sounds leads from the exotic, spirited Middle-Eastern string and woodwind ensemble to the jovial Tennessee twang of an advanced banjo building, once a public library, houses two floors of classrooms, a café, an auditorium and the Different Strummer music store. The school moved to this Lincoln Avenue home last year after it became clear that the old Lincoln Park location could no longer accommodate its growing number of students.

But the Old Town School's bigger, better facilities haven't detracted from the family feeling you get when you sit down with a couple of mandolin players breaking into tune at the Old Town Café. A nearby whistle player can't resist the urge to join in. The sound is contagious. Soon anyone near the café with an instrument feels the need to accompany the pair, heads bobbing, feet tapping. The scene resembles Stracke's old "second-half" session, in which students were encouraged to get together after class for a sort of free-for-all jam session. Clearly, Stracke's communal spirit is still alive at Old Town.

Public relations liaison Medich stresses that the school's role as community center is more important than ever. "It's always been a very social place," he says. "In a city like this people lack a sense of community. It's a reaction to the modern world." According to Medich, a lot of professionals such as doctors, bankers and lawyers take classes here for relaxation and stress release. "They come after work to play acoustic music. It does the heart good as opposed to coming home and going online," he says.

"People say our world is becoming more 'virtual.' Here, everything is completely 'actual.' There's nothing virtual about playing acoustic music."

With that in mind, one can contend that no matter how often the class catalog changes, the Old Town School's mission will always remain as its founder intended. **E**

The magic of Jim O'Rourke

The man with the off-the-wall ideas brings everything he touches to life

by DUSTIN DRASE

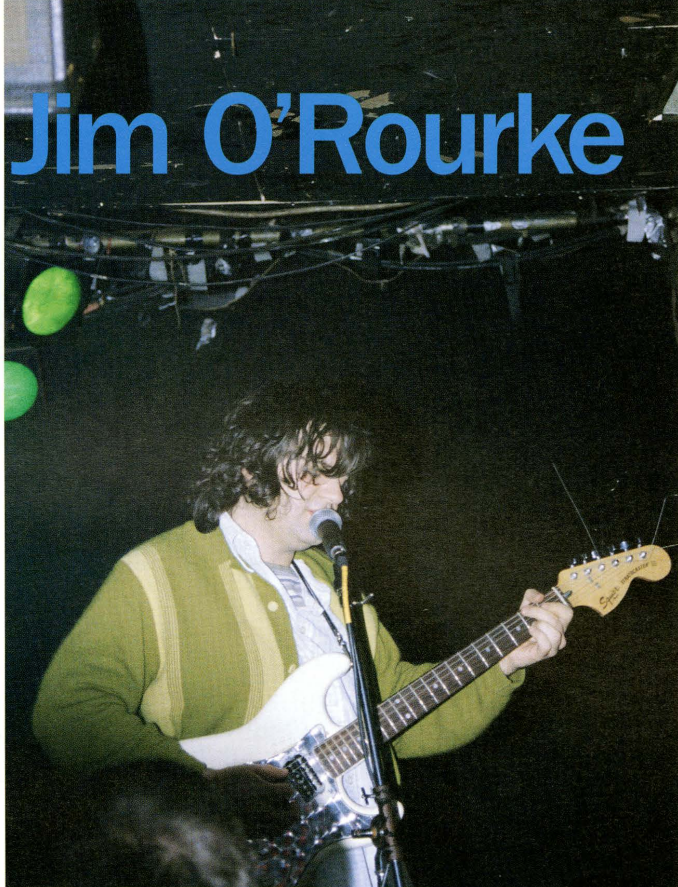
Jim O'Rourke is the king of karaoke. He stands on the stage of a New York bar, his stringy, brown hair unkempt and in his face. He wears a brown thrift-store suit jacket, and trademark black, high-top Converse sneakers. The hardest working man in the recording industry is taking a breather.

"Nobody gonna take my car. I'm gonna race it to the ground," he sings to the crowd of celebrities represented by the Nasty Little Man publicity company. Minutes earlier, European pop sensation Robbie Williams finished his rendition of "Anarchy in the UK." Guitarist Eric Erlandson of the band Hole stands at the bar removed from the commotion. Australian wonder-kid (and Claire Danes' boyfriend) Ben Lee wanders about the place with wide-eyed excitement. Jay Mascis of Dinosaur Jr. stands against a railing, smoking. O'Rourke is primed, the back-up-punk-rock karaoke band in full force.

"I love it and I need it. I bleed it yeah it's a wild hurricane. All right hold tight. I'm a highway star."

O'Rourke does Deep Purple like no other. In the heat of the moment, he drops to his knees and continues singing. He grabs the microphone, and in an attempt to swing it over his shoulder, bashes himself in the mouth. Blood splatters the microphone stand. "This is fucking awesome," he says. O'Rourke stands, reaching into his front pocket to grab a Halloween blood capsule. He puts the capsule in his mouth, turns his head to continue singing, and accidentally swallows the capsule, barely managing to choke out the next few verses of the song.

O'Rourke steps off the stage, engrossed in the high of the moment, his lip, purple and swollen. Breathing heavily, O'Rourke is the exact opposite



Jim O'Rourke rocks on at the Lounge Ax in Chicago

of his true demeanor. Normally quiet and demure, O'Rourke has the uncanny ability to surprise everyone, no matter what it is that he attempts to do. Jim O'Rourke is a character of avant garde proportions. As far back as 1995, magazines such as *Option* predicted him to become the most important composer of the 1990s.

"With a name like Jim O'Rourke, I expected him to be some sort of cowboy," said Al Johnson of the Chicago-based art-rock band US Maple. "It sounds like some Irish mick who rides in on a keg of beer and steals your girlfriend. Instead, he is the meekest, most humble person, very polite and extremely introverted." O'Rourke recorded two records for US Maple, which proved to be the first of many rock bands he would record. He was so excited about recording for them that

he actually broke out in hives and had to bring hand cream to the sessions to control them. This close working relationship led to O'Rourke touring throughout Europe as US Maple's opening act. At the time, tape-splicing music was gaining popularity.

Terminal Pharmacy and earlier albums such as *Disengage* marked O'Rourke as tape music's emerging star. The Holland papers previewed the show and built up expectations. For the show in Rotterdam, everyone expected O'Rourke to come out and play abstract tape collages. Instead, he came out onto the stage, smoking, with an acoustic guitar in his hand. He sat down and started playing intricate little fingerpicking patterns. Every once in a while he would stop and tell jokes that made no sense.

"It took a lot of balls," said Johnson.

"It was a sharp left turn. Someone in the audience turned to me and said in a thick European accent, 'Who does he think he is? David Letterman?' The audience was appalled. O'Rourke may get lots of acclaim for an album, and build up expectations from fans, but this never stops him from doing something really fucked-up on his next album."

O'Rourke is constantly reinventing himself. Whenever he sees a trend coming, or feels the press is pigeonholing him, he runs the opposite direction. Lush, orchestral and highly concerned with melody and songwriting, O'Rourke's style can be modest or completely and totally over the top.

"Jim [O'Rourke] carries with him some choice elements: surprise, creativity, adeptness at his instrument, and the ability to create some really fucked-up shit." Johnson said. Since his days recording US Maple, O'Rourke has contributed to a wide range of albums and bands, both in the roles of producer and temporary band member.

O'Rourke is more than a serious producer, composer or musician; he is foremost a fan of music. Almost all of the work he has done has been for people he admires or has worked with in some other capacity. Although not highly praised by the American music press, O'Rourke is an international superstar (his album *Eureka*, from 1999, debuted at No. 7 in Japan). The American press has failed to grab hold of the O'Rourke phenomenon as Europe has. This may be due to O'Rourke's obscure sense of humor, or his love of the element of surprise.

This feeling of a lack of comprehension by the press has led O'Rourke to be self-deprecating and evasive. "Come 2000, I will not be talking to American writers any more. Endearing, aren't I? Anyway, it's not my habit to encourage writing about me; I'd be more apt to discourage, [because there] isn't anyone in this damn country who doesn't think I ruin records."

Perhaps what O'Rourke is best known for musically is his work with Gastr Del Sol, the now defunct band

that paired O'Rourke with the eccentric David Grubbs. O'Rourke and Grubbs couldn't have been more different in their backgrounds. Grubbs came from a straight rock background, playing in bands such as Bastro, while O'Rourke had more background in electronics and soundscaping. The two produced a number of albums, most notably 1996's *Upgrade and Afterlife* and the critically acclaimed *Camofleur*, which served as their swan song. Gastr Del Sol combined intricate guitar patterns, tape loops, subdued, soft vocals and spacious drumming. Space and silence were as much a part of the music as the notes and instruments themselves. Sometimes gritty, yet

"Jim brings with him all the various worlds that he occupies at one time. Once you get him animated, he'll go."

Sean O'Hagan

always panoramic, Gastr Del Sol's music made you want to light a candle, turn off the lights and lose yourself.

O'Rourke definitely likes a challenge, and working on the Aluminum group record *Pedals* was a great chance for him to explore his techniques of vocal recording.

"Jim was an extremely scrutinous, strong vocal coach," said John Navin, one of the two brothers in the group. Instead of editing individual words that didn't sound right, as most engineers do, O'Rourke preferred to edit the entire line. In search of perfection in sound, O'Rourke recorded all the vocals in analogue and then transferred them to digital DAT, thereby giving them more warmth.

Studiowise, O'Rourke's biggest strength is his ability to mix. "He comes to the project with a whole bag of tricks. Almost like a mad scientist, there were a million cords running everywhere [plugged into patch bays and effects fil-

ters]." Navin said. "Jim thinks in terms of math and geometry; he has a very keen sense of melody, and is very respectful and in the spirit of the project."

After recording the Aluminum Group record, O'Rourke went to England to work on Stereolab's album, *Cobra and Phases Group Play Voltage in the Milky Night*. Stereolab has spent the last eight years seeking America's best, most interesting artists. O'Rourke's ties with Stereolab also led him to work with Sean O'Hagan. O'Hagan, a former member of Stereolab, is frontman for the High Llamas.

"Jim brings with him all the various worlds that he occupies at one time. Once you get him animated, he'll go," said O'Hagan. "There's initially shyness, which is weird because he's so competent, but he definitely has the ability to create excitement. He has this attitude of 'There's no reason to stop, we are so excited, we have so much to do here.' A lot of times in the studio there is a sense of failure, Jim is so, 'Why stop, we're only just starting?'"

Whereas most people will have the strings composed weeks ahead of time, O'Rourke will write strings the night before a session, managing to write very complex, strange parts very quickly. "Everything he works on has a lasting irreversible effect," said O'Hagan. "He's such a musician and he's so interested in melody, and refines it, works with it, twists it to comply with his ambition. Jim can have Bacharach ambitions in brass, and atonal ambitions in string arrangement, and bring them together because of his intense knowledge of both.

"The best part about working with Jim is that there's no restriction; he's such a pop fan. He loves the utilitarian aspect of pop music. The one point on which I will always agree with Jim is that tunes are great. There's nothing wrong with a tune. People think of tunes as something their parents listen to. Jim thinks of a tune like a bit of rope that you throw to someone. They grab it and give it a little tug, and everything else follows." **E**



Free Associating: Liz Cloud, Todd Guill and Andrew Glasgow in "MedeaMorphosis: Greek Tragedy To Go"

New farce of Chicago improv

Free Associates takes the business of being funny seriously

by Erica Tava

Actor Susan Gaspar holds desperately onto a railing in a burning fish cannery. "Help!" she screams, "I've. I've..." Her partner looks at her, anxiously waiting. "Fallen through the floor!" he suggests. "Yeah! I've fallen through the floor! Help!" she cries. The audience laughs.

The home of the Free Associates, in the Ivanhoe Theater, 750 W. Wellington, dates back to the 1920s, when it was the Ivanhoe Restaurant. The Free Associates reside in one of the Ivanhoe's smaller spaces that barely seats 40 people. The walls are painted blood red, and the small stage and props in front serve as the background for

every setting: a mansion, a bedroom on the lawn, a bar or even the fish cannery. Few props clutter the stage, forcing audience members to use their imaginations. Welcome to the new face of improvisational theater in Chicago.

Chicago is the birthplace of improv, and still houses a number of troupes: Second City, the Improv Olympic, Annoyance Theater, Low Sodium Entertainment and the Factory Theater to name just a few. The type of theater performed at these venues helps define what most people think of improv—knee-slapping funny shows full of gags and fart jokes. But in reality, improv is just un-scripted theater performed for a live audience.

The Chicago Improv Festival defines improv as "a theatrical art form in which actors perform without a script. Improvisation is spontaneous communication between actors on stage inspired by audience suggestions. It is a comedy based form of theater."

But to the Free Associates, improv just doesn't describe what they do. "Our material stands out," Mark Gagne says. "I don't identify it as improv. We're a theater company that uses improvisation as our tool."

The Free Associates began in March 1991, founded by improv actor Mark Gagne. "My goal was to create a new forum using improv," he says. "I grew embittered with the homogeneous world

of improv: hetero, white and patriarchal. I wanted an environment more about the work and less about the people doing the work."

When the theater began, the sound system and lighting board consisted of a boombox and light switch. In 1994, the cast moved to its current home at the Ivanhoe Theater.

"As a performer I get more satisfaction doing this than 'quick improv,'" says Susan Gaspar, a Free Associates member since 1993. "You really see characters grow and develop. In the other kind of improv, characters are non-existent. It's amusing, but it's over in a flash."

Parodies from literature, TV or film are what the Free Associates do best. Its goal is to introduce the audience to artists that they may not have seen before. On its Web site (http://home.earthlink.net/~free_assoc/index.html) the group comments, "We really need to know the work we are spoofing. That is why we research and de-code an author's or filmmaker's work for months before we actually start rehearsing a new show."

Some of the spoofs done in the past are "Bronte," a spoof on Anne Bronte's work, "Back in the Shadows Again," based on the old, campy vampire TV show *Dark Shadows*, and "BS," the Free Associates' version of the hit TV drama *ER*. Theater-goers particularly enjoy seeing spoofs of their favorite shows. Audience member Kelly Suren was reminded of her childhood. "I remember *Dark Shadows* from when I was a kid, so this is very reminiscent. I'm glad other people are turning out for this show, too."

Learning the literature and show is a time-consuming task for the cast. But many of the Free Associates love that part of their job. "You want to suck all the information dry. You have to trust that you know it. It's a big part of the process," says Gaspar.

Michelle Madden, the Free Associates' publicist for three years, agrees. "The team knows a lot about what they are doing. They watch every episode of *ER* and rented every episode of *Dark Shadows*."

Like most improv shows, the group involves the audience. Shouting out plot lines or motivation is half the fun of seeing the show. The cast lovingly refers to audience members as "the writers of the show." The show moves along just as if it had been rehearsed for weeks, but they are literally making it up on the spot. "It's amazing to me that they have no scripts—some critics have thought they have," said Madden. "If you didn't know it was improv, you could not tell." That's the magic of it all.

This magic keeps people coming back again and again. The Free Associates celebrated its 10th season in March 2000, and the company has performed nearly 2,000 times for more than 100,000 people. It still remains a non-profit group. And the Free Associates succeed in drawing a large and diverse crowd of fans. At a marathon run of "Back in the Shadows Again," John Funley, a theatergoer, says, "I love their performances; I'd rather see this than a football game." Funley sees as many as two shows a week.

Every year the Free Associates performs three new theater pieces and one revival from the past years. The 2000 revival is "Back in the Shadows Again," created and directed by Gagne (Sept. 6 to Oct. 29). The three new pieces are "MedeaMorphosis: Greek Tragedy to Go" (March 29 to May 28), "Charlie and the Fiction Factory Roald Dahl Unscripted" created and directed by Gaspar (June 14 to Aug. 12) and an original comedy by Mary McHale "SIBS" (Nov. 15 to Jan. 14, 2001).



It's Greek to them: Susab Gasoar, Kecia Cooper and Todd Guill in "MedeaMorphosis"

As with any good improv group, the company's true strength lies in its ability to work as a team. If during a show a member has to use the bathroom, for example, he or she will use the code words "I'm going to the store" (or "market" depending on the time period). These little things really make a difference when watching the productions. If the team were uncomfortable with each other, the audience would be able to tell. But they all take cues from each other and perform the improv flawlessly.

"It's just like a family," said Madden, "but when they are on-stage, they focus on the play, giving generously to each other. They never know what's coming out of everyone's mouth. They have to trust each other." And trusting your troop is important, just in case you are, say, falling through the floor in a burning fish cannery someday. **E**

Diving into Latino culture

Increasing awareness through arts education

by ARLENE CRUZ

As a child, I went through the motions of being a Puerto Rican in an American Society. I enjoyed the festivities we celebrated as a typical Puerto Rican family, but I always felt a void that needed to be filled. As my parents migrated from the motherland to the "land of opportunity," they lost sight of how they came to be when trying to revamp into "ideal" Americans.

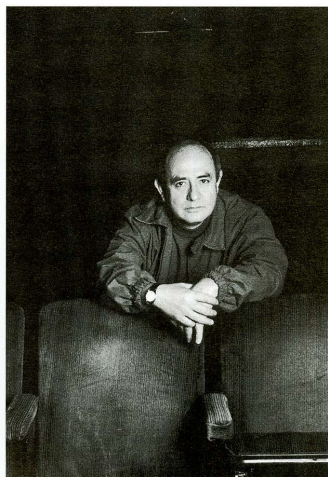
"Learning and teaching culture has made me who I am," said Pepe Vargas, founder and director of the new International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago, an offspring of the Chicago Latino Cinema. In the summer of 1999, the center officially changed its name to reflect its efforts to increase awareness, through arts and education, of the Latino community among Latinos and non-Latinos alike.

It all began with the success of the Latino Film Festival. Chicago Latino Cinema was founded in 1985 to create awareness of international Latino arts and culture. This was made possible by educating the public through film and other art forms. The Annual Latino Film Festival is the organization's most important activity. Since 1985 the festival's popularity has soared, from an initial audience of 500 to 1998's 33,000 viewers.

Chicago is the fifth-largest Hispanic market in the country and has the potential to attract worldwide visitors to the International Latino Cultural Center. The favorable responses and increasing audience members of the Latino Film Festival have served as proof that this center is something that has been long overdue for the Chicago area.

The Center, which will open in its new facility in approximately five years, will house a multi-arts complex, including four theaters of various sizes, a concert hall and an art gallery. The Center also will have a museum, gift shop, coffee shop, restaurant, banquet/reception hall, traveling exhibition space, a language institute, and the Bureau of Culture and Tourism. Instead of renting a building, the Center will purchase its own space, in order to have control over the program. Vargas has been with Chicago Latino Cinema since 1986. "I believe the project is long overdue, and I realize that the Latino market is well-enough recognized in the city to have an establishment of our own cultural institution," he said. Today, the center consists of a full-time professional staff, more than 100 volunteers, 300 members and a board of directors.

The International Latino Cultural Center will continue to help transcend ethnic lines and increase awareness of



Pepe Vargas, founder and director of the new International Latino Cultural Center

the Latino community. "I am a multi-millionaire in terms of the richness of culture," Vargas said. "Culture is who we are and dealing with our soul is what makes us whole."

For more information on how to become a member or to make a donation to help support the International Latino Cultural Center, you can visit its Web site at www.chicagolatinocinema.org or call (312) 431-1330. **E**

At the movies

The Latino Film Festival attracts a range of fans—old and young, male and female, Latino and non-Latino. Many viewers hold dear certain films that either depict a scenario of their lives or that they can relate to because of its representation of the Latino community. "The Q & A segment with the directors and producers after the film makes it easier to grasp the intensity of the film and what it takes to make it," Veronica Lopez, a college student and avid participant, said.

