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Columbia Chronicle (04/15/1991)

Columbia College Chicago

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The Columbia Chronicle

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 17

COLUMBIA COLLEGE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

April 15, 1991

Torco: Towering inferno?

Violations aplenty in surprise inspection

By Jerry E. Pott
Staff Writer

Columbia students are attending classes in buildings with blocked or jammed fire escapes, inoperative or non-existent fire alarm systems, and improperly stored toxic chemicals.

Three separate surprise inspections, requested by the *Chronicle*, and conducted by Lt. Don Rice of the Chicago Fire Department's Fire Prevention Bureau between March 22 and April 8, revealed that, according to Rice, the college is the site of numerous fire hazards including violations of Chicago's Municipality Code.

The most serious violation was found in the Torco Building, which houses the school's marketing department—the building has no fire alarms.

According to Rice, the previous owners of the Torco building were not required to have an alarm system. But, as soon as Columbia purchased the building for classroom use in May, 1990, the college was in violation of city fire codes.

"So you don't have a fire alarm in this building—period?" Rice asked Larry Dunn, director of building services for Columbia, who accompanied him on the inspection.

"No," Dunn replied. "Not yet."

Dunn said Arrow Electric, a small firm based in Skokie, was contracted to install a fire alarm in the Torco Building, and it's "just a period of weeks" before it will be completed.

The secretary answering the phone at Arrow Electric identified Mickey Wolff as the only person with information about their contract with Columbia. Wolff failed to respond to numerous attempts to reach him.

"Columbia is going to have to take care of the fire-alarm problem immediately," Rice told the *Chronicle*.

Bert Gall, Columbia's executive vice-president, disputed Rice's claim, saying that "a fire-alarm system is only required if there are more than 100 students in the building at one time, which at this time there are not."

The actual wording in the code, however, refers to the number of people in a building—not just students—and would include faculty members and other staff.

Gall went on to say that, "Installation of a fire-alarm system in the Torco Building is both premature and voluntary on our part."

However, chapter 15-16-110 (2) of the code states, "Type I or Type II schools over one story in height shall be equipped with a Class I fire alarm system."

According to the classification schedule in chapter 13-56 of the

code, Columbia is a Class C-3 Type II School.

Gall also disputed the validity of Rice's concerns about the availability of fire escapes.

"I could rip out all the exterior fire escapes and still be within the code," Gall said. "The code only requires two interior exits, which are present in all of our buildings."

"Don't you think the city would be very concerned if we were in violation of fire codes?" Gall asked.

Rice, a 14-year veteran of the fire department, was accompanied by *Chronicle* staff during each inspection.

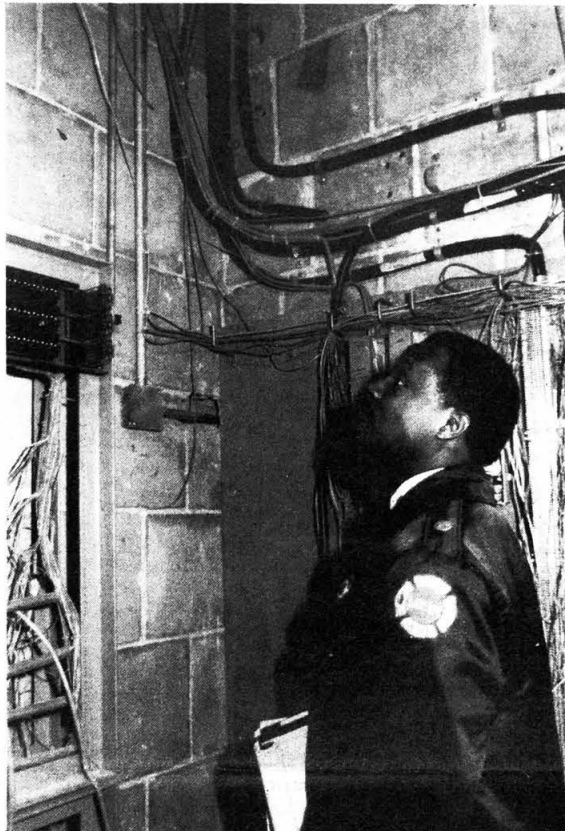
Blocked Fire Escapes

The three inspections revealed that 19 of the 29 floors occupied by the college in its three main buildings, 600 S. Michigan, 624 S. Michigan and 623 S. Wabash, did not have sufficient access to all available fire escapes.

Chapter 13-160-070 of the city code states, "There shall be no obstruction in any exitway that may hamper travel and evacuation." But, of the 42 fire escapes physically checked in the three buildings, 23, or more than 50 percent, were unreachable or unusable.

Equipment and debris blocked exits, windows were jammed shut, and doors leading to fire

See Inferno, page 5



Lt. Don Rice of the Chicago Fire Department's Fire Prevention Bureau, checks the Wabash Building. Keith Strickland for The Chronicle

Former teen queen wins production award

By Cynthia T. Dopke
Staff Reporter

When Lisa Jessen stood on stage in the 1985 Miss Teen USA pageant, little did she know that she would one day win awards for standing behind the camera instead of in front of it.

Jessen, 24, won the 12th Annual College Television Awards Competition in the news and public affairs division for her region as executive producer for "600 South," Columbia's news magazine show. The award is given by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the same organization that gives out the annual Emmy awards.

The awards ceremony was held on March 10 in Beverly Hills and starred such as James Earl Jones and Dan Castellaneta (the voice of Homer Simpson). Jessen won a \$400 cash prize for carrying the 11-state Midwest region.

The award-winning show of "600 South" included a segment about cocaine babies and an investigative piece about fire hazards at Columbia College. While many students helped create "600 South," the contest awarded only college producers.

The national contest draws stiff competition from big-league film schools such as Columbia

University in New York but Jessen said she didn't realize who she was up against.

"If I'd have known that, I wouldn't have entered," she said with a laugh. Her instructors convinced her to take a chance. It was well worth it.



Lisa Jessen

Jessen's interest in television production was sparked during the Miss Teen USA pageant. She didn't win, but while on stage as Miss Teen Illinois, she found herself paying close attention to the direction and angles of the cameras and realized that was where she'd rather be. Modeling crossed her mind as an option, but she decided to pursue a more challenging career.

Entering the pageant was Jessen's way of getting out of

Macomb, a small town in western Illinois. She came to Chicago and went to Loyola for one semester before starting at Columbia in Sept., 1986.

Though this award came as a surprise to Jessen, it's not the first television contest she's won.

Jessen produced a documentary called "Aide for AIDS" that showed how one person can make a difference. In Jan., 1990, she won a first place award from a women's cable television organization. It was her first television competition and she was hesitant to enter, but figured, "Hey, my competition will be cut in half. That was before I found out that men could enter the contest."

The same documentary earned Jessen second place in last year's Columbia's AIDS Awareness competition.

Jessen graduated last June and though not currently working in television, she hopes to start at a small news station.

She prefers a warmer climate but isn't counting on her first job offer to be in the ideal location.

"I want to go south," she said, "but with my luck, I'd end up in Alaska."

Workshop offers students tea, cookies, and sympathy

By Julie Sacharski
Staff Writer

It's 1:15 p.m., and a small office in the journalism department is buzzing with energy. Four students stand bunched together, listening intently to the dark-haired woman behind the desk.

Not only is she dispensing words of wisdom, but she also provides a wicked tea to wash them down.

The office is that of Rose Economou, Columbia's broadcast journalism coordinator, and the students are a portion of the informal workshop she conducts.

Meeting every afternoon with students to discuss future plans and tackle present problems might seem overwhelming to some, but Economou sees the workshop as a necessary element of the journalism department.

"There needed to be an open door where students could come share ideas, ask questions and network," Economou said. "We foster an encouraging environment for students who care about their futures."

And from the looks of the number of workshop participants, it's obvious just how much students do care. Since Economou began meeting with students just a few months ago, she estimates that she has seen

approximately 60 of the 100 broadcast journalism majors attending Columbia. About 10, she says, have begun working on "hard, independent projects that have more than Columbia as an outlet."

Alina Romanowski, a junior, is one such student. She transferred to Columbia from Bradley University last semester, and has since begun working on an independent project with another student, assisted by Economou. The project, sponsored by the Institute for Media Arts, is a documentary film on Chicago's homeless. Romanowski's first impressions of Economou were similar to those of many students.

