

1-1-2002

## Echo, Winter 2002

Columbia College Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/echo>

 Part of the [Journalism Studies Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Columbia College Chicago, "Echo, Winter 2002" (2002). *Echo*. 12.  
<https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/echo/12>

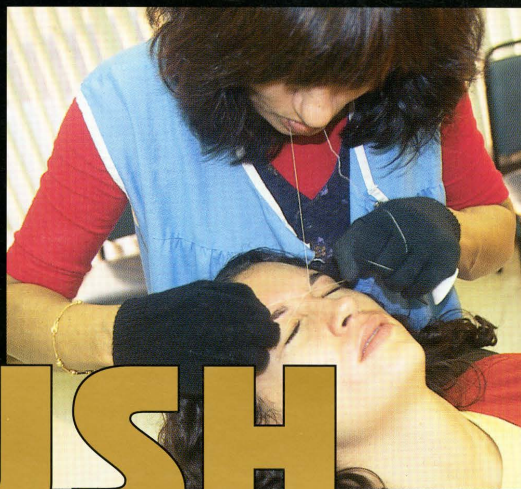
This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Publications at Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. It has been accepted for inclusion in Echo by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Columbia College Chicago. For more information, please contact [drossetti@colum.edu](mailto:drossetti@colum.edu).

Inside: The domino effect of gentrification in Humboldt Park

# ECHO

a publication of Columbia College Chicago

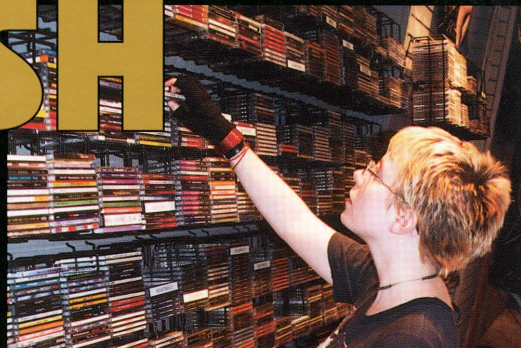
Winter 2002



## HUSH HUSH

Eat, drink, shop,  
get your **eyebrows plucked:**

Echo reveals  
**19 fascinating places**  
too good to **keep secret**



**Plus:** Echo's seven-night pub crawl • Cycling with Critical Mass  
The making of an R&B diva • Chicago's haunted places  
Why the FBI doesn't want you to read Sam Greenlee's 1969 novel



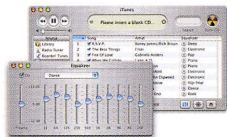
# The Center of Your Digital Lifestyle.

**Apple offers discounts just for Students  
at [www.apple.com/education/store/](http://www.apple.com/education/store/)**



## Mac OS X

Mac OS X is Apple's industrial strength operating system, combining the power and stability of UNIX with the elegance and simplicity of the Macintosh. The new Aqua interface features a more intuitive user experience, with a new Finder and the Dock, while OpenGL and PDF technology are built-in to Mac OS X's core.



## iTunes

The standard MP3 player on the Mac, iTunes allows you to rip MP3's off of your CDs, mix and listen to them, and burn them to CDs. And iTunes also features tight integration with iPod, updating iPod's music library whenever it is attached to your Mac.

## Great technology, priced for Students.

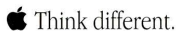
Apple offers discounts to Higher Education Faculty, Staff, & Students. Why? Because we know that once you go Macintosh, you'll never want to use anything else. The Mac is engineered to be the simplest, fastest way for you to get your work done (and also allow you to have a little fun once the work is over!).

The Mac is designed to be more than just a tool. With digital devices becoming more and more popular, you'll find that the Mac will grow with you and become the Hub of your Digital Lifestyle. This means taking your devices, hooking them up to your Mac, and doing things they could never do alone. You can build a web page from your digital photos using Image Capture and iTools, edit your digital camcorder footage in iMovie, or rip, mix, and burn your favorite music in iTunes.

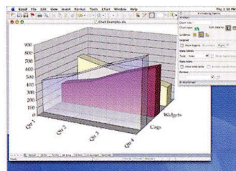
## Your discount, now available.

The Apple Store for Education is the place to be when you want to buy anything Mac. Featuring systems, software, and the latest digital devices, The Apple Store for Education offers discounts to Higher Education Faculty, Staff, & Students. Just visit online at:

**<http://www.apple.com/education/store/>**

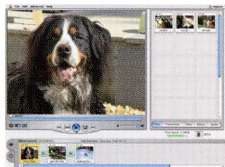


All prices reflect Educational pricing as offered by Apple Computer, Inc. Prices are subject to change without notice. Please visit [www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com) for more information.



## Office v.X

Microsoft has brought its highly acclaimed Office for Mac to Mac OS X, and the result couldn't be better. It is the Office suite with many Mac-first, Mac-only features and a simpler interface than its Windows counterpart. And, Microsoft also offers Office v.X at special education pricing at the Apple Store for Education.



## iMovie

Bring video editing home to your desktop with iMovie. Installed on every Mac Apple ships, iMovie is the simplest way to edit footage from your digital camcorder, add effects, and put your movie on the web or on a DVD using iDVD and the Apple SuperDrive DVD-R drive.



# Brudno Art Supply

Chicago's Premier Source for Art & Drafting Supplies for 75 Years.

700 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago P 312.294.4100 F 312.341.1345

# Hey, Creative Artist!

## Get all this...



### entertainment

SOURCE GUIDE

**Marlon & Shawn Wayans**  
Discuss longevity in **HOLLYWOOD!**



#### College Guide

The Road to higher education  
ESG looks at schools that offer  
degrees in the performing arts

**6** informative-packed issues of **Entertainment Source Guide** - The leading national magazine focusing exclusively on careers in the entertainment industry (movies, music, television, radio and fashion). Through job opportunities, internships and incisive interviews with leading industry professionals. Plus, everything else you need to know about career options in the entertainment biz!

**6** issues packed with useful career information including a variety of career opportunities with leading and cutting edge entertainment companies nationwide. Jobs range from entry level to mid-level and executive.

**6** must-read issues for anyone considering a career in entertainment.

**Special Charter Offer**  
**Only \$18.00**




Having **E.S.G.**, your career can be launched instantaneously by knowing a broad base of entertainment opportunities; rather than depending on one or two sources of leads.

**Subscribe Online Today!**

Visit us  
on the web...

[www.esgmagazine.com](http://www.esgmagazine.com)



GOSH!  
RAGSTOCK HAS THE  
DREAMIEST  
CLOTHES!



**RAGSTOCK**

Ragstock has been recycling  
for over 40 years!

**226 S. Wabash, 2nd Floor (between Adams & Jackson) - 312.692.1778**  
**Open: Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7**

812 W. Belmont, 2nd Floor - 773.868.9263 - Open: Mon-Thurs 10-9, Fri & Sat 10-10, Sun 12-7

no matter what kind of marks you're making



we've got the *materials* to help you make them

## THE ART STORE

**chicago lincoln park**  
**1574 n kingsbury st**  
next to old navy · corner of  
north and kingsbury · easy  
access off of the north &  
clybourne L stop · 312.573.0110

**PLENTY OF FREE PARKING!**  
m-f 9-9 sat 10-7 sun 11-6

**new! evanston**  
**1755 maple ave**  
corner of church st · next to  
century theatres · 847.425.9100

**ONE HOUR FREE PARKING**  
**ACROSS THE STREET!**  
mon-thur 9-9 fri 9-10  
sat 10-10 sun 11-6

**artstore.com**

# ECHO

Winter 2002

### Editorial Staff

**Karla Borders** Arts

**Allison Clark** Arts

**Natalie Thomas** Arts

**Shannon McEntee & Katherine Raz** Copy Chiefs

**Maral Karagozian** Editorial Coordinator

**Melanie Masserant** Features

**Bryan Schillo** Features

**David Arter** IntenseCity

**Briahna Gatlin** IntenseCity

**Cathleen Loud** IntenseCity

**Tonika Lewis-Johnson** Literature

**Megan Tanco** Literature

**Candice Zei** Literature

**Michael Hirtzer** Photo Coordinator

**Jason Foraker & Jeremy Lawson** Photo Editors

### Contributing Writers

Virginia Coglianesse, Trena Evans, Melissa Pavlik, Jenny Seay,

Martina Sheehan, Sadaf Siddiqui, Keli Stewart

### Illustrators

Tommy Baldwin, Tom Groholski

### Photographers

David Arter, Carrie Bergagna, Omar Castillo, Erin Clark,

Virginia Coglianesse, Jason Foraker, Gina Grafos,

Michael Hirtzer, Jeremy Lawson, Tonika Lewis-Johnson,

Sarah L. Peck, Terry Scarbrough, Jeffrey Sfire

### Advisers

**Lisa Jevens** Design & Production Adviser

**Clare La Plante** Editorial Adviser

**Omar Castillo** Computer Specialist

**Norma Green** Interim Chair, Journalism Department

**Barry Rice** Director, Magazine Program

### Advertising Sales

**Chris Richert** Advertising Sales Manager

**Asleigh Pacetti** Advertising Graphic Designer



Columbia College Chicago

Journalism Department

624 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60605

Editorial: (312) 344-7630; Advertising: (312) 344-7432

*Echo*, Volume 12, No. 1, is published two times each year by the Columbia College Chicago Journalism Department. Contents copyright by Columbia College Chicago. Reproduction in whole or in part without written consent from the publisher is prohibited. Any similarity between the people and places, not intended, is purely coincidental. Columbia College Chicago assumes no responsibility to return unsolicited editorial or graphic material.

**From the Publisher**

Please enjoy and help spread the good word about the Winter 2002 issue of Echo, the student magazine of Columbia College Chicago.

This issue is the result of 85 hours of classroom work and inestimable labor outside of class. Fifteen students in the Journalism Department's Magazine Program and two photography majors worked closely with editorial adviser Clare La Plante and design-and-production adviser Lisa Jevens to create this splendid work of magazine journalism.

It's an amazing and inspiring event: Each semester, students of different races, backgrounds and ages work as a team to write, edit and design a cohesive product that reports on Chicago's diverse arts and media scene. This exercise in communication becomes an exercise in community. The integration of ideas, manners and talents prepares them for the real world of working in today's media.

I am proud of what these student journalists have produced, and what they have learned in the process. We hope you enjoy the product of their work as much as we do.

In addition to Lisa and Clare, I would like to thank Chris Richert, Echo's business manager, who sold this issue's advertising, and Omar Castillo, the department's computer technician, who kept our sophisticated Macintosh lab running like a top.

If you would like more information about Echo or Columbia's Magazine Program, please feel free to call or e-mail. Your feedback is always welcome, and your patronage as a reader is most appreciated.



Barry Rice  
Director, Magazine Program  
brice@popmail.colum.edu



OMAR CASTILLO

**Echo Winter 2002 Staff**

Back row, from left: Candace Zei, Melanie Masserant, Bryan Schillo, Michael Hirtzer; middle row: Karla Borders, Natalie Thomas, Katherine Raz, Cathleen Loud, Lisa Jevens, Tonika Lewis-Johnson, Shannon McEntee, Jeremy Lawson, Clare La Plante; front row: Briahna Gatlin, Megan Tanco, Allison Clark, David Arter. (Not pictured: Jason Foraker, Maral Karagozian.)

**From the Advisers**

This semester Echo magazine embarked on a brave new world. For the first time, the students produced the entire issue of Echo—editorial and production—in one semester, rather than spreading the work over two.

This change took place in a changed world, after the events of Sept. 11, which impacted us as journalists as well as human beings.

This new world couldn't help but infuse Echo with a newfound maturity. For example, the class was united in its desire to include stories such as "The Domino Effect," which addresses the consequences of gentrification in Chicago's neighborhoods; "Road Warriors," which goes on the road with the environmental and cycling advocacy group Critical Mass; and "Creating Mini Me," which takes a hard look at the selling of image at Chicago's American Girl Place. The issue also includes poetry that relates to Sept. 11.

Of course, the lighter, quirkier side of the staff comes through in important service stories such as a seven-night bar guide to Chicago, a tale of good tattoos gone bad, and our cover story, which chronicles the staff's favorite off-the-beaten-track haunts for great eats, cheap tunes, retro toys, you name it. (It's called "Hush Hush" because these places are hidden gems—and this story lets our readers in on the secret.)

The staff of Echo (15 journalism majors and two photography majors)

did an amazing job, even while holding down other "real" jobs, meeting full-time class schedules, and often caring for family and friends.

What you see in these pages is their vision. They created the story mix, wrote and edited the articles, and filled the book with images. They solicited poetry and other writing from students in Columbia's English and fiction departments, and commissioned illustrations from Columbia artists. They documented a world-class city in a voice that is compassionate, funny, perceptive and unmistakably real.

What you hold in your hands, then, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the alchemic results of these special 17. Or, on a more prosaic level, a once-in-a-semester opportunity to read the latest issue of Echo. We hope you enjoy this magazine as much as we enjoyed being the advisers to this group.

*Lisa Jevens*

Lisa Jevens  
Artist-in-Residence  
ljevens@popmail.colum.edu

*Clare La Plante*

Clare La Plante  
Artist-in-Residence  
claplante@popmail.colum.edu



# Exchequer

Restaurant

& Pub

226 S. Wabash Ave.

Chicago, IL 60604

Est. 1969



# CENTRAL CAMERA COMPANY

PHOTOGRAPHIC HEADQUARTERS SINCE 1899 • OUR 103rd YEAR

## WHERE YOU WILL FIND LOW PRICES EVERYDAY & GET FREE DELIVERY\*

At Central Camera You Will Find:

**STUDENTS & FACULTY Get An  
ADDITIONAL 5% OFF Our Regular Low Prices**  
On Most: FILM; AUDIO, DV, or VIDEO TAPE; PAPER;  
CHEMISTRY; & OTHER SUPPLY Purchases.

Used  
Equipment:  
35mm &  
Medium  
Format

New  
Equipment:  
35mm, APS  
& Medium  
Format

Photography  
Books

Gadget  
Bags

Film & Finishing,  
Projection Bulbs

Exposure  
Meters,  
Electronic  
Flash, &  
Accessories



Digital Cameras,  
Film Scanners  
&  
Printers

Binoculars

35mm &  
Medium  
Format  
Accessories

Darkroom Supplies:  
Paper, Chemistry,  
& Enlargers

Frames &  
Photo Albums

Tripods  
&  
Lighting Equipment

All This And Much, Much, More.

Make Central Camera Your One Stop Source For All Your Photographic Needs

\*FOR ORDERS OVER  
\$50.00 IN THE  
CONTINENTAL 48 STATES  
WITH USE OF VISA, MC,  
AMEX OR DISCOVER

230 S. Wabash Ave. • CHICAGO, IL 60604

Near Jackson Blvd.

312-427-5580

WE ACCEPT VISA-MC-AMEX-DISC.

M-F: 8:30-5:30 • Sat: 8:30-5:00

www.central-camera.com

**FREE** 2nd Set of 35mm  
Color Prints With Processing - Always

# Reckless Records

buy · sell · trade

special orders, rarities,  
gift certificates...

MUSIC & MOVIES  
& GAMES

cds, vinyl, tapes,  
videos, dvds, laserdiscs,



3157 North Broadway Avenue  
Tele: 773-404-5080

1532 North Milwaukee Avenue  
Tele: 773-235-3727

# ECHO

Winter 2002

## departments

### 5 letters

### 12 intensecity

- 12 Seven Specialty Bar Nights
- 15 Odd Jobs
- 16 Life of a Movie Extra
- 17 Zine Entrepreneurs
- 18 Grad School Decisions
- 19 Vintage Underwear
- 20 American Girl Place

### 22 arts

- 22 Comic Book-Writing Couple
- 24 R&B Diva-in-the-Making
- 25 Spring/Summer Theater Listings
- 26 The Bandoleros
- 27 Drag Kings
- 28 Icon Artist

### 50 literature

- 50 Sam Greenlee Speaks
- 51 Gwendolyn Brooks Writer's Conference
- 52 Poetry
- 54 "Pirts," a Short Story

### 58 photo essay

"Graveyard Shift"

### 64 back page

Tattoo Regrets

### cover

Clockwise from left: Carol's Pub, 4659 N. Clark St.; Dipti's salon, 2734 W. Touhy Ave.; The Music Recyclery, 856 W. Belmont Ave.

Photos by Jeremy Lawson

## features



JEREMY LAWSON

### Hush Hush

Echo scours the city to find unique places to eat, drink, shop, make pottery, get your eyebrows plucked, trade in a CD and more.

By Katherine Raz



SARAH L. PECK

### The Domino Effect

In Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood, a strong Latino community is facing—and fighting—gentrification.

By Megan Tanco



CARIE BERGGREN

### Road Warriors

Biking activists block traffic in the city to promote less crowded roads and cleaner air.

By Martina Sheehan

# Deli Delights



- Groceries
- Liquors
- ATM

**OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!**



*Burnham Plaza Mart*  
828 S. Wabash • 312.663.5010

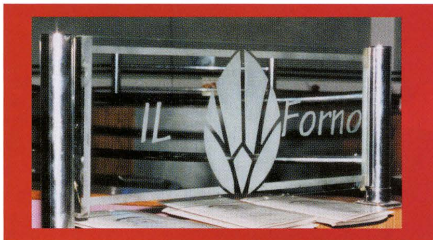


Restaurante.  
Pizzeria.  
Sports Bar.



OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK at 11 a.m.

10% discount for  
students & faculty



850 South Wabash  
Chicago, IL (312) 431-9007

# JIMMYZ

MEDITERRANEAN  
CAFE



*Featuring:*

**Soup**

**Salad**

**Sandwiches**

**Chicken**

**Pizza**

**Pasta**

**Mediterranean**

**Specialities**

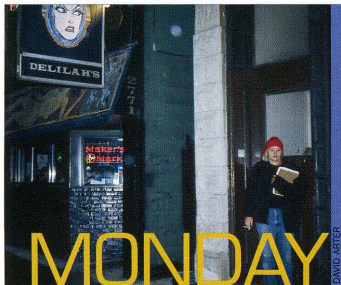
224 S. Wabash Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60604  
(312) 939-5685  
Fax (312) 786-9128

# Raising the Bar

CAN YOU TAKE THE HEAT SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK? ECHO DID!

BY DAVID ARTER

**W**e went in search of weekly specialty nights at local clubs—nights that can get you off the couch and in a party mood every day. Echo magazine considers this weeklong tour of duty our sacrifice for you, and we earned plenty of cavernous eyes and prescription antibiotics along the way. We recommend you try all of these fine establishments, but not one night after the next.

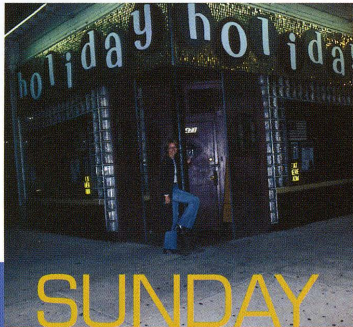


## MONDAY

DELILAH'S  
2771 N. LINCOLN AVE.

*Why Go? Punk Rock Mondays. \$1 Iron City Beers, \$2 Jim Beam, free pool. No cover.*

People think “punk,” and they conjure images of wild hairdos, piercings, tattoos, lewdness, and kids who tear up stuff for fun. Monday at Delilah’s is more about wrapping an arm around a buddy and yelling along to classics by the Ramones, Black Flag and Chicago legends Naked Raygun. Delilah’s, Chicago’s self-described premier “cavern tavern,” looks like Archie Bunker’s old two-story, squeezed in between the Lincoln Park blitzkrieg of condos and convenient mini-shopping centers.