Erik Sosa of the Mexican Fine Arts Museum says that the film *Sexo, Pudor y Lagrimas* (*Sex, Shame and Tears*) was a No. 1 hit in Mexico, ranking higher than the much-anticipated *Star Wars*. "Mexican films are becoming more substantial in content and not

as mystical as the widely popularized *Como Agua Por Chocolate* (*Like Water For Chocolate*)," he said.

Furthermore, Sosa feels that the Latino community is willing to spend the money to see its own actors and actresses in something positive versus movies that represent Latinos as violent people.

The Chicago Latino Cinema has built its reputation on relating to both Latino and non-Latino audiences. Latinos that have collaborated with the Latino Cinema for the Annual Latino Film Festival are such talents as the Cuban songstress Celia Cruz and Mexican actor Ignacio López Tarso. Both were honorees for Lifetime Achievement Awards in 1999.

How to get to Hubbard Street

A day in the life of dancer Mary Nesvadba

by PAULA DAVIS

Friday, Dec. 17, 1999

8:15 a.m. *Rise 'n shine*

The snow falling outside makes it hard for Texas native Mary Nesvadba to get out of bed in her warm Printer's Row apartment.

9 a.m. *Come 'n get it*

Nothing like good ol' oatmeal to stick to the ribs. She's going to need a hearty breakfast—she has seven hours of rehearsal ahead....

9:30 a.m. *Ready, set, go*

And they're off. Mary and her boyfriend, Joey Pantaleon, another Hubbard Street dancer, dash into their white Ford Escort to the Hubbard facility at 1147 N. Jackson. The glass entrance is cold and clammy. The fog on the glass makes it hard to see inside.

10 a.m. *Play it again*

The pianist is playing, while Mary is warming up on the barres in studio A. One wall is a mirror, from top to bottom, while the other three walls are white. Mary is at the barre along the back wall of the room. "Real easy, just breathe," says instructor Mark Gomez, in his white T-shirt, black shorts and white socks.

10:30 a.m. *Put your right foot in*

Mary is lying face-up on the ground. She crosses her left leg over the right. Her palms are face down and her elbows stay to the ground. She repeats the pattern with her right. Painful? Not for Mary. She's been dancing since she was 3 years old, which makes for a total of 24 years.

11:10 a.m. *Thunder*

A small roar fills the room as the 18 dancers' feet land in unison from a



Flexible hours: Mary Nesvadba warms up at the barre.

jump, sounding like thunder. "You want to be in the air on one," Gomez says. Mary is used to being in the air. For Hubbard Street's latest performance, *The Lottery*, she is being flipped.

11:30 a.m. *Gimme a break*

Mary and the other dancers leave the studio to go to the restrooms and to get drinks of water. Ballet class is done.

11:50 a.m. *Back at work*

Now the dancers begin to practice *The Lottery*, which they will perform for their home audience. "We usually perform once a year at the Schubert,

Ravinia or Navy Pier, putting on two shows in Chicago," she says. "We love to perform in the city."

1 p.m. *I believe I can fly*

While dancer Kendra Moore is working on her solo number *I Shouldn't Care at All*, Mary practices being flipped by Joey and Greg. Along the left side barre are scattered backpacks, shoes, socks, Crystal Geyser and sweat-shirts. Draped across the barre is a sweaty, honeycomb-yellow, three-button shirt.

1:30 p.m. *The crossover*

Kendra completes her piece by dragging the chair she's using as a prop, across the floor. While she is doing this, Mary is on the floor also, marching in place, for the beginning of the next number.

2:30 p.m. *Lunch munch*

Mary and the company go downstairs to the basement to eat in their kitchen. Mary eats a piece of leftover green pepper and black olive pizza, a banana, and a SoBe Wisdom. "In the company, people are healthy," she says.

3:30 p.m. *Getting down to business*

The company has a meeting with the executive director.

4:30 p.m. *No time to rest*

The company continues to practice *The Lottery*, ironing out all the kinks.

5:30 p.m. *End of the road*

Mary, the dancer, stops. Mary, the civilian, begins. She puts on her other shoes, as she tackles the outside world. "If you have a plan, a passion for something, try it," she says. **E**

House of style

Three Arts Club has provided housing for Chicago's female artists for more than 75 years

by PAULA DAVIS

As you walk up the steps to enter the Three Arts Club, you may hear loud, dramatic pounding of piano keys and see a resident gliding around the ballroom like Ginger Rogers. Or you may hear opera singing coming from the second-story room right above the front desk. The wonderful aroma of cooked chicken may call you from the kitchen, tucked around the corner.

Welcome to the Three Arts Club, located at 1300 N. Dearborn. Built in 1912 by architects Holabird and Roche, the Club was to provide a home for young women engaged in the practice or study of the arts in Chicago. This 5,000-square-foot building was inspired by a Tuscan villa. The Byzantine-style entrance contains mosaics representing the three arts of music, drama and painting.

The Three Arts Club has an art studio, an art gallery, ballroom, tea room, library and courtyard where residents can eat, read, write or draw. Today the original "three arts" have expanded to include

architecture, design, photography, filmmaking, dance and interior design. Residents of the Three Arts Club come from the United States and abroad,

"The advantage of living here is that we are in the heart of the city. You get a strong sense of community and besides, they have good brownies."

Jessica Owens Schlegel

including Germany, India, Japan, Korea and Canada. They pursue careers in the arts, participate in special programs, study with private instructors or attend schools.

"Right now we have about 88 permanent residents," Nancy Moore, executive director, said. "It's always around 100 residents at a time."

Moore, who used to be associate director of resident life at Northwestern

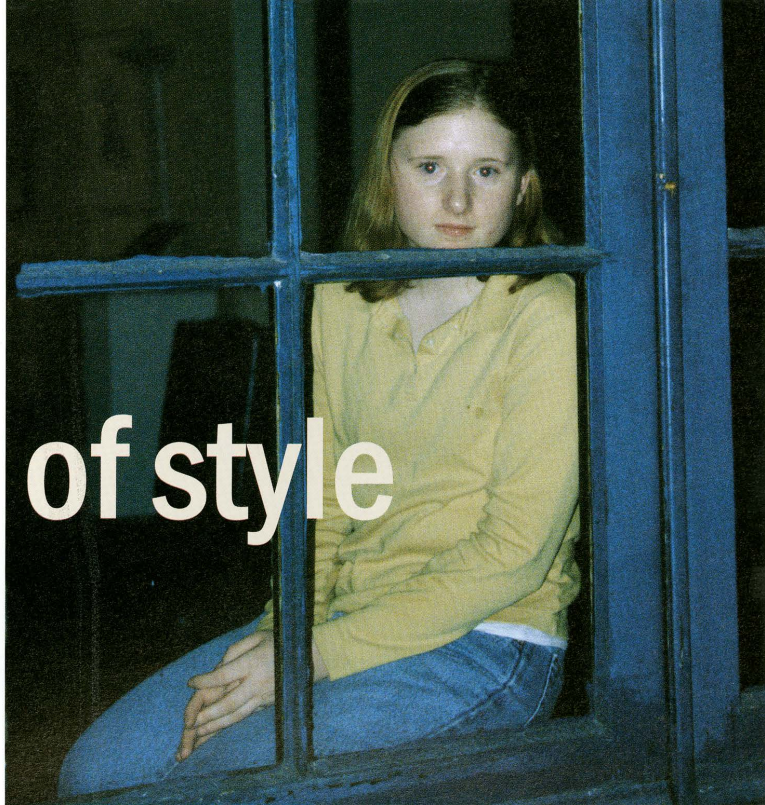
Jessica Owens Schlegel, 17, a senior at the Chicago Academy for the Arts, is the youngest resident at the Three Arts Club.

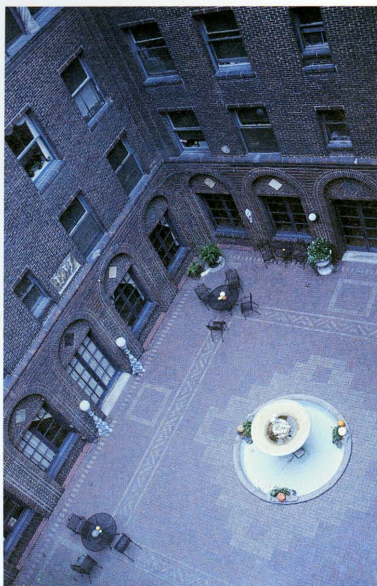
University, says that business is booming.

"Primarily, when I first arrived, everyone was 18 and 19 years old. There were a few graduate students, a few practicing artists. Now it's diverse, with age and experience. Before it was viewed as a fancy or old dormitory for art students; now it's viewed as more of an arts organization," she said.

Since Moore has come on board, programs such as the Three Arts Club Gallery, Landmark Jazz, the NonSalon Series and the Mentoring Project have come into full swing.

Landmark Jazz, now in its ninth season, engages Chicago's most innovative and exciting jazz artists in intimate, live performances. The NonSalon Series highlights contemporary women artists—their work, lives and times. The Mentoring Project provides young women in the arts with access to the experience, wisdom, resources and inspi-





The courtyard is used by residents to eat, read, write and draw.

ration of working women artists.

There are more plans ahead. "We would like to build more studio space, a darkroom for photographers, general life-work environment and re-wire the building to tap into technology," Moore said.

Being the executive director and having a broader mission base, Moore's energy is not as focused as much on residents as it is on fundraising and meeting potential donors. But as she sees it, the group of women residing at the Three Arts Club are "diverse, energetic and talented artists who connect with one another."

For example, Vonetta Berry, Megan Gulick and Mari Rice are the three resident assistants. They organize Sunday-night movies, a Halloween party, a trade and swap (exchanging old clothes) and a show-your-work night.

"Living here I get to meet new and interesting people that don't go to Columbia College," said Columbia student Kelly Tucker. "If I were staying at

the Columbia dorms, I'd only be around Columbia students."

"It's so wonderful [living here]," Carolyn Mosher, a painting student at the School of the Art Institute, said. "Your meals are prepared so you don't have to shop, cook or clean up. You can concentrate on your art."

The Three Arts Club's neighborhood also is convenient for artists. "You can live on two blocks," Mosher said. "Walgreens, Jewel, Osco, Kinkos, Starbucks, Mailboxes, etc., Gap and Third Coast are all nearby. I can get food any time during the night."

Jessica Owens Schlegel is a senior in high school, the Chicago Academy for the Arts, located at 1010 W. Chicago, and is the youngest resident at the Three Arts Club. Her mother moved to Boston a couple of years ago, and her father lives in Highland Park.

Schlegel didn't want to leave her school or her pursuit of acting.

"The advantage of living here is that we are in the heart of the city. You get a strong sense of community, and besides, they have good brownies," she said.

Schlegel and other residents also spoke of some flaws of living at the Three Arts Club. The Three Arts Club rents out its facilities for weddings, which happens to be the No. 1 complaint of the residents. Besides the noise factor, residents who enter the building during a wedding party and during resident dinner hours have to go down the stairs to the basement and around through the kitchen, instead of walking across the ballroom to eat.

The residents also complained that neither alcohol nor men are allowed above the first floor after 11 p.m.

"My brother can't even stay the night," Jiwon Chun, an Art Institute sculptor student, said. "I don't know if it's because there is

not enough trust, or if it's the proper amount of security."

One thing that all the women agreed upon is that one of the best things about the three arts club is the friends they have made along the way.

"The friends I have made here will be my friends for life," Tucker said.

Anyone interested in permanent residency at the Three Arts Club must complete an application including a financial-stability statement, a self-assessment, two letters of recommendation and a health record.

Rates for permanent residents vary depending on the size of room. A small single, with a public bath is \$575 a month; a larger single with a public bath is \$630; a single with a semiprivate bath is \$675; and a double with a semiprivate bath is \$535. All permanent room rates include breakfast and dinner, seven days a week.

For more information, visit the Web site www.threearts.org or contact Christy Munch, housing director at (312) 944-6250. **E**

The remains of the day: left-over paint in the studio.



Talking trash

Treasure hunting in Chicago's alleys

by KAREN E. ARMJO

One of Chicago's greatest offerings lies in perusing its alleys for broken bits of history, scraps of someone else's memories, or neglected and unloved furniture hidden under layers of thick paint.

Chicago's alleys house garbage in ubiquitous black dumpsters that line the way as Linden trees do European landscapes. Complete with rats and scores of stained mattresses, this niche of the city could have been where the phrase "one man's trash is another man's treasure" was coined.

For example, an abused antique wooden file cabinet is finally hauled out of someone's basement after years of neglect and tossed into the back street. Often it is a race against the city workers and the neighbors to get to it first. Mirrors, dressers, garden tools and unique zinc table tops become disposable as space in our homes runs out.

Today, on this unseasonably warm November day, there are two lawn chairs resting against a dumpster. Summer is over and their usefulness has come to an end—yet they are completely intact with only a little rust coating the bottom of

Writer Karen Armijo knows that one man's junk is another woman's treasure.



the legs. At \$15 each in hardware stores, these vehicles of leisure are a steal here.

Working-class neighborhoods contain the best junk. In their constant striving for upward mobility, the residents throw out anything old to make way for the new and improved. The neighborhoods fall prey to the advertisements that

latter stages of construction. Most likely these storages have been cleaned out long ago and have nothing left to offer hungry beds of pick-up trucks.

Shopping isn't the only enticing thing about the alleys. Few people in Chicago have front yards worthy of mentioning. Travel around to the back-

sive wood that these days would never be used to skirt the back of a piece of furniture.

"Somebody must not have wanted to deal with it when they moved," said Revesz. His roommate Tim has a new household rule that Revesz cannot bring anything big home anymore.

Chicago's alleys house garbage in ubiquitous black dumpsters that line the way as Linden trees do European landscapes.

target them. Dirty oak shelving gives way to cheap Euro cabinets, and marble sinks are replaced with something more contemporary from the generic do-it-yourselfer Mecca, Home Depot.

Beware of rows upon rows of garages with siding and buildings that are in the

Free-for-all: Armijo loads her finds into her truck.

yards and a whole new world opens up. Flower gardens with dahlias the size of dinner plates hover over graying and worn-out picket fences while clumps of tiny wild poppies crowd themselves among the brush. A loquacious cardinal chases its mate through the sparse trees and provides better music than that which is piped through retail spaces in a mall. The dull murmur of the truck's six-cylinder engine only competes with barking dogs.

The end of the month is an especially good time to go junking. People move and either don't have space in the moving van or lack space in the new place for a complete set of Time-Life cookbooks or a piano.

Todd Revesz, an avid alley hunter, is the golden boy when it comes to big finds in the alley. He actually found a piano hanging out beside garbage cans. It was an old piano, but it was in perfect condition. The ivory keys have a handsome patina from years of age, and the back was held together by a solid piece of birds-eye maple, a beautiful and expen-

Their tiny apartment is so crammed with antique furniture that there is hardly any room left to move.

When searching for booty, it is best to carry a small parcel of tools: screwdrivers to unfasten brass doorknobs and ornate Victorian hinges from discarded paneled doors; a chisel; and a can of WD40 lubricant. A pair of pliers might come in handy, too. If salvaging old molding, take a precaution against rusty nails by wearing gloves. As pristine as a "find" might be, remember, it was in the garbage. Also, it is important to watch for broken glass and shards of metal lurking on the pavement, because a flat tire would ruin a good spelunking trip.

Chicagoans are lucky. In Manhattan, the garbage is placed on the front sidewalk because there are no alleys. Seattle's alleys are so clean and garbage dumping laws so strict, you would be hard pressed to find even a dead house plant to bring back to life.

Junkers are not the only ones fascinated by Chicago alleys. Bob Thall, chair of Columbia College's photography department, had a recent show of his work that portrayed gigantic portraits of Chicago's industrial alleys in the Loop. In a culture that is incredibly concerned with the facade, presentation and outward appearance, people like Thall and Revesz can relish in their uniqueness without the posturing crowds destroying their serenity. Chicago's alleys are open to all but only available to those willing to see them as more than garbage dumps. **E**





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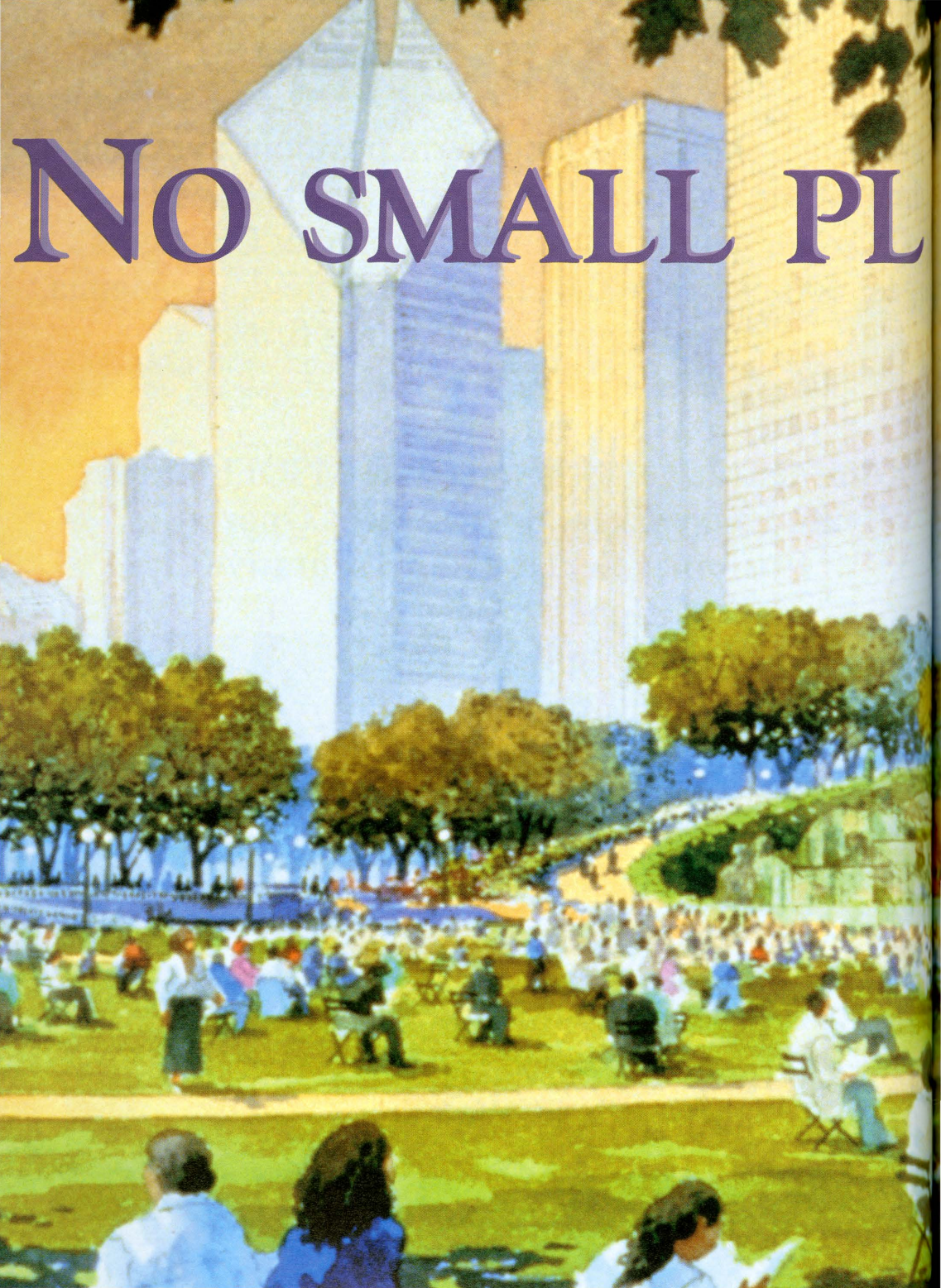
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NO SMALL PL





AN

Chicago's Millennium Park fuses innovation and tradition

by Kimberly A. Brehm

Daniel Burnham, a visionary architect and pioneer of city planning at the turn of the century, once said, "Make no small plans," and Chicago is certainly heeding his advice.