"When I was introduced to Rose, I was unsure about what I wanted to do in journalism," Romanowski said. "She was so friendly. As soon as we met, she said, 'Sit down! Would you like some cookies?' When we started talking, she asked me if I was interested in working on the independent project with her, and I said yes. From then on, I knew Rose was a good person. She's always willing to help students."

Economou said she began the workshop primarily because she recognized the need students had for an outlet to their ideas. "Most students, especially the younger

See Tea, page 10

**"BIG EVENT, BIG EVENT... I GOTTA GET...TO ...THE ...
BIG EVENT!!!**

I don't know about you, but I'm on my way to the big event at the HOKIN ANNEX. Why?? Because this Tuesday and Wednesday, April 16th. & 17th. from 11:00am -- 2:00pm Rebecca Courington is gonna be exsponding *!#%?? You know, talking about the Student Purchasing Program and demonstrating the three New Macintosh Computers! Hey I don't know about you, but I need tips on improving my resume.

There's gonna be computer experts there as well as Raffles, Giveaways, Music (D.J.), and my favorite... food.

So, don't worry about lunch time, you can grab something there.

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LASTS 2 DAYS.**

See ya there!"



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Frankly Speaking:**Poet and novelist, Paul Hoover**

By Jerry E. Pott
Staff Writer

had anything like that happen since.

What influenced you to write?

My mother was a writer. She wrote children's books and religious songs. I never saw her writing the whole time I was growing up. That was bizarre. I saw the evidence of the writing, and in her sewing room there were stacks of writer's magazines that I would spend Saturday afternoons reading. I had no ambitions to be a poet whatsoever, although I was interested in writing. I began an ambition to be a fiction writer when I was at college—a fiction writer who had a disdain for poetry. Like a lot of young men, I thought poetry was silly, and I was more interested in the art of fiction. I didn't understand poetry in particular. It was my goal to go on for a Ph.D. in English, but then the Vietnam war intervened.

What changed your mind about poetry?

I came to Chicago and started graduate school in a creative writing program. Then I got involved in a program for writers at the University of Illinois, Circle campus. Paul Carol became my teacher there, and he motivated me to become a poet. The most important thing that he did was one afternoon after a class we were standing outside and it was raining—one of those April days when it's raining but the sun is out—and we were standing together under his umbrella and he told me I was a true poet. He said it in very dramatic fashion. I was bowled over by that, and I believed him. He introduced me at my first big reading by saying, "Here's Paul Hoover. He's quite a fine young poet, but he doesn't yet know he's a poet. I'm here to tell you that he is." I think my protestant upbringing prevented me from calling myself a poet until I was sure I was one. After that I never wrote a story for 20 years. I wrote only poetry.

How did your family feel about your career choices?

My parents were proud. They had no ambitions for me to be a doctor or an engineer anyway. In our church tradition one seeks to be of service in some way in the world, and being a poet is, in a way, a form of human service. I realize now that in the long run I'm not that much different from my dad. I think a poet and a preacher share a lot of the same things. I was approached by some people at the college who wanted to give me a scholarship to go to our church seminary, but I decided to go ahead with my conscientious objector work instead, and then pursue a career. I thought ultimately I would head for a college teaching position. But after I started the M.A. program in poetry, I decided to follow that instead of an academic career.

Where do prize-winning poets come from anyway?

I was born in Harrisonburg, Virginia, the son of a Protestant minister in the Church of the Brethren. That's a pacifist sect—German pacifists—originally known as the Dunkers. We didn't live in the south that long, and moved to the midwest when my dad changed congregations. We would move every three or five years, kind of like an army brat. We lived in downstate Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. My finest memories are from central and southern Ohio, and usually associated with a given congregation. My background was pretty much a rural environment—rural and religious. After high school I went to Manchester College in Indiana, which is one of the Church of the Brethren denominational colleges.

How did a small town preacher's kid end up in Chicago?

I came to Chicago with sort of a religious purpose. After I graduated from college in 1968 the Vietnam war was going on. Our church, along with the Mennonites, Quakers and Jehovah's Witnesses were the leading pacifist churches of the day. I took my conscientious objector status and began working at Wesley Memorial Hospital, which is now Northwestern Memorial Hospital. I worked there from 1968 to 1970. That experience, by the way, is the basis of my novel "Saigon, Illinois." James Holger in the novel is essentially Paul Hoover. I did experience culture shock when I first came to Chicago, being a country kid. I thought I could drive down State Street, park in front of Carson Pirie Scott and go shopping. I also had a gun pulled on me the first week I was here, but I've never



Jill S. Dolan for The Chronicle

How long have you been teaching at Columbia College?

I started teaching part-time in 1974 and moved to full-time in 1977. I've never taught at any other institution. Columbia College is unique in that if you're adept at something like poetry, you can teach that skill and that understanding without necessarily going after a Ph.D. So I got my M.A. in 1973 and then came here. You always have concerns about your own freshness in relationship to your position, but I've been refreshed by sabbaticals, I've been refreshed by my own curiosities, and by pushing myself back into areas like fiction writing.

Did you ever have doubts about what you were doing?

I remember when I was a young unpublished poet in the early 70s, my wife and I didn't know what we were going to do, so we briefly discussed moving into upper Michigan to work as hired hands on a farm. I was a hippie and thought it would be a fun thing to do. That's about as close as I ever came to getting away from writing. My life has been happy. I have a family. I've been married for 17 years to Maxine Chernof, who is a poet and fiction writer with virtually equal accomplishments to mine. We have three children. The period of the Vietnam war was a little disturbing. It altered my attitudes radically. I think it shook me out of place, but I wound up going in the same kind of direction I intended to go.

What prompted the return to fiction writing?

I had already published a few books of poetry, and appeared in a number of anthologies and magazines. Around 1985-86 it occurred to me to write a novel based upon my experiences as a pacifist. There were a number of Vietnam War novels published, but none from the perspective of a conscientious objector. I put my poetry aside, and every evening I would go home, have dinner, and

write. Six months later I had a novel. I sent a chapter off to the New Yorker, and the manuscript off to a division of Random House. Two weeks later the New Yorker accepted the chapter, and the next day I got a call from the editor at Vintage Contemporaries that they had accepted the novel. The New Yorker said there was a good chance they were going to take it if I would change one thing. So I immediately sent a copy of that letter to the editor at Vintage. I think that encouraged her to read it a little more quickly. But the speed with which they both acted was really amazing.

What other changes occurred as a result of the novel?

Suddenly I had a double career. But I eager to get back to the poetry. You can't always write a novel in six months. I followed that with another book of poetry called "The Novel", which was a book-length poem, and a reaction to having written a novel. Also, after you have a book published it's advisable to go out and give readings. The cycle generally is you are very private and hermetic while you are writing, and then you get your public persona, and drag it out—sometimes howling—and seek out readings, and sort of go on tour.

Does it ever become easier to write longer pieces?

You keep wanting to challenge yourself as an author to keep things interesting. When I got into my mid-thirties I started to challenge myself to do longer works. I started writing in length when I did a sonnet sequence at a time when it was considered not cool to write sonnets. It's fun to try a little of the unexpected. Then I wrote a 15-page poem, and a 30-page poem, and that finally got me to do the poem "The Novel."

Focusing on the college for a moment, what is your impression of Columbia students?

The student population has been very consistent from the beginning. We get a good mix of kids from different racial, religious, and economic backgrounds. The poetry program does seem to attract more women than men, though. I think Columbia students can write with just about anybody. Three of my poetry students were included in a national anthology a couple years back. There were only 30 poets included in the work, and most of them were graduate students. Columbia had three of the thirty and our students are all undergraduates. I think that's pretty good. Our students have been successful in several areas and styles of poetic expression.

Have you had any problems with the administration?

Nobody teaches anywhere without experiencing some disappointment. I was hopeful that we would have a full-fledged graduate poetry program by now. I felt we had the achievement and the staff to handle a graduate program. We do have one forthcoming next year, subject to approval by the State of Illinois. That would be a masters in teaching with an emphasis in poetry. I've been quite ambitious to enroll graduate students in poetry. I would also like a full-fledged M.A./M.F.A. program that would be nationally competitive. We already teach our undergraduates with a graduate standard, so we're prepared for the transition. There are also other Columbia College politics that everybody knows about because they read *The Chronicle*. But Mike Alexandroff is a brilliant man and a very astute politician, who had a good vision for the college and made it happen.