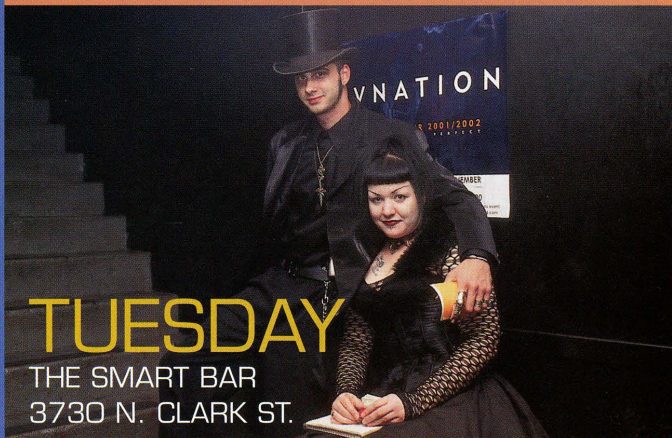


## SUNDAY

THE HOLIDAY CLUB  
1471 N. MILWAUKEE AVE.

*Why Go? Pitcher Mania. 1/2 off any drink in a pitcher. No cover.*

The Holiday Club shines on Milwaukee Avenue like a diamond in a pile of crushed brick. The inside is clean and fresh, a contrast to the ancient malt-and-tobacco reek of most Chicago bars. The place has a vintage look and a contemporary feel. The jukebox ranges from Frank Sinatra to the Stooges. The usual Wall of Fame is a “Who’s Who” of cool, with the framed likenesses of Elvis Presley, Sammy Davis and Robert Mitchum. The Holiday marquee and candle-lit tables evoke an era when bars still had a touch of class.



## TUESDAY

THE SMART BAR  
3730 N. CLARK ST.

*Why Go? Gothic night, titled “Nocturna,” \$3 cover; open until 4 a.m.*

At Nocturna, both girls and boys don heavy eyeliner and lipstick, tighten up their leather and dance in the depths of darkness to the puls-

ing, ethereal gothic tunes of resident DJ Scary Lady Sarah. But despite their fiendish looks, the Nocturna crowd is friendly. Be forewarned, though, appropriate attire is encouraged.



BIG WIG

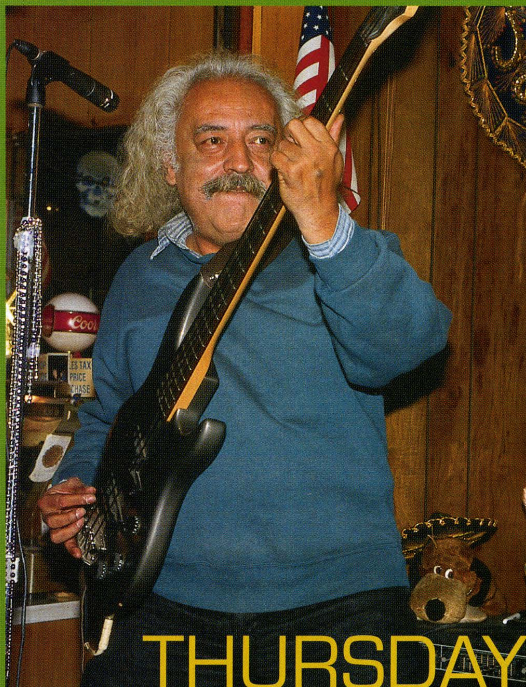
1551 W. DIVISION ST.

**Why Go?** *The Drum and Bass Showcase "The Seminar," \$7 cover.*

Some lips curled when we walked in the door as incoming patrons checked us out. There's so much style at the Big Wig, but we couldn't afford any of the outfits we saw with an entire paycheck, especially those tightly cropped, perfectly colored haircuts. This night has all kinds of flash—and hair is the theme. The bartenders keep cherries and olives in old Barbicide sterilizers. Mannequin heads with wigs line the top of the liquor cabinets. You can even relax in a salon chair while catching the drum and bass work of local and world-renowned DJs.

**Why Go?** *Chicago's best bar band, Nightwatch. No cover.*

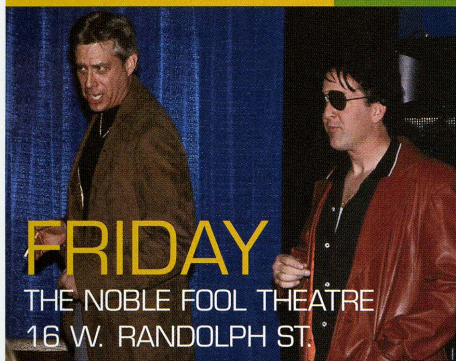
The Lakeview Lounge is packed like a box of crayons from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. to see Nightwatch. We stumbled in, threw our hands in the air, sang along, and cried in our beer when the band performed a sweet cover of the Santo and Johnny classic, "Sleep Walk."



THURSDAY

LAKEVIEW LOUNGE  
5110 N. BROADWAY

kangaroos in a thunderstorm of beer. Nightwatch has been at this for 16 years. "Cold Steel" Larry, Gilbert, and Raul will take you down a road of traditional folk and classics like the Beatles and Hendrix.



FRIDAY

THE NOBLE FOOL THEATRE  
16 W. RANDOLPH ST.

**Why Go?** *Uproarious Mafia-inspired improv.*

If you think the North Side is the only place for Chicago-style improvised comedy, you're wrong. The Noble Fool Theatre is the home of "The Baritones," the crime family comedy about guns, money, fast women, cheatin', betting at the track,

and the old country. It has all the stereotypes of an evening's work for organized crime syndicate don Tony Baritone. The cast of the Noble Fool asks for a few words from the audience to help create an ephemeral, fully improvised comedy. We got there early to hang with Tony Baritone and some of his "waste management" crew around the piano. After a couple of drinks, Wally Peanuts, one of Tony's men, conducted a hysterical sing-along version of "That's Amore," to warm our guts for the assault of Mafia comedy.

SATURDAY  
THE PUMPING COMPANY  
6157 N. BROADWAY

**Why Go?** *\$5 Cover and Penny Pitchers all night.*

This drinking well near Loyola University has more beer than frat boys to drink it. The Pumping Company was the good conclusion to such an eventful week. There's not much in the thrill department except cheap beer. Here the evening begins with Tom Petty and morphs into a trance-techno-booty-house thing. □



# Daily Specials

Monday. Fried Rice and Egg Roll  
Tuesday. Pad Thai with Spring Roll  
Wednesday. Panang Curry with Spring Roll  
Thursday. Chicken Teriyaki with 3 pieces Gyoza  
Friday. Green Curry with Cucumber Salad

**Thai**  
**SPOON**

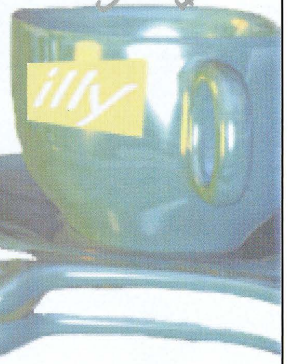
632 S. Wabash Chicago, IL 60605  
PHONE: (312) 427-9470

FAX: (312) 427-7887

Mon-Fri 10:30 AM - 9:00 PM  
Sat 11:00 AM - 9:00 PM  
Sun 11:30 AM - 7:30 PM

Hey! Looking for a nice place to grab a cup of coffee and study?

Cappuccino Americano  
Espresso Mocha



Ask about our new study or party room!

# Odd Jobs

BY CATHLEEN LOUD

FIVE AVERAGE JOES (AND JOSIES) FIND THEIR BLISS OUTSIDE CORPORATE AMERICA

Corporate necktie too tight? Maybe you didn't know you could make a living baby-sitting dogs, impersonating Will Rogers or sticking a needle in your arm. Echo caught up with some creative individuals who aren't caught up in the 9 to 5. They'll make you wish you weren't, either.

## Doggie Director

A typical day for Gary Russo, owner of A Walk in the Park doggie daycare, located at 2144 N. Wood St., starts at 8:30 a.m. when he hops into his van and begins his doggie bus service. He taxis pups to daycare by 11 a.m. and starts grooming. Noon is lunchtime, followed by nap time. The day winds down by 6:30 p.m.

The pup play land is open Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., with evening, weekend and overnight services. There are always at least 45 dogs running around the free-range daycare.

"Dogs will be sitting on my lap while I'm working on the computer, or chewing on my shoe," says Kathleen Gallagher, A Walk in the Park's business consultant.

The dogs have weird habits, too. Every day between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. a group of dogs howls for 10 minutes. Russo calls it the mid-day choir.

"I love my dogs," he says. "[They] are my children, but they're not going to want to borrow the car."

## Hat Trick

In one of his famous magic acts, David London of Chicago escapes the business world. He transforms from a professional, wrapped in neckties, to a casual Joe.

"Fringe magic describes it perfectly," says London of his technique. His act blends performance art, props and strange characters, such as an uncle who collects celebrity toenails. He does an average of five shows per month, but says being a magician is a 24-hour job. When he's not practicing his act, he's thinking about it. When he stops thinking about magic, he dreams about it. For a real-life Harry Potter, magic isn't something you leave at the office.



It's a Dog's Life: Pups at A Walk in the Park doggie daycare hang out with owner Gary Russo.

JEFFREY SPIRE

## Liquid Assets

A needle gets stuck in Kristin Krasowski's arm twice a week. It's easy money and no experience is needed. For around \$20 a pop, Krasowski donates her plasma.

From Augustana College, where she is a student, Krasowski treks to the Aventis Bio-Services donation site in Rock Island, Ill., for the procedure.

**"I love my dogs. [They] are my children, but they're not going to want to borrow the car." — doggie daycare owner Gary Russo**

First, her bodily fluids are screened for drugs and diseases. Then she is asked questions about her health. After she passes the physical, she is hooked up to the machine that draws blood, extracts the plasma and puts the plasma-extracted blood back into her bloodstream.

"I don't mind donating," Krasowski says, "but I wouldn't say I enjoy the process."

Her parents aren't fond of it. They're afraid she'll contract HIV. But Maria Doxee, a nurse at Aventis, says the equipment is sterile because it's pre-packaged. After the procedure is over, everything is heat-sealed and disposed of in a biohazard container.

## Chakra Doc

Dr. Elsbeth Meuth teaches people how to have better sex. She is a Certified Tantra Educator and co-founder of the Tantra Institute Chicago with Certified Massage Therapist Freddy Weaver. Individuals and couples take her private lessons to master the art of Tantra, the ability to harness the chakras, or energy, that we all possess. Those who are successful learn to experience intense pleasure, deeper intimacy and greater creativity.

Part of the lessons are conducted in the nude, but the focus is on spirituality. Couples don't have sex during the lesson, but they do touch each other. Dr. Meuth isn't a couples counselor, but this isn't a porn ring, either. The sessions for individuals depend on the individual's comfort level, but usually start with an opening conversation about chakra awareness. Then Dr. Meuth demonstrates breathing techniques and exercises in touching and closeness. The goal is to get the person in touch with his or her own sexuality and spirituality. The cost is between \$250 and \$300 for a two-hour session.

## Cowboy Junkie

Chicagoan Lance Brown spends his time impersonating a dead cowboy. By dressing up as his hero, the 1930s cowboy Will Rogers, Brown says he sets "an example of a life lived with humor

and compassion."

For more than 15 years, Brown has morphed in and out of Rogers' character, doing motivational performances for businesses, libraries, historical societies, museums and theater audiences. He performs across the country and says he enjoys being on the road "doing interesting and challenging shows."

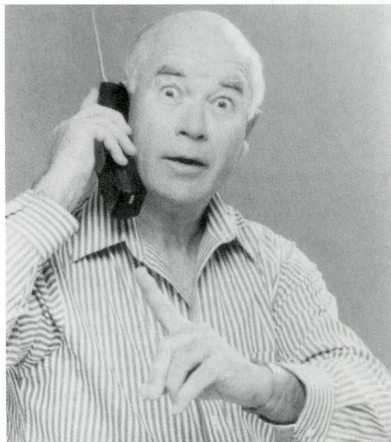
In 1997, Brown wrote a book called "On the Road with Will Rogers," about Rogers' life and wisdom.

"I'm not saying he was not a flawed human being," says Brown, "but he was a philanthropist and encouraged others to give." □

# Extra, Extra!

**BEHIND THE SCENES AND INTO THE LIFE OF A MOVIE EXTRA**

BY KARLA BORDERS



COURTESY OF TOM GIBSON

**Extra Tom Gibson has worked on more than 35 films and television shows in Chicago.**

**U**nder a large white tent on the Shedd Aquarium's museum campus, about 60 people are lounging on folding chairs, eagerly waiting to do their jobs. They flip through magazines, listen to music or read books to help pass the time on the hot June afternoon. An important-looking man approaches the gathering, causing them to stir. Energy quickly fades when they hear what the man has to say: "Don't worry, people. We will need you in about five more minutes." As expected, another hour goes by until they are acknowledged again.

For retired Jewel manager and Hometown, Ill., resident Tom Gibson, this is a familiar scene. He has been working on movie and television sets for 10 years as an extra—one of those crucial people who make a

scene work. It may not be glamorous, but there is nothing like it for him.

Divorced, nearly bald and standing at 5-feet-10-inches and 180 pounds, Gibson was talked into becoming an extra by his nephew, Richard Williams. Williams was taking his kids to sign up for an open casting call and suggested that his uncle do the same. Gibson took the advice without ever having done anything in theater or television before.

Acting on multimillion-dollar film and television sets may seem like an attractive job. But for an extra, it's not a luxurious ride. Extras don't usually have speaking roles in the productions they are working on. They are simply there to make the scenes look natural.

According to the Chicago Film Office, at 1 N. LaSalle St., extras have been used in more than 300 productions filmed in Chicago since 1989. In 2000, 51 productions including Hollywood feature films, television shows and independent films were shot in Chicago. Rich Moskal, director of the Chicago Film Office, reports that thousands of extras are assigned to productions each year.

"The [Tom Hanks] film 'Road to Perdition' alone required nearly 400 extras for one day," says Moskal.

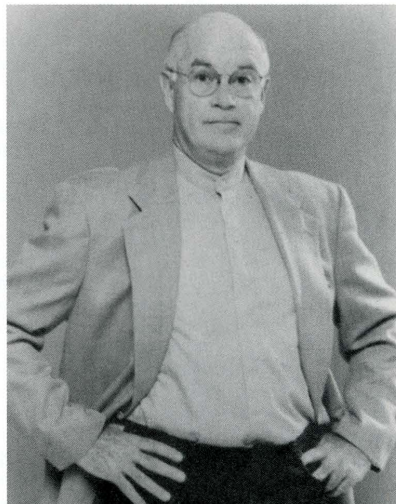
Extras are paid between \$50 and \$175 per day depending on the agency they are with. Most work at least eight hours and are often required to stay longer. "Hoffa," starring Oscar winner Jack Nicholson, was the movie that gave Gibson his first taste of life on a set. He was one

of the many extras needed to make a riot scene come to life.

"When I first got on the set, I immediately saw Jack Nicholson, but I didn't know who he was because of all the makeup," Gibson says. "Once I realized it was him, I was totally shocked because he did not look like the Jack Nicholson I was used to seeing."

Gibson has worked in more than 35 films and several television shows filmed in Chicago since his debut in "Hoffa." Some of his projects include: "Soul Food," "Stir of Echoes," "Save the Last Dance" and the canceled television show, "What About Joan?"

Like most extras, he is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, the actors union. Being a SAG member means that he automatically gets a certain stipend for his work in addition to other benefits. Gibson is a client of Holzer & Ridge Casting, located at 3738 N. Broadway in Chicago.



COURTESY OF TOM GIBSON

**Even though Gibson doesn't earn a ton of dough being a movie extra, he treasures the experience.**

**Extra, Extra!**

Seeing himself on screen alongside some of Hollywood's finest and meeting amazing people have not been the only reasons why Gibson continues to do the job that is often referred to as "paying dues."

"I like all the perks that accompany being an extra," Gibson says. "But my love for the work is greater than all of it."

Even though he does not earn tons of dough, Gibson says the entire

**"I like all the perks that accompany being an extra." —actor Tom Gibson**

experience is one he treasures.

"Of course I could not make a living from being an extra," Gibson

says. "But the friends that I have made, the excitement I get when I see

myself on the silver screen, and just the whole adventure of being on a movie or TV set is priceless." □

## ZineZen

BY BRYAN SCHILLO

### THRIVING IN THE RANDOM WORLD OF SELF-PUBLISHED RAGS

It's 2 a.m. and you're at Kinko's. Your eyes are heavy from staring at a computer for too many hours. You're hoping you have enough money to cover printing costs since you've spent so much on coffee for that after-hours caffeine boost. Finally, your job is done. You fish out the last penny from the lint of your pocket and walk away with a warm bundle of printouts in hand. No one is making you do this. This is your idea of fun.

This is also a typical night in the business of zines, those wonderfully low-budget personal publications. Zines usually take on a subject matter that the publisher holds close to his or her heart. Matthew Sinclair of Bollingbrook, Ill., publishes Local Crew Chicago (LCC), which covers music and stage acts that perform in Chicago. It is distributed at music shows around town. LCC also offers its readers the chance to be writers. If a writer can do a comprehensive review and Sinclair can get the tickets, he'll send them to cover any concert or performance.

Sinclair decided to start LCC when he was at Fan Fair, the country music festival in Nashville. He noticed that labels and artists were always looking for exposure, so he decided to give them a little of his own.

Zine production can be tedious.

Alex Zander, publisher of Chicago based M.K. Ultra, a zine about gothic/industrial music and its subculture, says, "Cutting and pasting is the most time-consuming, painful process. Your floor has stuff all over it and there's glue in your hair." Fortunately, computers have layout and design programs to make things easier, but it still can take many hours. Producing a zine is hard work but

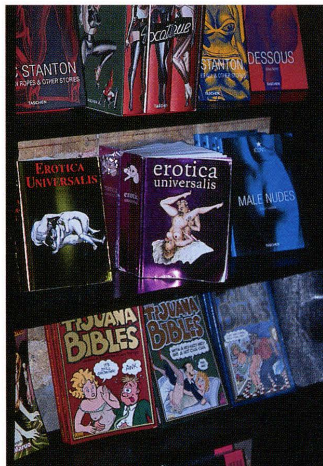
"definitely a labor of love," says Larry Roth, publisher of the zine called 1544 W. Grace, a zine about four tenants living in Chicago.

Printing can take its toll on your pocketbook. LCC costs Sinclair \$50 a month to publish. M.K. Ultra supports itself by advertising. Jade Dragon Tattoo, Liars Club and assorted rock labels are among the businesses that advertise in the zine. "Any money I made I put right back into it," says Zander.

For a zine to be successful, the publisher needs to get the word out. "I guess I could wear a sandwich board outside coffeehouses," says Roth.

But there is an easier way. One special bookstore in the Wicker Park neighborhood can help. Quimby's Bookstore, located at 1854 W. North Ave., caters to all things zine. It has a huge selection of zines and is a place where publishers can promote their work. Along with its sister store, Chicago Comics, located at 3244 N. Clark St., Quimby's keeps the zine scene thriving. "Quimby's makes it easy," says Roth.

You can also create buzz the old-school way—with a lot of footwork. Zander recommends handing out copies after a concert has ended. "For every copy you give out, three or four people read it," he says. Also, taking out an ad in a larger



Zine extravaganza: Quimby's Bookstore, located at 1854 W. North Ave., caters to all things zine.

publication can help. In 1998, Zander took an ad out in *Alternative Press*, a music magazine, and within a month was receiving \$16 subscription orders from overseas.

To get exposure you have to network, Zander says. He recommends trading your zine with other publishers. "If other zines write about you, do the same for them." And since there are zines like *Zine Guide* (available at Quimby's) dedicated to simply reviewing and cataloging other zines, it's not difficult to find others to contact. Distribution Web sites such as *Stickfigure Distro & Mailorder* ([www.stickfiguredistro.com](http://www.stickfiguredistro.com)) and others on the Internet are resources that can be helpful, too.

"It's useful to get *Zine Guide* and others that do reviews," says Katherine Raz, publisher of Chicago-based *Retail Whore*, a zine full of anecdotes about working in retail. Raz publishes 200 digest-size copies, four times a year. The cost of *Retail Whore* is \$1 on

### Producing a zine is hard work but definitely a labor of love.

the newsstand and \$2 by mail.

Use common sense about where you distribute your zine. For example, it wouldn't make sense to distribute a zine about fetish wear at Target.