The city is currently building the lakefront Millennium Park, a \$230 million endeavor that will serve as a bridge between Chicago's architectural past and future. The project will complete an urban lakefront nearly a century in the planning.

The park will span 24.6 acres, with such amenities as a music pavilion, a music and dance theater, an ice rink, a commuter bicycle center and much more. All of the park's features will be free.

"No other city in the United States is celebrating the millennium with such a major public benefit," said Edward Uhler, Millennium Park project director. "It will expand way beyond what Burnham envisioned. It will be a park that can be enjoyed year-round, as it will be a complete development of prime recreation in the heart of the city. Burnham's essential idea of creating an organized, free public space along the lakefront is being done with our new plan."

Millennium Park will be located on the northwest corner of Grant Park, directly north of the Art Institute. It will be bounded by Michigan Avenue, Columbus Drive, Randolph Street and Monroe Street, covering more than 1 million square feet.

The original idea for a lakefront park with free access for the citizens of Chicago began with Burnham. He believed that Chicago's lakefront should remain open, with amenities for all citizens, both wealthy and poor, to enjoy. In

1909 Burnham drew magnificent plans for Grant Park, which was land given to the city by Montgomery Ward. Burnham envisioned a downtown Chicago that would mirror the style of central Paris, with a vast civic center and a wide Michigan Avenue. He drew a large neoclassical museum within a lakefront park that would be linked to a fair site by a chain of Venetian-style canals and lagoons.

While Burnham did not live long enough to see his original plans come to fruition, most of those involved in the project believe he would be proud to see how today's plan grew out of his own.

Millennium Park will open in the summer of 2001—the year, some argue, that is the true millennium. Approximately 40 years ago the Metropolitan Planning Council proposed an idea to implement Burnham's 1909 plan, but there wasn't much interest in increasing park space until Richard M. Daley was elected Chicago's mayor in 1989. Through Daley's efforts, others have become involved in the financing of the park including many corporations and wealthy private donors. Equally important, parking revenues will pay a significant portion of the project's cost.

"The mayor has really been great," said Uhler. "If it wasn't for him, this wouldn't be happening. He's very civic-minded and wanted a public space for everyone to use. Grant Park is the best park in the city because everyone can use it and everyone feels comfortable there." Millennium Park will be a spectacular tribute to Burnham and an infinite gift to the people of Chicago, according to Uhler.

The park will be built on top of a newly constructed 2,400-car parking garage, whose revenues will finance con-

struction bonds issued by the city. Indeed, providing ample parking has been a major concern in the planning of the park. In addition to the new parking garage, the Grant Park North underground garage can hold 1,095 cars, and 3,800 more can be parked in the Monroe Street underground garage. Finding convenient parking shouldn't be a problem for the visitors of Millennium Park, according to Uhlir.

Railroad tracks currently at street level will be decked over with ramps and hidden from sight. Those involved in the project believe this will greatly improve the look of this section of Grant Park, but not everyone agrees.

"The current plans are trying to pay lip service to Burnham too much," said Professor Charles Waldheim, director of graduate studies in the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "It's missing the point of making a 21st century park. The trench [where the railroad tracks are located] in Grant Park should remain

open and untouched instead of being decked over. The parking garage improvement had to happen, but the train riders aren't being considered. The experience of the train rider will change because it won't be open. Instead, it will be buried in the basement. They shouldn't try to hide the railroad tracks."

World-famous architect Frank O. Gehry, working with the primary park design firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill of Chicago, has designed the Millennium Park Music Pavilion. The existing James C. Petrillo Band Shell is being torn down to make way for a state-of-the-art outdoor amphitheater.

The 600-by-300 foot music pavilion will feature a band shell that will be able to accommodate 4,000 audience members, along with a huge lawn area that will hold another 7,000. Above the seating areas and the lawn will be steel "curls of ribbons" from which 50 speakers will hang, according to Lee Bey, architectural critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

"The steel trellis resembles a high-tech fish net strung 60 feet overhead and supported by a perimeter of columns out of sightlines," said Bey.

The steel trellis is also being hung high so that movies and other images can be projected onto them.

"The contrast between Gehry's

design and the style of Grant Park play well off each other," said Adrian Smith, design partner at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. "It blends classicism and modern with classical qualities. It almost feels medieval in certain ways."

Gehry's design has been criticized because of the possibility of strong winds off the lakefront bouncing off the steel trellis and interfering with the acoustics. But, according to Bey, Gehry has assured the city that the wind won't be any noisier than when it whistles through the elm tress currently found there, and that the sound system will operate in the same manner as the surround-sound found in indoor theaters.

"Gehry's scheme fits in with Burnham's original plan," said Uhlir. "He is the next century's great architect, and his design is a work of art within a historic preservation."

Bey agrees that Gehry has designed a plan that pays tribute to Burnham. "Gehry's design is wonderful in itself, but its importance is that, for too long, Chicago had a sense that to pay homage to an architect of the past, you had to repeat the designs," said Bey. "This doesn't add to Chicago's legacy. The true way to pay homage is to know it's not about the look, but about using the materials and designs of today in order to anticipate the future, which Gehry's design does. He doesn't look back to the past but upholds the smart nature of Chicago's [past] architecture and speaks to the future."

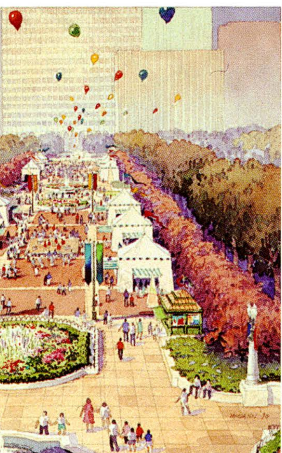
While the Millennium Music Pavilion is a major feature of the park, it is far from the only one. There will be a music and dance theater, designed by the architectural firm of Hammond Beby Rupert Ainge Inc.

The music and dance theater will be the Loop's only mid-size theater, holding 1,500 audience members. The facility will be used by 12 nonprofit performing arts groups: Ballet Chicago, Chicago Opera Theater, Chicago Sinfonietta, Dance Center of Columbia College, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Joffrey Ballet of Chicago, Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum, Muntu Dance



Top: A classical Peristyle, an original feature of Grant Park, which was torn down in 1953, will be reconstructed in accord with Burnham's wish to give the city a Parisian look.

Right: Millennium Park will span 24.6 acres, fulfilling Daniel Burnham's vision for Chicago's lakefront nearly a century later.



Theatre, Music of the Baroque, Old Town School of Folk Music and Performing Arts Chicago.

"The new theater will enhance their exposure to a new audience base," said Joyce Moffett, general manager of the Chicago Music and Dance Theatre. "Currently, the groups have no home base but now will, and audiences will know where to go [to see them perform]."

Thomas Beeby, the main architect working on the project, has designed a theater that will seat 600 audience members on an orchestra level, 500 on a parter (slanted seating), and 400 on a balcony.

Another unique feature of the park will be a reconstructed Peristyle. In 1953 the original Peristyle, a semicircle of classical columns, was torn down to make way for the Grant Park North garage.

"Edward Bennett, a partner of Burnham, originally designed the columns," said Uhlir. "There was no preservation movement back in the 1950s when it was decided to tear them down. We have found [Bennett's] original drawings and are using them in the new plan."

The restoration of the Peristyle fits with Burnham's original idea of giving a Parisian look to the city of Chicago.

"Burnham believed to civilize a city it must look European," said Bey. "That was his intention for this park."

Landscaping also will be an integral part of Millennium Park. There have been three major landscape architects hired to design different portions of the project. Carol JH Yetken Landscape Architect, of Oak Park, has been chosen to design the area called the Millennium Terrace, which is located over the railroad tracks.

Millennium Park not only is an exciting project, but also an expensive one. The projected cost for the park is about \$230 million, of which \$170 million will be provided by the city itself. A private group called the Millennium Park Project Committee is raising the other \$60 million. John H. Bryan, chairman and CEO of Sara Lee Corp., is the chairman of the committee, and Donna LaPietra, executive

producer of Kurtis Productions, is the co-chair.

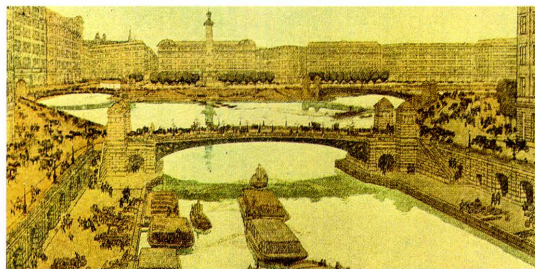
"Mayor Daley called me in to visit in March of 1998, to tell me of his plans to have a wonderful new park developed in Grant Park as the city's millennium gift to the people of Chicago," said Bryan. "He explained that the monies raised from the parking garages underneath the park would enable the city to fund the basic structures of the park, and asked if I might form a private-sector group to raise funds and provide direction to the enhancements to the park's art, architecture, gardens and other amenities."

To date, according to Bryan, the committee has raised \$49 million toward its financial goal and is confident that it will exceed its goal of \$60 million by the time the park opens. Some of Chicago's most prominent businesses and wealthiest families have already contributed to the cost of the

park and a number of gift requests are still outstanding.

In addition to the \$15 million donation from the Pritzker family (owners of Hyatt Hotels) for the Frank Gehry Music Pavilion, the committee has collected \$5 million from the McCormick Tribune Foundation for the new ice-skating rink; \$5 million from the Crown family to build a fountain; \$5 million from the Ryan family to develop a garden; and \$3 million from Ameritech to fund the park's plaza and sculpture, which are being designed by the world-renowned sculptor Anish Kapoor.

Kapoor's sculpture will be 70 feet long, 30 feet wide and 30 feet high. "It will be made of polished stainless steel so that people can walk around it and see their reflections," said Smith. "There will be a 10- to 12-foot-high passageway so you can walk through it, and in the middle of the sculpture there will be a space that goes up to 10 to 15 feet high,



Daniel Burnham's plan of 1909 for Chicago's lakefront

HISTORIC GRANT PARK

Grant Park, where one can view Chicago's scenic lakefront, is a Chicago Park District Landmark and has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1804, 20 acres of Grant Park were part of the Federal Reserve of Ft. Dearborn, a military post that provided protection for fur traders and early settlers in Illinois. In 1837, parts of Grant Park began to be set aside for public use and, in 1909, Daniel Burnham designed the Chicago Plan, which designated Grant Park to become the civic center of Chicago. The original designers of Grant Park chose a French approach for the park and based their plans on the French Gardens at Versailles.

Millennium Park will attempt to recapture the classical elements that were originally intended for this section of Grant Park, while adding some innovative features to the design. The combination makes Millennium Park both a tribute to the past and a bridge to the future.

as a vortex or negative space, for a unique experience."

Many \$1 million gifts also have been received from various Chicago civic leaders, families, foundations and corporations. Their names will be commemorated on the Peristyle that is being recreated on the Randolph Street corner of the park.

"We have invited [Chicagoans] to make donations of time, talent or dollars," said LaPietra. "We wanted to go beyond what the city's ability to raise funds could do. We wanted a space that was as globally beautiful as possible and state-of-the-art with incredible surroundings."

With all of the money and artistic talent going into Millennium Park, it promises to be a major new tourist attraction for Chicago. City officials are hoping that the park will bring in more conventions and businesses to Chicago. The fact that Frank Gehry is involved should entice more tourists to view his music pavilion, much as his architecture has added to tourism in Bilbao, Spain.

"The park will enhance Chicago as a tourist destination," said Uhlir. "Because it will provide more opportunities to use Grant Park year-round, there will be a reason to come here all year long."

"I am certain, especially with Gehry involved, it will become an attraction in and of itself," said LaPietra. "You can sit and watch the play of light on steel curls and sit under the skyline of Chicago, which can create any mood or feeling you wish. It will be like a fireworks show every night."

Because of the wide range of music and dance that will be offered at Millennium Park, it should appeal to a variety of people with different tastes. "There will be so many different types of features to enjoy at the park," said LaPietra. "Grant Park will be utilized to its fullest extent and will be made [to look] as beautiful as it can be."

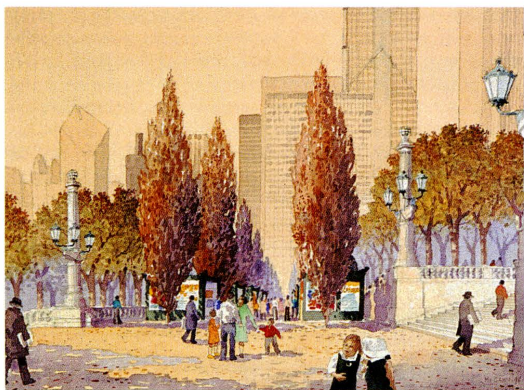
London has its Millennium Dome and Paris is building a commemorative tower of wood, but no other city in America or abroad is celebrating the millennium with such a huge endeavor. And "no other city

is doing a major civic project with so much meaning," said LaPietra. "It's not trendy or hokey. Instead, in a real sense, it's a gift to the future."

"It may be too soon to predict," said Byron. "But we anticipate it will be a huge draw for people from all over the globe. The Art Institute, on the park's south border, is already a remarkable attraction for tourists. The park's ameni-

much if he could view it."

Waldheim agrees that Millennium Park will be a continuation of Chicago's greatest treasure, which is the city's lakefront. "It will be a renewal of the social contract with the lakefront," said Waldheim. "It will open room for different kinds of work to be done at the lakefront, much as Burnham envisioned. People around the city will per-



Visitors to Millennium Park will be able to enjoy the park's theaters, gardens, recreational facilities and a view of the lakefront. Also, two new fountains are being designed. Both will be located near Michigan Avenue.

ties will complement the Art Institute beautifully, and will add to the drawing power of the new Randolph Street theater district as well."

It is unfortunate that Burnham will never see the ways in which his vision is being fulfilled. Some believe that without his original plans and ideas, Millennium Park would never have become a reality.

"Daniel Burnham's remarkable vision and plan of 1909 has been very much in our thinking as we have been developing this new park," said Byron. "It combines the classic Beaux-Arts elements of the 19th century with the stunning advances and accomplishments of the 20th century."

"You will recall that Daniel Burnham very much wanted a 'signature' of Chicago in the city's front yard, and he explored having something wonderful in the lake as the entryway to Grant Park and the city. That did not prove feasible, but now we are completing the park in a way that I believe would please him very

ceive a new openness to the lakefront and Gehry's design will invite them down, along with the integration of public transportation."

The current plans and ideas guiding the Millennium Park project reflect Burnham's vision for Chicago's lakefront in every aspect of its design. It was, perhaps, to the men and women who are finally making Burnham's plan a reality in the 21st century that he spoke these words nearly 100 years ago:

"Make no small plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our sons and grandsons are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty." **E**



chicago thrift: the designer challenge

articles by Amanda Serafin
photos by John Armentrout

No buzzers. No bells. No million-dollar prizes.

Just a pile of clothes and one request: take our thrift finds and create an outfit to die for. Up to the challenge? Chicago designers Orenthal White and Regan Wood were ready to wrack their brains and work fashion magic. Second-hand clothes never looked so good.

Five overfilled shopping bags and a few rules were all they had to go by. We wanted to get a good look at their original designs, so we let them use up to five pieces from their own collections with our thrift bargains. For two weeks, our thrift clothes were at their mercy.

Take a glance at what happened when their creative flair was matched with our dingy duds.

Out with the bargain shoppers

Tips on where to go and what to buy

Before we could give the clothes to White and Wood, we had to do some shopping. Overcast skies and a breeze greeted us as we hit the streets. My fashion bud Amy and I were ready for a thrift shopping extravaganza! Our mission: to find stylish clothes at a cheap price. We accepted the mission. We piled into my 1973 VW Bug named Mr. Bill. We were off to thrift.

As we entered the first thrift shop of the day, Amy and I discussed our master plan. We figured out a few guidelines for a rewarding thrift experience. Before heading out to your local thrift store, take a good look in your closet. Think about what you need and what you would like to purchase. Of course, there will always be a shirt or pair of pants you just have to have. Is there a plain shirt that resides in your closet screaming for a pair of funky pants from the '60s? Or a pair of bell bottoms you've held onto that would match perfectly with a polyester shirt if you could just find the right one?

Thrift items can add a bit of color and personality to your wardrobe. A little bit of planning goes a long way. Sometimes the selection becomes overwhelming, so try and pace yourself. Take the time to think what will better your closet.

Una Mae's Freak Boutique at 1422 N. Milwaukee has a runway entrance with funkyed-out mannequins decorated with bags and other accessories. Overflowing with re-invented clothes and classic threads, it offers a higher scale thrift. Small yet roomy, Una Mae's is a homey place. Warm and dimly lit, it's easy to get lost for hours. With some men's and women's fake fur jackets, broken-in jeans and casual retro shirts, it's easy to tell the clothes are handpicked by owners Nancy Becker and Karen Prendergast.

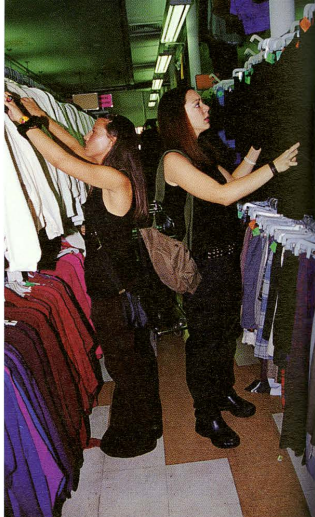
There also is an abundance of classic vintage dresses and skirts. A quick survey of prices found jackets from \$22 to \$38, pants from \$15 to \$20 and

dresses \$20 to \$40. Prices may seem steep for second-hand items, but the clothes are like new. Not only did we pick up a blue nylon ball skirt and white beaded purse for our *Echo* endeavor, but I couldn't pass up a pair of tiny flower earrings for myself.

While skimming the racks we thought of a few things to remember so you can get the best second-hand deal. Try to stick with items that grab you right away. Those are the ones you'll most likely wear. Take a quick look at the seams, buttons, zipper or clasp of the garment. If there is a tear or something is broken, how fixable is it? Are there any stains that you can't readily identify? How much more will you have to spend? How much time will you have to invest? If you were at a retail store, how much do you think the item would cost? Even though you are getting a deal, you still can get ripped off.

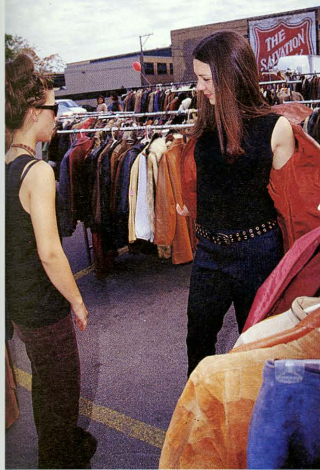
We walked down the street and stopped in the now defunct **Backseat Betty's**, formerly at 2053 W. North Ave. We rummaged through classic vintage in great shape with pretty reasonable prices. The owner, Tom Solyan, watched as we raced up and down the open aisles looking for the perfect item. Having such an assortment, we were able to put together full outfits instead of just picking up separate pieces. Two 1950s party dresses priced at \$35 and \$65 caught our eyes. Searching through endless shoes (\$12) and bags (\$21), we came up with a perfect evening ensemble. Dressing rooms were quite roomy and had no maximum numbers of items to bring in. So we stepped out in some of our picks as we inspected the racks for more.

Village Discount Outlet at 12914 Western Ave. is filled with clothes plus other odds and ends. From your grandmother's underwear to her kitchen appliances, this place has everything. Clothes on split-level racks line the narrow aisles. Housewares and toys



Top to bottom: Amanda and Amy dig through the racks at Village Discount Outlet, Salvation Army and, below, Amanda checks out the bargain truck at Una Mae's Freak Boutique.