Do you foresee any problems with Alexandroff's departure?

The way this college works is there are strong chairs. Each chair has his or her own little fiefdom.

See Hoover, page 4

Perspective:

First amendment no excuse

By Amy Barthelemy
Copy Editor

There is abundant evidence on campuses nationwide that Americans hate each other. Too many of us have failed to overcome our worst racist, sexist, or anti-semitic attitudes.

The disturbing prevalence of publicly expressed racism on college campuses has led some schools to adopt codes restricting and punishing "hate speech." At issue is whether schools have the right to restrict speech on their campuses, or whether such practices are an abridgement of individuals' First Amendment rights to free speech.

As many as 200 U.S. colleges and universities have adopted codes restricting racist, sexist and other derogatory speech on campus. The scope of these codes, and the severity of punishments they provide for, varies greatly. One code, at the University of Michigan, was struck down in 1989 because it was so broad and vague that it infringed upon students Constitutionally protected right to free speech.

Schools that have adopted speech codes say they are motivated by a desire to protect minority students from language which is clearly hurtful, and to preserve the diversity of their student populations, which might be threatened if minority students felt uncomfortable or unprotected on campus.

Whether speech codes can offer anything but the most superficial protection remains to be seen. But it is an admirable aim, and schools have the right to take reasonable measures toward that end.

Those opposed to speech codes say they infringe upon students' First Amendment rights. But, if a student is suspended, or even expelled, for shouting anti-black remarks on campus (as was a student at Brown University), have his Constitutional rights really been abridged? Is he any less free to stand on a public street corner and express his views, no matter how narrow minded? All that has really been taken away from him is the opportunity to study at that particular institution.

A student expelled for spouting offensive racist epithets has no more recourse than an employee who loses his job for cursing out his boss. Both student and employee are entitled, under the First Amendment, to express unpopular opinions. But just as the tantrum-throwing employee is not guaranteed a job by the Constitution, neither is the expelled student guaranteed a place in a college classroom after his outburst.

Institutions of higher learning (both public and private) set certain standards for academic competence and appropriate behavior. State-supported schools do not have to accept all applicants. They are not supposed to discriminate on the basis of race, sex or religion, but they do discriminate based on other criteria.

Limiting what students may say to one another on a college campus will not alter the misguided attitudes behind the words. Perhaps minority students will feel comfortable in their newly sanitized environments, but surely anyone who's been the object of racism is aware that silence does not equal acceptance.

Yes, schools have a right to be intolerant of bigots who would intimidate their fellow students. Speech codes may not be as effective as school administrators hope, but in the final analysis, they will have to rely upon trial and error to deal with this problem. Let's not tie their hands by inappropriately invoking the First Amendment.

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Hoover,

from page 3

The administration communicates with the chairs essentially by having lunch with them. The faculty doesn't have that much input in that mix, so its run like a business—from the top down. That's different from many traditional academic institutions where things bubble up from the bottom. That is, the faculty rises up through the ranks to positions of chairmanships, deanships, and ultimately presidencies. What might happen with Mike's leaving is the faculty will be trusted with more of a hand in governing the college. But that's still in some contention because of the strong position of the chairs. It's a strength that in the wrong hands can lead to tyranny, and it has been observed to lead to that. On the positive side that system can get results in a way that more democratic systems can't achieve.

Any changes in store for you?

I've never actively campaigned to get another position at another college. I have it pretty good here. For example, if I want to bring in a special panel of poets, or do some other project or workshop I can do it. Not many

people have that kind of freedom in an academic setting.

Are you working on anything else right now?

Yes. I'm writing another novel. The working title is "Critical Thinking," but I expect I'll have a different title when it's finished. An alternative title would be something like "The Post-Modern Christmas of Jamison Harkness." It's a Christmas diary by a man who's a professor of critical studies at a university not unlike Columbia College. It primarily takes place in the man's mind and in his home. The character evaluates every trivial event in his life as if it has monumental significance. So it's a comic novel—sort of a philosophical Walter Mitty who is obsessive/compulsive in the way that he exercises his thinking.

When will it be completed and published?

I started the book at Christmas time a year ago and I hope to have it done by this Christmas. I had a summer vacation plus a sabbatical from the college to write this one, which is why it's twice as long as my first novel. But, I couldn't secure a deal with this book because normally you approach a publisher with 100

pages and then use the advance to finish the rest of the book. At 100 pages I still didn't know what I had. The book kind of made itself as it went along. After 200 pages I saw what I had and went back to the beginning to rewrite it.

Nobody likes to talk about money, but are you as commercially successful as you thought you would be?

There's always the question for an author or poet of whether you should go somewhere else. There's also the cliché that there are certain advantages to being in New York, and that has occasionally entered my mind. But Maxine and I have been published by some of the finest presses in the country and we're here, so it really makes no difference. It's wherever your mind is. That doesn't mean you should ignore New York. In fact, as a writer you should try to get there a couple times a year. I also try to make one West Coast trip a year, usually to San Francisco, if I can to do readings. I'm not necessarily a Chicago booster but it's a fine place to be. There are lot of writers in the suburbs teaching at the local college who would kill to come to Chicago. As artists we're lucky to be living in a city that is very cosmopolitan, world class, and a net producer of art in a very big way.

To the Editor:

I wholeheartedly disagree with Brock Craft about the effectiveness of the anti-cocaine ad in the March 11 issue of the Chronicle. I think it is a very powerful image. It may not deter most cocaine users but it is bound to be more effective than "a thousand words," which is a ludicrous suggestion, even for concerned citizens.

Who wants to read a thousand words? I think Mr. Craft is confusing deterrence ads with public discussion by concerned citizens. In this case, a picture is definitely worth a thousand words.

Mary Little
Library Assistant

Letters to the Editors should be sent to room 802-W by noon Tuesday for publication the following week.

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Jonas Dovydenas, Ironworker, Chicago, 1969, silver gelatin print, courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago.

Low GPAs land some students in financial aid limbo

By Theresa Volpe
Staff Writer

This semester, 190 of Columbia's 2,700 financial aid recipients lost their funds because they had not followed guidelines set by either the federal government or the college.

Of the 190 students who lost funds, 145 were affected by Columbia's guidelines. At Columbia, a financial aid recipient must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better, complete undergraduate studies within six years and be enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours per semester.

The federal government's guidelines, which went into effect two years ago, caused 55 students to lose their aid this spring. Students receiving aid after June 1987, must have at least a 2.0 GPA at the end of their fourth term, regardless of what they did the first three.

"This new addition has caused some confusion among students," said John Olino, director of Financial Aid. "If a student maintains a 2.0 for the first three semesters and then drops to a 1.99 at the end of the fourth term or any time afterwards, they will lose their aid."

The financial aid department is required to be strict about such matters, but those in the counseling department have a more sympathetic ear.

"With these regulations, the federal government acts as if there is some magic moment where they can take a picture at the end of your fourth semester and at that point you must have a 2.0," said Mark Kelly, director of Counseling Services.

But as statistics show, more students are affected by Columbia's guidelines than by the government's.

Columbia's guidelines are set by the Dean of Students and the Director of Financial Aid. The school's policy complies with federal regulations and is mandatory for all institutions receiving financial aid.

Students at Columbia who don't receive aid must maintain at least a 2.0 GPA and obtain their bachelor's degree within 12 terms. Full-time students must satisfactorily complete 10 semester hours per term. Part-time students need at least six hours per term. When students on financial aid fall below a 2.0 GPA for four consecutive terms they are dismissed from the college. However, students in jeopardy are notified by the third term about the possibility of dismissal.

Since 1980, the U.S. Department of Education has worked to ensure that students who receive aid are progressing through the system at an acceptable rate.

"Originally, it was based on a student's cumulative GPA, but now it has become more complex because the federal regulators keep adding new requirements," Olino said.

Kelly and Olino argue that the federal regulations are unfair because they do not give students enough time to adjust to college life.