In fact, the glory of zines is that they usually stay underground, even if the readership grows to astounding numbers. *M.K. Ultra* had a readership of 10,000 before it went on hiatus in 2000 due to financial reasons. During this time, the zine went online as a full-time publication and posted impressive numbers, with more than 100,000 hits a month. In the spring of 2002, Zander plans to re-launch *M.K. Ultra* in Chicago as a full color, 28-page glossy publication.

Large or small, there's one thing all zines have in common—they're tangible memories. From Zander's plethora of interviews and accounts of hanging out with bands like *KISS* and *Garbage*, to Raz' memories of making out with co-workers in the bathroom, it's fun to go back every once in a while and read an old issue. "There's still stuff in there that makes you laugh," Raz says. "They increase in value—if only to you." □

## Bachelor or Master?

### GRADUATE SCHOOL CAN BE A TOUGH CALL

BY ALLISON CLARK

**D**eciding whether to pursue art and media graduate education can be a difficult decision. It concerns not only money and time but also value. Artists have less clear career paths than engineers or doctors, for example. A master's degree in the arts may or may not be an instant key to success.

Senior Aaron Collins, a photography major at Columbia College Chicago, doesn't think it's necessary to pursue a master's degree. Collins has other plans after graduation. Photo assistant, art director and Web designer are some jobs he's interested in.

"I'd go back to school if my career was not going well," Collins says. "But I would wait a couple of years after graduation." He has a few job leads in San Francisco. A friend who owns a Web site design company might offer Collins a job.

Not many arts and media employers demand a master's. For example, Francine Fields, office manager at WKQX-FM, seeks college graduates with flexibility and attitude.

"A master's would not help or hinder them," Fields says. If an applicant with a master's degree applied for an entry-level position at WKQX, Fields says she would be concerned with how long they planned on staying because they may be overqualified.

Artists and media students go to graduate school for a variety of reasons, ranging from career advancement to a difficult job market. It's a great place for students to mingle with key people in their field because having the right contacts is essential in creative industries.

Rose Economou, a graduate and undergraduate journalism professor at Columbia College, says getting a master's is important now because the economy is in recession. Advanced training gives students a competitive edge, she says.

Arthur Jones, graduate program coordinator at Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design, agrees. "Having a master's degree in



JEREMY LAWSON

It can be difficult to decide if a graduate degree is worth the time and money.

design shows that you are committed to the field," he says.

In Chicago there are a variety of schools that offer art graduate programs, including Columbia College Chicago, the School of the Art Institute, and the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Columbia College offers 18 master's degrees within 10 disciplines including photography, film and video, and creative writing. Admission

**"Having a master's degree in design shows that you are committed to the field."**

—IIT graduate coordinator Arthur Jones

requires a 3.0 undergraduate GPA or above. Tuition is \$413 per credit hour. For more information call (312) 344-7160 or visit [www.colum.edu](http://www.colum.edu).

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago offers an M.F.A. in studio, an M.F.A. in writing, an M.A. and M.S. Admission requirements vary greatly among departments. Applicants must provide a portfolio and a GRE score for graduate admission to certain disciplines. Tuition is \$744 per credit hour. For more information call (312) 899-5100 or visit [www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu).

The Illinois Institute of Technology offers a Master of Design degree and a Ph.D. in design. Admission requires a minimum 3.0 GPA and a minimum GRE score of 1,100. Average tuition is \$11,350 per academic year. For more information call (312) 595-4901 or visit [www.id.iit.edu](http://www.id.iit.edu). □

# Victoria's (Grandma's) Secret

A QUEST FOR THE PERFECT VINTAGE UNDERWEAR BY BRIAHNA GATLIN

You walk into a store and there is a stale smell that makes you want to scratch under your nose. The floors are concrete. The aisles are crowded with old clothes lying on the floor, or hung up, squeezed on a small rack. Some of them have brown stains. Sometimes, since the clothes are so old, the sizes don't match. You spot the underwear section; you look and you look through the lingerie and finally, after an hour of shopping, you find one good garment out of a whole rack.

There are people shopping all around you, bumping into you, pushing against you. The smell gets to your head, you get dizzy and your stomach gets queasy but you want to shop on. The quest continues as you search for that perfect lacy corset from the past.

The history of underwear is woven into the threads of vintage lingerie. One of the earliest undergarments, the corset, dates back to the latter part of the 12th century. Corsets have evolved with women's bodies and the ideal of achieving the proper silhouette. They are just one of the garments that vintage lingerie collectors and wearers search for when sifting through thrift store racks.

Even if you're looking just for fun, finding something old can become something cherished. Frequent vintage shopper Maria Kimble shops at the Gaia Movement located at 1318 N. Milwaukee Ave. She likes to buy glamorous vintage underwear. She has purchased nightgowns, teddies and an elegant silk robe she wears often. She likes vintage underwear because it's comfortable and broken-in. "The only underwear I don't buy are panties," Kimble says.

Maggie Smith, a shopper at The Village Discount Store located at Halsted Street and Diversey Avenue, doesn't buy vintage underwear—at least not to wear. "I would never purchase underwear from a thrift store unless it was spectacular," she says. Smith, who used to work at a thrift store, says that bras and nightgowns were popular, but panties were uncommon.

The low price of some vintage underwear is one reason why people buy and wear the garments.

Betty Syren was spotted with a tape measure around her waist while shopping for bras at The Village. "This is my second time buying a bra from a thrift store," she said as she politely pulled the tape measure from her waist to measure a black lace bra. "The sizes aren't the way they used to be."

She likes to buy bras at vintage stores because they are more reasonably priced than at large department stores. But she always uses a tape measure to double-check the fit.

If you're willing to look, the old-time underwear can be found around town. Stores like Una Mae's Freak Boutique, located at 1422 N. Milwaukee Ave., and Recycle, at 1474 N. Milwaukee Ave., also have small but quality selections of vintage underwear. The garments range in price from \$2 to more than \$300.

Name-brand vintage underwear, collectors items and common pieces can be found online. [Sleeeknchic.com](http://Sleeeknchic.com) and [vintageslips.com](http://vintageslips.com) are two Web sites that specialize in selling vintage lingerie. □

This black lace robe is from the 1960s.



GINA GRAFFOS



GINA GRAFFOS

Vintage corsets fit the best. You can find vintage pieces like this at The Gaia Movement, 1318 N. Milwaukee Ave., for less than \$5.



GINA GRAFFOS

A beautiful vintage robe gives you a look you can't buy new.

# AMERICAN GIRL

# AMERICAN GIRL

BY TRENA EVANS

## CREATING MINI ME AT AMERICAN GIRL PLACE

At American Girl Place, 111 E. Chicago Ave., I'm greeted by mostly white, smiling, zombie faces. All of their wide, glassy eyes are staring at me. After the initial shock of seeing so many faces, I take in the subtle, distinguishing features of those of different races and ethnicities. There's Hispanic, another with Asian features and an African American with fuller lips and a broader nose. They're all safely contained in a glass case. The rest of the walls of the black room encase more than a hundred dramatically lit outfits for them, fashionable ensembles for every occasion, from a ski trip to a slumber party. These are completely fleshed

**"It's like a cult. You come once and it's got you." —shopper Jim Crosswhite**

out constructed worlds. Nothing is left to the imagination.

Middleton, Wis.-based Pleasant Company opened American Girl in 1998. Its mission statement says it aims "to educate and entertain girls with high quality products and experiences that build self-esteem and reinforce positive social and moral values."

"It's certainly something. I'm blown away," said Corina Dootjes, from Canmore, Canada, shopping with her 9-year-old daughter. "We've had a



A mother-and-daughter shopping team eyes American Girl Place's upscale boutique.

great time, but I don't know about this dressing like your doll thing. I mean, the girls seem to love it, but I don't want my daughter to dress like her doll, or to be a doll."

The process of getting a doll to look like you begins by selecting a doll from the glass case. All dolls are of an indeterminate age, probably between 4 and 12 years, with no waists. They're all sort of generic, but there are enough variations in the com-

binations of hair and eye color and facial features that almost any girl can pick one that is like her. Girls then look like their doll or make the doll look like them by wearing similar outfits. Dolls are not crafted to specification.

Everything is very neat, well-maintained and beautifully displayed. In fact, the displays are perhaps the most striking element of all. The glass display cases teach girls it's OK to look but not to touch, encouraging them to cultivate a discerning eye, while generating the desire to buy.

American Girl Place also sells taste — taste of a particular class. The products displayed are high quality and come with a high price tag. Most of the dolls cost around \$85 and each

doll ensemble outfit is about \$25. The girls' clothing costs as much as it does at The Gap. I'm struck by how fashionable and upscale the clothes are—as nice as any in the boutiques on the rest of the Magnificent Mile (Polo, Ann Taylor, Nordstrom, Eddie Bauer.)

American Girl Place not only teaches girls how to shop and dress fashionably, it also cultivates the Martha Stewart in every girl, teaching her how to furnish and decorate her home. She can purchase a "Starter Collection" of a historical doll tableau for \$300, or a "Complete Collection" for \$1,000, the same amount she may drop on a trip to Ikea for her first real apartment.

Beyond products, American Girl Place sells values and creates identities. In an issue of American Girl magazine you may find articles instructing girls how to be good: how to be a good hostess for a slumber party, what kind of hostess gifts to give your guests, how to create special crafts like charm books and how to make peppermint snowmints.

American Girl Place may, as its mission statement says, build the self-esteem of girls, but it does so in very traditional ways—a point highlighted in the rest of that statement that says they aim to "reinforce positive social and moral values."

Making my way out of the store, I spot Jim Crosswhite, a dad with his son, Justin, in the book room—a room that seems to offer a bit of respite for men and boys not wanting to be infected with all things girly. This is his first time here, he tells me, laughing, "But I'm sure we'll be back," referring to his wife and daughter, not Justin, who's clearly restless. "It's like a cult. You come once, and it's got you. You've got to keep bringing them back just to keep them happy." □

# THE GRADUATE SCHOOL



MFA In  
**Architectural  
Studies**

MA In  
**Arts,  
Entertainment  
& Media  
Management**

MFA In  
**Creative  
Writing**

MA In  
**The Teaching  
of Writing**

MA In  
**Dance/Movement  
Therapy**

Graduate Laban  
Certificate in Movement  
Analysis (GLCMA)

MFA In  
**Film and Video**

MA in  
**Interdisciplinary  
Arts**

MFA In  
**Interdisciplinary  
Book & Paper Arts**

MFA In  
**Interior  
Architecture**

MA In  
**Journalism**

MA and MFA In  
**Photography**

MAT in  
**Educational  
Studies**

Elementary Education,  
Interdisciplinary Arts  
Education,  
Urban Teaching

**Columbia College  
Chicago**



For information contact: **The Graduate School Office,**  
Columbia College Chicago, 600 South Michigan Avenue,  
Chicago, Illinois 60605 1996, **312 344 7260.**

E-mail: [gradsch@popmail.colum.edu](mailto:gradsch@popmail.colum.edu) [www.colum.edu/graduate](http://www.colum.edu/graduate)

Columbia admits students without regard to age, race, color, creed, sex, religion, handicap, disability, sexual orientation, and national or ethnic origin.



# Comic Book Couple

THIS PAIR IS AS QUIRKY AS THE CHARACTERS THEY CREATE

BY NATALIE THOMAS

Brian Azzarello and Jill Thompson take a break from their comic books "100 Bullets" and "Scary Godmother" for a quick snuggle at the Subterranean.

TEHRY SCARBROUGH

Getting married on a day when most people are passing out goodies to children dressed as ghosts and goblins is a testament to comic creators Brian Azzarello and Jill Thompson's ghoulish take on the world.

"We eloped to the courthouse," Thompson says. "I've always wanted to get married on Halloween."

It must have been good luck. After six years of marriage, this couple's relationship—and individual careers—have prospered. They both won the Eisner Award, a prize given to writers and artists for excellence in the comic field. And they're on the forefront of the new age of comic books—an evolution from the superhero in spandex to complicated, adult-oriented storylines.

"Comic book storytelling is evolving dramatically," says Len Strazewski, Columbia College journalism professor and retired comic writer of DC Comics "Phantom Lady" and "Justice Society of America." "Jill's Scary Godmother is readable by both the children and adults. It's very clever. Brian has really made a niche for himself with crime comics. These are two people who are on the cutting edge of this evolution."

Azzarello, who is in his late 30s, writes the popular comic series "100 Bullets," about a mysterious agent named Graves who gives untraceable ammunition and a gun to victims of crime. Azzarello is also the writer of Vertigo Comics' long-running series "Hellblazer," about an Englishman

who dabbles in the ancient art of magic.

Thompson, 35, is the writer/artist of "Scary Godmother," the whimsical comic series published by Sirius. The story is about Hannah Marie, a young girl who discovers she has a redheaded witch for a godmother.

"Jill is a brilliant writer and beautiful artist," says fan Steven Piscione. "Her unique style blends perfectly with any type of story. From the darkness of 'Sandman' (a popular comic series for which Thompson served as illustrator) to the playfulness of

**"It's so funny," Azzarello says. "People look at us and ask, 'Are you guys really married?'"**

"Scary Godmother," she brings out the best in it."

Like Thompson, Azzarello has his own legion of fans. "Brian Azzarello is a hard-edged writer. I like his style because it reads more like a movie," says Dennis Kovacs, assistant manager of Comix Revolution in Mount Prospect, Ill. "His work is very direct and makes his point in a good way."

DC Comics refuses to release circulation figures, but Kovacs says that Azzarello's and Thompson's comics are popular. "If we have at least 50 issues of their work, by the end of the week, we have half left over," Kovacs says. "That's good."

Despite the differences in Azzarello's and Thompson's styles, some fans

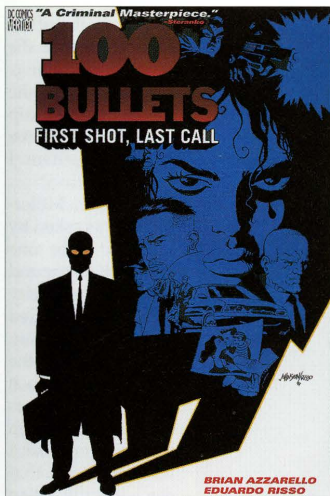
admire them both. "Thompson's writing is more bouncy and fantastic while Azzarello's is grounded and full of the psychological drama and ultrarealism," says Brian Halloway, a computer technician and a fan of the pair. "They're both two of my favorite writers. But I wouldn't put them in the same category at all."

"It's so funny," Azzarello says. "People look at us and ask, 'Are you guys really married?'"

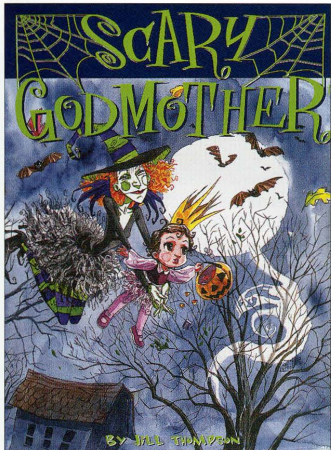
Thompson is a native of Chicago who has made a name for herself illustrating Neil Gaiman's "Sandman." She

is a graduate of the American Academy of Art in downtown Chicago and has spent most of her childhood drawing comics.

Thompson says the idea of "Scary Godmother" came from the birth of her first niece. "I wanted to do something cool for the baby for Halloween," she says. "The Halloween stories at that time were lousy. There was nothing remotely wicked about them. Anyway, I was campaigning pretty hard to be my niece's godmother. So, here I was at the back of the church wearing a black leather motorcycle jacket and platform shoes and my wild red hair. I thought I looked like a 'Scary Godmother.' And that's when the light went on."



Azzarello's aggressive "100 Bullets," (above) and Thompson's whimsical "Scary Godmother" (below) are worlds apart in content but share a legion of devoted fans.



"Scary Godmother" is a tall, red-headed, black-dressed witch who shows Hannah Marie that the monsters hiding in the basement and the skeletons in the closet are friendly creatures, and nothing to be afraid of. The comic series has become a national hit with adults and children alike. Last fall, the series came to life on stage as a children's play at the Athenaeum Studio Theater in Chicago, which ran from Sept. 28, 2001, to Halloween.

"Thompson is one of my favorite writers because of her style," Kovacs

says. "She can write for any age group, which I like."

Azzarello's series, however, is not as charming and innocent. The characters are emotionally scarred people whose lives have been turned upside down by a horrible injustice.

The story of "100 Bullets" was derived from an angry episode that took place on an evening four years ago. "I was in a car with a friend of mine, and a guy cut us off," he says. "I wanted to kill that guy. My friend asked me what if I could. I thought back and forth and suddenly I came up with a guy walking around and he gives you 100 bullets. I thought if there was somebody who really fucked up your life and you have a chance to get back at him, would you do it?"

Although Thompson has been illustrating comics for years, Azzarello only started writing them four years ago. He had been living in Cleveland working as a furniture restorer.

The couple met eight years ago when Thompson was in Cleveland for a comic convention. After the convention, she went to a bar to take a break. "I wanted to meet fun people who were interesting and made me laugh, and then I met Azzarello there," she

**"It's like being a rock star," Thompson says. "The fans are amazing and great, and we're treated like gods."**

says. "We went out a couple of times with a group and I liked him. He drove me home once and we decided we should go out."

In spite of the fact that it was a comic convention that brought them together, now they rarely spend time together when they are working at one. "It's like I have to meet with these people and so does she," Azzarello says. "We're not together, but we know where we are."

The couple says life as comic creators has its rewards. "It's like being a rock star," Thompson says. "The fans are amazing and great, and we're treated like gods."

Sometimes it becomes just another job, Azzarello says. "You work all day, there's nothing to it." In fact, Azzarello is thinking about branching into screenwriting to keep the thrill in his life.

But for now, their lives evolve around the panels. Since they work

together in the comic business, they can relate to each other about certain works they have done, especially with other collaborators.

"When I was an artist for Neil Gaiman there were episodes when he was out of town and he would only send me one page of his work at a time," Thompson says. "It can be frustrating, because for me to draw the panels, I would need the whole script."

Azzarello agrees that delays can be stressful, which can be a downside to a comic star's life. "It's so unfair to the people you collaborate with," he says. "And you don't get paid when that happens."

When they encounter these situations, they vent to each other. They also share story ideas. "I'll usually come home after days of agonizing over an idea I'm stuck on and finally bring it up to Brian," Thompson says. "He'll usually say, 'Oh, this is supposed to happen,' and then the floodgates will open and everything will fall into place."

The couple prefer to work in separate locations. Azzarello works on his stories at home while Thompson works in her own studio on Damen Avenue. "I work the usual 9 to 5 shifts and come home," she says.

Azzarello's schedule is different. "I work at home all day," he says. "But I'm mostly a night person. I have to work by myself. At the end of the day, Jill comes home and it's like, 'What did you do today?' It's a mundane question, but it's the way we are."

It appears that these compromises keep this talent-filled marriage together. Like most marriages, space is needed to maintain a healthy relationship. "Too much time together can create a strain," says Azzarello. "If we're together all the time, it can really drive us crazy."

Thompson agrees. "I work in my own studio, and I can see him at night. We're no Linda and Paul McCartney. I don't know how they did it 24/7. But for us, we know that you can bitch and moan about the hard day you've had with somebody who hasn't had that hard day. In our case, we know exactly what it's like." □

# A Diva in the Making

## NATIONAL TOUR LAUNCHES AISHA MILLER-LEAKE'S SINGING CAREER

BY KARLA BORDERS

On the sultry evening of July 1, 2001, in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., singer Aisha Miller-Leake was overcome with excitement and fear as she gazed into the sea of anxious faces while a blaring bass boomed from the surrounding massive speakers. The show was about to begin.

A thought of "Will they like us?" quickly crossed her mind, but not for long. A god-like voice bellowed: "Introducing Syleena Johnson," and she took her place as a backup singer behind the star.