Top to bottom: Amanda and Amy comb the parking lot at Salvation Army, try on jackets at US #1, while the rest of our thrift finds flap in the breeze after being brought home and cleaned.



along with electronics and jewelry are either in the back or off to the side. Maneuvering the cart can be quite a challenge, but if you want clothes at a great bargain, you will learn. With such a wide selection to choose from, you need to be willing to look. Most often the treasures are buried within items you would not be caught dead in.

Racks are divided up by sex, age, style and color. Even with all the clothes to choose from, it is easy to navigate by using their system. As we combed through each one, the PA system announced the special of the day. “Half off women’s dresses today!” What a deal! After overfilling the cart, we had to make some decisions. No dressing rooms make it harder to decide so we just tried our “maybe purchases” on over our clothes. This can be difficult, but just learn not to be modest. Try it on! Prices are super cheap here, so it’s easy to get a ton of stuff. Four overflowing shopping bags and \$35 later, we were tired, but ready to shop some more.

Whether or not the thrift store has a dressing room, it is always a good idea to make a conscious decision about what you will wear for the trip. Be sure to wear a shirt that can be easily pulled over your head or at least one with quick-fastening buttons. Pants should be simple to undo and be ones you wear often. This makes it easier to imagine how a shirt will look with items you have already. It is also smart to wear shoes that don’t have complicated closures and are comfortable. Another tip: Pull your hair into a simple style that if messed up, can be fixed fast.

Hopping into my car we drove to the **Salvation Army**, 1515 N. Milwaukee Ave. Similar to Village Discount, this place will take almost any kind of donation. Specials are run on a daily basis. We were lucky to be there when all winter jackets were 50 percent off. We began to sift through the leather, fur and plastic jackets, which were showcased in the parking lot. As we made our way inside we found a women’s gold and ivory dress we

just had to have. We barely made it up to the counter, when fatigue began to take over. It was time to go home and rest. As we reached the car, we caught a second wind and decided to shop some more. We had to hit one of the hottest thrift sections in Chicago.

We jumped onto the Kennedy heading straight to Wrigleyville. This is one of the best places to find a bunch of mod thrift stores all within a few blocks from each other. There also are a few interesting novelty shops and shoe stores mixed in. Clark, Belmont and Halsted are the key streets.

We went directly to **Strange Cargo** at 3448 N. Clark St. This place is always a sure thing for finding hot thrift clothes. Plus a semi-recent expansion has brought more shoes, accessories and other super cool collectable stuff. The staff is awesome about helping you find exactly what you need. Racks are divided up by style, size and gender with pretty reasonable prices. Along with recycled clothes, Strange Cargo has items tagged as “never-worn vintage.” Many of these items have the original tags from when they sat on the rack of your local Kmart. They are brand-new and deserve a higher price tag. A tip while at Strange Cargo: check the clearance rack in the back by the shoes. Many an awesome deal has been discovered there!

Next we made a quick stop on Belmont where it’s hard to miss **Hollywood Mirror**, the bottom floor to another huge thrift spot, **Ragstock**. Both have warehouse-like set-ups filled with affordable vintage items plus a few other goodies. (Tin lunch boxes along with rhinestone glasses are just the tip of this fashion iceberg). Hollywood Mirror has a basement filled with 1950s kitchen tables, chairs and other household accessories, while Ragstock sells up-to-the-minute styles found at your local mall (but at much better prices).

Thrift shopping is quite the experience. It takes time and dedication to walk away with the hottest styles. Have patience and look. Look. Look. **E**



Designs on the future

This page: shirt, Salvation Army (\$3); jacket, "Oren" (\$272); pants, "Oren" (\$115). *Opposite, clockwise from top:* gold purse, Salvation Army (\$3); tube top, Orenthal White (\$63); skirt, White (\$112); necklace, White (\$17); dress, White (\$80); sweater, Salvation Army (\$4.35); light blue shirt, Salvation Army (\$3); rain jacket, Village Discount (\$3); belt, Backseat Betty's (\$8); bikini top, White (\$58); capris, White (\$72); plaid pants, Ragstock (\$9); pleather jacket, Salvation Army (99 cents); hot pants, White (\$65); shirt, White (\$75); snake skin shirt, Backseat Betty's (\$16); pants, White (\$125); pleather jacket, Salvation Army (99 cents); shirt, White (\$75); hot pants, White (\$65).

White, making a name for himself in Chicago, plans to go global

Orenthal White, 31, may have designed clothes for Barbie dolls when he was a child on Chicago's South Side, but now he's moved up to the real thing.

The Apparel Industry Board chose him, along with seven other designers, to showcase their collections during their Fall II Market collective show-room, Discover Chicago. His label "Orenthal" received public notice, and he was awarded the first Rising Star Award from the Fashion Group Foundation of Chicago. He also received \$5,000 to help launch the line.

His "Orenthal" label specializes in women's ready-to-wear, haute couture, bridal and evening designs. "Oren," his men's line, mixes classic style with a creative flair. "Classic Textured Techno Separates" combines wool boucle and Techno leather.

Fabrics with texture, along with his ability to embellish with beads (a trick his mother taught him), is a trademark. "I really want the garment to pop out at you," he says. "I try to take unconventional fabrics and do more traditional garments so people can see they're not limited." Although innovative with fabric and texture, he sticks with one golden fashion rule: he wants women to look their absolute best in clothes that function in real life.

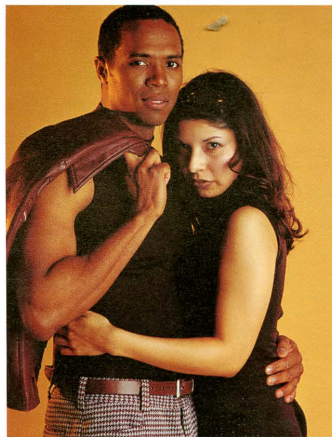
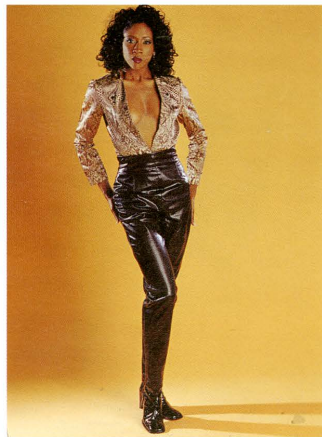
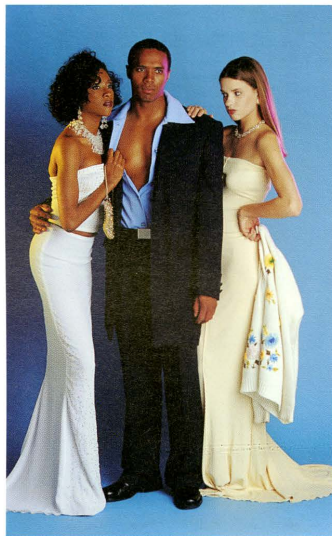
White produced his first professional show while still in high school in Chicago at Willibrord Catholic. He attended the Illinois Institute of Art, where he graduated with a fine-arts degree.

White recently finished his new "Chocolate Collection." Featured at "Rhythm in Fashions" at the DuSable Museum, this collection had the audience cheering as the models strutted down the runway. A bit edgier than his earlier designs, this collection is filled with snake skin, fake fur and knits. By audience applause, he was awarded the Millennium Award of Fashion by WGCJ host Krazy Howard McGee.

A stickler for detail, White is in control of every part of his business. He doesn't want to be another designer who dies out after a few seasons. "I would rather have more control of handling all the aspects. So when I do take it to the next level, I've covered all of the bases," White says.

He is making a name for himself in his hometown of Chicago, but also plans to expand. New York, London, Ohio and Detroit are just for starters. His designs seem to sell better out of state. "The Midwest is more traditional, and my stuff is more avant-garde," White says. But he does have successful accounts here. Marie's Boutique and Studio 910 in Lincoln Park both carry his line. Although trying to develop his business elsewhere, he's not ready to leave Chicago. "An instructor of mine told me that it's better to be a big fish in a small pond than a small fish in a big pond. I figure New York is a pretty big pond, and if I can make an impact in Chicago first, then I could establish credibility there."

If you want White's designs, contact him at orenthal69@hotmail.com. **E**



Wood's fashions add subtle flair to any closet



Classic beauty with a touch of funk. That is what this Chicago designer is running through her sewing machine. With her attitude and talent, Regan Wood, 25, is well on her way to the big fashion runways.

Wood's designs complement the figure with flattering cuts and stitching. The designs offer clean, sophisticated lines with a touch of style that is noticeable, but not outrageous. "If the only thing I can add to my clothes is wearability, I'd be happy. I don't want people to feel like they are wearing a costume," Wood says. "I like simple shapes, classic silhouettes, mixing fabrics in unexpected ways and adding little details."

Wood specializes in women's clothes and would also like to branch out into shoes and accessories. Menswear is not on her fashion agenda. "I don't feel I know enough about men's tastes and how they feel in clothes to feel like I could design for them. Many of the crazy women's clothes we see are designed by a man and I feel like I would end up doing the same thing for a man," Wood laughs.

Although interested in fashion, she attended the University of Kansas for a journalism degree. During her second year there she signed up for a sewing class at a local fabric store. This class revived her interest in fashion design. She decided to finish her degree and travel to Europe for the summer. In the fall of 1996, she enrolled in the International Academy of Merchandising and Design of Chicago.

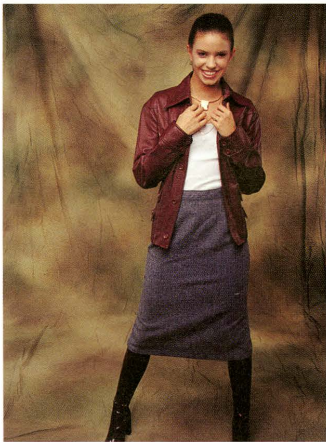
While at the Academy, she studied all aspects of the fashion world and worked for the Chicago-based fashion magazine *The A-List*. She used her journalism experience in the advertising and sales department and picked up fashion tips. After graduation, she combined her fashion degree and journalism degree, drew from her internship experience and opened her own company.

Wood's company is now in its second season with her spring 2000 designs. Traveling from Chicago to California and New York, she is actively promoting her business. Boutiques in San Francisco and Los Angeles carry her line. Phoebe 45 in Chicago's Bucktown picked up the label for the second year in a row.

While her clothes directly reflect her design philosophy, they also reflect the average American woman. Wood makes all of her clothes available in sizes 2 through 12. "I like to make my stuff available in bigger sizes because I'm bigger and know a lot of people who are. It's frustrating to go out shopping and have something only made up to a size 8," says Wood. (She especially hates this since the average size of a woman is 12.)

As Wood's company continues to grow, so does she. "It's a process. The more I go along, the better I hone my skills. I am learning how to finesse the collection and make it more marketable to buyers. There's a lot more to being a fashion designer than just whipping out shirts," says Wood.

If you want Wood's designs, contact her at reganwood@earthlink.net. **E**



Simple, feminine and a little bit rock 'n' roll



This page: slips, Village Discount (\$2 each).

Opposite, counterclockwise: jacket, Village Discount (90 cents); scarf/dress, Village Discount (90 cents); pleather jacket, Salvation Army (99 cents); skirt, Salvation Army (\$2.50); shirt, unknown; skirt, Una Mae's Freak Boutique (\$12); shirt, Regan Wood (\$120); necklace, Unique (\$2); dress, Salvation Army (\$4.65); jacket, Regan Wood (\$125); red jacket, US #1 (\$36); silver jacket, Village Discount (\$14).

by AMY AZZARITO

ACTION

lights camera

Behind the scenes of a Chicago film shoot

Last November, right after *Blair Witch* fever, I set out to discover for myself the realities of the supposedly glamour-ridden profession of filmmaking. No, I didn't pack my bags and take the Greyhound to L.A.; I only had to travel to the Northwest Side of Chicago for a little bit of movie magic. The movie? It was the independently filmed *Lana's Rain*. This was only the second week of shooting, and distributors were already showing interest in buying the film once production was finished. Everyone was crossing his fingers, hoping that this film would make it big.

Today's independent filmmakers have high hopes. After all, who would have thought more than \$100 million would have been made from a movie about three college students and a bunch of stick piles?

Lana's Rain had already gotten quite

a bit of media attention for such a small endeavor. It had been featured in *Pioneer Press*, *Screen* magazine, and in the book *Hollywood on Lake Michigan: 100 Years of Chicago and the Movies*.

One of the producers, Joel Goodman, told me to arrive for shooting between 10:30 and 11 a.m. They were filming at an unobtrusive gray stone building on the six-corner intersection of Elston, Diversey and Western. The neon sign, which read "Six Corners Grill," was completely invisible from the street, especially in the face of the glaring morning sun. There was a long row of trucks, trailers and cars that stretched about 100 feet down a side street. A reflector was set up across the street to bounce sunlight onto the actors' faces and supplement the bright lights inside the diner. Generators pumped electricity from

outside the diner to power the lights inside. About 50 feet away from the diner, in the middle of the trucks and trailers, a long folding table was saddled with coffee, Nutri-grain bars, doughnuts and bagels cut into halves—snacks for the stars, directors and extras.

When I arrived, Julia Orlenko (the actress who is playing the title role of Lana), a former Miss Ukraine, was outside with a friend while she waited for shooting to begin. This part of the movie was supposed to take place in the summer, and she had a hooded camel-colored coat wrapped tightly around the thin floral dress she'd wear for the shoot. She wore thin nude-colored nylon stockings that make legs look sleek on camera but don't provide much protection against Chicago's late-fall winds. The make-up crew had given her that "fresh off the boat" look—pale skin, eyes and lips bare-

Movies Filmed in Chicago: Home Alone * Wayne's World * Natural Born Killers * Never Been Kissed

photos by TASOS KATOPODIS

Director of photography Balitski Gennadi shoots a car-crash scene



ly made-up. But even without much make-up, the striking good looks that have given Orlenko a successful modeling career were completely apparent.

Goodman said everything that happens on the set of an independent movie is similar to what happens on the set of a studio production. There is really only one difference: money. Independent movies have to work with substantially smaller budgets. Which is why, instead of renting the diner and closing it for the shoot, Goodman somehow persuaded the owners into thinking that the diner could still do business while the film crew worked. So, people were trying to eat their breakfast while the crew bustled around.

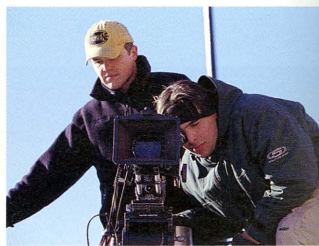
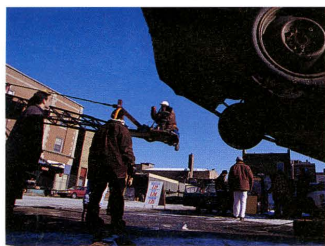
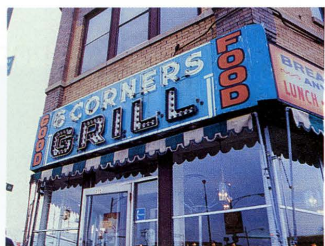
When director Michael Ojeda called for silence, the diner patrons obeyed. Some seemed interested in the film; others were just annoyed that their usual

breakfast spot had been overrun by people with clipboards, wearing headphones and yelling for either action or silence. Two of the grips (film jargon for gophers) were instructed to make a large sign proclaiming the diner open (although there was hardly room in the diner to squeeze in another body). They came back with a piece of cardboard with purple lettering that said, "WE ARE OPEN DURING FILMING," and placed it unobtrusively in the bottom of the dirty storefront window.

In between takes, a waitress gossiped in a corner with a customer, seemingly oblivious to the director's call for silence. She complained that the diner was crowded with non-paying crew members instead of customers. Her grouchy expression changed later, and she was positively beaming when the lunch orders for the crew were

given to the kitchen. The owner of the diner stood in back with the cook and helped him by throwing fries onto the plates of hot sandwiches and burgers. "Kind of like a Saturday or Sunday lunch, isn't it?" the owner said. You could almost see the dollar signs in her eyes as she calculated the amount of money she would be making off of the crew members' healthy appetites. The food came out fast, and the production assistants shuffled around dropping plates off to people seated in the booths and at the lunch counter, which wrapped around the center of the room.

After a quick lunch break of 30 minutes, the prop people set up the next scene by arranging suitcases on one of the booths. A cameraman studied numbered illustrations that would direct the camera placements and shots. The actors sat down at a booth and rehearsals



From left: The crew spent a day shooting at the 3 Corners Grill; a car is towed away after a crash scene; two crew members roll film

began. The actors ran through the scenes three or four times before the crew filmed them. Ojeda often relied on Frank Pinnock, the assistant director of the film, who flew in from L.A. to help work on the movie. Pinnock's bouncer physique and booming voice made him perfect for the job of directing the cast and crew. While he came across as overbearing, he knew just how to get people moving—a valuable asset on a movie set. Ojeda left the crowd control to Pinnock and concentrated on the story.

The artistic side of the movie was important to Ojeda because he wrote the script. He based it on several magazine articles he'd read about the rise of prostitution throughout Europe after the fall of communism.

The story focuses on Lana, a 19-year-old Bosnian woman. After she loses her family in the war, she locates her estranged older brother, Darko, whom she hasn't seen for six years. Darko is now a mobster and a wanted man. He decides to flee to America due to mob troubles. Lana is so desperate for family ties that she goes with him. Her new American life quickly turns sour as Darko manipulates her into prostitution.

Ojeda added some dramatic visual touches of his own, including Darko's (and yes, as the name suggests, his character is the "dark" one in the film) black eye patch that is a result of being beaten by mobsters. The eye patch made him look more like a kooky pirate than a menacing mobster.

At the diner, the actors worked on a scene where Lana and Darko have just arrived in America and Lana is having her first good meal in a long time. Although it was easy to tell that they were sharing a tender memory as they hummed a little tune and smiled fondly at each other, it was hard to make out

exactly what was happening, as the whole scene was shot in Croatian. (Subtitles will be added later.)

Ojeda is no stranger to directing action in a foreign language. He was the cinematographer for a Chinese soap opera that was shot in Chicago's Chinatown. He directed the actors by paying attention to the tone of voice and actions of the characters since he didn't understand the language. Despite the language barrier, he had no trouble coaching Nickolai Stoilov, a Bulgarian actor based in L.A., on how to act like he was hiding his evil side in *Lana's Rain*. "When the monster comes out, put him away," Ojeda said to Stoilov.

Before each scene was shot, polaroids were taken of the arrangement of food on the table. As they shot each scene from almost every plausible angle, over and over again, the food inevitably was moved. So between takes, one of the prop girls was always checking the arrangement of the steaming plate of pancakes, sides of hash browns and mugs of coffee on the table against the arrangement in the picture. That way, when the takes are edited together, the arrangement on the table will be consistent.

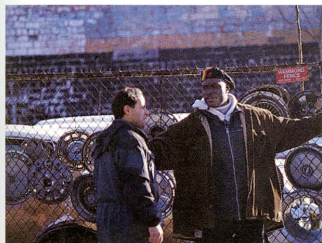
As the sky darkened, tension rose. The whole diner episode was supposed to take place in the morning, so shooting would have to stop when it grew dark. Orlenko confided to Ojeda that she wasn't happy with her facial expressions. She was supposed to look startled when Darko yelled at her for accidentally spilling coffee on his jacket. "You'll have one more chance to make it up," Ojeda told her. They were going to shoot three more close-ups of Orlenko. Ojeda ordered more lights to be moved outside to brighten the street. The scene was shot, but quickly Ojeda yelled "cut." He raced over to the booth from behind his

monitor and banged his hand down on the table, knocking over a glass. "Look at me, Julia. Look at me," he yelled so loud that almost everyone in the diner jumped. Orlenko was able to retain that startled look because they shot the scene only one more time. After more than eight hours of shooting what will be only one scene in the final film, Ojeda finally declared the diner scene finished.