"This is the effect of a Congress that is determined to cut funds. You get these bureaucratic laws that have little relationship to a real life of a student," Kelly said.

The Academic Advising Department offers guidance for students who find themselves in a position where they may lose funds. All students, whether receiving aid or not, are put on probation whenever their GPA falls below a C average. When students fail to bring up their GPAs by their fourth semester, they are dismissed from school

for at least one year. A dismissed student must obtain a 2.0 at another school before being reinstated.

Any student on probation must see an academic advisor for counseling. "If a student is on probation, we direct them to the Writing Center and the Math and Science Learning Center for help. Also, special tutoring programs are available in some of the major departments," Kelly said.

Students who have lost aid can become eligible again if they bring their GPAs up to meet the school's and the government's standards. "If you're in trouble, you've got to come in for help," Kelly said. "We want to make sure none of the guidelines come into play."

"Sometimes, with all the regulations, the hole students fall into is so deep it's hard to get out," Olino said.

Inferno, from page 1

escapes were locked, the inspections showed.

South Campus

The Torco inspection revealed other fire-safety lapses. On three of the four floors used by Columbia fire escapes were blocked.

The fire-escape stairs outside the third-floor faculty lounge were blocked by garbage dumpsters in the alley. Anyone trying to escape from the building's west side would have had to jump the final two floors.

A sixth-floor conference-room door leading to an inner-court fire escape was locked, and the fire-escape door in room 605 was stuck and had to be forced open.

Another door on the eighth floor took almost five minutes of pushing, prying and kicking before it finally opened—after Dunn and Rice had cleared several desks out of the way.

Dunn told Rice he thought the weather was to blame for warping the exterior doorjamb.

The 14th floor fire escapes were all in good shape, but no classes were scheduled there this semester, Dunn said.

Main Campus

Rice began his first inspection March 22, on the top floor of 600 S. Michigan. And one of the first things he noticed was the bare wood ceiling at the top of the central stairwell.

He wondered aloud whether the building was fire resistant.

Dunn assured him it was, saying the wooden cover was a temporary replacement for a skylight that used to be there.

Rice and Dunn then climbed to the roof. Dunn refused to let the *Chronicle* accompany them because of "insurance liabilities."

The first room Rice inspected was the Television props/set-storage room on the 15th floor. It was one of the few times he was noticeably annoyed with what he saw.

The fire escape was blocked

by a furniture dolly, and the two rooms that make up the storage area lacked a heat detector, ceiling tiles, and proper closures.

"This whole area needs to be properly enclosed," Rice said. "They'll have to make the recommended changes or stop using this as a storage area."

On the 13th floor, a west-side fire escape was blocked. And in room 1301, a large area housing most of the fabrics and other supplies for the fashion design department, there were no fire extinguishers, or signs directing anyone to areas where extinguishers were available.

The 11th floor accounting-office fire escape was blocked by a desk and coat rack. And on the east side of the same floor, Rice found a large supply of ammonium hydroxide, a chemical used in the art department's blueprint machine.

The machine is kept in a small area between rooms 1101 and 1103. According to documents provided by science department faculty member Keith Kostecka, ammonium hydroxide is extremely caustic and corrosive, and should be stored in a special corrosive-containment cabinet.

Eight one-gallon containers of the chemical were being kept in and on top of a standard metal storage cabinet. One open container was on the floor, and held a supply tube leading to the blueprint machine.

While ammonium hydroxide fumes pose a danger to skin, eyes and lungs in its liquid form, under certain fire conditions it will also produce a poisonous gas.

Rice questioned whether such a large supply of the chemical was needed.

"We go through about four containers per semester," said Sharon Lavine, of the fashion design department. "The fumes are ... part of the developing process."

Other handling and storage precautions, such as adequate ventilation, and a shower and eye bath were not in evidence.

On the 10th floor the hallway to an emergency exit was clogged with miscellaneous debris and a large refrigerator. The west side

fire escape was blocked by someone's bicycle.

On the east side of the same floor, three portable blackboards barred an emergency exit from photography department offices to the center stairwell lobby.

A heavy blackout curtain and several chairs blocked the west fire escape on the eighth floor. And on the seventh floor, the escape window refused to stay open because of a broken closure.

In the records office on the sixth floor a large radiator with a cover, topped by a stack of books, prevented anyone from using that fire escape.

Outside the Bursar's office on the fifth floor, a secondary hallway leading to an emergency exit was clogged with mailbags.

Not that it would have mattered—the door was locked, and there were no signs to indicate it was an emergency exit.

Not even the college administration offices were safe. The emergency-exit door leading from the offices to the central stairwell lobby was locked from both sides.

On the fourth floor, the door to the Black Music Research Collection, and another fire escape, was locked.

Dunn said an "electric strike system" was being installed that would automatically unlock the doors when the fire alarm was triggered, providing access to the fire escapes.

The strike system is not yet completed, Dunn said.

On the third floor, the emergency exit from the library's technical services area was blocked by desks, files and shelves of old books.

And outside the library's main second-floor entrance, the emergency-exit signs pointed people in the wrong direction, sending them down a second-floor hallway instead of the stairs leading to the first floor.

The main entrance to the Museum of Contemporary Photography on the first floor was the only available door for an emergency exit from that area. A museum official told Rice the door was locked from both sides to protect the exhibits.

Wabash Campus

"This building is in good shape," Rice said as he began the inspection of 623 S. Wabash.

He was impressed with the dust collecting system used in the 10th floor woodworking shop. And said the entire building looked to be the most fire resistant of the three main campus structures.

But problems with fire escapes plagued six out of the 10 floors there, as well.

The door to the escape in room 909 was locked, and once inside, the window was blocked by drafting tables and chairs.

In room 807, the escape window was blocked by desks, and the window itself was jammed shut.

The door to room 700-S, and another escape, was locked, and escape windows in rooms 609 and 309 were stuck shut.

On the second floor, the east side fire escape was behind a locked door. And in the theater

scene shop, workers had temporarily positioned large tables in front of the west exit, and placed sticks in the east window frames, including the fire escape, to prevent them from being opened.

According to Steve Bauer of the theater department, the tables were placed by the exit temporarily while another part of the floor was being painted.

"The sticks are one of the measures we use to prevent thieves from getting into the shop," Bauer said.

Depending on the violations, the college administration has up to 90 days to comply with the Fire Department's recommendations.

Major infractions, such as the alarm system in the Torco building, and the locked doors leading to fire escapes, will have to be dealt with immediately.

Until that happens, however, the next time you hear the fire alarm go off at Columbia College, take it seriously—and get out.

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One hand washes the other with 'Soap'

By Theresa Volpe
Staff Reporter

How about this for a cast of character: mobsters, murderers, detectives, drunks, sluts, swindlers, unfaithful lovers, interracial marriages and split personalities.

No, it's not an Oprah or Geraldo show. It's Columbia's soap opera, "Behind the Screen," a 30-minute program, produced by students from various departments which airs regularly on cable and satellite networks.

"The reason for a serialized program was to have a format where students could write, act, produce, direct and do all the production totally from ground zero," said Luke Palermo, co-instructor of the Cable Workshop Producing and Production class.

"If we did something from plays that have already been created, the students wouldn't have the opportunity to create original plots, and we would have a harder time being creative all around," Palermo said.

The show's plot revolves around two television news stations engaged in a fiercely competitive battle for ratings. There are scandals, murders, love affairs and more.

Some of the main characters are Olivia Jackson, the owner of one of the stations and Jack Jackson, Olivia's conniving brother, who is always trying to find ways to take over the station. There's Guido Nova, a mob boss out to control every character on the show, especially his daughter, Sylvie. Then there is Jessica Dugan, whose split personality sometimes turns her into Francesca La Fevre.

A collaboration of classes come together to help out. Students from several departments

collaborate to produce the show. The Cable Workshop Producing and Production class is team-taught by Ron Bayly and Palermo. Susan Regelet teaches the Professional Writing Workshop, while Catherine Slade supervises the independent actor's project.

The classes from the various departments meet for five or six hours each week on the 15th floor of the Michigan building, where the studio is located. There are eight scenes in each half-hour episode. Two scenes are filmed each week and one new episode is telecast each month.