For Miller-Leake, 24, being on the 40-city TP2.com tour was her first taste of fame. She sang backup for the soulful Jive Records recording artist Syleena Johnson. R&B sensation and Grammy Award-winner R. Kelly headlined and was joined by two additional acts. The tour lasted about two months.

A 5-foot-7-inch, slender Miller-Leake is a determined woman from Danville, Ill. After singing backup on a national tour, she is one step closer to achieving her goal. She wants to be a musical diva like Whitney Houston and hopes the experience will propel her to stardom.

"I was so nervous the first night because we knew that most, if not all, of the people were there to see R. Kelly," Miller-Leake says. "We knew Syleena was great, but we didn't know what to expect because she is still considered a new artist."

Born and raised in Danville (120 miles south of Chicago), Miller-Leake is the second-oldest of three children.



JEREMY LAWSON

Waiting in the wings: Singer Aisha Miller-Leake (above) hopes to become the next R&B superstar in the music industry.

She grew up singing in the choir at her father's Baptist church in Danville. While in high school, she sang in a gospel group with her brother, Everett, and sister, LaToya. The three were hoping to sign with

Lauderdale, Fla. "[R. Kelly] actually introduced himself to us, like we did not know who he was. He was cool," she says.

Like so many others who have gone on tours, Miller-Leake agrees it's

**"I'm sure the next time you interview me, it will be after I am signed to a major label." —singer Aisha Miller-Leake**

Capitol Records, but things did not work out. She is now the only family member singing professionally.

When she's not on the road with Johnson, Miller-Leake lives in Calumet City, Ill., with her husband, Christopher. He is a graphic designer she met in college in 1995.

Miller-Leake met Syleena Johnson in 1997 while majoring in music business at Illinois State University in Normal, Ill. "We weren't best of friends in college, but we knew each other from being in some of the same music courses," she says. "I only knew her for

not all fun and games. "I didn't realize how much work went into making a tour successful. Being on tour was great, but it did have its downfalls," she says. "Singing every night puts a strain on your vocal cords. It was also hard being away from Chris for such a long period of time."

The couple talked on the phone every night and Christopher traveled with the tour to some cities when he had the opportunity. Miller-Leake said her husband was extremely supportive and understanding. "Being away from Aisha was difficult

about half of a semester before she was signed to Jive. She told me she might need backup singers, and three years later, here I am."

In 2001, Miller-Leake was asked by Johnson to be one of two background singers for a 10-city tour that preceded the TP2.com tour. She accepted the offer. "It had been almost three years since I had spoken with Syleena, so I was shocked that she actually called me back and offered me the job," she says.

Ironically, Miller-Leake did not meet R. Kelly (the man who sang, wrote and produced the inspirational hit, "I Believe I Can Fly") until a week after their first show in Fort

because she is my best friend," Christopher says.

Eating greasy fast food while traveling and sleeping in some of the finest hotels became standard for Miller-Leake. Gourmet food was provided at the venues where they performed. Eating fast food was so customary that when she was served healthy food, it was not appetizing. She recalls a time when the cooks prepared an extravagant meal: "It was some nasty food like baked salmon and other things that we really didn't want to eat," she says. "We were like, 'Where's the real food?'"

Riding on a tour bus across the country was what Miller-Leake always aspired to do; she just didn't know that it would happen so suddenly. "I've been singing all my life, so it really hasn't been an overnight accomplishment, but it still shocks me that I was asked to be a part of that tour so fast," she says.

She has every right to be amazed at how quickly her career has progressed in such a short period of time. Randy Scott, Jive Records' A&R coordinator, says, "Nobody becomes a star overnight; it takes some people years before they are even released to the public."

Miller-Leake also is working on becoming a solo star. She has a demo containing some R&B songs, including some she wrote, that she shipped directly after the tour to record companies and people she met.

Networking opportunities were some of the perks of being on a high-profile tour. She met artists such as rapper Jay-Z, the legendary Ronald Isley, and others. "I met so many people who are in the business who have told me to give them my demo, but I'll see who was being honest and not just talking," says Miller-Leake.

"I'm sure that the next time you interview me, it will be after I am signed to a major label. I know that you'll be hearing from me soon," Miller-Leake says with a sly smile.

Having prepared for the industry at college, Miller-Leake knows no one is promised a successful career. "In this business you can be here today and gone tomorrow in a blink of an eye," she says. "But the knowledge I gained on tour was more than I could have ever gained if I had not gone." □

## Spring/Summer 2002 Theater Listings

WHEN TELEVISION RERUNS GET OLD, CHECK OUT CHICAGO'S PERFORMANCE THEATERS

BY ALLISON CLARK

### Steppenwolf Theatre Company

Phone: (312) 335-1650; Tickets: \$10-\$40

Steppenwolf features four stages including Mainstage, Studio Theater, the Garage, and Arts Exchange. Actors such as Gary Sinise, John Malkovich, and John Mahoney have performed there.

Mainstage:

"The Royal Family"

April 18 through June 16. This 1917 comedy is about the Cavendishes, the first family of the American stage.

"Purple Heart"

July 5 through Aug. 15. Written by Bruce Norris, the play follows a Vietnam War widow.

### The Goodman Theater

Phone: (312) 443-3800; Tickets: \$45  
In 1999, Goodman's "Death of a Salesman," starring Brian Dennehy, received four Tony Awards.

"The Beard of Avon"

April 19 through May 15. Writer Amy Freed's character takes a look at how to break into show business.

"Galileo, Galilei"

June 14 through July 18. This opera on Galileo is directed by Mary Zimmerman and composed by Philip Glass.

### Stage Left Theater

Phone: (773) 883-8830; Tickets: \$15  
The theater celebrates its 10th anniversary with the series "Most Legal: Heating up the Headlines." The plays feature social and political issues.

"The Good Woman of Setzuan"

April 16 through May 15. This Bertolt Brecht play follows a prostitute's attempt to be moral under economic strife.

### eta Creative Arts Foundation

Phone: (773) 751-3955; Tickets: \$15  
Performing plays for both children and adults, eta has produced more than 150 productions of new works



The Steppenwolf Theatre is featuring Francis Guinan, Amy Morton and Laurie Metcalf in the upcoming season.

by African-American writers.

"Stoops"

March 7 through April 11. Written by Charles Michael Moore, the play follows the life of four friends through childhood to adulthood.

"Father & Son Night"

May 1 through June 16. A father struggles to explain life to his gang-member son.

"One Monkey Don't Stop No Show"

June 17 through Aug. 11. A romantic comedy about the tribulations of love.

### About Face Theater

Phone: (773) 549-3190; Tickets: \$11-\$15

The theater examines history and experiences through gay and lesbian lives. Tony Award-winner Joe Mantello and Jim Grimsley, the author of "Dream Boy," are featured this season.

"Fascination"

March 18 through May 19. This play experiences the mind of serial killer Randall Bartelman.

"About Face Youth Theater"

June 17 through July 18. This compilation includes interviews, personal stories, and testimonials from minorities. □

JEREMY LAWSON

# Livin' La Vida Habibi

**THE BANDOLEROS' SPICEY MIX OF MIDDLE-EASTERN AND LATIN SOUNDS HEATS UP THE CLUB SCENE**

BY MARAL KARAGOZIAN

**H**a-bi-bi, ha-bi-bi," chants a Thursday night crowd at Déjà Vu Bar Room, a cozy club with a small dance floor at 2624 N. Lincoln Ave., in Chicago. The Bandoleros, a band known for its fusion of Latin and Middle-Eastern music, fiddle with their instruments between songs. The seven band members, all casually dressed with rock-star accents of leather and bandannas, are on stage against an orange wall. They look down at their multi-cultural fans—Latinos, Indians, Middle Easterners, African Americans and Asians—and smile. They know that most of the chanters probably don't even understand the meaning of the Arabic title of their most requested song, "Habibi." Yet they all come to

**"I keep coming back to see them because I love the energy the music gives."**

—fan Carlo Oliveri

dance to the Bandoleros' exotic and spicy sound, which is as diverse as their fans.

The musical style comes from a fusion of the band's two main cultural backgrounds, Latin and Middle-Eastern, seasoned with a little bit of African and Western. All the members of the band are from the Middle East except for the keyboardist, Federico D'Antoni, who was born in Argentina. Wesam Isho, Ashoor Isho, Suham Isho, Johnny Shabander, Ferris Horems and Wayne Aoraha were all born in Iraq, and immigrated to the United States to avoid a mandatory military draft.

While in Iraq, they experimented with music from their Assyrian culture, but they individually ventured

into other cultural sounds including Spanish, Italian and Greek.

D'Antoni studied music in Argentina and came to the United States to continue his studies in Boston. It wasn't until they all met in Chicago that they formed the Bandoleros. Wesam Isho and Shabander, the two singers, started the band in 1994 and invited the other members to create the ethnic hybrid.

The band's early influences were the Gypsy Kings, whose music they modeled. "The world loves the Gypsy Kings...the rhythm grabs any nationality," Wesam Isho says.

The recipe for the Bandoleros' sound is a romantic flamenco guitar rhythm (like the Gypsy Kings) played by Ashoor and Suham Isho, mixed with a pulsating rumba drumbeat by Aoraha, Horems and Wesam Isho. D'Antoni writes the Spanish lyrics and translates them for

the other members. Then they blend the Spanish and Arab lyrics to be sung by Shabander and Isho in their raspy, passionate voices. "Music is a different language. It's made so you don't concentrate on the words, but on the feeling," says Wesam Isho. "The reaction from the music is to make you dance."

It works. "I keep coming back to see them because I love the energy the music gives," says 23-year-old fan Carlo Oliveri. "Though I don't usually dance, I do when I hear these guys play."

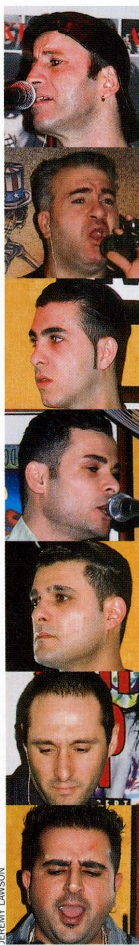
The band has played all over Chicago at clubs such as Madbar, Pasha, Voyeur and many others. They started playing for private parties, and eventually made it onto the stage at the Taste of Chicago. "We have played about 5,000 shows," Shabander says. They reached this level of success with hard work and passion for their music. The band is their full-time job. "I don't want to do anything else," Shabander says.

Their first CD, "Habibi," has a few songs previously recorded by other artists such as the title track "Habibi" which earned Amr Diab—the Arab equivalent of Ricky Martin—a Grammy Award. In addition, there are originals that integrate the two worlds, such as "Sol de Babilonia" ("The Sun of Babylon") and "Rhumba de Arabia" ("Arab Rumba").

The band is currently working on their second CD, which "has a lot more Western influence," Shabander says. With the second CD they hope to please their current fans as well as attract new ones. According to one admirer, Linda Hagopian, their fan base is growing. "Every time I come see them, there is less room to dance on the floor," she says.

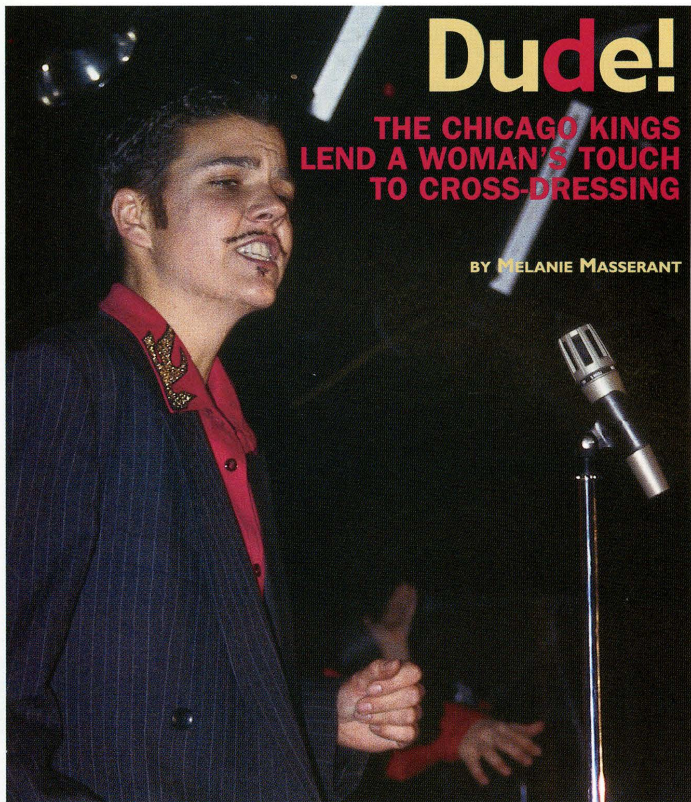
At the end of the night the band prepares to play their last song. The melting-pot crowd on the dance floor waits enthusiastically, for they know the song will be "Habibi." The band is hot and tired, but the crowd's excitement urges them on. Though the crowd may not know what "Habibi" is, the band knows that they can feel the song's meaning. "Habibi," in Arabic means "my love."

For more information about the Bandoleros, and a schedule of performances, visit [www.Bandoleros.com](http://www.Bandoleros.com). □



BERNIE LAWSON

From top: Johnny Shabander, Wesam Isho, Ashoor Isho, Suham Isho, Ferris Horems, Federico D'Antoni, Wayne Aoraha.



Chicago King Maxx Hollywood struts his stuff at Circuit's Halloween ball.

Chip Starlight's leisure suit accentuates his '70s swinger style. He has that slimy, come-hither stare that screams out, "Want another drink, baby? Your place or mine?" Women who encounter him are torn between revulsion and amazement. They are like gapers staring at a car wreck—they want to look away but can't. But that doesn't put out Chip because he's smooth and has the moxy of a king. A Chicago King, that is.

The 20-member Chicago Kings claims to be the city's first and only female drag group. According to their handbook, a drag king assumes a male persona by looking, acting and dressing like a man. To perform as one, they must convincingly dance and lip-sync songs by male performers. The men they imitate range from Buddy Holly to Ricky Martin.

Entertaining is the group's ultimate goal. Their performances create

an anything-goes community that accepts different gender and sexual orientations. They encourage audiences to step beyond the spectator's

**"We advertise this as a drag king party, not just a drag king show where you go to a performance."**

—founding member Debbie Linn

realm and get involved in the show.

"We advertise this as a drag king party, not just a drag king show where you go to a performance," says Debbie Linn, one of the group's founding members. "You're a part of the whole evening. We want you to feel involved."

The lack of many lesbian-focused events in the city sparked the group's formation. In May 2001 they staged their first show for 300 people at Jack's Tap, located in the West Loop.

The show's success put them in high demand: In 2001 they hosted a Halloween ball at Circuit, collaborated with drag queens in the annual charity event "Night of 1,000 Drag Queens" and feature monthly performances around the city.

However, the response is not always happy and gay. Recently, the Drag Kings performed in New York with other female drag troupes from around the country. Before the performance a British news program asked to film them meandering around New York's bustling streets. They agreed. Unfortunately, the experience was not what they anticipated.

"The show's host wasted her time asking the public 'What do you think of these drag kings? What would you do if your sister looked like this?' It seemed like she just didn't get us," says Sam Bryer, who performs as Mr. Izzy Big and is one of the group's founders. "Everything about it seemed forced. It didn't go off as everyone expected. I think even the host was disappointed and didn't know why because she probably thought she had all these great ideas and we did not do them right. None of us are actors. We are entertainers. That comes out of us being natural."

The most candid interactions between the Drag Kings and curious people generally occur when they are in drag before or after a show. In New York, a man came to them and said, "You almost had me." He was curious about everything, from why

they were cross-dressing to how they applied facial hair.

In fact, the facial hair is the key to the final metamorphosis. And when the feminine Jessica, who is also an actress, puts on her hair to become Chip Starlight, she says a mental transformation occurs simultaneously with the physical.

"I don't know what happens," she jokes. "The last few times I've performed as Chip I felt as if he were living inside me." □

# Divine Inspiration

**CHICAGO  
ICONOGRAPHER  
MELTEM AKTAS  
SHARES HER JOURNEY  
THROUGH HER LIFE  
AND HER ART**

BY SHANNON McENTEE

Nestled in a quiet, tree-lined street in southeast Rogers Park sits a two-story home surrounded by shrubs and a white picket fence. When the doorbell rings, a petite woman dressed in black answers. She is Chicago iconographer Meltem Aktas. Smiling, she unlatches her gate, welcoming you in her Turkish accent.

First, she leads you through a garden, a botanical oasis in the middle of the city. A gray stone birdbath gurgles with water. Birds chirp as the mid-morning sun shines down on leaves of various oranges, reds and browns.

Walking inside the house the musky smell of burning incense entices you. The soft sounds of a woman's voice waft through the room from a hidden stereo. Brightly colored Persian rugs and exotic fabrics grace the interior, with candles placed strategically throughout. Aktas' work covers the walls: paintings of saints draped in cloaks and robes of rich, lavish colors.

She sits propped upon a plush, royal purple pillow, sips her tea, and begins to talk of her life and her art.

"Art is not only making something beautiful. It can take you to different places," Aktas, 37, says. Born in Turkey and raised a Muslim, she now creates icons, an art form rooted in Christian tradition.

Icons have been created for about 1,500 years. According to the Grove



Meltem Aktas sits in her studio with one of her pieces, a depiction of Christ's crucifixion.

Dictionary of Art, "An icon becomes a living reality when the painter, through prayer and research, realizes the divine within himself." A tangible version of scripture, icons are stories taken from the Bible and made visible on a panel. Seen as God's instrument, the artists do not sign their names to their pieces.

Aktas grew up in Mardin, a city on the border of Syria and Iraq. "The sun

**"Art is not only making something beautiful. It can take you to different places." —artist Meltem Aktas**

was this warm, reddish-golden color that would reflect off the hills and stone buildings. Seen from the valley, the sunset was breathtaking," she says.

A community of many cultures, Mardin was unlike most cities in the Middle East. In fact, Aktas lived next to a Greek Orthodox monastery. "Mardin had a desert-like climate and

the monastery had trees inside its courtyard. I would look down from my balcony and see all the green and spy on the monks. As a child I was just fascinated with this magical place," she says.

Aktas comes from a small family. She had one older brother, but often felt like an only child. Her mother took care of the family; her father was a judge who also wrote law books.

Aktas says her favorite part of the day was when her dad came home from work. "I was always so happy to see him. He spoiled me and paid attention to me. He still does," she says.

Since her only brother was 10 years older than she, they didn't spend much time together. Instead, she was always looking for ways to entertain herself. Drawing and sculpting became daily activities. "I would

play with clay all day and make animals that I would later line up on the window sill."

Even at the age of 5, the people around her noticed her artistic talent. "When I was in kindergarten my teacher wanted to talk to my parents," she says. "I was really scared because I thought I was in trouble. They went to school and she told them that I was

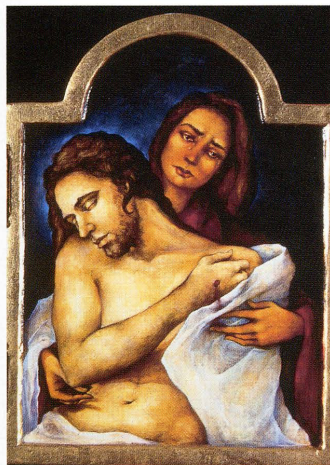
**"She goes to a place where a lot of artists won't by trying to convey the presence of God and spirituality in our everyday lives." —business partner Joseph Malham**

really talented in art and they should nurture and encourage it. That was all it took. That's how it started."

Dubbed the local Picasso by her classmates, Aktas went on to excel at art in high school and later at Mimar Sinan University in Turkey where she earned a master's degree in fine arts.

What she didn't find, however, was an outlet for her art once she graduated. In Islam, creating a human image is considered God's work. As Iranian novelist Gelareh Asayesh wrote, "...those architects of mosques who abstained from images of earthly life, decorating their work

**This painting, called a traveling icon, is small enough to carry.**



COURTESY OF MELTEM AKTAS

with geometric shapes that they believed freed the soul to slip from its worldly moorings."