After the equipment was packed, everyone piled into either a trailer, van or car and headed off to a new location to film a night scene. Apparently, a 40-hour work week has no meaning in the film industry. In fact, Goodman has been working on this project with Ojeda for three years. This was more than a job. It was a way of life. When Goodman talked about the film his eyes sparkled and his voice softened. This project was their baby, and they loved every single minute that they spent working on it.

Ojeda and Goodman have been making films together since they were 10 years old. They grew up together in Chicago's north suburbs and then went to the same college—Columbia College Chicago. Both graduated from the film department at Columbia. Goodman has since worked on music videos such as Michael Jackson's *Jam* (casting), The Ryme Poets' music video *Talking That Bull* (producer), and the Slick Boys' *Ain't It a Shame* and *Whatcha Gonna Do* (director/editor). Ojeda is an NBC cameraman who worked as a cinematographer on independent films such as *The Ride*, *Three Days*, *Language of Love* and *Eden*. His abilities have been recognized as far away as China, where he earned a nomination for best cinematography on a dramatic television series for *From the New World*.

Lana's Rain is a project that has been years in the making. It took Ojeda a year and a half and five drafts of the



From left: Ojeda and Pinnock after the crash scene mishap; soundman Ernest Saunders at work; on location at the Renaissance Hotel

script before he was satisfied with the result. Goodman had been looking for a project of his own; he was tired of waiting for other people to get the ball rolling. He joined the project after reading the screenplay, and the duo has been working together on it for three years prior to filming. The biggest obstacle was raising money. "Michael and I come from poor Jewish families, so we had to really hustle to get the money," said Goodman.

Before shooting in Chicago had even begun, a number of Hollywood movie companies expressed interest in the project. In *Hollywood on Lake Michigan: 100 Years of Chicago and the Movies*, author Arnie Bernstein draws attention to the duo's project as an example of the thriving Chicago film community, and calls Ojeda and Goodman "two rising members of this fresh new wave." Ojeda and Goodman are continuing the tradition of great Chicago filmmakers that started in 1896 with William Nicholas Selig's production of *The Tramp and the Dog*. More recent Chicago filmmakers such as George Tillman Jr. and Robert Teitel (*Love Jones* and *Soul Food*, respectively) have helped to pave the way for new filmmakers to sell to Hollywood what they shoot in Chicago.

Although expectations were high, *Lana's Rain* was still far from complete, and tensions began to mount as the shoot progressed. Every day meant more money, and for a film with a budget well under \$2 million, it's important to stay on track. It was now the fourth week of shooting, and the crew was setting up the equipment at the lavish Renaissance Hotel on Wacker Drive on a cold December evening. The marble foyer was lit with gleaming crystal chandeliers. On a tabletop in the center of the room rose a display of poinsettias, intended to give

the illusion of an elegant red Christmas tree. Hotels like this can cost a fortune to rent for just one night of shooting, but Goodman's fast talking and smooth



Julia Orlenko (above) stars as Lana

negotiating skills enabled him to finagle a free shoot.

The only catch was that they could shoot only between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.—not quite glamour hours. For the amount of money that the actors and crew got paid, it might not seem worth it to some. But these are people who love movies and will do it regardless of the money involved.

Amid some grumbling about hating snooty places, the crew began transforming the elegant hotel into a movie set. All of the equipment was placed on a sort of mat board to protect the marble. The whole ensemble was moved three times before finally being stashed in a corner.

The sounds that had first appeared warm and welcoming—the piano man in the bar, people laughing over drinks, the Christmas carol recording in the background—were just a nuisance to Ernest Saunders, soundman. Saunders moaned about noises I hadn't even heard, such as a low murmur from the vents. He care-

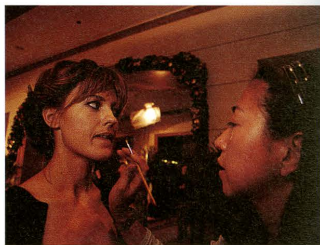
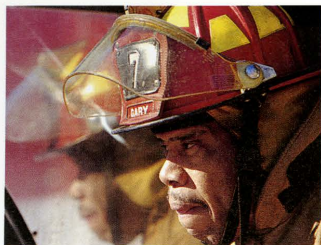
fully guarded his cart full of \$30,000 worth of sound equipment, all wireless. He spent 13 years in the army as an Airborne Ranger, all the while saving to buy his own stuff. He was flown out to work on *Lana's Rain* from L.A. during the second week of shooting after the first soundman quit.

Saunders has gleaned experience as a C-SPAN cameraman, so he was used to getting things right the first time, which translated into thousands of dollars in savings for the movie.

However, it took nearly eight hours at the hotel to complete what would be only a few minutes of on-screen time in the final cut. Ojeda first shot Orlenko getting out of a taxicab and walking into the hotel. For this shot, she was wearing a glamorous black-beaded dress with 1920s-style fringe. She looked completely different from the scenes at the diner. For these scenes, she is supposed to be working as a prostitute.

Apparently some hotel guests had volunteered to be extras. Their job was simple. All they had to do was walk behind the taxicab when it pulled up to the hotel. The first time, they walked too fast. The second time, they walked too slowly. The third time, they completely ignored Pinnock's direction and they didn't walk at all. Then the extras got it right, but the cabbie drove too slowly.

When Orlenko was finally able to go through the scene, it had to be repeated a few more times to shoot it from different angles—first a full-body shot of her getting out of the cab, then just her legs and finally a close-up on her face. A couple of hours later, they moved inside to shoot Orlenko coming in the door, and the whole process started all over. The crew shot seven or eight scenes before Ojeda called it a night. This was any-



From left: A fireman stands by for safety; the truth behind the illusion of spurting gasoline; a makeup artist perfects "Lana's" face.

thing but glamorous and exciting.

With so much work to do, the nightly break never seemed long enough. But of course, all good things must come to an end, and finally after five weeks of 12-hour working days, this was to be the last day of shooting. It was going to be one of the most elaborate scenes of the entire movie. The set was filled with onlookers who had braved the cold Midwest December to watch what they all hoped would be an exciting car crash. Goodman and Ojeda had decided to film this scene in Gary, Indiana—much less expensive than filming such a dangerous scene in Chicago. Not only was the set filled with family and friends of the crew, but also Gary locals—who suspiciously resembled gang members—turned out to watch the show.

The plan was for the driver of a lime green '50s-style car to race into an abandoned gas station. It would then broadcast one of the gas pumps, sending gas flying into the air. Water would be sprayed into the air to simulate a spewing gas line. Finally, the car would plow right into the middle of a black Trans-Am. Countless hours went into the preparation for this one scene. "It's a one-shot wonder," said Dave Whiteman, the camera operator. "It takes too much time to reset everything."

As the preparations for the scene continued, the set slowly became filled with firefighters, policemen and medics, all there merely as a safety measure. Pinnock directed one of the police cars to the middle of the set. The policeman stepped out of his car and handed Pinnock the loudspeaker. Pinnock introduced the stunt man to the cast and crew and motioned for him to describe the scene. A smallish, scraggly-looking man worked his way to the front of the crowd and proceeded to explain how he was

going to drive and hit first the pump, then the black car. Every other word was peppered with admonishments to stand back. The stunt man told everyone that after the crash the only one that should run up to the car is the medic. "There is about a half a gallon or more of fumes [in the car], which is like two sticks of dynamite," he said. "So stay back."

At Pinnock's call for action, the engine of the car roared. The car sped in front of the cameras. It only nicked the gas pump; water sprayed into the air as the driver aimed for the black car. He hit the black car—it hardly moved. Then the engine revved, tires squealed and the black car moved maybe another inch. Everyone was astonished at the extent of the failure. As soon as Pinnock yelled cut, Ojeda, ignoring the rule about the medic, rushed to the car. He kicked the car and began screaming obscenities at the stunt man, who sat hunched over with his face in his hands.

Ojeda screamed at the stunt man until he was pulled to the side by Pinnock. Only when Ojeda was gone did the medic slowly approach the car. It was obvious that nothing dangerous happened there. According to the crew, it was the worst possible way the crash could have happened. When the stunt man nicked the gas pump, he knocked off the front and exposed the fake filler inside. Because he didn't completely knock over the gas pump, it didn't make sense that the gas (which was really water) spurted in the air. They didn't get the shot, both cars were destroyed and thousands of dollars were wasted.

After Pinnock tried to calm Ojeda down, the production assistants got everyone to head over to lunch. Slowly members of the crew piled into cars, but all of the decision-making people, such as Ojeda, Pinnock and Goodman,

stayed behind. The crew headed to the basement of one of the churches in Gary, where there was a buffet of chicken from KFC. The chicken had been sitting for more than an hour, but everyone was too hungry to complain.

It was already 4 p.m. by the time lunch was over—too late to set up any new scenes. Goodman called a meeting and asked the crew if they would be available to come back Monday.

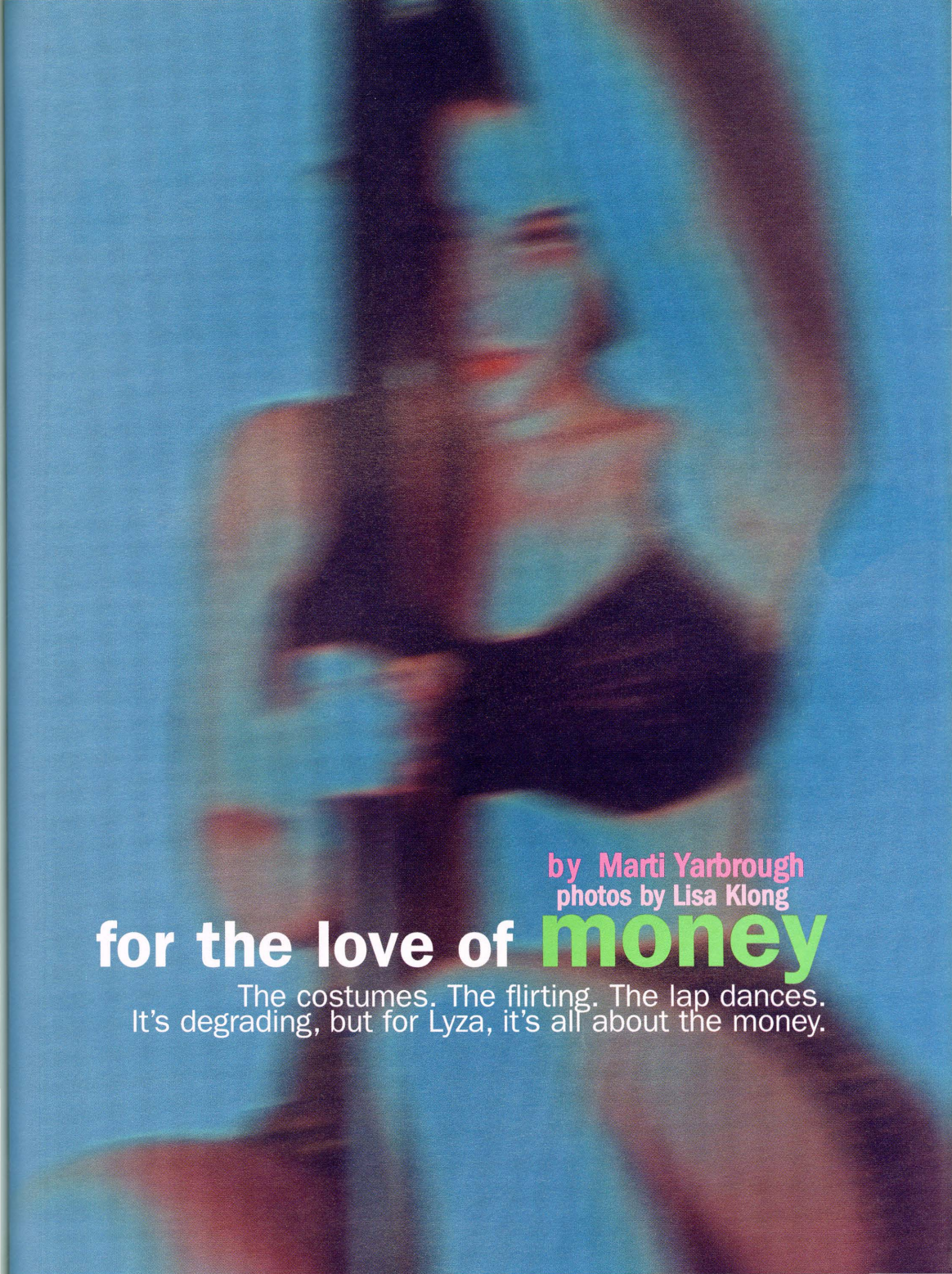
The cars were towed to a body shop, and they decided to try to re-shoot the scenes later. So much for the last day of shooting. The cars could be repaired. The next time Ojeda shot the scene, they hired a stunt coordination company. The company provided someone to coordinate the scene, as well as a driver for the car. Goodman was ecstatic about the result.

With shooting finished, Goodman and Ojeda will work on editing. Ojeda bought some editing equipment so they would be able to do most of the work themselves. They planned on finishing the editing by the end of March 2000. The next step will be getting it sold to a distributor.

In order to make *Lana's Rain*, Goodman and Ojeda had to hustle to raise money, work 12-hour days shooting, edit the movie, and finally negotiate the sale of the movie. That may be why it's called the movie *business*.

The next time you're sitting in a dark theater with that tub of buttery popcorn and the soda of your choice, take a moment to think about all the work that went into bringing you two hours of entertainment. Then, breathe a sigh of relief that you never have to think about it again.

If you're interested in checking on the progress on *Lana's Rain*, visit the film's Web site at www.reigningpictures.com. **E**



by Marti Yarbrough
photos by Lisa Klong

for the love of **money**

The costumes. The flirting. The lap dances.
It's degrading, but for Lyza, it's all about the money.

In Lyza Seda's bedroom, the walls are covered with posters of the teenage heartthrob Justin Timberlake of 'N Sync and Minnie Mouse. A furry, red Elmo doll lies on the floor next to the single bed that she and her 3-year-old daughter share. A groggy Lyza unknowingly kicks the toy across the room as she stumbles her way into the kitchen to prepare breakfast—a bowl of Cheerios.

In a few hours it will be time to get ready for work, which is at the Skybox in Harvey, Illinois. When people ask Lyza what she does for a living, she simply tells them the truth, "I'm a dancer." But what she fails to do is put the word "exotic" in front of the word "dancer."

Motivation is key in a job like this. The biggest motivation for this fair-skinned Puerto Rican-American woman is having the money to raise her daughter comfortably. Right now Lyza and her child share a small two-bedroom apartment with her cousin and her cousin's husband. "I'm only doing this until June," Lyza says. "By then we'll have enough money saved up to move to Florida." When asked why Florida, she says because it's warm and different from Chicago, the city in which she grew up.

"I had people tell me that I'd be hooked by June, because the money was too good. But I just want to be able to get a car, save, and have money for day care."

Lyza was working as a receptionist for Wright College prior to her dancing days at the Skybox. After hearing a commercial on the radio for the nightclub called Heavenly Bodies, Lyza and her friend (whose stage name is Lady) decided that it

couldn't hurt to try out. After all, Lyza heard that the money was good. She liked to dance, so why not give it a shot? Heavenly Bodies sent her to the Skybox. There she had to fill out an application and have her picture taken in her bra and panties. Ironically, no dancing was necessary for the interview. Five days later the manager of the club gave her a call back offering her a position.

Lyza, known at the Skybox as "Precious," has only been working in the business of exotic dancing for two months. At 5-feet 4-inches and 140 pounds, the 20-year-old is not old enough to drink liquor with the male customers she dances for.

Precious recalls being nervous on her first night. She had to report to the club at 7 p.m. to train. The first hour was spent in a backstage area that was identical to the one she

would be performing in following her training. She was shown how to move her body in ways that would interest the customers. She was shown how to use the silver, metal poll that stood in the center of the stage,

how to walk sexy, how to assume seductive and friendly facial expressions, how to place her arm around the customer and kiss him on the cheek and most important, how to open her garter and take the money.

If money is not being made while the dancers are performing on stage, they need to be trying to make money by getting the customers to enter the VIP room for a private dance. Customers are escorted back into a room separated from the main floor and seated on a long, black leather couch. Once here, the customer may receive a \$5 massage, a \$10 lap

The first night that Precious performed, she took home \$200. By her fifth week, she was earning \$400 to \$500 a night.



Most dancers change their appearance for anonymity. For our photos, a model portrayed an exotic dancer.

dance (fully dressed), a \$15 topless lap dance or a totally nude lap dance for \$20. Each "event" lasts through one song only. Even though the dancers are up-close and personal with the customers, the customers are not allowed to touch the girls. Large bouncers sit in the corners of the room to make sure things don't get out of control.

House rules are explained at this time. For example, all dancers must keep their crotch covered with their hands while performing. The dancers are not allowed to grind on a customer's groin when performing a lap dance, and a dancer is not allowed to place her nipple in a customer's mouth while performing.

Each girl has to make a house payment every night she performs. On the first day, the payment is only \$32 because they don't expect you to bring in a lot of money right away. This house payment, however, goes up gradually as the dancers develop their skills, topping off at \$160 a night. Any other money earned while working is the dancer's to keep.

Each girl is required to work a minimum of four days a week. Precious usually works Monday through Saturday, from 7 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. If you miss a day of work or show up late, a \$25 fine is issued.

When Precious made her way to the main stage for the first time, she felt fear take over her body. Dancing to the music was no problem. It was the stripping part that was difficult. Each performer usually dances to two or three songs and by the second song the girl should be topless. "I didn't want to take my top off," she recalls.

"After I finished dancing, I was pulled to the side by the manager and was told I would be fined \$25 if I did that again."

As her night went on Precious got her first lap dance client. "The VIP room was easier for me to deal with because all the other dancers back there were naked with me. This guy knew it was my first day because I was shaking. I couldn't even put my privates in his face. After that, it took about a week for me to warm up. It's a lot of work. You gotta act like you like it or at least fake it. You gotta have the talk, and you gotta have the walk. It really is a lot of work because it's all about hustling."

It's been more than two months now since Lyza has started dancing, and she's developed a routine. The Skybox closes each morning at 3, but the dancers that do the late shift are required to stay inside the club until 3:30 a.m. so that the bouncers can make sure the parking lot is empty. This is a safety precaution. A group of five girls at a time are driven to a secret parking lot where they've parked their cars. Since Precious doesn't have a car, she either hitches a ride home from one of the other girls or gets a ride from one of the bouncers. It's close to 5 a.m. by the time she crawls into bed with her little girl.

This is how the story begins and where the routine continues. By the time the clock strikes 1, it's time to begin preparing for work again. Lyza's cousin usually watches her little girl while she gets ready, and sometimes while she dances. Lyza's mother also pitches in.

While in the shower Lyza washes her long, copper penny-colored hair and shaves off all unwanted body hair. Once out of the shower, she either polishes or reapplies polish to her fingernails and toenails. The next step is to gather her things together. This includes her darker shades of make-up, her heated roller brush for her hair, her perfume (Secret Crush), high heels and her outfit for the evening.

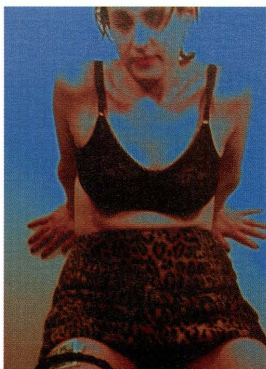
Lyza needs to leave her house by 3:45 in the afternoon so she can arrive at work by 5:30. If she takes the bus to work it could take her up to three hours, easy. For a while she and her friend Lady caught a cab together to the Skybox, but that was a bit too costly—\$60 one way. And the trip could take anywhere from one to two hours depending on the traffic. Until she gets a car, she's decided to take the Metra into Harvey. The commute is only one hour, and the price is right at \$18 round trip.