Each class has designated responsibilities. The writers are mostly from the fiction and film departments. Students from the television department act as directors, set designers, lighting and camera people. "The actors have input as to what happens to their character, and they meet weekly with the writers to talk about story lines and character development," Palermo said.

The show has a student music director who sits in on rehearsals, then scores an original set of music for each scene. The music is recorded separately on a synthesizer and worked into the show later. Performers are members of an independent study group from the theater department.

In any given semester there are between 70 and 80 people involved in the project. Writers and production people can hold those positions for two semesters. Actors can stay in their roles for as long as they are at Columbia.

In terms of plot line, character development, make-up, wardrobes and sets, everything is run by students.

"You would think we should be re-inventing the wheel every semester, since new people have

to start from the beginning. But for some reason, the quality of the work starts where it left off the semester before and keeps getting better," he said. We just finished shooting episode 23, and there is a dramatic difference compared to episode one."

The continual improvement is hard for Palermo to explain, but he said it could be due to the reputation the program has within the participating departments. Students know what to expect when they sign up for classes.

"The new students talk to other people who have already worked on the project and become familiar with the show. Word gets around that it's a serious project. Students have a real motivation to carry the show on," he said.

The television department was surprised to see the soap take off the way it did. "At first, we weren't even sure the product would be showable. With 70 people trying to learn how to do a show, how could we expect them to produce quality stuff by week three of a semester. But as our students always do, they surprised us and took the ball and ran with it. Within three weeks we had good stuff," he said.

"Behind the Screen" can be seen on Channel 21 through the Chicago Access Corporation as part of its Prime Time Columbia slot. This slot is part of a one-hour program put out by the television department monthly. The show is telecast in 47 communities in the suburbs using cable systems such as Continental, U.S. Cable and Multi-Media. The show has recently been added to a nationwide satellite network called UNET (University Network), which has 126 affiliates.

That the product was presentable for cable was a wonderful



Omar Castillo for The Chronicle
"Behind The Screen" instructor Lucas Palermo.

luxury and a benefit the department didn't expect. When working in an educational environment, Palermo said, getting the experience of producing, directing or acting in a television program is far more important than whether or not the product gets air play.

"The process is far more important than the product. The audience and the showing of it takes second seat. But we've found that the product's success motivates students because it is something they can be proud of," Palermo said.

Chicago news personalities such as NBC's entertainment critic Norman Mark, ABC and CBS roaming reporters Janet Davies and Bob Wallace have all had guest appearances on the

show. Wallace even did his well known, "Where's Wallace?" from the show's studio for Channel 2 news.

Many of the students who have worked with the program have gone on to land bigger and better roles. For example, Michael Stoyanov started out as one of the show's prime characters and he is now appearing on the CBS sitcom, "Blossom."

"We have had a lot of people leave here to become producers and actors of various types of programs. Their experiences here help them learn what actually happens on a studio set," Palermo said.

"The nice thing about the soap," he added, "it represents many departments here at Columbia."

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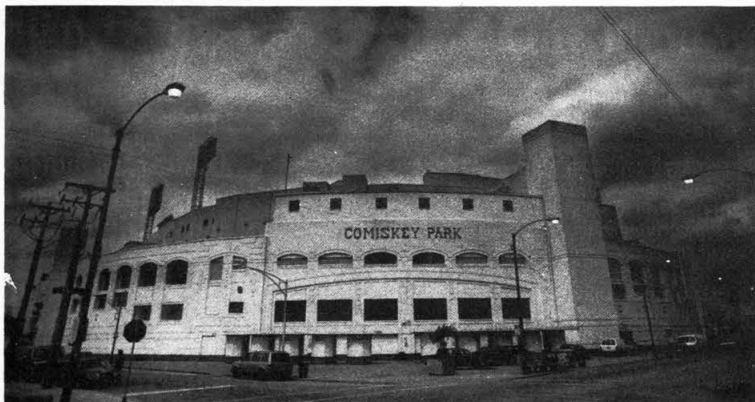
The program teaches English to non-native speakers using learning activities involving drama and music. Positions are available for college students who are studying music, drama, speech, or dance.

Residential assistants live in the residence hall with the students, work with the program faculty, and coordinate learning and social activities.

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Text by Amy Barthelemy
Photographs by Omar Castillo.

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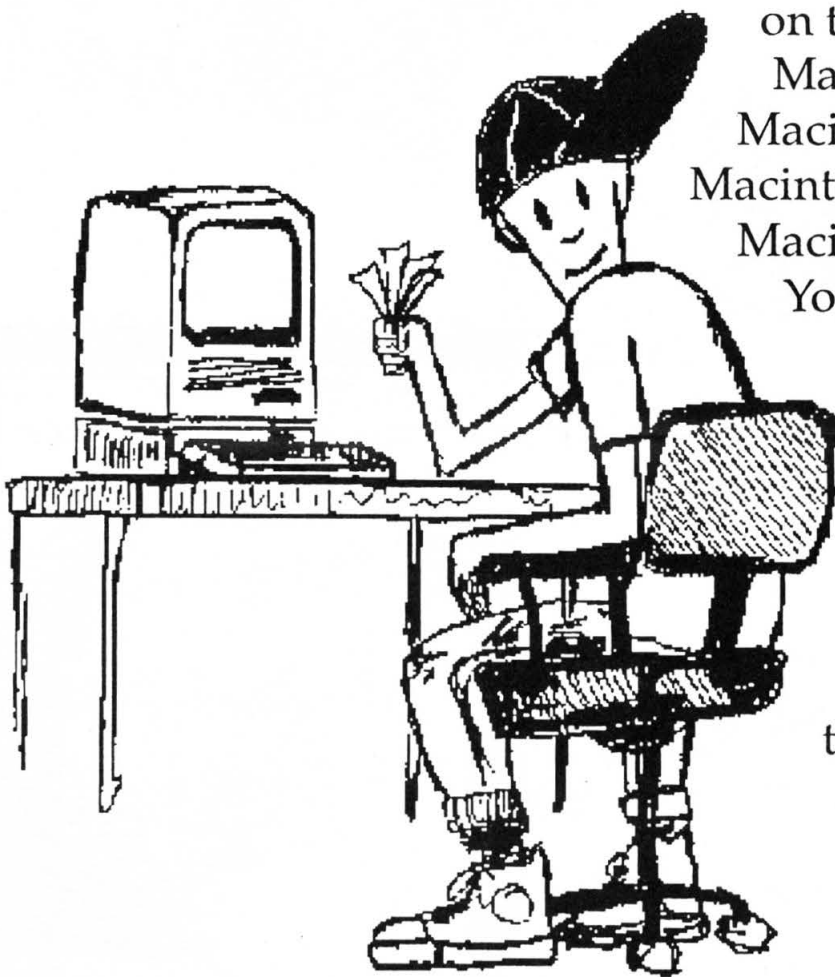
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Hokin Gallery paves the way for artistic display

By Cynthia T. Dopke
Staff Writer

If you're looking for Utopia, you can find it in the Hokin Center. That's where color, chaos, and a cow's eye come together to create a montage of photographic images, entitled "Utopia," by Matilda Gits.

The giant collage is part of a show of her latest works hanging in the Hokin Center, Columbia's student art gallery. This is what the Hokin Center was built for—a place for art students to share their work with other students.

But she wouldn't have been able to create this show without the help of the people at the Hokin Center, especially Bobbi Stuart (Hokin Center coordinator), Gits said.

"The Hokin Center is extremely helpful. They purchased all the glass, bought and cut all the backings and hired someone to hang my work."

Gits approached Stuart with about twenty photographs and an idea. Six months and 80 prints later, she had completed one of the biggest challenges of her life.

Carol Ann Brown, assistant coordinator of the Hokin Center, explained the services available to students who want to exhibit in the gallery. Along with the matting and glass, the Hokin also provides money for food and invitations for an exhibit opening.

"This is a great opportunity for students to get the experience of a show and having something to put on their resume," Brown said.

Despite the availability of space and money, Brown said it's difficult to get the departments involved, because the Hokin is not seen as a gallery space. She said that Stuart visits different departments to encourage students to display their work, but that doesn't seem to draw much response.

"I don't think enough is done to get students to put their work here," Brown said. She has suggested the Hokin board consider offering cash awards through a judged show which would look

good on students' resumes.