Though exposure and knowledge of painting was limited, Aktas' desire to learn about it was not. In 1988, after completing her education in Turkey, Aktas joined her brother, a physics professor at Kansas State University.

Upon arriving in the United States she stayed with her brother in Kansas for six months. After being accepted to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, she moved again.

She enrolled in the student-at-large program and began her journey into the world of painting. "I wanted to learn the language and be close to a museum where I could observe the art directly. That is why the Art Institute was an ideal place for me," she says.

It is there that she had her first experience painting an icon. "I wanted something that would challenge me and was a completely different style," she says. That something turned out to be Saint Marina, the daughter of a monk whose mother had died and whose father then joined a monastery with younger daughter in tow.

Aktas' experience with this painting helped draw her further down her spiritual path.

"If you look at the broad spectrum, I don't see the difference. I call it Christ, somebody calls it Allah and someone calls it Buddha. What is most important is that we are drawn to love of a higher being."

Despite her ecumenical approach, she does not feel isolated from her Muslim family. "My family has a very special place in my heart. I take this particular journey alone, but I have a lot of people around me to share with," she says.

Aktas has her own company, Imago Sacred Images, through which clients commission her work. Currently she is working on "Saints of America" for St. Barnabas church in Chicago. It is a series of six icons, each standing five feet high and



COURTESY OF MELTEM AKTAS

**Aktas brings scripture to life in her icons, like this one of St. Peter.**

approximately 36 inches wide.

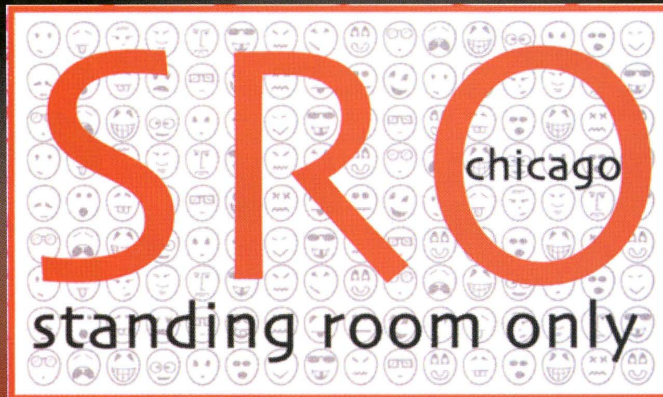
Richard Rayho is Director of Liturgy and Music at St. Barnabas. He says that Aktas was the only iconographer he considered. "I was drawn by her attention to detail and design. I wanted something that was aesthetically pleasing, and having seen her other work I knew she could offer that."

The piece will take one year to complete and is the first shrine to the American saints in the United States. The first installation was of St. Elisabeth Seaton on January 1, 2002.

"Meltem believes in the sacred, in the divine, and that makes her unique. She goes to a place where a lot of artists won't by trying to convey the presence of God and spirituality in our everyday lives," says Joseph Malham, Aktas' business partner.

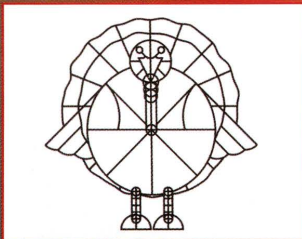
Aktas, on the other hand, insists that she is nothing but ordinary. "I really try to follow a prayerful path and be committed to do my best and to ask God to guide me. But in no way do I feel that I am an exceptional person, nor do I think I am God's chosen person. I believe that we are all gifted with something. And making use of those gifts makes a difference." □





**610 S. Dearborn  
Chicago, IL 60605  
312.360.1776**

***"Best fast food in the south loop."***



**HOME OF THE TURKEY BURGER.**

homemade soup

turkey chili

char chicken salad

SRO burger

cajun/bbq chicken

grilled veggie burger

veggie kabob

hummus

falafel

**hours**

**monday-friday**

**11 a.m. - 9 p.m.**

**saturday**

**11:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.**

Vellum

Georgian

Paints



Liquitex®

REMBRANDT

Rulers



Pencils

Clay

Canvas



Acetate



ARCHES®

Paper

**Brudno Art Supply**

Chicago's Premier Source for Art & Drafting Supplies for 75 Years.

700 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago P 312.294.4100 F 312.341.1345

A photograph of a liquor store bar. The shelves are filled with various bottles of liquor, and there are festive decorations like string lights and garlands. A person is visible behind the bar. The overall atmosphere is warm and inviting.

Listen up. Echo scoured the city  
for something new, and we found  
19 fresh places for the jaded  
Chicago hipster.

# Hush Hush

BY KATHERINE RAZ

PHOTOS BY JEREMY LAWSON

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY  
DAVID ARTER AND BRYAN SCHILLO

Regulars sit and sip at Rite Liquors, a two-in-one bar and carry-out liquor store on Division Street.

**P**sst. You're boring. Week after week you go to the same restaurants, the same bars, the same neighborhoods. But we've covered your Saturday night, your new haircut, some great drinking holes and punk shows, where to rent, where to eat, and where to take Mom when she wants a fun weekend in Chicago. So next time you go out, head for one of Echo's secret spots. You'll be glad we couldn't keep our big mouths shut.

### Hero's Submarine Sandwiches, Inc.

3600 N. Western Ave.

(773) 327-6363

Monday-Saturday 9:30 a.m.-10 p.m.

Sunday 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Located across the street from the mammoth Lane Tech High School, Hero's looks like a toolshed in comparison. In its 39th year of operation, Hero's is the place to grab an excellent, affordable sandwich. There are no dine-in tables; Hero's is strictly cash and carry. Order from a menu of basic subs (turkey, ham, salami, roast beef, etc.) and split.

**Tip:** The Italian cold cuts are recommended.



A Hero's Submarine employee prepares another delicious sandwich.

### Edna's

3175 W. Madison St.

(773) 638-7079

Tuesday-Sunday 6 a.m.-9 p.m.

Closed Mondays

At 6 p.m. Edna's bustles with men coming off the day shift, pulling off their hats and leaning back on the stools at the counter. They're watching the small television or chatting with Edna, wearing her thick-framed glasses and folding napkins. Dusty rose wallpaper and tall exotic plants surround patrons in vinyl booths. Edna's specialty is soul food—collard greens, grits, fried okra, chitlerlings and biscuits. But the entire menu is enriched with the home-cooked flavor that goes into those traditional African-American meals. Breakfast is served all day, as is hot, fresh coffee and homemade pastries. The dinner menu offers everything from a BLT to catfish and spaghetti.

**Tip:** This place isn't for dieters so get something from the "Deep Fried" menu and add some delicious sides.

### The Nervous Center

4612 N. Lincoln Ave.

(773) 728-5010

Tuesday-Thursday 5 p.m.-2 a.m.

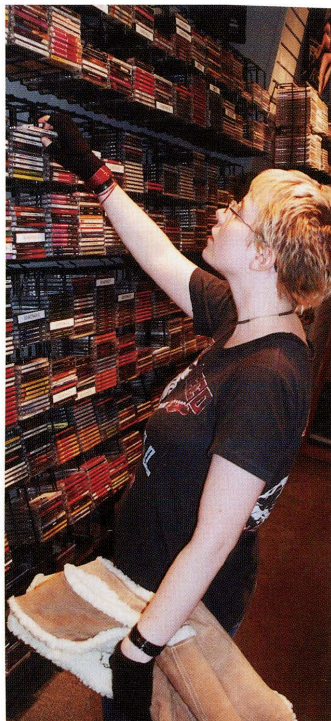
Saturday-Sunday noon-2 a.m.

Closed Monday

The Nervous Center is the one place in Chicago where you can sit on a big, comfy couch, chat with your friends over a latte and not feel like you're in an episode of "Friends." It's like somebody's basement, complete with board games and a (somewhat leftist) book collection.

The bar serves the usual coffee-house fare: tea, coffee however you take it, and soup. You can usually check out a punk show downstairs—generally a grubby local band. Sometimes the crowd gets rowdy; most times people drape themselves over three long benches to take in the atmosphere and the tunes.

**Tip:** Stay upstairs and read from the large selection of magazines and enjoy the music—which you can still hear loud and clear from the basement.



Katherine Raz trades her old CDs for a new one at The Music Recyclery at 856 W. Belmont Ave.

### The Music Recyclery

856 W. Belmont Ave.

(773) 929-9791

(multiple locations)

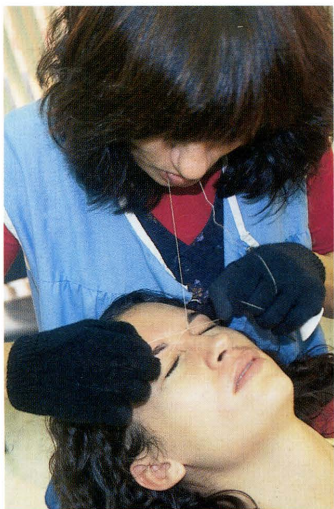
Monday-Thursday 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

Friday-Saturday 10 a.m.-11 p.m.

Sunday noon-8 p.m.

Music Recyclery buys back any CD, no matter how lame it is, even if it has a scratch. It looks just like Disc-Go-Round or any other generic used CD, DVD and video merchant. But unlike those places, the Music Recyclery will always buy back singles and damaged discs for 10 cents, and you can pawn off embarrassing titles for no less than a quarter (sometimes 50 cents). If the Recyclery won't buy it, you'd better just throw it away.

**Tip:** Get the duds (Who is Jimmy Ray?) out of your collection and use the trade value (usually 33% more than cash) to buy a new CD or movie in the store.



Eyebrows away! Melanie Masserant goes beyond plucking at Dipti's, where eyebrow threading is all the rage.

### Dipti's

2734 W. Touhy Ave.  
(773) 465-3737

Monday-Saturday 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m.  
Closed Sunday

Leaning over a customer's eyebrows with a white spool, a piece of thread in her mouth and a twisted length between her fingers, Dipti removes unwanted hair in a very unique way: with quilting thread. With the precision of 20 years' practice she catches each individual hair between the threads and—yank!—the hair is gone. Eyebrow threading is fairly painless and a deal at just \$6.

Other hair removal is done with wax. Dipti does henna tattoos, facial waxing and massage, full body waxes (\$125) and all combinations of limb waxes. Despite the stark retail space (white-tile floor and brown wood paneling, two barber chairs facing a wall-to-wall mirror), she has a loyal, fervent clientele—everyone who walks in the door ("Hi Dipti!") knows her.

**Tip:** Get there after 2 p.m. when it slows down, but you'll have to take a number—literally. And be forewarned: Fights have broken out between catty would-be pluckees for offenses like cutting in line.

### Chicago Peace Museum

100 N. Central Park Ave.  
(773) 638-6450

Tuesday-Friday 1 p.m.-5 p.m.  
Saturday by appointment only

Talk about good things in small packages, The Chicago Peace Museum is not much larger than a high school classroom, but it is the only museum in the world dedicated to the cause of world peace.

The exhibit space is so small that not all of the artwork, poetry and photographs can be shown at once, so they are rotated every few months. Exhibits range from the Vietnam War and nuclear bombs to hand-penned lyrics by U2's Bono and John Lennon's acoustic guitar. Suggested donation is \$3.

**Tip:** Make an appointment on Saturday and get a personal tour.

### Truckstop Audio

2255 S. Michigan Ave. #4W  
(312) 326-5580

By appointment only

Truckstop Audio provides a comfortable and leisurely recording environment at affordable rates. They start at \$250 for a full 10-hour day of recording. Package rates are also available.

They have mastering facilities available with the help of engineer Dave Pavkovic. The studio has gear and instruments available in-house, including numerous pianos, a Wurlitzer organ, guitar and bass amplifiers, drums, basses, percussion, keyboards and melodica.

Past clients of Truckstop Audio have included Joan of Arc, The Nerves, Chicago Underground Duo, We Ragazzi and Tallulah. "We don't discriminate against any type of project," says Peter Andreadis, one of Truckstop's head engineers, "from demos to albums, singles, whatever people want to do."

**Tip:** Make a day out of it if at the studio; they have a pool table, a kitchen, fridge, a stove, even a shower.

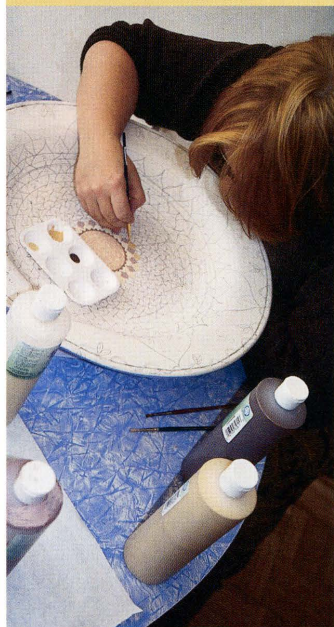
### Glazed Expressions

3339 N. Lincoln Ave.  
(773) 665-4072

Tuesday&Thursday noon-10 p.m.  
Wednesday noon-8 p.m.  
Friday & Sunday noon-6 p.m.  
Saturday 11 a.m.-7 p.m.  
Closed Monday

Glazed Expressions lets you pick out an unfinished piece of pottery and decorate it using the store's paints and brushes. People paint all kinds of things: saucers, mugs, teapots, dog dishes, garden animals and Christmas ornaments. Finished pieces are decorated with pastel swirls, bright geometric shapes, names, dates and even poetry. Pottery prices range from \$4 to \$80, and the studio time is \$8 an hour. But on "Friends" Night, patrons paint while watching NBC's Thursday-night lineup and get three hours for the price of one. Glazed Expressions also does private parties.

**Tip:** Take mom here when she visits the city—or on Mother's Day.



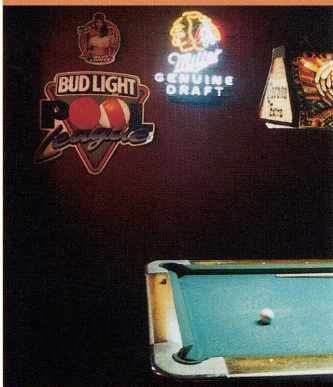
Customers paint their own pottery for an hourly fee at Glazed Expressions.

## Video Matic

8718 S. Cicero Ave. (708) 425-5526  
Monday-Sunday 11 a.m.-10 p.m.

Video Matic is a film buff's wet dream. Like those corner video stores in the 1980s that had nifty names like "Railroad Video" and "Classic Sounds & Video," Video Matic has some of the most classic, bizarre and underrated movies, the kind at which Blockbuster would scoff. The store is a maze of rooms, each filled with shelves stocked with hundreds of films. Movie posters (like "Back to the Future") cover the walls. It's easy to find a dozen films you're hoping to rent, but don't forget, at Video Matic titles are always due back the next day.

**Tip:** Tuesday and Thursday rentals (normally \$3) are half price.



Regulars frequent Carol's Pub to drink, dance and shoot pool.

## Carol's Pub, Inc.

4659 N. Clark St. (773) 334-2402  
Friday-Sunday 11 a.m.-4 a.m.  
Weekday hours vary

Don't expect to find any swinging hipsters here, nor the Dixie Chicks' brand of country either. Carol's clientele are the real deal. They're here to drink, dance and listen to Johnny Cash, Hank Williams and Patsy Cline. On Monday, Carol's serves up 50-cent draughts (that's usually Old Style and Budweiser). Thursday features karaoke from 9 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. and Friday and Saturday feature live country music.

**Tip:** Get there early on Thursday to dominate karaoke.

## Comic Asylum

8506 S. Cicero Ave. (708) 499-2250  
Tuesday-Thursday 3 p.m.-8 p.m.  
Friday 3 p.m.-7 p.m.  
Saturday 1 p.m.-6 p.m.  
Sunday noon-5 p.m.  
Closed Monday

You can't miss the owner's thin, 6-foot, balding frame or his eternally bloodshot eyes. He barks colorful four-letter words at Punisher posters that fall off the wall, and if you mention KISS, he'll jabber on for hours about how hard it is to find a copy of "KISS Meets the Phantom." At the Asylum you stand a good chance of coming across a rare back issue, an old poster or a rare Spider Man, Silver Surfer or X-Men figurine, or overhear lewd conversations (say, about sexual encounters in jacuzzis and how to control an erection against the jet-stream.)

**Tip:** Make sure the owner's white Camaro is parked outside before going in—otherwise your visit isn't complete.

## King Solomon's Mines

1207 W. 63rd St.  
Daily 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

King Solomon's Mines is across the street from a currency exchange, just east of Rothschild Discount Liquors on 63rd. It's not exactly the place you'd expect to find an African-American community center. There are no flashy window gimmicks and no warming "welcome" displays in the door frame. A sign and some black, green, yellow and red paint is all you get.

But inside, patrons experience something intense. There's the meeting room, a modest space that is part basement-chic and part shrine to African-American culture. This is where everything happens, like musical performances and guest speakers. In the small shop next door you'll find clothes, jewelry, cocoa butter soap, oil and incense, all handmade by local artisans. You can't leave this place empty-handed or with an empty mind.

**Tip:** Check out the scheduled guest speakers at King Solomon's. When you're there, ask to see the calendar of upcoming events.



Nostalgia rules at Quake Collectibles, located at 4628 N. Lincoln Ave.

## Quake Collectibles

4628 N. Lincoln Ave. (773) 878-4288  
Wednesday-Friday 1-6 p.m.  
Saturday 12-6 p.m.  
Sunday 12-5 p.m.

Think of any toy you played with as a child: He-Man, Care Bears, My Little Pony. Remember that Luke Skywalker figurine you lost at the grocery store? Quake Collectibles has it, and in gross quantities. This tiny storefront in Lincoln Square is filled head-to-foot with kitsch and collectible nostalgia. They've got everything from unwrapped MacFarlane "Spawn" toys to plush Simpsons dolls and a Farrah Fawcett make-up set.

**Tip:** Buy four "Star Wars" collectible plastic figurines for just \$10. Quake has buckets full.

## "Survive This!" Improv @ the Bailiwick Theater

1229 W. Belmont Ave.  
(773) 883-1090  
Friday at 10:30 p.m.

"Survive This!" is the Chicago-area improv show that can get reality-television fans off the couch. Every Friday from 10:30 p.m. until just after midnight, the 12-member Survive This! improv troupe square off against each other, all trying to "stay alive," by not getting voted off the show by audience members. Just like reality television, once a cast member is kicked off he's gone for good (that means the whole season). Hijinks ensue and fans of live improv theater are treated to a show unlike any other.

**Tip:** BYOB.

## Why Knot Concept Salon

851 W. Randolph St. (312) 421-6580  
Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-7:30 p.m.  
Saturday 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
closed Sunday

Unlike your typical unisex salon, Why Knot smells of sandalwood incense, not perm solution. This West Loop warehouse district storefront is decorated with plants and hanging rugs, room dividers and an enormous Hot Wheels collection.

Why Knot will perm or relax hair, but owners Jamal West and Kenyatta Mitchell always stress the benefits of natural styling, without chemicals. They also sell natural hair products like carrot oil. The cost of your 'do depends on what you want. Small braids can run you \$100 or more, twists from \$65 to \$85, and corn rows \$45.

The stylists work with hair of all colors and textures. Walk-in cuts and trims are welcome, but if you're considering a more elaborate style, call first to schedule a consultation.

**Tip:** Check out the hip merchandise—Why Knot sells cool bags and sexy ladies' T-shirts.



Do the 'do at the Why Knot Concept Salon, where hair twists like this start at \$45.

## Rite Liquors

1649 W. Division Ave.  
(773) 486-6257  
Monday-Thursday 7 a.m.-1 a.m.  
Friday 7 a.m.-2 a.m.  
Saturday 7 a.m.-3 a.m.  
Sunday 11 a.m.-1 a.m.

Rite's got a formula that can't be beat: a bar inside a liquor store. Okay, so this place is seedy, as the toothless regulars ogle most girls under the age of 40 as they approach the bar to order a drink. But the beer is cheap and the take-out selection is killer.

**Tip:** Save Rite for your last stop of the night so you won't have to hit the liquor store on the way home for your after-party.