At the club, Lyza rushes to the dressing room, where she has to put on her costume, do her hair and make-up and be out on the floor no later than 6:55 p.m. At 7 p.m. roll call is taken. The DJ calls the names of all the girls performing that night one by one to the stage so that they can "show their face" to the customers. Once she exits the stage, Precious is on her feet in high heels working the room, hoping for the more lucrative, private dances

for the next eight hours.

The first night that Precious performed, she took home \$200. By her fifth week she was earning \$400 to \$500 a night. "So far my best night yet has been \$800. Sometimes I can make as much as \$2,000 a week," she says. Precious says that even though the money she's making now is good, she could probably make more. How? By getting breast implants for her 36Cs. Lyza has felt self-conscious about her breasts since she had her baby. "It's something I thought about, but I'm not really sure if I'll go through with it. The guys say they like natural, but they come running when the big breasts are on stage."

Even though Precious has adapted well to her new career, at times the job can be a bit rough. Her biggest complaint is that sometimes the men can be rude. "For the most part the things that the guys say to me don't bother me. I can pass them up. But sometimes I feel like walking out; then I just think about Florida. When I'm working the room I get frustrated when I try to get a guy to go to the VIP room and he tells me no. Because all you're thinking is 'I need money, I need money!' But you can't let them know that." **E**



Part of a dancer's training includes a demonstration on how to open her garter and take the money.

by Anne M. Dienethal

photos by Kelly Buffurine

For what it's worth

Volunteers keep Chicago's arts institutions alive



The Museum of Contemporary Art

Ellen O'Hare was not prepared for this. As a supervisor and tour guide at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio in Oak Park, O'Hare had seen dedication at its best. However, it wasn't until one particular Saturday, when she was faced with 500 guests eager to tour the home and only four tour guides, that she realized the monumental importance of teamwork.

"It really is logistically impossible to do what we did," O'Hare said. "But with the help of staff, and some creative scheduling, we ended up getting everyone through. It was a stressful afternoon, but everyone worked so hard that we didn't have to turn anyone away."

If this sounds like a rough day at work, you should know that O'Hare and the four valiant tour guides are volun-

teers at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home, giving tours and making the studio run smoothly for free.

Like many others who donate time to the arts in Chicago, O'Hare and her fellow volunteers help to sustain a treasured institution by providing the manpower to serve and educate patrons. In doing so, they touch innumerable lives and help keep Chicago's cultural arts alive and well.

The desire to volunteer has increased markedly in the United States since 1995. According to a recent article in *The Wall Street Journal*, the number of volunteers increased 14 percent to a total of 109 million people volunteering in the United States last year. Volunteering for the arts, however, rings in at a low 6.2 percent of people volun-

teering, according to a 1995 survey by the Independent Sector, a Washington, D.C., research group.

Yet volunteering for arts organizations, often overlooked in favor of volunteering for human services, plays a vital role in keeping those institutions fiscally sound. According to Brent Walters, director of information services at the Illinois Arts Alliance in Chicago, arts funding in Illinois is not as high as it should be. Illinois ranks only 28th in arts funding per capita, with about \$12.2 million in state appropriations.

Although this is a definite improvement over last year's ranking of 39th, at \$11 million, Walters and the Arts Alliance are pulling for a top-10 slot by fiscal year 2003. To achieve this goal,

appropriated funds must reach \$22.5 million. "We would really like to be higher," said Walters. "And we should be, if you consider the population in Chicago, and the fact that we house some of the nation's most important institutions."

The Arts Alliance currently has members all over the state involved in a grassroots effort to elevate arts funding in Illinois by writing letters to the governor and other policy makers. During the past three weeks alone, Walters said, the governor's office has received about 20 letters.

"We find it difficult to gauge exactly what kind of a response our letter-writing efforts are creating," said Walters. "But it's an example of the cockroach theory; for every one you see, there are usually hundreds behind it. Elected officials take notice of this kind of a response."

In the meantime, volunteers all over the city are picking up where government funding trails off. "Cultural institutions simply cannot function without these volunteers," said Janet Smith, deputy commissioner of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. "We use them to their full advantage. Even here at the Department of Cultural Affairs, there is no way we could get along without them, and I don't know how any institution could."

Indeed, at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio, volunteers are essential. "Volunteers restored the home and set up the organization, and it continues to be highly dependent on volunteers. Most places are," said O'Hare, 36, who works as a marketing manager at the Naperville Park District.

Michael Mitchell, volunteer coordinator at the Art Institute of Chicago, agrees, stating that this year alone, volunteers have contributed about 65,000 hours working in positions the institution

never could have afforded to staff. Mitchell leads approximately 620 volunteers per year. This includes public contact volunteers who staff the seven information areas, and behind-the-scenes volunteers who help with filing, answering phones and doing curatorial work.

Mitchell is careful to point out that although volunteers help to sustain the institute financially, they also bring with them a priceless sense of warmth and community. "They bring a certain energy and a love of the Art Institute to us," said Mitchell. "And quite honestly, we couldn't get that anywhere else."

Another way in which volunteers serve arts institutions is by spreading the word. Often, volunteers are recruited by word of mouth from other volunteers who enjoy what they do. At the same time, volunteers generate public interest in the institutions they are serving.

"It's not just a question of whether these institutions would be sustained without volunteers," said Dr. Dennis Rich, chairperson of the arts management department at Columbia College. "I think they're much more important

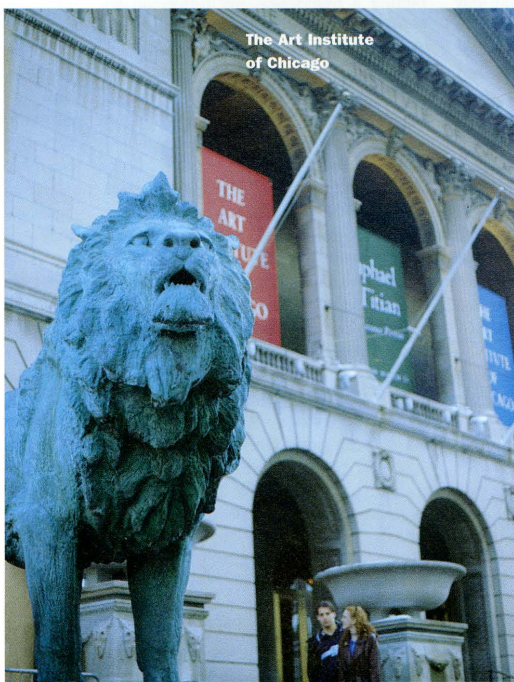
as extenders of the arts, and they're an important way of building community interest." Without volunteers, many services offered by the institutions simply would not be there.

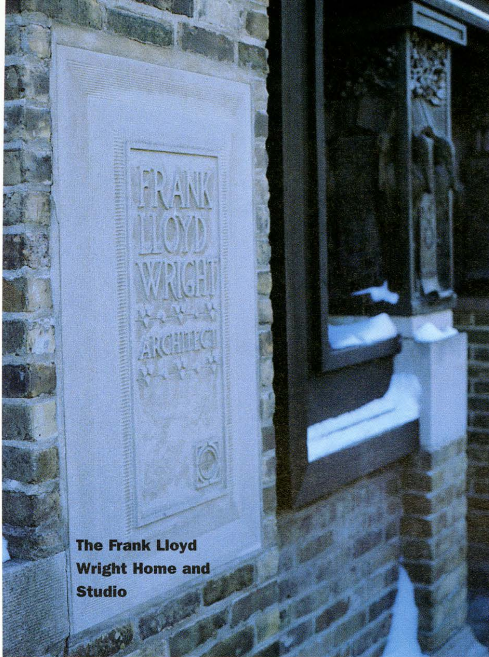
Of course, it is not the institutions alone that benefit from volunteering. Larry Simon, 46, has given tours at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio for nearly a year now and loves it. As an "interpreter," which is what the organization prefers to call tour guides, Simon's job is to interpret the space of the home. Interpreters are able to tailor their tours creatively, to give visitors the full benefit of their knowledge and interest in Frank Lloyd Wright. This allows guests in the home to get a different point of view with every tour.

Simon, a free-lance writer and narrator, decided to volunteer simply because he wanted to give something back to the community and because he had the time to do it. He does, however, admit that he came to volunteering with a bit of hesitancy. "By nature, I'm really not a joiner," said Simon. "In fact, I almost blew off the first session I was supposed to attend. But from the moment I walked in the door, I knew it was what I wanted to do."

Donating time as a volunteer requires more than walking in the door. Most institutions, depending on the type of volunteer position, have intense training programs to properly educate volunteers on the subject matter. The Chicago Architecture Foundation, for instance, puts docents through a rigorous 10-week training course held each fall. Trainees are required to practice giving tours with a sponsor and are then tested by a certifier. After doing the required 13 tours for the first year, the docents are then given a follow-up test.

Norma Green, Ph.D., a long-time docent at the CAF,





**The Frank Lloyd
Wright Home and
Studio**

says that it takes dedication and zeal to become a docent. Green, a professor of journalism at Columbia College, was required to take a graduate-level course in architecture when she began volunteering at the foundation 22 years ago. Although training has been made a bit less rigorous now, Green and her fellow volunteers-in-training attended all-day training sessions and read an average of two books per week. An oral and written exam followed, as well as a final paper. Trainees were then expected to create tour cards and go on two-hour walking tours during which docents would critique their mannerisms and delivery.

"I probably gave 200 hours worth of training that first year," said Green. "I distinctly remember one time when we were out wandering around the various buildings in the dead of winter. It was minus 20 wind chill, and it was so bad our pens froze. That was a pretty dedicated group of people."

Dedication is key. Julie Sponsler of the Arts and Business Council of Chicago is the program director for Business Volunteers for the Arts. The BVA program recruits, trains and places business professionals in pro bono consulting assignments with small to mid-size arts organizations. Projects range from marketing to

strategic financial planning.

The goal of the program is for business professionals to go in and share their expertise in vital management functions with staff members. In this way, the BVA plays a large role in building the arts community through volunteerism.

The program, according to Sponsler, consists of about 200 extremely dedicated people. Projects can involve

anything from a volunteer going in to help a theater create a marketing plan to boost their season, to helping an organization develop a budget. This type of service helps the small and mid-size organizations that can't afford to staff these positions. Sponsler cautioned that the BVA volunteers are not saviors, and that pulling a foundering institution on its feet requires the tremendous dedication of staff members, who are often volunteers themselves.

There have, however, been major success stories resulting from a BVA volunteer going into an organization in chaos and pulling it together. This service, said Sponsler, requires anywhere from a 10-hour consultation, to staying with an organization until it feels it is in a good place. This can take hundreds of volunteer hours. "They don't have to do it; they do it by choice," said Sponsler.

"It's actually quite heartening. I haven't, up to this point, had to recruit very forcefully. Some people have had arts in their background and have lost that connection in their adult life and are now trying to get back to their creativity." Sponsler's main goal is to spread the word about the BVA program so that more people can take advantage of what the organization has to offer.

Often, volunteers make up the very backbone of an arts organization, according to Rich. "In the American nonprofit arts structure, the policy makers are often volunteers who donate countless dollars and bring specific expertise into it."

Indeed, one such place is the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Dan Novak, volunteer coordinator at Lyric, works with a division of volunteers called the Lyric Opera Chapters. The Chapters is an organization of 2,500 volunteers divided into 21 different chapters by geography. The chapters are responsible for sponsoring events, raising funds and planning educational programs, lectures and talks on the season's repertoire. In addition, as an entire group, the Lyric Opera Chapters sponsors the annual Operathon, a lucrative event that takes 12 months to prepare. One level above the Chapters is the Chapters Executive Board, 40 volunteers who guide and govern the chapters' activities. According to Novak, these groups put in countless hours each year.

Julie Benson has been a member of the Chapter's Executive Board since 1987. After moving to Chicago, Benson began volunteering in an effort to meet new people. After becoming a member of the Lyric Opera Chapters and donating time to numerous events, Benson was nominated for a position on the Board. Now a senior adviser for the Near North chapter, and vice president of the entire Chapters Executive Board, Benson spends an ample amount of time each month planning fund-raisers and promotional events with fellow committee members.

"I think that sometimes it's a bit harder to raise money and get volunteers for the arts because people think there are other, more important causes," said Benson. However, Benson pointed out that both the Lyric Opera and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra are world renowned, and that it is essential to keep them flourishing. Benson also donates her time to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Women's Board, and to the School of the Art Institute's Film Center.

Donating countless hours, although appreciated, is not necessary to be a volunteer. Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas, director of volunteers at the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, described a new trend that has changed the face of volunteering. According to Wolf-Astrauskas, episodic, or short-term, volunteering has become increasingly popular with people who want to get involved but don't have a lot of time to spare. These volunteers pick and choose particular events to donate time to; if a volunteer wants to work only the Taste of Chicago, for example, his or her obligation is over once the event has ended.

In contrast, many volunteers choose to donate their time for extended periods. "There's always something for someone to do," said Wolf-Astrauskas. "It's really just a matter of matching up someone's time and talent with the needs of the department." The department attempts to match volunteers up with areas they're interested in, whether it's music, drama, children, or working with senior citizens. If a volunteer expresses an interest in a certain age group or activity, a good match can usually be found.

Courtney Eisen, volunteer coordinator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, sees a trend toward younger people volunteering for the arts. "I think that younger people want volunteering on their résumé, and they want to have a good time doing it," said Eisen. Eisen believes that the older generation of volunteers was more dedicated to wanting to make a difference, whereas younger volunteers want their volunteer experiences to be quick, social and fun.

The influx of young people volunteering has forced coordinators such as Eisen to think creatively when assigning volunteer positions to applicants. She tries to both satisfy the need for volunteers and meet the expectations of volunteers looking to meet people and have fun while they donate their time.

"It's worth the work," said Eisen. "Volunteers are so important to us. We have to be creative and open to new ideas. It's a different world now." Eisen also said she is aware of the huge financial downfall the museum would experience without volunteers. "We cannot afford to staff those positions, so we look to the community to help us provide education to the rest of the world."

Susannah Carradine, 29, does not think about the bottom line when she is volunteering. Carradine, who has donated her time to the Museum of Contemporary Art for two years, takes her role as a volunteer seriously. "When I work with kids in the educational program, I get completely wrapped up in it," said Carradine. "It's funny to watch the parents get involved. Sometimes they end up having more fun than the kids."

Carradine hopes that her volunteer work at the museum may give her an advantage if a permanent position opens up. With fierce competition for paid positions in the museum industry, Carradine has to fulfill her passion for museums by volunteering on a regular basis. Carradine also said that through MCA she has made many invaluable connections with people.

"I have only been in the city for two years, and I have found that spending time at the museum is definitely a great way to meet people and

learn. When I'm volunteering my time at the museum, I'm certainly not thinking about how much money I'm saving them.

"When you have an interest in something and you know that you can share that passion with others, it's wonderful. And on top of that, we're helping an organization thrive. It's a terrific feeling. That's why I keep coming back for more."

The savings are there, however. According to Independent Sector, in 1998, the worth of volunteers could be calculated at \$14.30 per hour. This figure is arrived at as the average hourly wage for nonagricultural workers, as published in the Economic Report of the President, then increased by 12 percent to estimate fringe benefits.

That means the Art Institute, with 65,000 volunteer hours through November 1999, saved \$929,500. Wolf-Astrauskas' volunteers saved the Department of Cultural Affairs \$200,200 through November 1999, with 14,000 volunteer hours. To put these figures in perspective, in 1995, the dollar value of volunteer hours in the entire United States reached \$201.5 billion for that year alone.

"It really is amazing when you look at the figures," said O'Hare. "When you have an interest in something and you know that you can share that passion with others, it's wonderful. And on top of that, we're helping an organization thrive. It's a terrific feeling. That's why I keep coming back for more."

The arts organizations continue to come back for more as well. "You simply have to rely on volunteers," said Wolf-Astrauskas. "I always refer to my volunteers as angels sent to me, and we must be very, very thankful for them." **E**

Volunteer opportunities in Chicago:

The Adler Planetarium: Call Gary Van Deurse at (312) 922-7827 or send an e-mail to volunteer@adliernet.org.

Chicago Waterworks Visitor Center/The Chicago Store: Call (312) 742-8811.

Fitzgibbons Historical Museum: Call Frank Stanley at (312) 747-6039.

Hyde Park Historical Society: Call (773) 493-1893.

Leather Archives and Museum: Call Joseph Bean at (773) 761-6200 or send an e-mail to archives@ix.netcom.com.

The New World Resource Center: Call Victor at (773) 227-4011.

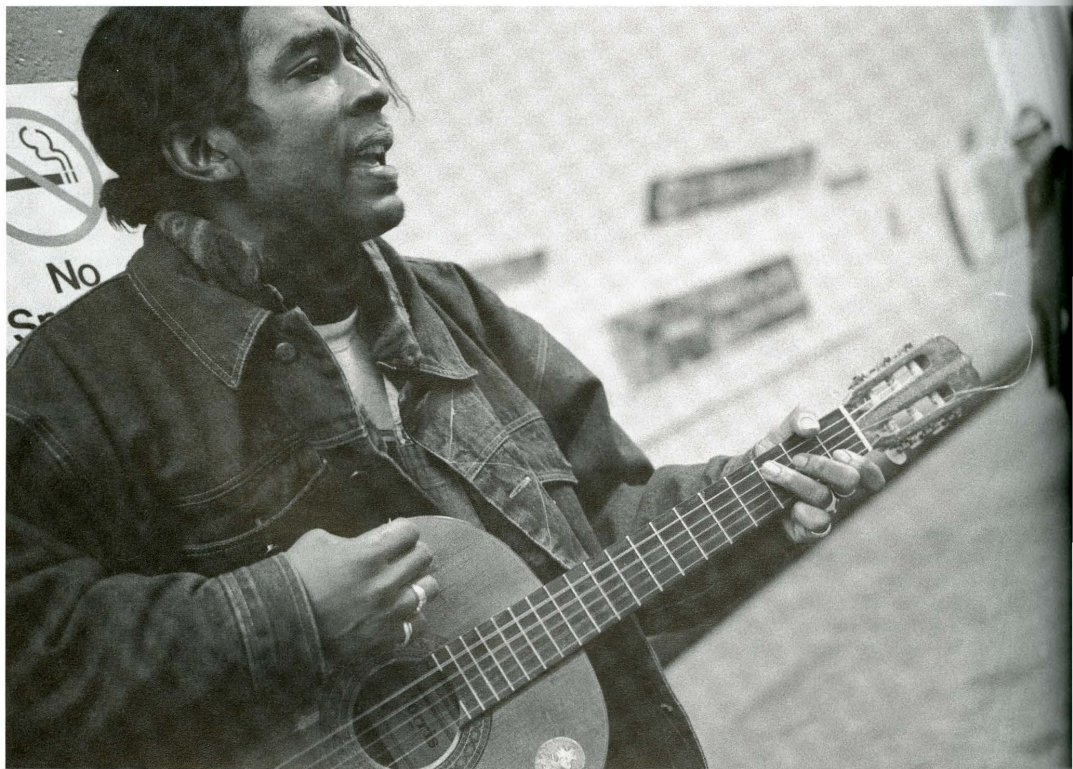
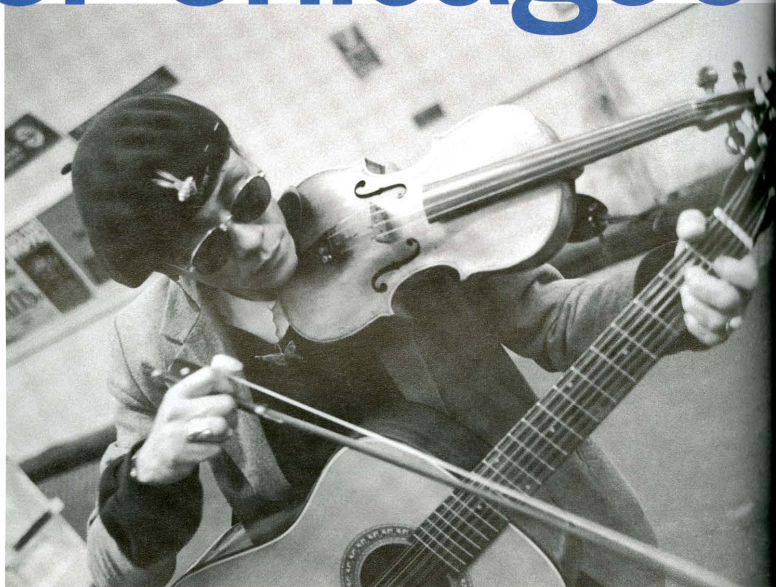
Under Chicago's

Some love them, some hate them. But no matter how you feel about Chicago's street musicians, one thing is clear: You can't ignore them.