One of the reasons that students may not display their work is a lack of knowledge about the gallery display process. The Hokin Center has guidelines to follow, but they aren't widely known.

Nancy Bain, a junior, majoring in photography, said she first heard of the Hokin student gallery from instructor Bill Frederking who displayed work from his Photo III class in the Hokin.

"I was aware that it was student work, but I hadn't inquired to find out what the selection process is or what any of the procedures are," Bain said. "It's something I've always thought about doing but never got around to. One of the problems is students are so concerned with finishing their work for one class they forget about all the other learning experiences offered by the college."

Liz Chilsen, a graduate photography student, was also unaware of how the Hokin Center operates.

"I think if they're anxious to get people to hang there, they need to do more to inform people about how to do it," she said. Chilsen suggested that communication between the Hokin, faculty and students be improved.

Students interested in having their work displayed in the Hokin are asked to turn in a written proposal and meet with Stuart with a sample of their work. The Hokin staff reviews the proposals and works with students if they need assistance.

"They are extremely supportive for individual art students interested in putting a show together," Gits said of the staff.

Gits detailed some of the positive aspects of having her work displayed in the Hokin gallery.

"You get lots of exposure, lots of financial and physical assistance and you get total freedom. To me, that's ideal. This facility is so good because there is no red tape. If your work is good, they'll put it up."

Student exhibits photos in Hokin

By Cynthia T. Dopke
Staff Writer

"Photomontage" is the title of Gits' exhibit that opened last Friday, April 12. The exhibition is a collection of photos Gits has taken over the last four years in places as far as India, Europe, and Nepal and as near as Chicago's Buckingham Fountain.

But Gits explained that the locales are not the focus of her work. "I kept discovering that my work wasn't about a place, it's about a style."

Gits has captured vivid images and vibrant color to create a stunning display documenting her experiences around the world and peering into her personal experiences.

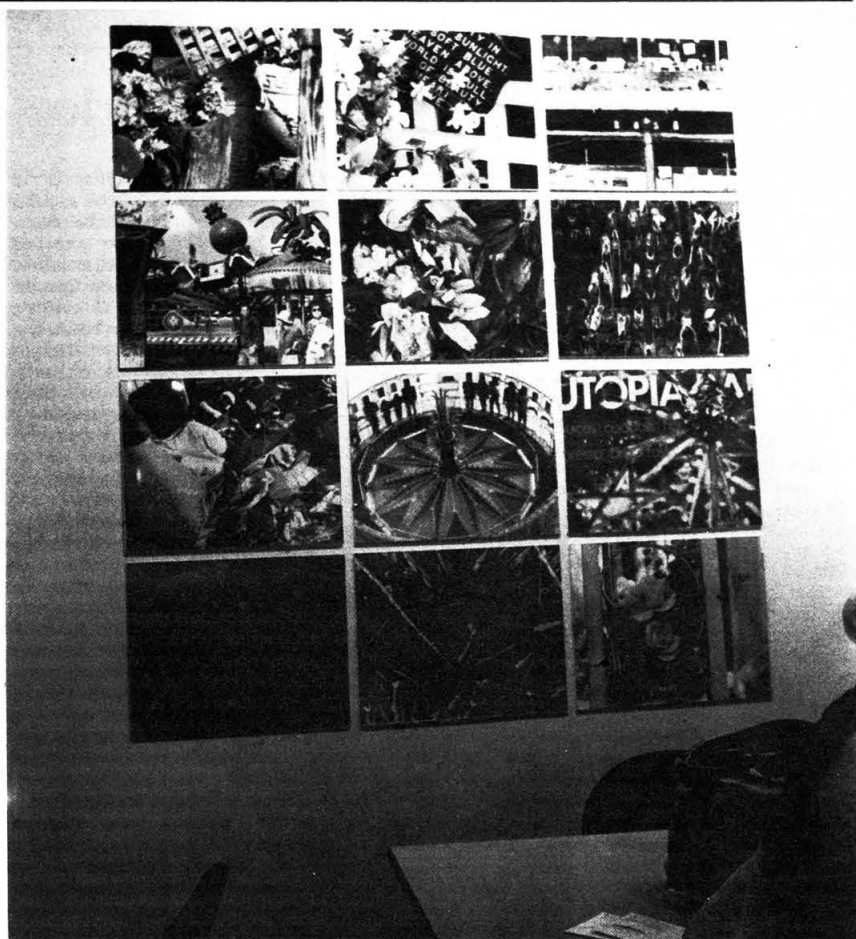
"It's about seeing," she ex-

plained, "I want people to see my work and say, 'It's not that difficult to get some money together and go to South America.'"

The unusual way the photos are arranged in the display expresses her different emotions and her "constructionist" style.

Individually, my photograph are strong and simple which is what allows them to be grouped together. And that pushes it to another level. That's what I'm trying to do," she said.

Gits has studied at the University of New Mexico and the University of London and has visited Venezuela, Germany, India, and Nepal. Her travels are beautifully and creatively documented in her "Photomontage" exhibit which runs through Friday, April 26.



Hokin Center displays "Utopia", a photographic collage by Matilda Gits.

Omar Castillo for The Chronicle

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Students squeezed by textbook prices

By Julie Sachi Moriki
Staff Writer

Peel off the sticker of a used book from the Columbia College bookstore and chances are you'll find a second tag underneath with a lower price.

The cost for a used book at the store may actually increase over time, and some students are wondering why.

"The value of the book depreciates the more it is used," said Moiz Husain, a senior marketing communications major. "So, why should the store charge more money for it?"

The bookstore prices a used book 25 percent below the cost of a new one, said Mike Smith, the store's manager. When textbook publishers raise the price for a new book, the cost of a used one goes up as well, he said.

The price of used books is not set by Columbia but by Follett College Stores, a firm that leases the bookstore space from the school. Follett manages more than 300 college and university bookstores nationwide. In return, Columbia receives rent and a portion of the store's earnings.

Follett purchases all of the store's merchandise—books, tapes, supplies, clothes and other materials—hires its own employees and takes care of the store.

While school administrators

may be happy they don't have to fret over the store, students frown over some of the store's policies.

Sophomore Jude Abella, a radio major, said the store not only charges students unfairly for used books but also rips them off with its book buy-back policy.

"Students pay full price for a book at the store," Abella said. "They are lucky if they receive half of the money they spent for that book at the end of the semester when they go to have it refunded."

The bookstore charges students more for used books than it paid to buy them back, she said.

Caroline Noonan, a sophomore liberal arts major, said

the store shouldn't raise its prices on used books because they don't require the labor that is involved in printing and distributing new books.

Smith agreed, but he said that used books are more work for his staff than new ones.

"Used books require actually far more labor than new books do," Smith said. "The store has to sort through piles of (miscellaneous) used books purchased from wholesalers, whereas new books come in one big box."

"The store also has to spend a lot of time blacking out the old prices to put in the new ones, whereas new books come already priced."

Since the bookstore is not managed by the school, students must abide by Follett's policy. The only alternative is to find someone willing to sell them used books at a price lower than the store is charging. Columbia's hallways and bulletin boards feature many advertisements for used books.

Roosevelt University, whose bookstore is also managed by Follett, came up with a solution to the frustrations some of its students had with refund and used book policies.

Roosevelt's Student Senate Committee holds a used book sale in the fall and spring, where students can buy and sell used books. The used book sale is an opportunity for students to get more money back for their used books than the bookstore is willing to give them. It also allows them to buy used books at a lower price. Many students may not like some of Follett's policies, but Smith and Roosevelt bookstore manager David Roth insist that their stores try to serve student needs.

According to Roth, Follett saves money for students because it buys textbooks from wholesalers.

Muriel Kelley, textbook manager at Columbia's store, said the store's special order service allows students to order books or materials free of shipping and handling charges.

Tea, from page 1

ones, have never written a resume or cover letter, but are looking for guidance to help them," Economou said. "They come to me saying, 'I haven't done anything; no one will want me.' But this is ridiculous, because all of us have life experiences. We are all experts at something, whether we want to believe it or not."

Economou said that her workshop has become so popular among students because the field of broadcast journalism is a highly competitive one that requires patience and determination. The workshop, she says, prepares students for real life experiences in the market.