## Record Breakers

1588 W. Algonquin Road  
(847) 359-7544  
Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-10 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Sunday 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Record Breakers has a huge selection of used music (an entire wall filled from top to bottom with CDs and a separate room filled with vinyl). But the kicker is Record Breakers' punch card, one punch for every ten bucks you spend. Get 20 punches and your card transforms into a \$20 bill, good on anything in the store. You can't beat that.

**Tip:** Bring some crackers to feed the pet parrot.

## Hidden Cove Karaoke

5338 N. Lincoln Ave.  
(773) 275-3955  
Monday-Sunday 11 a.m.-4 a.m.

Every night at approximately 7 p.m. (unless there's a football game) Hidden Cove changes from Lincoln Square dive bar to, well, Lincoln Square dive bar with karaoke machine. On weeknights you'll find a group of regulars congregated around the bar, brave souls hunched over the three-ring binders that serve as the song menu. Every 15 minutes someone will slip a song suggestion—usually a power ballad or a Billy Joel tune—to the lone bartender, who cues it up on the machine in the back of the room. On the weekends the crowds get big—so do the bust sizes and drink orders.

**Tip:** Don't try doing Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean,"—you'll fail miserably.



El Presidente offers delicious Mexican fare 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## El Presidente

2558 N. Ashland (773) 525-7938  
Monday-Sunday open 24 hours

This is one place you can take a date who won't fault you for being cheap—even on Christmas! The neon sign in the window of this burrito palace at the corner of Ashland and Wrightwood avenues says it all: Open 7 Days, 24 Hours, Holidays.

El Presidente is like many other fast-food taco joints that serve burritos as big as your head, those dark greasy chips and hot-as-hell salsa, but here the wait staff serves you a sit-down meal. El Presidente is larger than most burrito places, with two big dining rooms filled with stylish decor: Mexican weavings and paintings, plants and pottery.

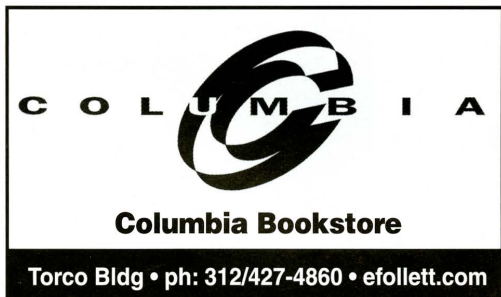
**Tip:** Go when it's warm out and you can sit outdoors on the patio in back—with beautiful arches decorated in roses the place looks like a Mexican courtyard. How romantic! □



What it takes!  
we've got it.

# Your Used Book Headquarters!

Save  
**25** %\*  
on  
used  
textbooks



**efollett**  
NEW & USED COLLEGE TEXTBOOKS  
.com

\*compared to the price of new textbooks.





## Did You Know?

That Columbia Students receive a 10% discount\* and most major insurance plans are accepted at

# Printers Row Pharmacy



Buy & Sell Records  
Extensive Wine Selection  
**Photo-Processing**  
**\$3.99 3 1/2" Doubles EVERYDAY!**

Cards  
Vitamins  
Herbs  
Candles  
Incense



**We Offer**

**721 S. Dearborn / 312-663-9313**  
**prpharmacy@aol.com**

\*except tobacco, lottery, insurance co-payments & photo processing

# A TRADITION IN CHICAGO'S SOUTH LOOP!



## SOUTH LOOP CLUB

701 S. STATE STREET AT BALBO

**THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLACE TO BE!**

### Featuring...

- Over 50 Brands of Imported and Domestic Beer
- Cable/Direct TV - Watch your favorite sports events on our 8 different screens
- Daily Food and Drink Specials
- Great Menu
- Open For Lunch - Call ahead for pick-up orders
- Open Late - Kitchen open until closing
- Available For Parties

Located Two Blocks West of  
Columbia's Main Building

Open:

Sunday-Friday: 11am-4am • Saturday: 11am-5am

*Join us for  
a Great Time  
Anytime!*

We Welcome:  
*American Express,  
Visa, Mastercard,  
Discover and  
Diners Club Cards*

Call Ahead For Pick-Up Orders

**312 427-2787**

**"The Best Burgers In Chicago!"**



# The *Domino* Effect

**The gentrification of Humboldt Park opens the door of opportunity to the upwardly mobile, but may force out longtime Latino residents who have given it its present character.**

BY MEGAN TANCO  
PHOTOS BY SARAH L. PECK

**A**t California Avenue and Division Street on Chicago's Near Northwest Side, in front of storefronts at little iron tables or at a corner of the park, a group of men run wrinkled, calloused hands over ivory boxes imprinted with distinct numerical dots—*fichas* (dominoes). The “clang,” “click,” “clang,” rises to the rooftops melting into the voices of women in rollers yelling “Juan!” and “Jose!” out of windows offering black coffee to their husbands below. The men sit with hats cocked back on their heads and bellies wrestling with the edges of the table as they stare intently at their *fichas*.



Numbered days: *Fichas*, a common Humboldt Park recreation, is one of many colorful local customs that may be washed away when the tide of gentrification sweeps the neighborhood.

**“We cannot wait for politicians to make decisions about where we live...We need to be persistent.”**

**— housing activist  
Nelly Serrano**



**Recycling real estate: Eclectic architecture is the legacy of the Northern European and Eastern European immigrants who were Humboldt Park's earliest settlers. On Fairfield Street some buildings are undergoing renovations that will inflate housing prices.**

These immigrant Puerto Ricans are part of the vital Latino population in Humboldt Park, which is command central for Chicago's Puerto Rican community and often a mouthpiece for Latinos across the nation. It is here protests against the military bombings in Viequez, Puerto Rico, are organized, and where social groups come together to advocate change such as lobbying in Congress for political asylum for Mexican immigrants. This is also where the next wave of gentrification is breaking.

If gentrification has its way here, Humboldt Park's Latino community will be forced to crumble or separate into smaller communities dividing the power of the neighborhood. In 1990, Latinos made up 62 percent of the Humboldt Park population; now, they make up only 46 percent of it. If this trend continues, Humboldt Park will join other Chicago neighborhoods, including Bucktown and Logan Square, which have lost much of their ethnic and artistic flavor and become

yuppie hot spots with trendy lofts, fancy restaurants, pricey boutiques and martini bars.

Already construction has begun on the loft condos and townhouses that will replace the older two- and three-flats. Even Starbucks is making its way here, with its presence in neighboring Wicker Park. It is time to start saying good-bye to the *bodegas*, the local beer-and-bread shops where owners not only recognize their customers, but also still put goods on tabs.

Ruth Glass, a London sociologist, coined the word "gentrification" in 1964. She wrote, in part, that "once this process of gentrification starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupants are displaced and the whole social-character of the district is changed."

Today, cultural anthropologist Neil Smith defines gentrification as the "restoration of deteriorated urban property, by the middle classes, often resulting in displacement of lower-income people." These definitions,

however, can't fully describe the loss of community that happens when that "restoration of deteriorated urban property" takes place.

Usually, gentrification takes place in areas that are brimming with architectural possibility and natural beauty, but can't develop financially—like Humboldt Park. New residents, often the white upper-middle class, move to renovate it under the guise of community improvement. The increased cost of living forces out the current residents. "We can't prevent what amounts to the largest makeover of urban America in decades," says Keri Lydersen, associate editor of StreetWise.

In addition to its architecture and natural beauty, Humboldt Park also offers a prime real estate location. "Humboldt Park is a next major battleground for Chicago," says Ann Gunkel, a professor of Humanities at Columbia College Chicago. "It's valuable land because it is near downtown and has an exceptionally beautiful

turn-of-the-century design." Bounded by Armitage, Chicago, Western and California avenues, Humboldt Park is a quick 10-minute El ride downtown. It's also home to one of the city's largest parks, Humboldt Park. Built in 1869, the 207-acre park was named after German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt. It contains several lagoons, an outdoor pool, 15 baseball diamonds, a rose garden, and a boat-house. Every summer the park holds the annual Puerto Rican Parade—"Las Fiestas Patronales"—honoring patron saints.

This park is a remnant of the first wave of Humboldt Park immigrants—the Germans and Scandinavians—who came in the 1800s. Next came the Norwegians in the 1920s, followed by Italian, Polish and Jewish immigrants in the 1930s. The Latinos who came in the 1980s are the latest immigrant group to find a home on these streets, and this is reflected in the area surrounding it.

Division Street, the neighborhood's northern boundary, is the mile-long stretch known as "*Paseo Boriqua*," or the Puerto Rican Passage. Two enormous steel Puerto Rican flags mark its entrance. Stroll down this street, and you'll find Humboldt Park's main artery. Here you'll hear Caribbean music spilling out of houses, smell pinchos (shish-kabobs) roasting in outdoor bins, and see the Puerto Rican flag in nearly every window, shop and mural. The street also has almost every type of aid program. On California Avenue, the western boundary, you'll find the Albizus Campos museum—in memory of the Puerto Rican political leader and activist; Casa Central, Chicago's largest Hispanic social-service agency; and Las Moradas, a retirement home for seniors. On Kedzie Avenue, in the east, stands the National Guard Armory Hall and Association House. Built in 1899, Association House is one of the city's oldest settlement houses, and offers classes in Spanish literacy, computer training and child-care services. North Avenue, the southern boundary, is Victory Outreach Church. It is a city-wide street outreach program that specializes in drug rehabilitation.

Many of those who are gentrifying Humboldt Park cite the need for improved safety and services as reasons. They have a good argument. Although residents have found sanctuary in the grassy refuge of the 207-

acre park, it has a reputation for being a high crime area. In July 2001, two 13-year-old boys and one 14-year-old taunted and stabbed a gay man. Residents who witnessed the hate crime said the "boys were looking for trouble."

New residents have already created bike paths and night patrols that have helped to transform the park into a safer place. This part of gentrification is appealing to some longtime residents, who are themselves at risk for displacement, like Ana and Ivette Sandoval, sisters who live near California Avenue. "It's about time that Latinos realize that they need to do things for themselves. If they don't want to see their neighborhood go down then they should take steps in improvement before being threatened with relocation," says Ana. Ivette agrees. "Yeah, I also think it's a good thing for new people to move in. It forces people to act, and can only better the neighborhood."

However, working-class citizens of a gentrifying neighborhood rarely enjoy the benefits of development in the long run. The improvements cause rents to rise and developers to buy buildings to demolish or renovate into more costly housing. This trend can cause feelings of resignation, as expressed by Jose "Che" Soto, 65, a resident of Humboldt Park who lives in Las Moradas, the retirement home on

California Avenue. "Well, what can I do? If we have to move, we have to move, but I'm not sure where we'll go," he says.

Once a neighborhood begins to gentrify, buildings such as Las Moradas, which are funded by the government and community, are usually among the first to be destroyed and replaced by upscale housing. The loss of such places as Las Moradas, Casa Central and Association House would have a profound impact on the community, since many seniors rely on these centers for support. Janelle Robles, 24, says her family put her grandmother in Casa Central because "it's a good place for her to be around people her age. It's better than to have her locked up in the house and bored." Her grandmother, Juanita Martinez, 66, nods in agreement.

Not everyone is as resigned to go quietly, however. Nelly Serrano, 42, who is active in the housing programs with the Logan Square Association of Chicago serving Humboldt Park, works to find housing for low-income residents like herself, and is often used as a spokesperson for the organization. Displacement infuriates her. "When I go speak [about the neighborhood] people tell me they can only imagine what it's like, and that's true. They can only imagine what it is to live here," Serrano says.



Street talk: Lifelong Humboldt Park residents savor the neighborhood camaraderie.



**Neighborhood icon:** A resident takes his dog for a morning stroll down “Paseo Boriqua,” or Puerto Rican Passage on Division Street. The steel Puerto Rican flag was dedicated to the community in 1995 and is a prominent landmark.

She believes that people should not have to move to find resources; the aldermen and community leaders should work to make their communities comfortable places to live. Nevertheless, she believes it should not be left solely in politicians’ hands. “We cannot meet and wait for them to make decisions about where we live. If we do that then things get cold, and when things get cold nothing happens. We need to be persistent.”

Jose Lopez, the director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, shares similar views. He believes that all urban policy and legislation since 1968 has been aimed at a process he calls deconcentration: “a heinous, very systematic approach to the disempowerment and containment of people of color.” He strives to get the community involved, asking them to “not move out, but rather buy, sell and recycle your money into the community...because if not

large number of residents who are facing displacement.

According to the 2000 census, Chicago’s urban population has grown 8.6 percent since 1990, bringing the overall population of the city as a whole to over 2 million people. The city has become the place to be. The new urban residents are tempted by the comfort niche of living near work, entertainment and shopping. According to a November 2001 study done by the Woodstock Institute, a nonprofit agency based in Chicago, 61 percent of all home buyers in the areas surrounding the Loop were wealthy. However, for many of Humboldt Park’s residents, wealth is measured differently—it means a community with a rich shared history. For them, Humboldt Park is more than peaking real estate prices, it is home.

Of course, that home life is quickly changing, and soon the cultural signs

[we] will lose a political and economic enclave.”

One thing that has been effective in delaying gentrification in Humboldt Park is the use of Eminent Domain. Eminent Domain is a law that safeguards land areas that are prime for condo development by forcing buyers to develop housing to better the community. If they fail, the city is entitled to acquire it and create federal housing.

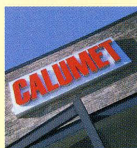
The city has also been waging its own public relations campaign in an attempt to mitigate the growing divide between Humboldt Park’s old and new residents. In February 2001, Mayor Daley unveiled 11 subsidized houses in the area under his “New Homes for Chicago” program. These 11 houses, however, are a drop in the bucket toward appeasing the

**“Well, what can I do? If we have to move, we have to move, but I’m not sure where we’ll go.”**

**—resident Jose Soto**

of Paseo Boriqua will be as scarce and nostalgic as the old German-built homes that line Humboldt Park’s streets. Soon gentrification will resurface here to cause its damage. Soon the comforts of home will be obsolete.

It is Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. Humboldt Park resident Francisca Cortez has just gotten off of the California Avenue bus. She is on her way home from work, but first stops to pick up her son at her mother’s house, exactly two streets away from Washtenaw Avenue where she lives. She enters the local bodega, nestled between two churches, and greets Juan, the owner. She makes her way back toward the refrigerator where she picks up milk. When she gets to the counter, she can’t seem to find her money. Embarrassed, she decides to return the milk to the refrigerator when Juan slaps her hand affectionately. “Don’t worry, *te lo doy fiao*.” (“It’s on credit.”) Bring it next time. □



## If You Need It, We Rent It.

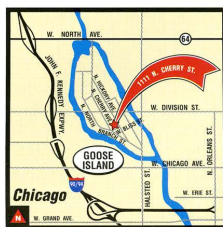
With our in-depth selection of rental equipment, it's easy to try out that exotic lens or experiment with new lighting techniques. All of our rentals are clean, pre-tested and guaranteed so you don't have to worry about anything except your next shot!

- We carry the latest releases and most popular equipment from leading manufacturers including Canon, Contax, Fujifilm, Hasselblad, Lowel, Mamiya, Matthews, Minolta, Nikon, Norman, Pentax, Speedotron and many more.
- Our vast selection includes unique Calumet-exclusive brands such as Balcar, Caltar, Cambo, Calumet and Hosemaster.
- Our affordable rates are available on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.
- We rent the newest digital equipment on the market including scanners, printers, cameras, camera backs, lighting, memory and much more.
- With our "Try Before You Buy" program, you'll receive a partial refund of your rental fee if you decide to buy the product.
- If you travel, we can arrange rentals within our network of 30 retail locations around the world.



Visit  
[www.calumetphoto.com](http://www.calumetphoto.com)  
 to download a PDF version  
 of our rental catalog.

Chicago, IL  
 1111 N. Cherry • 312/440-4920  
 Monday - Friday  
 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

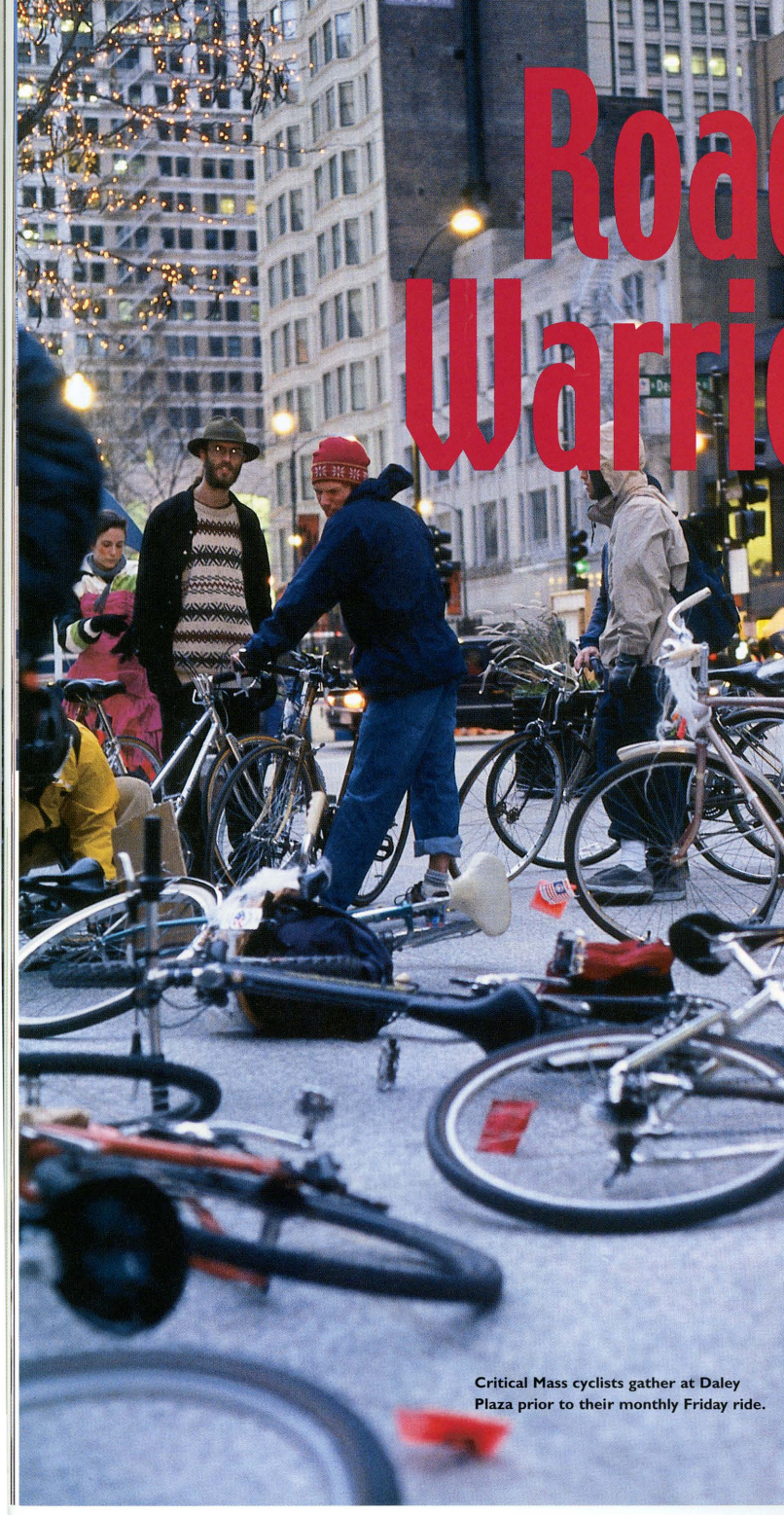


**CALUMET**  
 PHOTOGRAPHIC

# STOP IN AND SAVE 10% ON YOUR NEXT RENTAL

Present this coupon before February 28, 2002. One coupon per customer.  
 Sorry, no other offers apply. IN STORE COUPON ONLY. ECHO0202





# Road Warriors

**Critical Mass**  
cyclists are  
changing the  
world's climate  
one bike at a time

BY MARTINA SHEEHAN

Maybe you've heard stories about Critical Mass—that it's a group of militant bike advocates who hate cars—with factions in almost every major city in the world, including Chicago. Or maybe you've seen the propaganda they sticker across the city on stop signs ("Stop Driving") and the backs of SUVs ("I'm changing the world's climate—ask me how.") Or that their monthly rides entail blocking traffic and harassing downtown motorists during rush hour.