For two years, documentary photographer Josh Rubinstein dedicated his time and energy to capturing the images of the city's underground street musicians. These performers would rather share their passion for music with the city's commuters than to take on the everyday nine-to-five routine.

These are the images of performers that he captured beneath the city streets.

Clockwise from right: Tampico, David White, Steve Hawkins and DuOp



streets



DEARBORN



W
Washington
Northwest to
O'Hare
station.

YAMAHA

PLAYING in the STREET

One musician's tale of the people
and the politics behind an endangered art

By Ashley Willard

Virus X at play: "This is what makes it worth it—meeting all these different people who really, really feel that music is important to them."

Virus X does it for the people. A 90-year-old woman stops daily to watch; a man from a senior citizens home comes by on his scooter and waves; kids bounce and dance: These are the people for whom Virus plays. After drumming on Chicago's streets for more than a decade, he says, "This is what makes it worth it—meeting all these different people who really, really feel that the music is important to them."

Chicago's street musicians have

faced an uphill battle in the past decade. Rules upon rules have been proposed and sometimes imposed—to the point where, in the words of one guitarist, in order to be a street musician in Chicago you have to know the law.

"Street performers have never been as welcome in this city as they have been in New Orleans' French Quarter, New York's subways, London's Covent Garden, Paris' Metro or Havana's old city center," wrote

Howard Reich, a *Chicago Tribune* arts critic, in the summer of 1999.

In fact, there are festivals all over the world for street musicians, a.k.a. buskers. From Italy to Singapore, Nova Scotia to New Zealand, buskers gather in celebration of the art of public performance.

Yet Chicago frowns on a practice that other cities celebrate. Chicago street musicians are now required to obtain permits from City Hall, costing \$60 per year

and involving almost as much paperwork as business permits. "It seems that the city officials—governmental Chicago—are the ones who dislike the street musicians," says Reich. As for the public, he says, "some citizens don't like the noise, but the majority are supportive."

"Having grown up in New York," says Jim DeRogatis, pop music critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, "I always thought that street musicians were a part of any diverse and thriving metropolitan culture. It seems this city is getting awfully restrictive on musicians in many ways that are unconscionable. If it ain't run by the city, then the city ain't too enthusiastic about it, and that sucks."

Virus X sports a goatee that shows a hint of gray. He's an articulate Maoist, an activist with passion for the causes he believes in, and his drums serve as a display for those causes. On one is a flyer for the annual rally to stop police brutality, and on another is a Free Mumia poster. He often wears Free Mumia T-shirts or buttons when he's playing.

Virus occasionally writes for the *Revolutionary Worker*, a national newspaper that covers issues such as police brutality and civil rights. On some days he doesn't play because he's covering a story about evictions at the Robert Taylor homes or incidences of police corruption.

"Whether it's the drumming, the poetry or the writing," he says, "I want to have an impact on how we live in the world."

Born in New Rochelle, New York, Virus began playing the drums at age seven. He has a habit of tapping, rapping, thumping and pounding on everything in sight, though he says he doesn't do it as much as he used to. He came to Chicago in the late '70s with a band called Articles of Faith. Since his punk-rock days, he's been known as Virus X, a term from comic books and science fiction that he describes as "the unknown element that fucks up the system." "That's how I was known in the band," he says, "and that's how I've been known to pretty much everybody but my mother ever since."

After Articles of Faith dissolved, Virus spent a few years as a bike messenger. That's when he encountered a man playing drums on State Street. Virus would watch him play and think about how much he would love to do that, to set up on the street and play for passers-by. The

more street musicians he saw, the more he wanted to try it, and when an injury halted his bike messenger duties, he seized the opportunity.

His first time was in the subway, around 1986. Gradually he migrated to the streets, and his spot of choice soon became the northwest corner of Wabash and Madison. Since then, he's played with countless other street musicians all over the Loop, but lately he can most often be found on the southwest corner of Randolph and State.

The 90-year-old woman who comes to see him almost every day gets on his case if he starts late. The man on the scooter stops to listen for a few minutes

"Whether it's the drumming, the poetry or the writing, I want to have an impact on how we live in the world."

Virus X

before continuing on his way. A *StreetWise* vendor selling papers nearby asked Virus to play at his wedding. "The people you meet," says Virus, "the people you encounter, that is one of the most important things I find in doing this."

The money he makes playing on the street is his primary income, though recently he's been involved with a couple of different bands that have landed gigs at places like the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Guild Complex and Hothouse. There are some months when he'll barely squeeze by, beginning a month with no money. But he gets joy out of entertaining people, and he continues to lug his drums downtown, one packed inside the other, via the El. The amount of time he spends on the street depends on the weather, and how he feels. "Sometimes there are days when I played so hard the day before that

I'll get a tendonitis or something and I've got to back off. 'Cause I'm not a teenager anymore. My body can't do that shit."

One day last year, an old woman stood about 10 feet away and just stared at Virus as he played at Randolph and State. He wondered what she was thinking, whether she enjoyed the music or not. After about 20 minutes, she walked over slowly and said, "God bless you. Stay healthy. I'm 83 years old, and listening to you play just makes me feel so happy." At that, she turned and walked away.

Ten minutes later, a cop came by and said that a doctor in a nearby office didn't like the music and that Virus had to stop playing and leave the corner. "So I'm thinking, this woman got some joy; this doctor's got clout. I gotta move."

That wasn't the first time Virus was told to relocate. Once, in the subway, a cop told him that he was blocking the way and had to move behind a newsstand. That was before 1991, when the CTA designated areas at four stations—out of more than 140—where musicians were allowed to perform. These four areas are at Washington/Dearborn, Jackson/Dearborn (both on the blue line), Washington/State and Jackson/State (both on the red line). In order to play in the subway, performers must obtain a permit, separate from the city's street musician permit, for \$10 a year. The actual enforcement of this policy, though, is as lukewarm as the musicians' enthusiasm for it.

The past few years have seen a number of restrictions placed on street musicians. In the summer of 1999, for the first time, city officials decided to restrict performers at festivals like the annual Taste of Chicago. No longer could they set up wherever they pleased; now, they had to wait in line to sign up for a spot, and they were allowed to play each spot for two hours. "It really cut down on who was able to do it," Virus says, as it made it difficult for someone like him with an instrument that takes some time to set up and break down.

"They just decided to slip in this ordinance, and regulate what didn't need to be regulated, and say there's a problem when there was no problem, and then drive them out. And the irony is that at the summer music fests, they drive music out of the park. Where's the

logic in that?"

Reich agrees. "Why is it okay to have 100,000 people in Grant Park for days on end, but not okay to have a street musician on a corner playing for a small crowd?"

Also in the summer of 1999, Ald. Burton Natarus of the 42nd ward proposed an ordinance that would drastically restrict street performers, cutting back on both the hours during which they'd be permitted to play and the volume levels they could play at. The proposed ordinance would also make it illegal for them to play between Thanksgiving and Christmas, a very lucrative time for street musicians.

Petitions circulated among street musicians to stop the ordinance from passing, including one that Virus put together himself. The Chicago Coalition of Street Musicians and Performers was

formed to discuss what could be done to stop the ordinance. Virus helps to publish their newsletter, *Street Songs*, which profiles the issues they face with the law and with their art.

When hearings for the ordinance began, Virus and other musicians flocked to City Hall for heated protests. They carried signs, and some spoke against the ordinance. To their relief, Natarus' proposed ordinance did not pass, but a watered-down version with less extreme restrictions did.

If Natarus had gotten his way, then many of Chicago's street musicians would no longer be able to make a living the only way they know how. "Whatever people do," says Virus, "they're doing because they're trying to survive. There are people who sit in a bank office and with the stroke of a pen take money out of a third-world country, starve a village,

put it in another third-world country and exploit someone for six cents an hour to make their shoes or their clothes or whatever they're making. That is the most offensive, obscene, murderous way of earning a living."

Generally, street musicians do not ask for money, but instead place a hat or an open instrument case nearby for people to throw change into. Even so, many people see them as bums or beggars. "A few may be homeless," says Reich, "but many are working musicians who have other jobs. In not another city is there such a stigma on being a street musician."

Virus has been treated like a bum by passers-by, but he takes it in stride. "People trip about panhandlers," he says. "You can say 'No.' Don't get upset because somebody asks you. Unless you just expect them to sit there and die." **E**

Underdog of Sidewalk Sound

Michael Jette always starts his street concerts with the theme from *Underdog*. The cartoon was his favorite as a boy. There's an Underdog sticker on the inside of his accordion case, which lays open beside him when he plays on the street. He often wears an Underdog hat, and he has a certain naivete that reflects the young boy inside his middle-age body.

In a loud, monotone voice reminiscent of Dustin Hoffman in the film *Rain Man* and a demeanor much the same, Jette recites his repertoire:

"I play the theme songs of *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *The Rifleman*, *Bonanza*, *The Addams Family*, *M*A*S*H*, *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *Bewitched*, *Gilligan's Island*, *Dennis the Menace*, *All in the Family*, *The Three Stooges*, the *Jeopardy!* game show theme song, plus I also play the theme song from *Howdy Doody*—even though I was too young to remember that!

"I also play the theme songs of *Bugs Bunny*, *The Flintstones*, *Sesame Street*, *Popeye the Sailor Man*, *Mighty Mouse*, *Spiderman*, *Hercules*, the theme song of *Commander McGrath*, *Go-Go Gophers*, *Tennessee Tuxedo*, *King Leonardo*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *The Hunter*, *Casper the Friendly Ghost*, *Woody Woodpecker*, some of Walt Disney's songs like 'Zip-A-Dee-Do-Da' and 'Hi-Ho' from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, the theme song from *Snow White*—'Some Day My Prince Will Come,' the theme song from *Alice in Wonderland*, the theme song from *Pimocchio*—'When You Wish Upon a Star,' the theme song from *The Mickey Mouse Club*...

Is that all?

Michael plays his accordion on Chicago's streets, where he's never had any run-ins with the police. In addition to the multitude of television and movie theme songs he learned by hearing over and over, he enjoys playing traditional Polish music. He loves Polish food, and on Sundays he plays his accordion at a Polish church.

But Michael isn't Polish. A little more than nine years ago, he moved to Chicago to start a new life after being laid off from his job in Rhode Island, his home state. "Most of my music that I play on my accordion is Polish and I've always thought about living in a city with an extremely heavy Polish population. I'd heard that Chicago has the second biggest in the world. And I just couldn't believe it at first until after I came here to Chicago just to visit on a two-week vacation in 1987."

He doesn't skip a beat when he speaks. When he plays on the streets, he stares ahead with a sort of demi-smile on his face, and as pedestrians drop change in his accordion case, his eyes shift momentarily to the money, as if he's counting it in his head. He follows the same schedule five days a week, playing a different location each day for about seven or eight hours. He makes a living this way, and he prefers the streets to the subway because he tends to make a bit more money outside.

Jette has a permit and follows the rules that come with it, and he's not the kind of man you'd expect to raise a stink if he was harassed. He's just doing what he needs to do to get by and enjoying it. "I seem to have had no choice in the matter but to do it, since I was having trouble finding myself work," he says. "At least I don't have no one to ask me why I'm late for work."

The power of the pen

How writing is helping at-risk students

by REY ESCOBAR

Among the structures that line the strip of North Avenue in the hub of Chicago's Wicker Park is a gray building built at the turn of the century. Its triangular roof slants down. There are four windows in front, each one fenced and tightly secured.

You really wouldn't notice this building if not for the mural spray painted on one side. A brown-skinned woman emerges from a forest of waterfalls and entangled vines. The vines wind through an alien world of fish and abstract shapes. Behind the woman, the sun rises with an eye in its center, its rays stretched out like tentacles. The woman is breaking shackles that have bound her, and is punching through a white wall. In her hand, she holds the Puerto Rican flag.

The building is home to the Association House, a settlement house that has helped immigrants since the turn of the century. The mural was painted through an alliance between volunteer artists, nonprofit organizations and students from the arts program of El Cuatro Ano, an alternative high school run by the Association House.

The mural reflects the Association House's belief that helping others is a fundamental component of individual responsibility and social change. This is demonstrated by a network of bilingual social services ranging from mental health to child welfare to rehabilitation programs. It also offers adult education, including computer training.

On any given day you'll find the after-school classrooms busy with volunteers providing mentorship, and day care filled with children. There is a gym that echoes of a century of community

women doing calisthenics and now aerobics and the noise of children running and laughing. You'll find a mini-montage of Chicago: theater and dance workshops, community service and job opportunities.

If you walk up the stairs, to the second floor you'll find the real work of the Association House. El Cuatro Ano, the alternative high school, that provides at-risk teens a second chance to earn a high school diploma, is in session every week day.

El Cuatro Ano consists of 50 students, mostly Hispanic, who are required to earn 16 credits to graduate. Classes range from the high school prerequisites such as math, English, history and science to elective courses in dance, theater, creative writing, gym and visual arts. With six full-time teachers, a principal and one outreach volunteer, the school is small by Chicago standards.

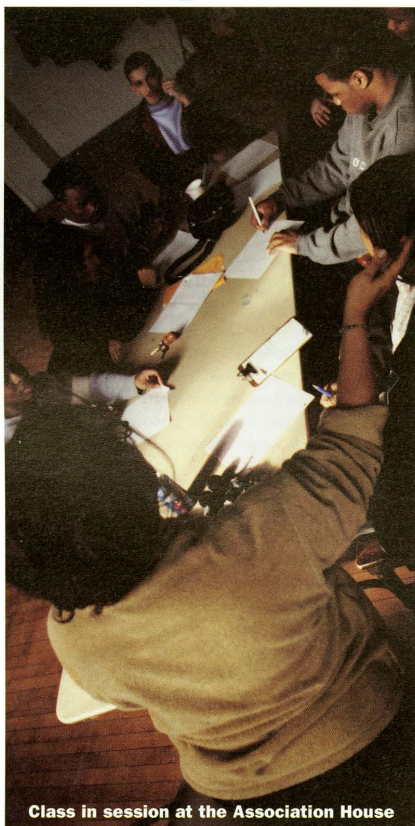
What El Cuatro Ano lacks for size, it makes up for with its sense of community and commitment. The school's small classes provide a learning environment that allow teachers to personalize their instructions.

Teachers here are more than just educators. They act as mentors, guiding the students with the care of a friend and the discipline of a parent. Students know that they are being given a second chance. As one student, who prefers to remain anonymous, says, "El Cuatro Ano provides a place where a person like me can have the old one-room school house where I don't have to adjust to a zillion different groupy

moods every day." A fellow student agrees. "It is a fresh start," he says, "and in a way a different scene."

The school has established partnerships with universities, museums and nonprofit organizations to provide a learning environment rich in art, culture and education.

"In a lot of ways, alternative programs succeed where traditional high schools fail," says Marlon Esguerra, 26, an outreach teacher hired by El Cuatro



Class in session at the Association House

Ano to teach a creative-writing class. Every Monday and Wednesday for two hours, Esguerra teaches 10 to 12 students. His focus is poetry; however, he does not merely teach his student the methods of how to write poetry. He tries to also get the students to express themselves as critical thinkers.

"It is about tossing away grammar and abandoning form or constraints," Esguerra says. "It's about seeing writing not as a chore, but a means of expression, just like dancing and singing."

Poetry, according to Esguerra, is a way to confront and redefine a culture trapped within each of his students. It is a way to survive in an inner-city community filled with gangs, drugs and violence. "I was able to formulate a schedule where they could take on writing in a different light, not as a book report or a test. I didn't want them to think about grades."

Esguerra emphasizes the importance of personal experience. He encourages his students to write about the things they know using imagination and creativity. He then challenges them to look at things in a new way.

"This whole quarter, I've stressed free-writing. Take a topic and just write on it. Write for five minutes, 10 minutes, or even sometimes up to 30 minutes.

"In the first free-write I had, I asked my students to talk about what made them angry. I told them to make a list and pick an item from the list. We then did a free-association exercise." Eventually, the exercise became poems, writings that opened up discussions on important subjects, such as racism and police brutality. The students elaborated on their ideas using personal experience and accounts they had read in books, newspapers or magazines. They discussed how police brutality had changed their outlook on justice for example. Finding their voices, they began to interpret their lives as something precious.

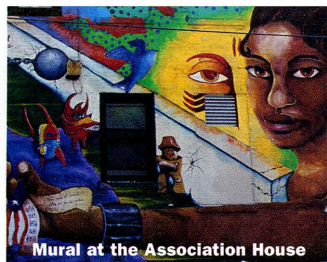
"What Marlon does is what we ask all our teachers to do," says Principal Maria Gamboa.

"I tell my kids there is no right or wrong answer, that they shouldn't feel pressured," Esguerra explains. "I tell

them that a part of thinking critically lies in understanding what your feelings are in the first place."

To the El Cuatro Ano's staff, promoting creativity is essential in a student's development into successful adulthood. It is a necessary tool that encourages students to become involved not just in the community, but also in themselves as artists and creative thinkers. It wasn't always easy.

"In the beginning, it was difficult



because the discipline was not there," says Gamboa. In order to reach students, she encourages her teaching staff to get to know each student's background, personality and education history.

"You have to first look at them as a person, as an individual and explore their weaknesses and strengths and as you find that person, they find you," she says. "They start to look at you as an individual, who you are and how you really care for them, and they start giving the respect you deserve. In my experience, the students want to please you; they want to be there."

Gamboa finds that without meaningful student-teacher interaction, many students become less willing to try. In public high schools, this lack of motivation becomes more prominent as kids face tremendous physical, emotional and intellectual pressures. For inner-city youths who live in poor neighborhoods and subsidized housing, the problem can become overwhelming. Often, these kids become vulnerable to violence, drugs and gangs.

To decrease the negative social presence, the staff at El Cuatro Ano formed a

curriculum that centers on graduating students with high school diplomas. The emphasis is not only to graduate students, but also to motivate them to beyond a high school education. At the student center, kids can inquire about colleges, vocational schools or job opportunities. They can use one of the two computers available for homework, for projects or for any other educational reason.

Teachers make themselves available at lunches, break-time and after school. They stay to tutor or to just talk to the students. The conversations are not just about school, but also about what's going on in their lives.

The dialogue and conversations between students and teachers have been transformed into poems in a recent literary journal. With help from the Young Chicago Authors—a nonprofit writing organization that assists urban youth, students from El Cuatro Ano were able to publish their work. It was completed in the spring of 1999 and fittingly titled *Raging on Insight*.

The journal was a project of Ana West, who worked with El Cuatro Ano as an English literature teacher. It featured a collection of poems and stories from students writing on topics that dealt with their neighborhoods, their family relationships and the inner-city culture as they confronted fears, hopes and dreams.

West, who now works with Voices of Neon, a nonprofit performance poetry and a creative-writing workshop, says that El Cuatro Ano was transformative for her as well. "They [the journals] restore a collective dignity," she says. At 23, she displays a sense of maturity and confidence that comes from years of involvement with the community.