"In the last ten years, it's been very difficult for broadcast journalists to enter and stay in the business," Economou said. "Sometimes it's easier to get in the business than to stay in the business, because it's a very competitive field. But for talented, creative graduates, the possibilities are limitless."

During her afternoons with students, Economou spends

several hours reviewing cover letters and resumes, writing project proposals, researching ideas and advising and listening to students.

"What I do is sort of interrogate students," Economou said. "I try to flush out their interests and experiences and show employers that we have this pool of people with potential. I act as a sort of catalyst for the group. If I can't answer a question someone has, more than likely, one of the other students can."

Beth Johnson is another broadcast journalism major working on an independent project with Economou's guidance. For her, the workshop is a place where she can come with ideas and leave with insight.

"The workshop is so full of ideas. It's just like fireworks when it gets going," Johnson said. "Rose literally sits down with people and until they stop needing her, she gives. The workshop has been so encouraging. People go out and do things I don't think they'd normally do."

"This workshop is an umbrella," Economou said. "It is a weighing station, a place to come with and for ideas."

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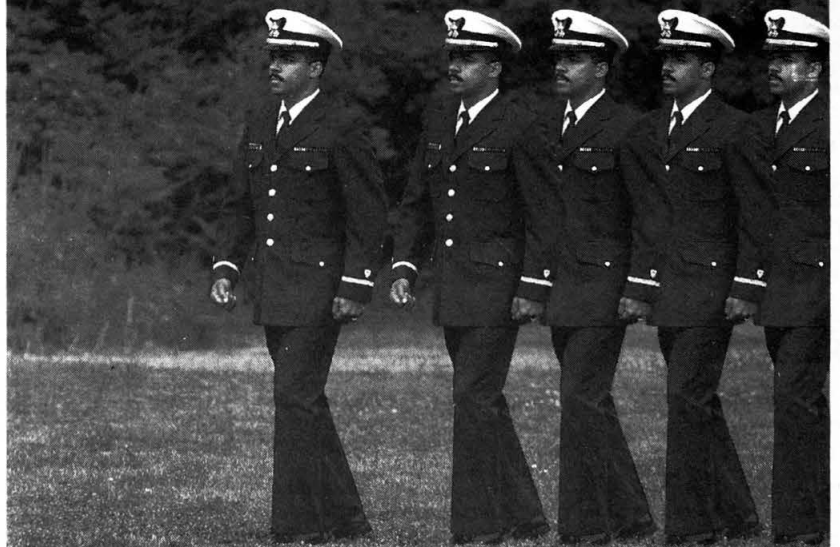
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French thriller displays lethal beauty

By Art Golab
Staff Writer

Take "A Clockwork Orange," cross it with "My Fair Lady," throw in a touch of "The Dirty Dozen" and you have "La Femme Nikita," a stylish French romantic thriller, now playing (with subtitles) at the Fine Arts Theater.

Though this film may be a bit too violent for some, the French locale, superb performances and taut direction all combine to bring a new twist to some old ideas.

In "My Fair Lady," we saw an English professor teach a lowly flower girl to be a lady. In "Nikita" we see a sinister government agency transform a haggard, burnt-out street criminal into a lethal, beautiful and highly efficient assassin.

The catch: she falls in love and eventually decides to try to change her life.

As the film opens, Nikita is a young woman who has already reached the end of the line. A dazed, strung-out junkie, living

on the streets, she helps a brutal gang of punks rob a drug store. In the course of the robbery she kills a policeman without thinking twice.

She is caught, convicted, and sentenced to death. Then a secret agency of the French government fakes her suicide and offers her a chance at relative freedom if she will become a trained killer for the state. The rest of the film chronicles Nikita's transformation from a savage street killer to a polished, government assassin. Along the way she falls in love with a happy-go-lucky grocery clerk and through this relationship finds her humanity.

All the actors in this film really know their stuff, but Anne Parillaud's performance as Nikita is particularly riveting.

At first she is a wasted, amoral, street punk whose speech consists mostly of profanity. (French majors should try out some of this vocabulary on their teachers.) Then she is an efficient, inconspicuously beautiful killing machine. Then awakened by

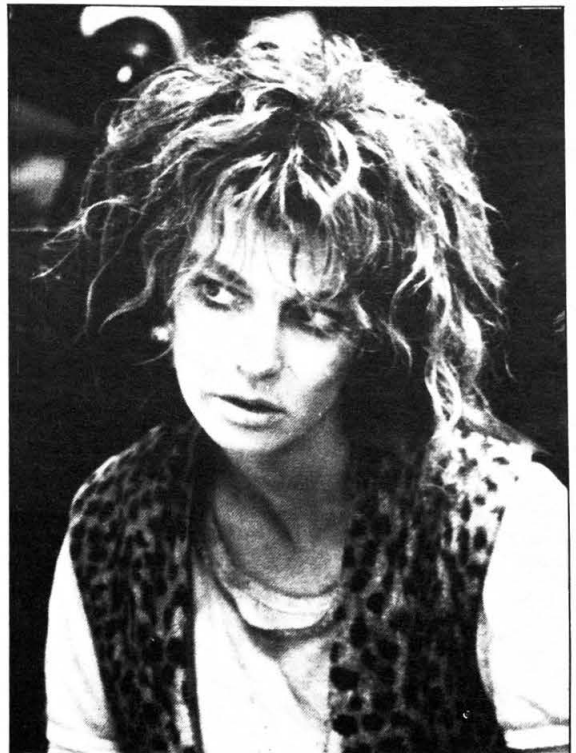
love, she is a tragic figure as she realizes what her life has been.

Parillaud puts across all these different faces of Nikita in such a believable and sincere fashion that one overlooks the excesses of this somewhat unrealistic plot. Indeed, the body count in this movie is only slightly exceeded by the Schwarzenegger- and Stalone-style shoot-em-ups.

It helps that Luc Besson, the writer-director, makes good use of interesting European locations. He also keeps the pace moving quickly throughout. The way he telescoped Nikita's three years of training into a series of vignettes lasting about half an hour was especially well-done.

Besson's sinister, cynical view of a government which trains assassins is thought-provoking, but the violence and death in his film is sometimes excessive.

Parillaud's striking performance, the European atmosphere, and the story of a woman transformed by love, however, make "La Femme Nikita" a film worth seeing.



Anne Parillaud stars as Nikita, a deadly beauty, in La Femme Nikita.

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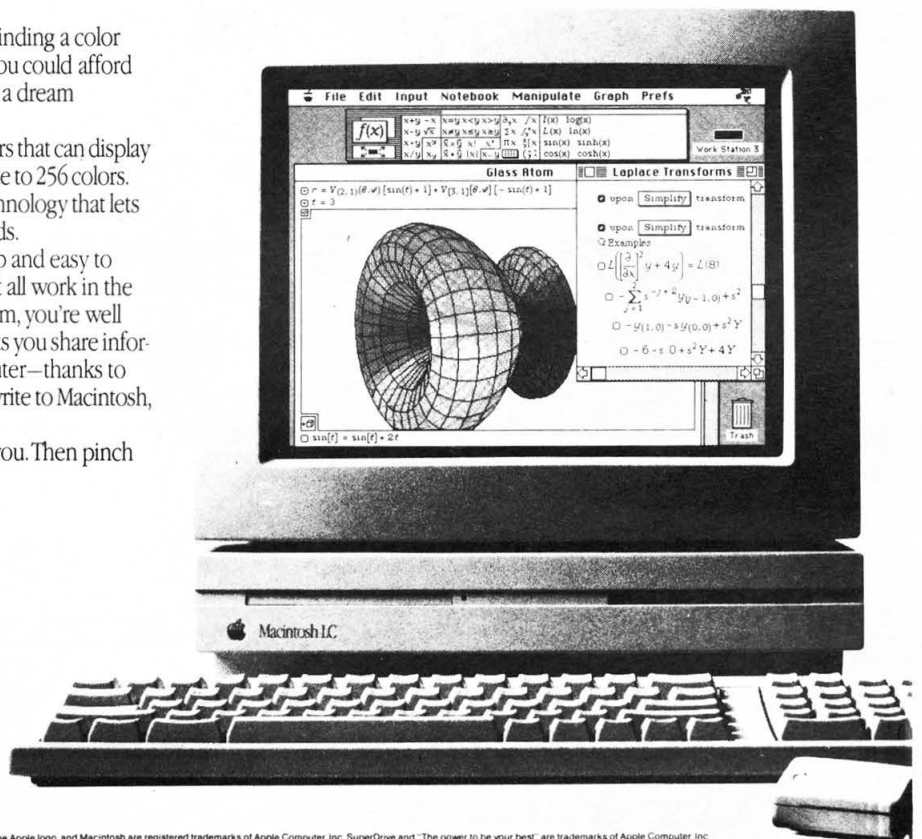
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MUSIC: Lounge Ax, 2438 N. Lincoln Ave., will present **Ian Moore and Moments** on Wednesday, April 17 for a 10 p.m. show. The critically acclaimed Moore has been compared to the late Stevie Ray Vaughn, so the show promises to be quite a treat. **The Merkins**, formerly **The Rocket Scientists**, will open the show. On Tues., April 16, Biddy Mulligan's, 7644 N. Sheridan Road., will present **The I-Lites** as part of their weekly "Reggae Against Depression," which features dollar Red Stripes and five cent pitchers. Doors open at 8 p.m. **Temple of Dale, Big Citizen, Turn To Fiction and The Junkies** will perform at the Avalon, 959 W. Belmont on Thurs., April 18. Showtime is 9:30 p.m. On Fri., April 19, **Big-head Todd and the Monsters** return to the Cabaret Metro, 3730 N. Clark. According to the Metro, the band has been developing a large and loyal following in the midwest and they were recently honored as a "New Face," in *Rolling Stone Magazine*. The band's latest release is entitled **Midnight Radio**.