Truth is, these advocates have fun as they deliver their message around town on their two-wheelers. Mass' message is simple: By taking your bike to work and on other simple errands, you're benefiting your health, the environment and doing your part to alleviate the city's overwhelming parking and traffic problems.

Every last Friday of the month, about 150 people and their bikes gather around the Picasso sculpture at Daley Plaza in the Loop. At a typical

Critical Mass cyclists gather at Daley Plaza prior to their monthly Friday ride.

CARRIE BERGAONA

ride in 2001, the mood was festive as a souped-up low rider sped by, followed by an antique from the 1920s, the kind with the seat perched awkwardly above a giant wheel and a tiny wheel to the front. Across the way stood a sleek, black, custom-built bike with 4-foot metal flames shooting from the rear. Another bike had a giant pickle strapped to the back while another played circus music from speakers in its rear basket. The atmosphere was friendly, as a pony-tailed man was hard at work patching a stranger's flat tire.

It is at this pre-ride rally at 5:30 p.m. when the group decides which route to follow. Critical Mass has no hierarchy of leadership so this is a strictly democratic process. Mass participants distributed a crudely Xeroxed map that specified the chosen route for the ride, and they were off.

The banter along the ride was friendly, playful and respectful. "I'm on a bike! Do you see me?" "Happy Friday! Take your bike to work on Monday!" Someone else yelled a big "Thanks for your patience!" at all the confused motorists waiting at intersections.

Nevertheless, police followed close behind with their lights flashing. Bikers kept riding, eventually taunting the police by merging onto Lake Shore Drive and then onto Michigan Avenue, which as always, was bustling with tourists, shoppers and business people trying to escape the Loop on a Friday evening. A few impatient SUV drivers blew their horns and one woman attempted to inch her bulky vehicle into a left turn, narrowly missing a few riders.

Other than that, the procession passed without incident. Most spectators seemed amused, reacting as if the Mass were some kind of twisted bike marathon. They applauded and cheered as the bikes passed. Others may have mistaken it for some kind of parade, with all the whooping, hollering, bell ringing and music.

But one thing was apparent: This fun-loving, comical approach to advocacy was getting people's attention.

In the Chicago group's early days, 85 muckrakers on bicycles ringing bells and shouting slogans through downtown traffic could be easily ignored or dismissed as lunatics by commuters, police and



No car? No problem. To Critical Mass cyclists, two wheels are always better than four.

CARRIE BERGAGNA

the media. But now, with larger numbers, a brighter spotlight has been cast on the efforts of these "unofficial" bicycle advocates. This once insignificant fringe group's voice has become harder to ignore.

Critical Mass was started in San Francisco in 1982 with hopes of mak-

**The banter along the ride was friendly, playful and respectful. "I'm on a bike! Do you see me?"**

ing city roads safer for bicyclists and to advocate the bike as a serious, viable mode of transportation. Since then, the movement has spread to cities as far as Tel Aviv, Tokyo and Dublin. San Francisco's Mass, the

largest in the nation, regularly attracts between 1,500 and 2,000 participants. On a monthly basis, riders meet downtown and ride together to various destinations of cultural or historical significance.

Critical Mass hit Chicago in 1998 when Jeff Redd, a graphic designer/poet and father of three, decided it was time the Windy City got a little taste of West Coast activism. With increasing traffic, daily gridlock and decaying air quality, Redd felt Chicago was ready for a radical, pro-bike movement.

But since the first meeting under the Picasso in 1998, the group has come under attack—sometimes by police, sometimes by angry motorists and sometimes by other bicycle advocacy groups who think Mass' confrontational approach does more harm than good.

The Chicago Bicycle Federation, or CBF, is the city's official bicycle advocacy group that has been chosen

by the mayor to represent the interests of bicycle riding in Chicago. Since 1985, the group has worked "within the system" with aldermen, city officials and legislators to make Chicago a more bike-friendly city. Its biggest accomplishments over the years include getting bike lanes added to city streets, more bike racks downtown and getting a piece of legislation to the Illinois legislature that would afford bicyclists the same rights as cars in case of accidents on the road.

CBF would seem a perfect foil character, a complementary better-half, for Critical Mass. Their goals are the same: get more people to ride bikes and get the city to make this a viable option by making bike-sensitive urban planning decisions.

But that's not how things panned out. "I suppose CBF means well," Redd admits. "They want to make things better for bikes, but they don't want to piss anyone off—they don't want to accomplish anything at the expense of car traffic."

Redd is referring specifically to one of Critical Mass' many offshoots, the Blue Ways program. Blue Ways calls for closing certain streets off to cars and turning them into bike and pedestrian zones. "We've worked with [CBF] on a few different projects, but we usually have all the ideas and they're the ones who always say, 'Oh no, you can't do that,' because they think someone in City Hall or some alderman will get upset," Redd says. "But let's say one of our ideas works out really well, like the Bike Summer project last year [where rides and bike safety workshops were held around the city]. They're always quick to jump in and take the credit."

In fairness, CBF does handle a lot of the less-glamorous aspects of bicycle advocacy. Members attend tedious council meetings, vie for government funding, negotiate with the Department of Transportation and work closely with Mayor Richard M. Daley and other city officials to get legislation passed.



GABRIELE BERGAMINI

**Critical Mass members rarely involve themselves in legislative work. "We'd rather be out in the streets rallying," says Jeff Redd, founder of Chicago's Mass.**

Critical Mass rarely involves itself with this kind of work. "We'd rather be out in the streets rallying," Redd admits.

Steve Buchtel, a director at CBF, lauds the working-within-the-system approach his group employs. "Critical Mass is a nebulous thing,"

**"What people don't get is that we're not blocking traffic, we are traffic—bike traffic."—bicyclist Kevin Womac**

he says. "By definition, Critical Mass is not organized and that's something that's key in getting initiatives passed with the city." Buchtel says he thinks people ride in Critical Mass for a range of reasons, not strictly because they want to make roads

safer for bikes. "I think a lot of them just like the idea of having other people to ride with," he says. "But I do admire their energy."

Kevin Womac, a young bike enthusiast who works at Rapid Transit bike shop in Wicker Park (he has a shirt that says, "ONE LESS CAR" across the back) has ridden with Critical Mass for several years. He thinks Critical Mass is just a more fun way to get people to think about bikes. "Critical Mass has a lot of younger people who live in the city. It's really a social thing and we know how to have a good time," he says. "CBF is a lot of older people, mostly in the suburbs."

Critical Mass' bolder, more grass-roots approach to getting the job done has given them a notoriety that CBF can't match. But Womac says some of Mass' reputation is pure hype. He explains it does no good to take an aggressive approach because it only alienates drivers. "People are more likely to listen if they don't feel insulted or put down," he says. "When we move through an intersection after the light's turned red, it's mainly to keep the group together. But what people don't get is that we're not blocking traffic, we are traffic—bike traffic."

Womac says people in traffic and on the streets usually don't know what to make of the colorful swarm of old cruisers, antiques, racing bikes and mountain bikes that zoom past them. "We hand out flyers when we ride past with information on Critical Mass so they'll know what we're about," he explains. "And we all have our own favorite things to yell. I like 'Save your life, ride a bike!'"

Although critics may question its tactics, the group has definitely gotten some attention and demonstrated a solution to Chicago's burdensome traffic, congestion and parking problems. "We're not trying to start anything with the cops," Redd says. "But if arrests are made, we get more attention and that's the whole point—we want to be heard." □

"...escape into  
the ultracool world  
of the South Loop's  
martini bar,  
with over **25**  
Martini's"



# TANTRUM

*Tuesdays*  
**\$2.00** *Tap Beer*

312.939.9160

1023 South State Street Chicago, IL 60605

(at the corner of 11th & State)

# Outside Looking In

**AUTHOR SAM GREENLEE TALKS ABOUT HIS NOVEL 'THE SPOOK WHO SAT BY THE DOOR,' AND ITS IMPACT ON AMERICA** **BY KELI STEWART**

*Sam Greenlee rests in a chair at a small table, looking out the window of his sparse studio apartment. The warm breeze from Chicago's South Side Woodlawn community, a neighborhood that never fully recovered from the 1968 riots, meanders through the room, bringing the laughter of children six floors down. He crosses his long legs and smokes a cigarette with the same indifference captured in the portrait inside his first novel, "The Spook Who Sat By the Door." He is thinking.*

"Spook," whose name derives from a 1960s derogatory term towards African Americans (it's also slang for "spy"), sold more than 1 million copies and was printed in six languages. Even though the 71-year-old Greenlee has authored two other novels, according to him "Spook" is his only novel both the public and literary critics remember—and ostracize—him for.

"Spook" criticizes racism in America by looking at the fictitious life of Dan Freeman, a black CIA agent, who subsequently takes the military tactics and armed-warfare techniques to black ghettos on Chicago's South Side. There, he forms a massive uprising against America.

For Greenlee, "Spook" was a response to the racial tension of the 1960s. He said he could sense an impending armed race war and that he "wrote the book so that people who were going to do it would do it right."

"Spook," was rejected more than 40 times by mostly major publishing houses before Allison and Bigsby Ltd., a small press in London, published it in 1969. Soon "Spook" circulated in independent black bookstores and became a national favorite among blacks and militants. It was dubbed the first Black Nationalist novel.

In 1973, the city of Chicago denied a license to independent filmmaker Ivan Dixon to shoot a film based on Greenlee's novel. However, armed with \$850,000 from independent investors, Dixon and Greenlee risked imprisonment and defiantly snatched shots of Chicago's City Hall and of the

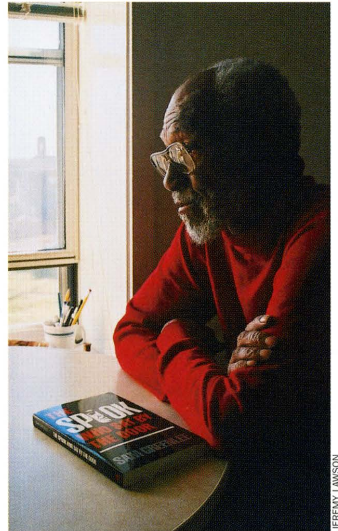
South Side ghetto with a hand-held camera to capture the set for the story.

Finally, they got permission to film in Gary, Ind., whose ghettos are strikingly similar to those in Chicago. The film was completed, but not without controversy. Four months after the movie was released, the FBI contacted the film's distributor, United Artists, and informed them of "the film's dangerous radical revolutionary content," Greenlee says. It was yanked from theaters.

Despite the attempted censorship, the impact of "Spook" prevailed. Once, in an airport bar in San Francisco, Greenlee befriended Aubrey Lewis, a former FBI agent, after offering to sell him a copy of "Spook." Lewis told Greenlee that he'd read it before but would love an autographed copy. A flattered Greenlee asked where he bought the book. Lewis said it was required reading in the FBI academy.

Because of "Spook," Greenlee says his telephone was tapped, his mail intercepted, and his character attacked by the FBI and CIA. "At that time the government agencies weren't as technologically sophisticated as they are now," says Greenlee. "As soon as a phone tap went in the volume on my phone dropped significantly."

Greenlee's experiences with government agencies have affirmed his distrust in them. In fact, he no longer anticipates a race war because he believes the American government has jailed all the potential revolutionaries. "Fifty percent of the prisoners in America are young black



JEREMY LAWSON

**Author Sam Greenlee gazes from his apartment onto the Woodlawn neighborhood, one of the settings of "The Spook who Sat by the Door."**

men," says Greenlee.

"There are some parts of him that are bitter," said Sheila Baldwin, an English professor at Columbia College. But Filmmaker Ron Pitts, a close friend of Greenlee who has lived with him over the years, clarifies: "He was always very intense. It's his intensity and creativity together that come off as bitterness. There are people who don't like him because of the way he projects his convictions."

Greenlee's conviction to literary diversity made him vow to never take another creative writing class after completing one at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where he received a degree in political science and history in 1952. He said his teacher was addicted to Hemingway and Faulkner.

Three months after graduating from college, Greenlee entered the Army. He served two years in the infantry unit as

a first lieutenant. In 1957 he became among the first black Foreign Service Officers for the U.S. Information Agency. There he helped organize overseas tours for American artists.

"I was a propagandist," he says. "Essentially I was an overseas public relations representative for the United States. Our job was to sell the best image of the United States overseas—basically I lied a lot."

In 1965, while Greenlee served in Greece, his disgust at what he refers to as a "corrupt foreign policy" forced him to quit and inspired him

to move to the island of Mykonos, located 100 miles from Athens in the Aegean Sea. He rented a house and lived off of his retirement money for three years. Every day he woke up and wrote for three or four hours and continued in the afternoons at various beaches. In four months at Mykonos Island he completed "Spook."

Greenlee still rises with the sun, drinks coffee, does calisthenics, watches the news, and writes for three or four hours every day. He no longer sends his manuscripts to pub-

lishers. He'd rather go the independent route and sell his books on street corners, at barbershops, and bars like he used to.

Although his main source of income is Social Security, in the future he hopes to reprint five books on the Internet, including an anniversary edition of "Spook"; "Baghdad Blues: The Revolution that Brought Saddam Hussien to Power," his recently completed novel, "Djakarta Blues"; and two books of poetry.

"The best writers sink their teeth into life until the juices flow," he says. □

# Something to Say

## THE 11TH ANNUAL GWENDOLYN BROOKS WRITER'S CONFERENCE

BY TONIKA LEWIS-JOHNSON

More than 400 writers simultaneously hunched down in their soft green chairs and anxiously scribbled into their notepads. Saul Williams, writer, poet and star of the 1998 Cannes Film Festival Award-winning movie "Slam," along with freelance writer Tony Medina, had just asked them to answer the question: "Why do I write?"

After five minutes it was time for the writers to share their reasons. Sherehee Hollins, a graduate of the University of California at Berkley, had traveled from California to attend the conference. She inched her way to the microphone and answered with a poem: "I write to heal and to be healed / to save lives and to be saved / to be the teacher and the student / I write because it is my God-given right and my mission / so I keep moving / my mind and my pen."

The poetry workshop was held in October 2001 at Chicago State University's Robinson University Center, on Chicago's South Side. It was part of the 11th



Poet Saul Williams urges the audience to answer the question: "Why do you write?"

Annual Gwendolyn Brooks Writers' Conference on Black Literature and Creative Writing. The event featured notable authors such as Ntozake Shange, author of the acclaimed choreo poem "For Colored Girls Who Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Wasn't Enuf" (a choreographed poem acted out in scenes); and novelist Walter Mosley, who wrote "Devil in a Blue Dress." It culminated with a keynote address from Dr. bell hooks, author of 17 books including "Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life."

Preceding the question exercise, Medina summarized the purpose of writing with a quote from Langston

Hughes: "The prerequisite for writing is having something to say."

The crowd fell silent when Williams added: "Great writers are voracious readers." They hummed in approval as both Medina and Williams agreed that they could identify a poet who doesn't read merely by their choice of words. "You learn how to write by consciously reading," says Medina. "When you read you learn a great deal about sentence structure and punctuation."

"Writing is a craft and a commitment," Williams says. To improve their craft Williams suggested a few tips: Start off by reading poetry anthologies; keep a notepad and pen with you at all times; and form workshops with fellow writers to read and critique each other's work.

Alice Jackson, 36, a teacher from Milwaukee, says, "The workshop provided the perfect space for necessary dialogue about writing. They [Medina and Williams] helped me reinforce my responsibility as a writer to read and search for the most accurate and profound word." □

# He Gave Great Hugs

His house, built with his bare hands, still stands.  
 His kids still play in the front yard.  
 His big, bubbly tank of a car from the '60s,  
 Still broken down in the garage.  
 He always wanted to fix it.

The Grateful Dead blaring out of his radio,  
 The classy clothes his wife made him wear,  
 The brown van that carted around his kids.

His hugs, those great hugs.

He told the best stories,  
 His strength, overwhelming.  
 His Italian cooking (he sometimes smelled of it),  
 And Camel Wides.  
 His wife made him quit smoking.  
 The respect he had for everyone.

All these things were taken,  
 Robbed from him; from me.  
 The silent thief crept in after dark  
 Left a hospital room, a casket, burial dirt.  
 It planted the question "why?"

No answers.

It took his last breath, his strength,  
 His laughter.

Now, no more blaring Grateful Dead  
 No brown van or working on the house.  
 No more hugs.

I never told how I respected him,  
 Never told how much he meant.  
 Suffering.

Him and his hugs.

The thief stole these  
 Without a sign.  
 All this it took and more,  
 a man,  
 a husband,  
 a father,  
 a brother,  
 a son,  
 an uncle.

Uncle Joe.  
 It took him and  
 His hug, those great hugs.

— Virginia Coglianesse

## For the First Time

For the first time in a long time  
 Words  
 Crumble into dust as they fall  
 from my mouth.

I'm experiencing a national pang  
 of grief.  
 The horror of the last few days is  
 crawling from the tips of my toes  
 To the ends of my hair.

The nation of my body is hurting.

I wanted to hug the world,  
 Wrap it in a fat blanket and  
 Tuck it back into the universe.

For the first time in a long time  
 I thought about calling my  
 mother to say  
 I love her and forgive her.

I relished the thought of blood  
 flowing,  
 But only out of donors  
 And into others whose organs  
 Were thirsty for it.

For the first time  
 I was able to admire the  
 Strength and nobility  
 Thirteen stripes and fifty stars  
 have  
 When melded together  
 In a collage of red, white and  
 blue.  
 For the first time in a long time  
 I believed that there could be real  
 heroes.

— Jenny Seay

# welcome back from hajj

(hope you have a most spiritual time)

at 18  
my father left us  
for the hajj

he witnessed  
arab government  
separating all the  
different muslims

the americans and arabs  
got the best seat in the desert

none of them died

pakistani muslims  
indian muslims  
bangladesh muslims

died in the inferno

someone forgot to turn  
off their portable gas stove

people running  
tent after tent  
bursting into flames

distanced americans and arabs  
watched  
muslims brothers and sisters  
martyrs

dying in a burning hell  
trying to get to heaven  
and a most merciful god

— Sadaf Siddiqui



ILLUSTRATION BY TOMMY BALDWIN

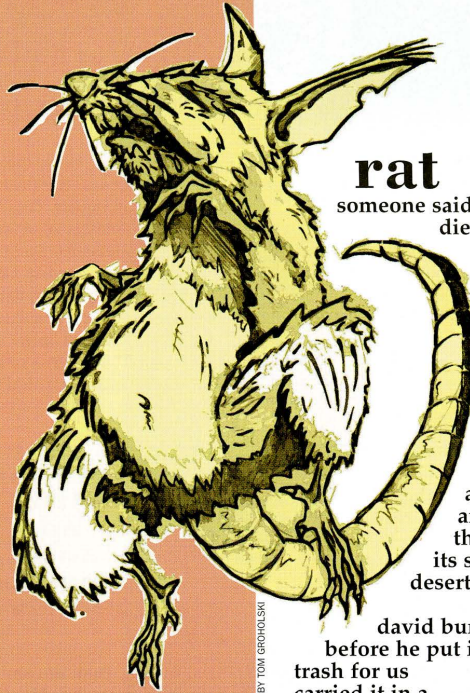


ILLUSTRATION BY TOM GROHOLSKI

## rat

someone said it  
died on the roof  
fell at the  
bottom  
of the steps  
hairless  
bones  
sticking

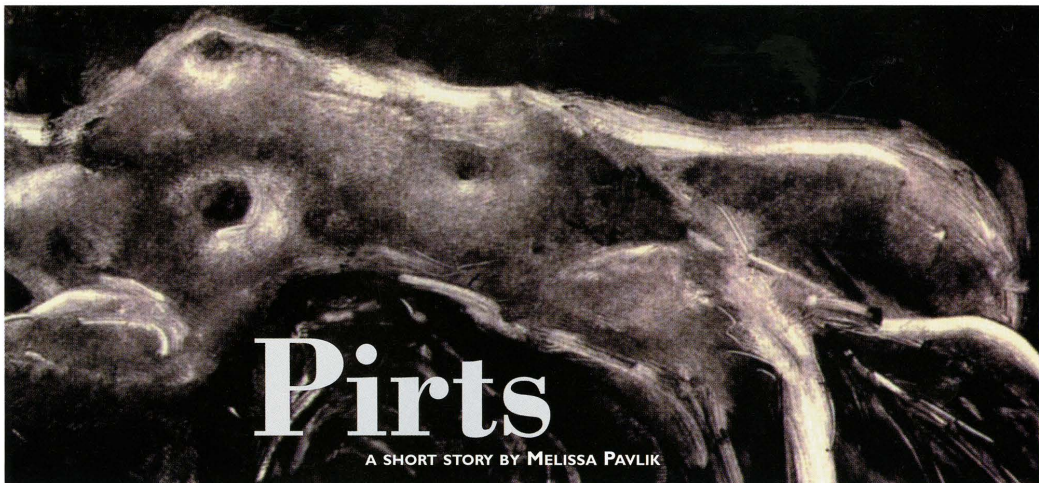
i thought it  
was an  
iguana  
it was so rough  
and wrinkled  
around  
the eyes  
its skin yellow like  
desert

david bumped his head  
before he put it in the  
trash for us  
carried it in a  
broken shovel  
and watched it  
so intently  
he dropped it

its stiff bony tail  
broke off and remained  
at the bottom of the  
steps

— Sadaf Siddiqui





# Pirts

A SHORT STORY BY MELISSA PAVLIK

ILLUSTRATION BY TOMMY BALDWIN

They don't offer to take me along to the pirts anymore. When my host family goes on Monday nights, I stay home, alone in their flat, and gorge. I wait until I can no longer see the headlights of the German four-door they picked up from a cousin last week. Aivars, the father, laughs dryly, so that no sound comes out. "This car is not new," he says.