"Part of my mission is to show that silence is not the answer," West says. In her former and current work, she has learned, at an age not much older than El Cuatro Ano students, a wisdom that doesn't come from textbooks.

"The kids keep me grounded in reality," West explains. "They have shown me that creativity is not just the basis for writing, but definitely an instrument for survival. It is a celebration of dignity." **E**

Sweet second home Chicago

Local authors talk about what inspires them

by IRASEMA SALINAS

Writers Luis Rodriguez, Evelina Galang and Maureen

Seaton all look to their ethnic heritages to introduce us to subjects they feel passionately about. Although none is a Chicago native, the city has become a second home to them. Chicago has infused their souls and writing, and become their spiritual home.

Luis J. Rodríguez

A few years back Luis J. Rodríguez walked into Benito Juárez High School in Pilsen. His objective was to teach “problem” students poetry. He compares the classroom atmosphere to a scene from a movie—everyone talking, paper balls flying, and students sleeping.

He began reading poetry and introducing the students to the art form that consumes his own life. The classroom teacher, who was working hard just to take attendance, ran out afterwards raving about the miracle Rodríguez had performed. Rodríguez had reached out to the students with poetry and they had responded.

Sadly, Rodríguez no longer conducts poetry workshops at Juárez. The change of principle and a new “zero tolerance policy” went into effect and many of the kids he used to work with were kicked out. There’s even a rumor that Rodríguez’s books have been removed from the library bookshelves.

His book, *Always Running: Living La Vida Loca* has been banned in the past due to the graphic nature in which he describes gang life and violence. The



Luis J. Rodríguez's favorite author is Pablo Neruda

“Chicago has been good to me.... I will always have a foot in Chicago.”

Luis J. Rodríguez

book was written as an attempt to discourage his own son from joining a gang.

Fortunately, Rodríguez is still able to visit other Chicago area schools, where he talks to students and conducts workshops. He believes this is his time to give back to the community. “Some of that stuff, I still carry with me,” Rodríguez says after admitting to having been involved in some of the most violent aspects of

gang life while he was a young man living in Los Angeles.

In addition to *Always Running*, Rodríguez has published several poetry collections and a few children’s books, including *Poems Across the Pavement* and *Her Name Is America*. He also founded Tia Chucha Press and the community group Youth For Survival.

Rodríguez grew up in East L.A. He worked factory jobs to keep out of trouble, although what he really wanted to do was write. Eventually he enrolled in night school and began writing for a newspaper and working at a radio station.

In 1985 he was invited to come work in Chicago as an editor for the *People’s Tribune*, a publication Rodríguez describes as political and revolutionary. He also freelanced for *The Nation* and *The Chicago Reporter* and was a news writer for WMAQ radio. “I was pretty busy,” Rodríguez says.

Currently he has three finished manuscripts and is looking for publishers. They include a book of essays, a short story collection, and a guide on how to deal with gangs and violence. He also anticipates beginning a multimedia production company.

“Chicago has been good to me... I will always have a foot in Chicago,” Rodríguez says.

Evelina Galang

The skeptic might raise an eyebrow at the following story. Filipino-American writer Evelina Galang, author of *Her Wild American Self*, recounts that at the end of an eight-week session with an all-female Asian-American writing



Evelina Galang on Maxine Hung Kingston:
"Amazing... gracious"

group, the aroma of fried garlic rice penetrated the room. There was no logical explanation since there was no kitchen nearby. Most businesses are closed on Sunday nights in downtown Chicago, and the group was meeting at the school of the Art Institute. Galang and the group of students felt that they had accomplished something. They had invoked their roots and their ancestors had responded.

The writing group was part of Galang's Dalaga project. Two issues gave birth to the Dalaga project. The first was the kidnapping and raping of women throughout Southeast Asia by Japanese soldiers during WWII. Second was the high rate of teen suicide among Filipino-American girls.

Wanting to shed some light on this little known historical fact and make a change in statistics, Galang became involved in the community. She works with Filipino students and refers to them affectionately when she speaks about the Dalaga project. The program included a trip to the Philippines. Interaction between her students and the "comfort" women (WWII rape survivors also known as Lolas) took place. It was an opportunity for Galang and

"Writing helps me remember what's important."

Evelina Galang

her students to learn more about their heritage and culture.

She is also working on a screenplay with Outer Loop Limited, a film company in Chicago. The film is expected to be a coming-of-age story and will touch on both the subjects that gave birth to the Dalaga project.

Her *Wild American Self*, is a collection of short stories that draws upon the Filipino-American experience and the exploration of identity, culture and ethnicity. "Writing," she says, "helps me remember what's important."

Galang, a first generation Filipino-American, grew up in Milwaukee, but moved to Chicago in 1986 and has come and gone from the city ever since. Currently she is teaching creative writing at Iowa State. However Galang says, "I will always think of Chicago as my home."

Maureen Seaton

Maureen Seaton begins her poetry workshop classes each semester at Columbia College Chicago by dividing the class into groups according to astrological elements.

"Fire signs are almost always the first to use obscenity," Seaton says. According to Seaton, each group writes with a defining characteristic true to the rules of astrology. She also finds that dividing students to write as a group helps students collaborate, build community and ease the pressure of writing.

Seaton is the author of several poetry collections, which include *Furious Cooking* and *Fear Of Subways*.

"[Chicago is] where my career has happened as a poet."

Maureen Seaton

Her next book, *Little Ice Age*, is due out in June 2000.

She arrived in Chicago eight years ago and was struck by the racial segregation and the religious influence on the city. However, Chicago seduced her. Now she considers herself a Chicago poet and permanent resident. "It's where my career has happened as a poet."

"Justice issues," and subjects that make her angry inspire Seaton's writing. Gentrification disturbs her and she says that if urban renewal results in a Starbucks near her home in Lincoln Square she will feel obligated to move.

Although writing has always been a part of her life she only took it seriously after her 10-year marriage ended. She went on to get her MFA at Vermont College and taught at the School of the Art Institute before coming to Columbia College.

These days Seaton lacks time to visit many poetry venues but she says, "I think the Green Mill is great." She can occasionally be found there enjoying the poetry of others. **E**



Maureen Seaton was influenced
by Ntozake Shange.

fiction Cowboy Cadillac

by WHITNEY JONES

My grandfather used to tell me there were only two things I needed in a man. He should drive a cowboy Cadillac and have that faded circle worn into his back pocket from his tobacco tin. The cowboy Cadillac is, of course, a pickup truck, and that circle is unmistakable and is found on most of the men's back-sides in Paris, Texas. I would say to my grandfather, "But Poppa, everyone here fits that description. How can I tell the good ones from the bad?" He would just laugh and say, "Well, honey, no man can be bad if he got hisself a good truck and that tobacco circle."

As I sit in the Sonic drive-in, I realize that I had never been here during all my visits to Paris. Poppa would always offer to drive me down to the Sonic to find myself a man. I would laugh and decline because I knew I was better than everyone in this town. It is late Friday night, and I need food badly. All the locals are hanging out at the drive-in this evening. I laugh at this way of life, but I find myself at Salvation Army stores buying jeans that already have that circle faded in for me by some tobacco-chewing redneck.

I watch the trucks, Jeeps and cars circle the lot, wildly honking at each other. I look around and see the girls with permed hair and frosty eyeshadow and matching lipstick. They lean casually against their love interest, then squeal in mock aversion when their beaus attempt to kiss them or squeeze them tighter. "Noooooo!" I hear one girl say when her fella tried to pull her on his lap, "Stop it, Chet! I mean it, no!"

I roll my eyes and notice a guy standing by a truck looking at me.

I suppose it's Eddie's truck, as that is what the airbrushed license plate tells



me. Maybe that is Eddie himself standing at the driver's side with his arms casually flung over the rolled-down window. He notices me looking at him and I quickly look away. Yet, I keep watching him. He catches me one too many times and starts to head my way.

He appears confident as he walks toward my car, but seems embarrassed to approach me directly. He is dressed in dirty jeans, construction boots and a tank shirt. You can tell he made this shirt himself because he has hacked off the poor sweatshirt's arms with scissors. His face is shadowed by his longish, light-brown hair covered by a bright-orange baseball hat that reads "H&H Construction." It looks new and stiff.

He leans his left forearm on my door and says, "How you doin'?"

I politely reply, "Just fine, thanks." He keeps himself at an angle, so he can still wave at the cars driving by and they can still "BEEP! BEEP!" in response.

"So, yer not from 'round here are ya?"

"Hmmm... what gave that away?"

He seems confused by this answer, then breaks into a grin, "Oh, you just jokin', right?"

I turn away from him and shake my head, "I guess I am."

"Naw, really, where you from?" Eddie asks.

"Chicago," I reply.

He steps back from the car with a look of surprise on his face, waves his

hands in the air, and does a little dance as he says, "Woo-hoo! Chi-ca-go! Big city girl, eh?"

"Yeah, I guess."

"Uh, are you visiting family?"

I had to think about that for a moment. Who am I here to visit exactly? "I'm here to visit my grandfather."

"Where does he live?"

I chose my answer carefully, "He lives across the railroad tracks in Mount Olivet."

Eddie realizes what I am telling him and says quietly, "Oh, I am sorry. How long has he been gone?"

"A little over a year."

The silence was growing.

"Hey, you wanna come to a square dance with me tomorrow night?"

I laugh, "A square dance? I was forced to square dance for three years in elementary school and I hated it!"

I stop laughing and say, "I'm sorry, I just don't think it would be a good idea." I mean it, too. I was sorry.

"Scuse me, hon." The waitress arrives with my food. Eddie stumbles backward and looks dumbfounded by the presence of the waitress. I say, "nice talking to you," over the waitress's shoulder. He nods and retreats defeatedly. As I watch him walk away, I notice his pronounced white circle on his back right pocket. I smile to myself. I should not have let that one go. I mean, he drove a cowboy Cadillac and had the tobacco circle. What more could a girl ask for?

On the way home, I drive around this tiny town with a population of 1,176 and I find it odd that I am here again. After I turned 18 and graduated from high school, I knew my mom couldn't make me come back. I love my grandparents very much, but I hate the rest of my family who lives here. I hate Paris, too. I always thought it was ironic that this dinky little town bears the same name of the city that is supposed to be the most exciting and romantic city in the world.

When I was in elementary school, and I would return from a trip to Paris, I loved to trick people. My friends would

ask where I went for such and such holiday and I would casually reply, "Oh, I went to Paris." Their mouths would hang open and they'd say, "No way! Paris? Oh my gosh, you went to Paris?" Then I would say, "Paris, Texas!"

There is nothing new to this town. There is nothing beautiful about it. At least a lot of the South is pretty, green and hilly. Texas is dry, ugly and flat. I mean a major landmark and the town's "night club" is a drive-in.

On Feb. 18 last year, we got the call

As I watch him walk away, I notice his pronounced white circle on his back right pocket. I smile to myself. I should not have let that one go. I mean, he drove a cowboy Cadillac and had the tobacco circle. What more could a girl ask for?

that Poppa suffered a heart attack. He died shortly thereafter. I could not believe it because he was only 70 and he appeared to be in good health. The family had to leave immediately in order to make the funeral. My family packed up their car and took off for Paris lacking one item, me. I said I could not make it. I had classes, I could not get off work, I had to wash my hair. I said anything to not go back to that awful town. I rationalized that I could say goodbye in my own way. Then, a year later, guilt forced me to come this time to visit my grandmother.

I find myself driving towards Poppa's cemetery. My grandmother, mom and sister are all supposed to go to his grave site tomorrow, but I had to do this alone. I park my car right inside the gate and begin searching for his

grave. It is incredibly dark and all I have to see the markers with is my little Bic lighter. I crouch along the graves, squinting at the names on the headstones. Finally, I see Poppa's full name on his gravestone illuminated by the orange glow of my tiny lighter. "William Robert Morrison... September 11, 1927 to February 18, 1997." No comments. No, "He was a great husband and father" or "His grandchildren loved him so much that they all came to his funeral."

I kneel by his grave and begin violently crying. I am sobbing and sobbing uncontrollably. I hang my head and my tears roll off my nose. I quietly whisper, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry..." over and over. I know I cannot hear him say he forgives me or not. I cry and apologize until I am weak, nauseous and my eyes are swollen. I reluctantly rise and run to my car.

As I drive home, Eddie, the cowboy Cadillac guy, pops into my head. Poppa would approve. I turn back to the Sonic and I circle the lot until I approach Eddie standing by his truck. "Hey, Eddie!" I call out to him. He does not respond at first, but he eventually turns around to see what strange girl is yelling to no avail. He sees me, and I wave him over. "Hey, you know what, Eddie, I would like to go to that square dance with you."

He looks at me perplexed and says, "My name isn't Eddie. I never told you my name."

I flush and feel my face growing warmer and warmer, "Oh, uh," I stammer, "I saw you hanging out by that truck and saw that license plate..."

"...and you thought I had to own a truck, huh? Nope, I got that Lumina over there."

I shake my head, "I am sorry. I shouldn't have assumed..."

He cut me off again, "It's alright. I reckon you're not used to fellas like me."

I smile, "No, I'm not, but I've heard a lot about guys like you from my grandfather." Well, he may not have a cowboy Cadillac, but he has the tobacco circle. That's close enough for me. **E**

Poetry

The Day Red Ceased to Rule the Street

by DUSTIN DRASE

"Poetry is a vindictive woman who never forgets a lie."

Yevgeny Yetushenko

In crept misogynistic friendly complaints
of times when children played in streets
oblivious to threats posed that's where I met Red
she knew exactly how to smile and exactly how to punch
I may have been young; I still knew the perils of letting a girl beat up on me
so I decided that I'd make her my woman
I mixed blood with concrete that day
rich red like her lipstick
I tried to kiss her
She punched me hard
I fell sideways
lost my footing
face hit ground
I got up—spit out blood
looked her straight in the eye
until she walked off in mock disgust
In losing a few teeth, I had won a small battle

Innocence

by IRASEMA SALINAS

I see a reflection of my innocence, before bad news was delivered, before iridescent illusions vanished, before death introduced herself to me.
Back when bus trips were adventurous, I could buy two paletas for a dollar and there was no one demanding to Don Poncho to use that silly, fancy and "sanitary" plastic wrapping.
Bras were a foreign garment Mami used, and playing with boys was not taboo.
Then nature handed me her gifts, my rites of passage into the world of a señorita.
Once a month blood stained my chonis, and the boys took interest in my bra.
Mami warned me to be careful, she told me all about their "true intentions."
Everyone on the bus began to stink.
Motion sickness now accompanies me on every ride.
A tamarindo paleta now costs 55 cents, and taste nothing like it used to.
She smiles, her front teeth missing, her tamarindo paleta dripping.
I wanna know if she thinks it tastes like real tamarindo.
I wonder if she smells the raunchy inte-

rior of the bus.
I know she is far from feeling nauseous.
The bus comes to a bumper car halt, its wheels and joints creaking like the very old woman inside of me.
The doors open the little girl takes her mami's hand, and waves goodbye just the way my childhood did.
Before I was well acquainted with it, Before I was ready to leave it behind.

I've Forgotten Tim

by DAN PORTICANSO

who drives the brand new red and white rusty truck
A gift from his father to celebrate an incomplete GED
Tim who works at Jewel
The first job he's held down in years
Tim whom I met again today pumping gas
he said "lets grab a bite, do you have time?"
Tim who gave me his number always a rain-check for another day
I wrote "Tiny Tim" on my thumb and he recited his number as my hand scribbled
Tim the inconsequential, he disappeared when I scrubbed my hands with itchy soap
later in the day the ink of his identity a blue foam at the bottom of the sink washed from my hands like a hard day's work
I've forgotten Tim. **E**





Art Vance is a man about town. He's *Echo's* resident expert on being an expert. When he's not spending his time touring the Chicago socialite circuit, he can be found tooling through Europe, bargain shopping at antique stores, sipping espresso at Starbucks or filling in *The New York Times* crossword puzzle.

Dear Art,

My girlfriend made me go with her to see some stupid dance troupe. I figured, how bad could it be? Well, let me tell you, it was really awful. I didn't know they let men dance in those things too. My question to you, is what's the deal with those big packages? —Albert, Wrigleyville

I agree, that great big package is extremely distracting. All those sweaty men up there, sweating, and gyrating, and touching themselves...and, well, I'm going to let you in on a little secret Al. To achieve that Tom Jones look, all you need is an extra pair of socks. That's right, socks, this way if it gets cold, you have an extra pair to slip into. You could also buy a larger pair of undies and store things in there, like maybe a granola bar, and a juice box. Dancing makes you thirsty you know.

Dear Art,

My boyfriend is a cheapskate. Whenever we go to the movies he refuses to pay for popcorn and candy. What's the point of going to the movies if you can't eat popcorn? It's a tradition right? Well, I've finally given up on trying to get him to buy me candy; instead I'll just bring my own. What is the best way to smuggle snacks into the movies?

—Samantha, Bucktown

Dear Art,

My favorite band is playing at a bar and I'm only 19. What can I do to get in? —Lionel, Hyde Park

I know this may sound a bit crass, but getting into bars is all about ass. Flirt with the doorman. He's your only link between standing outside in the cold and standing in front of the stage. Girls have it a bit easier on this one. Short, short skirts are a must. The shorter, the better. Also get yourselves some tissues or even a pair of socks, and stuff that bra, baby. What doorman doesn't like a little bit of affection from a well-endowed lady? For guys, stuff those pants. Everyone respects the guys with the mysteriously large package and if all else fails you have an extra pair of socks to wear while you wait outside looking like a dope.

Once again, I do not advocate any illegal activity. If you happen to see me at your local theatre laden with pockets full of Reese's Pieces, M&M's and Twizzlers, it's a case of do as I say not as I do. Wear baggy clothes, they don't frisk you when you walk in. The cashiers and ticket takers are barely making minimum wage, like they care whether or not you buy an overpriced soda and some Goobers. If you don't feel like wearing a big shirt or perhaps it's a bit too warm for a jacket, do as the dancers do, stuff it. My other suggestion to you would be to find another boyfriend. Perhaps one that isn't too cheap for a spring for some Sour Patch Kids and a Sprite.

Dear Art,

I'm a broke-ass college student. How can I see Chicago arts for cheap? —Stuart, South Loop

Fret not, there are still options. Prostitution pays well. As does the restaurant industry, but both are fairly degrading. If you didn't have time constraints your best bet would be to involve yourself in the art scene. Everyone will want you to come to his or her gallery opening if you're a famous young artist or musician. If you're not overly talented, you could get a job as a security guard at one of the local museums. It doesn't pay well, and you're not allowed to talk while on duty (except to say, "please don't touch the paintings"), but you do get to see lots of famous artwork. Most theatres in Chicago will let you in for free if you go hours ahead of time and volunteer to usher. For music venues your best bet would be to pal up with the band you want to see, and find a way to smuggle yourself in with them. Or if you're really desperate you could read the Guide to Chicago's Arts in *Echo* magazine.

Dear Art,

You pompous snob, what makes you so smart? You think you know everything. Well you know what? You don't know nothing. You're a fraud, and I'm going to tell everyone. If I saw you on the street I'd kick your ass. —anonymous

Idle threats will get you nowhere. I'm ready to throw down at moment's notice. In the future, if you're going to insult me, please use proper grammar, you ill-mannered baboon. I look forward to pummeling you some day, you twit.



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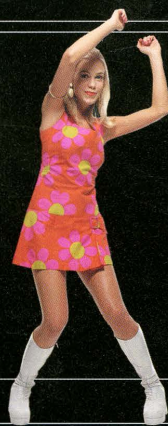
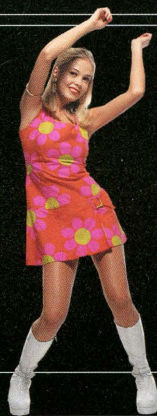
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