THEATER: The Theater department will present **"White Devil,"** a faculty-directed workshop production on Mon., April 15 at 7 p.m. in the Getz Theater. The production will run the entire week. For showtimes and information call extension 800.

The Theater School Showcase of Depaul University will present, **School For Scandal** by Richard Brinsley Sheridan on Thurs., April 18 at the Blackstone Theater, 60 E. Balbo Drive. Through elaborate use of comic

Meetings, Music and Miscellanea

By Laura Ramirez, Calendar Editor



The Hispanic Alliance will present Latin jazz by Frontline on April 25 at 2 p.m. in the Hokin Annex.

irony, disguises, and mistaken identity, Sheridan's boisterous Georgian caricatures uncover a group of hypocritical gossips spreading slanderous stories. Their scheming vanity and pursuit of fortune is exposed in a wildly funny theatrical climax. The play will run through April 28. Currently, The Theater School is also presenting **"The Moon Is Made Of Cardboard,"** a comic adventure. For tickets and information on either produc-

tion, call (312) 362-8455.

DANCE: The Dance Center will celebrate the contributions of Columbia College women to the art of dance with a special three-day performance concert on April 18, 19 & 20. Faculty members **Rebecca Keene Forde, Laurie Goux, Mary Johnson-Coursey, Shirley Mordine and Nana Shineflug** will join **Jane Eckert & Dancers** for the special performances. The Saturday

Shineflug will join **Jane Eckert & Dancers** for the special performances. The Saturday evening performance is a special Columbia College night. For tickets and more information, call (312) 271-7928.

MEETINGS: **WBBM-TV** reporter, **Jay Levine** will speak in the Hokin Auditorium on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. Levine will discuss his experiences covering the Persian Gulf War. The Writing Center will offer a punctuation seminar on Wed., April 17 at 2 p.m. in Room 707-W. The Front Page Lecture Class will present **Dick Locher**, Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for the Chicago Tribune on Mon., April 15 at 10:30 a.m. in Room 817-W. **Bill Campbell**, Director of Community Affairs for WLS-TV will speak on Wednesday at 3:30 in Room 615-W. All students are welcome. The Counseling Services offices will present a seminar entitled, **"Parents: How to deal with that older couple living in your house,"** on Tuesday at 12:30 p.m. in Room 317-W. The faculty and crew of **"Behind The Screen,"** will hold a semi-annual premiere party on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Hokin Center. All are invited.

MISC: **The Registry**, Students Working with Students for Life Experiences will hold its first meeting on Tues., April 16 at 5 p.m. in Room 217-W. Founded by John Abbot and Ernesto Diaz, **The Registry** will serve as a talent pool which students can use when they need help in their projects. For more information call extension 330.

By Kimberly Wagner
Staff Photographer

Face Value:

What improvements are needed at Columbia? Why?



John San Juan
Junior
English

From what I understand, students receiving financial aid are required to endure more red tape than any human should. Perhaps our financial aid department could make it their objective to overcome those difficulties.



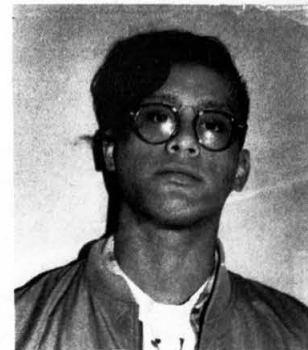
Joe Krupinski
Sophomore
Undeclared

If the people of this school enjoy relaxing in the Annex, they should respect it and clean up their mess. People can't relax and eat without having to push a mound of garbage aside.



Carmen Dias
Senior
Television

We need bursars and financial aid advisors who return your phone calls.



Derwin Umali
Junior
Visual Art management

I would like to see more preppies, prissies, Jock Muscleheads, ashtrays and parking spaces; loud obnoxious colors; a USVBA sanctioned hippie-Rasta volleyball team of students would be nice.

Spring season has a certain air about it

By Kathleen Troher
Science Writer

It's that time of year again. Your nose is running, your eyes are itching, and you can't seem to stop sneezing. Allergy season is back, and it's here with a vengeance.

"People can experience allergies at any time of year," said Dr. Renee Lantner, an allergist at Loyola University Medical Center, "but right now symptoms become more severe for some."

Lantner said that tree pollen becomes abundant by mid March; by May, grass pollinating season is here and August brings ragweed. Some people are only sensitive to one or two of these allergens, while others are allergic to all of them and they suffer from March until the first frost.

An allergy is an abnormal sensitivity to something that most people can tolerate. Pollen and ragweed are harmless to most people, but for others, close contact can cause severe discomfort.

"For some unknown reason 20-25 percent of the population have systems that believe allergens are invaders," said

Dr. Paul Kentor, an allergist and immunologist in private practice. "Their bodies produce chemicals called histamines to protect against these invaders."

Histamines are to blame for many annoying allergic symptoms. According to Kentor, they clog the nose so additional invaders cannot enter, make the nose runny so those already present will be washed out, and cause sneezing to blot out any remaining allergens.

Although the presence of pollen and ragweed in the air cannot be controlled, one particularly irritating allergen that can be controlled is dander, flakes produced by house pets when they shed dead skin cells.

Kentor said pets should be washed routinely to eliminate dander, and they should be kept out of certain rooms, like bedrooms.

Another option available to pet owners who have allergies is to get rid of the animals. But for some this sacrifice is too great. Although Colleen Weber, a senior journalism major at Columbia, suffers from allergies, she won't resort to giving up her pet, a 50 pound Afghan named Amber.

"My allergist told me to get rid of my dog but I couldn't,"

Weber said. "Amber's just too cool."

Weber realized she was allergic to Amber five months ago and is convinced her symptoms would be less severe without the dog. To help her cope with the itching, sneezing and wheezing caused not only by her pet, but by pollen, molds and dust mites as well, she receives two allergy shots every week.

Lantner said for some these shots can be very beneficial. "Allergy shots allow people to develop a tolerance to what they're allergic to," Lantner said.

Shots are often used after other forms of treatment have failed. Over-the-counter medications, such as anti-histamines, which provide relief from the symptoms, and decongestants, which reduce nasal tissue swelling, are usually recommended first. However, these medications can cause drowsiness.

If symptoms persist, or side-effects become unbearable, it is wise to consult a board-certified allergist who can prescribe medication that does not cause drowsiness, or administer shots if necessary.

Because 74 percent of the people who are destined to have allergies will develop them by age 29, and because allergies are hereditary, Kentor is certain there will always be sneezing, itching, runny-nosed people in need of competent allergists.

"God watches over allergists," Kentor said. "It's a field with plenty of business."