After they pull away, I invade the breadbox, cutting thick slices of sweet-sour bread, because it is filling, because it doesn't go as fast as the white bread, which is soft and melts away from the knife like marshmallow. Margarine is my favorite flavor. I sculpt it onto the bread, mold it an inch thick with the butter knife because, like the sweet-sour, its disappearance will be least noticeable. If there are cucumbers, I take one of the middle-sized ones and bite off chunks, try my best to chew and not to swallow it whole. I never touch the sausage, or the cheese. Any slice, however thin, would be a dead giveaway.

I'm a rich American living in this checkerboard Latvian town (potato patch-Soviet block of flats-potato patch) only I cannot buy food for myself as long as this family is hosting me. I could offer to bring groceries for Aivars, his wife, the daughters and the son, but the shame would only dry him up even more. Not just his laugh; I'm afraid that his speech would go, too.

"Pre-it-sa-yous Ee-ya-pa-zee-tee-us." I say to Aivars, the first day we meet, after throwing my bags into the trunk of his "old" car, a two-door shipped from Helsinki, and climbing in front. Nice to meet you. I offer my hand, after pressing the syllables into my thighs, one for each finger, the way we were taught in language class.

"You speak." He turns to his wife, his daughters and son, piled in back.

**It tickles all of our throats, and opens, quite suddenly and magnificently, hidden chambers inside ourselves.**

Spines straight, they are smiling the way Aivars means to. He tries, but has the habit of clenching his teeth.

Aivars' brother owns the pirts and it's in the basement of his country house, a 20-minute drive from town. The first Monday, I want to go along. Aivars says he wants to take me.

"It's different," he says, when I tell him I've been to a sauna before.

"A sauna is Russian. A pirts is not like anything you know." Gunta, his wife, shakes her head when she sees the bathing suit I'm holding. I shrug my American shoulders, and leave it at home.

The pirts is something the color of split wood with all of its rings showing. It looks like, when Aivars heats it, that it will sweat syrup. I don't know the difference between rocks and coals but I would say they are both, that boxed-in pile of balls on the inside that glows red when you blow on them. "Women first," Aivars says, leaving me down there, outside of the wooden box, with his daughters and wife.

"Not too hot," Gunta warns the daughters, who have already stripped and disappeared inside. The wife slips off her blouse. Naked, she watches me undress. "Don't be afraid." She laughs at the way I cover myself until the last minute, folding and unfolding my clothes around my chest. Afraid? I laugh at the way it sounds in Latvian. Don't have fear. I'm not good enough to lie yet in this language. "I have fear," I tell her. "I have lots of it."

"It's just a closet," she's saying, when she leads me inside. More like a meat locker, or that fairy-tale oven from "Hansel and Gretel," I think. The push of the door, the final creak of the wood as it closes, drowns out the daughters' laughter. They leave me an edge to sit on, while they lay, stomachs against the wooden bench, coveting the space nearest the rocks. The wife stands and stokes coals until her face reddens. The air gets so thick it catches in our throats like the foam of a heavy

beer. We drink it different ways: the daughters gulp; Gunta through her nose, one sip at a time. It tickles all of our throats, and opens, quite suddenly and magnificently, hidden chambers inside ourselves. When it's hot enough that the daughters' tepid yellow skin is flushed with blood, when I'm so wet I'm sure that I'm evaporating, Gunta leans under the bench and takes hold of the branches.

"Oak. For strength." She holds them steady, above her head, while the daughters giggle and gather hair from their shoulders, shaking from their hips up like fish tails, pleading, "Mamma, me first!" I watch the branches strike the girls' backs, chaffing away dead skin that slides like snowflakes off of the pink flesh. Their backs were made for this, I think. When it's my turn, I'll sprout blood.

But the branches are soft; not sticks of wilted leaves, but clinging ropes of overcooked spaghetti. "Your skin, too, it peels," Gunta skims my back with a wet palm, shaking the flakes before my face. "See?" I feel for myself the new skin, the wrinkleless, glistening wonder that was hidden underneath. My elbows, even, the dry circles of my knees, are reborn.

She takes the next step, filling a bucket of water from the tap in front of us, pouring it over the daughters'

**It feels like melted butter, so I fill and pour, fill and pour, washing away the dead skin while I still can.**

backs, then refilling, and pouring over her own. "Not painful for me," she says, when she catches me watching. "For you, it will be painful." She's hogging the fresh water for her children, I think, for herself.

"A little." I sit up, take the bucket myself. "Not painful." She smiles like a mother, through the bottom of her teeth, hiding back what she really wants to say. I stand before the tap and pull the full bucket, lift it to my chest, then over my head, pouring it

slowly at first. I can hardly feel the water, bubbling as it skims my shoulders. I hear it splash onto the concrete around my feet.

Gunta wants me to stop. "Ice cold," she warns. Only, it feels like melted butter, so I fill and pour, fill and pour, washing away the dead skin while I still can. My eyelids, warm and heavy, droop shut. On the sixth or seventh bucket, my knees give in.

Gunta doesn't say I told you so. She, instead, scoops me up like I'm a third daughter, and carries me out of the pirts. She leaves me sitting on my pile of clothes, pushes my head between my knees. When she returns, it is with some kind of tablet, a white blur I hold in tight resistance, cautious of its contents, even in my state. She leaves again, and the next time I hear footsteps, I think it's her, or a daughter, returning with a towel.

Instead, it's a man, a stranger, though the squinting eyes, low wrinkle lines around the lips give him away. He's a cousin, or brother, perhaps, of Aivars. He carries with him what would come to be an admirable quality I insist is distinctly Latvian. I'm completely naked, but this man looks me directly in the eyes, and only.

"Take some medicine."

"I have some." He stares into my eyes, in wonder.

"You speak Latvian?" He laughs, giddy. "The Russians have lived here for

years and don't know your language." I finish his sentence.

"You know?" The fact that I am without clothes, sopping wet, too light-headed a Yankee to even survive the pirts, and two breaths away from losing consciousness does not change the high opinion he is forming of me.

I lick the salty tablet, let it melt into my tongue. "Yes," I answer, dizzily. "I know." □

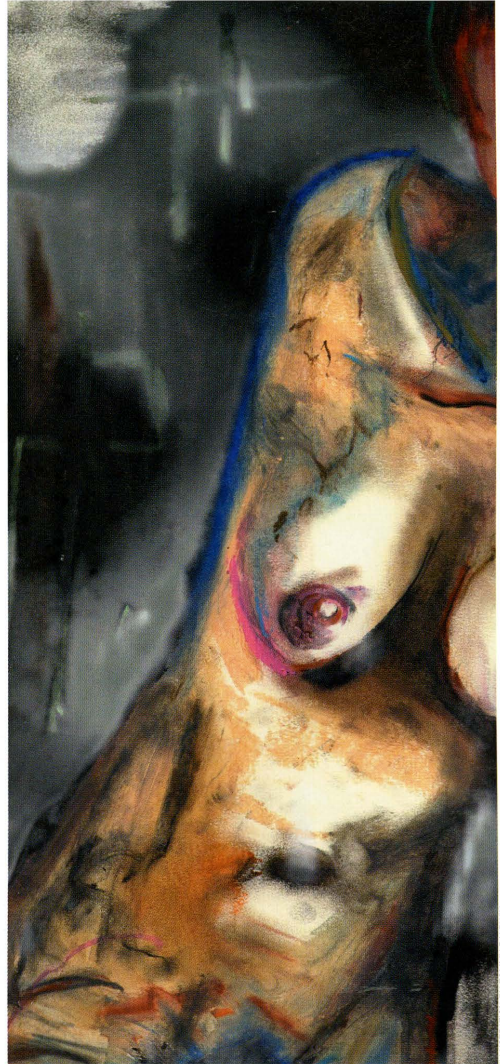


ILLUSTRATION BY TOMMY BALDWIN

**djangos**

# 2nd Hand Tunes

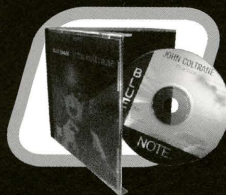
2602 N Clark Ave. • 773.281.8813

2604 N Clark Ave. • 773.929.6325

1377 E 53rd St. • 773.684.3375

800 Dempster St., Evanston • 847.491.1690

179 S Oak Park Ave., Oak Park • 708.524.2880



we aren't just used  
used & new music & movies

shop all our stores online at

**djangos.com**

ON SALE - IN STORE and ONLINE  
[www.towerrecords.com](http://www.towerrecords.com)

# Tower

has the  
**Best Selection**  
for your  
**entertainment**  
needs

NO  
MUSIC,  
NO  
LIFE.

TOWER RECORDS

from

**A TO Z**

The Difference Is  
**SELECTION**

**TOWER**  
RECORDS VIDEO BOOKS

[www.towerrecords.com](http://www.towerrecords.com)

**CHICAGO**

2301 North Clark at Belden  
214 South Wabash Ave.

**BLOOMINGDALE**  
383 West Trail Road

**SCHAUMBURG**  
1209 East Golf Road

**1-800-ASK-TOWER**

STORE LOCATIONS - HOURS - PHONE ORDERS



# Graveyard Shift

Documenting a city shrouded in mystery

## St. James Sag Church and Cemetery Lemont, Ill.

The church sits at the intersection of Lemont and Archer avenues, and has a long history of ghostly sightings, according to Dale Kaczmarek, president of the Ghost Research Society, a Chicago-based paranormal research organization. He says a former pastor of the church claimed to see the ground rising and falling as if it were breathing. Others have claimed to see several hooded figures walking across the church grounds only to disappear.

In the late 1800s, an old Native-American trail was paved over to make what is now Archer Avenue, which may be why there are so many reports of paranormal activity, Kaczmarek says.



PHOTOS BY JASON FORAKER & MIKE KALIN

TEXT BY MICHAEL HIRTZER





### **Beverly Unitarian Church Beverly, Ill.**

The church at 10244 Longwood Drive was built in 1886 as a castle for real-estate tycoon Robert Givens. The Beverly Unitarian Fellowship purchased it in 1942 and remodeled it in 1959. "When you start changing things physically at a location—whether you start remodeling or knocking down walls—if there's something there haunting, it's going to be stirred up," says Richard Crowe, a Chicago historian, ghost researcher and tour guide.

Crowe says that there are strong auditory haunts in the church, including the sounds of a party going on in the main ballroom (which is now used for worship) when the church is empty.

According to the church's Web site ([www.buc.org](http://www.buc.org)), one time "a very young girl, in a long dress, with a lilting Irish brogue, spoke to a woman in the castle about what the building had been like as a home. The woman was charmed, but then realized it had been a church for many years; she started back, but the girl had vanished."







### **Bachelor's Grove Cemetery Midlothian, Ill.**

"The dead don't rest easy here," says Dale Kaczmarek of the Ghost Research Society about Bachelor's Grove, reportedly Chicago's most haunted cemetery, dating back to 1844. Vandals have rendered many of the grave sites faceless at the final resting place of southwest suburban Midlothian's earliest settlers.

According to Kaczmarek, Bachelor's Grove was a popular dumping ground for gangsters in the late '20s and early '30s.

He says it was also a popular spot for devil worshippers, who were attracted to its secluded location. In 1975, forest rangers discovered "the remains of several small animals, all decapitated and totally drained of blood."

**G**ot a tattoo you regret? These poor souls do. Here they explain how they got their permanent ink, and why they want it gone.

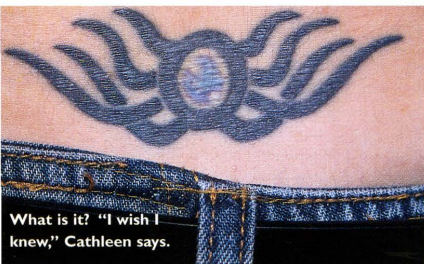


JEREMY LAWSON

Joel has to lighten this tattoo before he covers it up.

Joel got one of his 13 tattoos for no other reason than he'd been doing a lot of free publicity for a tattoo artist and the guy cut him a deal. With no real design in mind, he went for this mystery goblin holding a globe, and, like the rest of his ink, he now regrets the tattoo because it has no real meaning. Joel plans to get this baby covered, but first it has to be lightened because the ink is so dark.

"My only criteria was that it was symmetrical," Cathleen says of her brilliant plan to get tattooed at age 16. Since her then-boyfriend had six tattoos, she thought she'd hop on the bandwagon. So, what is it? "Really, I wish I knew," she says. "It resembles a spider." Why does she dislike it? "I think if you have artwork, perma-



JASON FORAKER

What is it? "I wish I knew," Cathleen says.

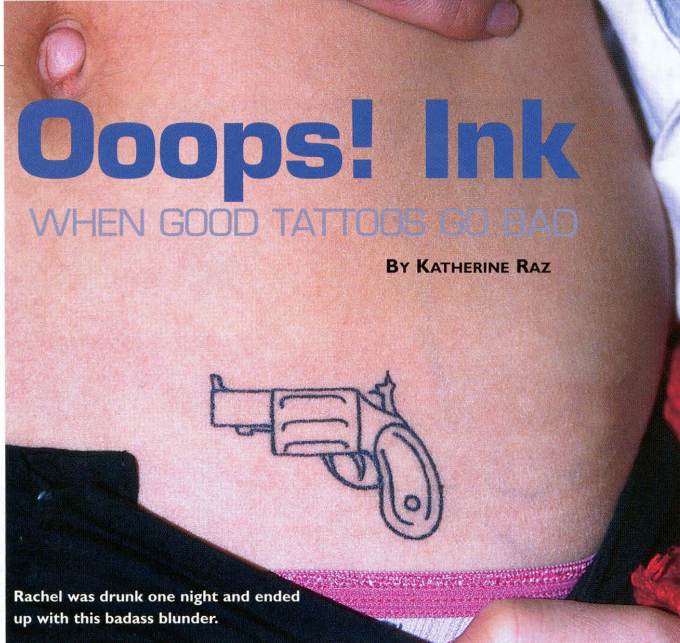
nent artwork, it should say something about who you are," she says. "This doesn't say what I'd like it to say about me."

Rachel woke up one morning with a vicious hangover and a bandage on her stomach. "What the hell's

# Ooops! Ink

WHEN GOOD TATTOOS GO BAD

BY KATHERINE RAZ



JASON FORAKER

Rachel was drunk one night and ended up with this badass blunder.

this?" she thought, trying to remember the night before. When she peeled off the gauze she exposed the biggest surprise of her life: a tattoo of a gun.

What seems hardcore when you're young won't seem hardcore forever.



MICHAEL HIRTZER

Mike got this hardcore tattoo when he was 15.

Mike got his half-sun, half-moon tattoo before he was old enough to see R-rated movies, and it shows. Aaron planned to get married to his high school girlfriend and did his own Indian ink tattoo with her initials. The design got botched, though, so instead of being a heart with a dagger through it, it looks more like a heart with a cross on top. The couple has since broken up, and what's worse, her initials are S.O.B.

David's tattoo is a dime-sized Oriental symbol, and he doesn't even know what it means. He got it on his birthday two years ago because his girlfriend was getting a piercing. He's no longer with the girl, and he hates the tattoo now because of its location: on his left pectoral. "I'm not

Popeye the Sailor Man," he says.

Ron had three tattoos when he went into prison. Twenty years later when he was released, he had tattoo sleeves. Now he's getting them removed a little at a time. This guy's not afraid of pain—most of the tattoos he has, he gave himself. But, he says, getting them removed is another story. "It's like a white-hot thumb tack pressed on your skin 30,000 times," he says. "The next day, it looks like you dipped your arm in a deep fryer: major large, fluid-filled blisters." And, he says, "It itches."

When Sabrina was a sophomore in high school, she had her first love's nickname, "Rapid," tattooed on her right leg. But alas, Rapid got another girl—Frankie—pregnant. Sabrina wore Band-Aids to school to cover up Rapid's name until she covered the design this summer with a tattoo of a black panther, and had Rapid permanently removed from her life, and her leg. □

Sabrina's panther discreetly hides her ex-boyfriend's nickname, "Rapid."



JEREMY LAWSON

# "The perfect entertainment."

—*Chicago Tribune*

## BLUE MAN GROUP



**STUDENT RUSH TICKETS!** Students with valid student ID may purchase tickets at the box office on the day of the show for \$25. Two tickets per ID, subject to availability.

### REGULAR SCHEDULE

Tuesday - Thursday 8pm  
Friday 7+10pm  
Saturday 4,7+10pm  
Sunday 3+6pm

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Box Office 773.348.4000  
ticketmaster 312.902.1500  
Group Sales 773.348.3300  
Tickets also available at ticketmaster.com

### BRIAR STREET THEATRE

3133 North Halsted Chicago

1.800.BLUEMAN

[www.blueman.com](http://www.blueman.com)



photos by Eunice Carson

We See the World the Way You Do —  
24 Hours a Day.

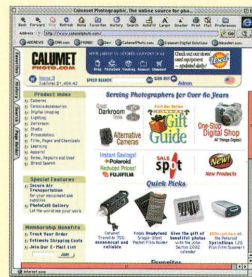
[www.calumetphoto.com](http://www.calumetphoto.com)

For over 60 years, photographers from all walks of life have counted on Calumet. They know they can rely on our in-depth technical assistance, incredible selection of equipment and supplies, competitive prices and outstanding customer support.

Our Web site is an extension of our long-standing tradition of providing quality service to student and professional photographers. Here are just a few of the ways in which our site enables us to serve you better:

- Simple, secure shopping
- Sales and product specials
- A huge selection of darkroom products
- Informative how-to articles
- Inspirational portfolios
- Immediate stock availability information
- Accessibility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Bookmark us at  
[www.calumetphoto.com](http://www.calumetphoto.com)!



**1-800-CALUMET**  
(225-8638) U.S. and Canada  
toll-free ordering

**Visit Our Local Store**  
1111 N. Cherry • Chicago  
312/440-4920

[www.calumetphoto.com](http://www.calumetphoto.com)  
Ordering, information  
and inspiration 24/7

**CALUMET**  
PHOTOGRAPHIC