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Columbia Chronicle (04/23/2007)

Columbia College Chicago

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Rachael Strecher/The Chronicle

Leslie Hall of Leslie and the Lys sports her bedazzled top in Gender Fusions on April 17 at the HotHouse, 31 E. Balbo Drive.

GLBT office hosts third annual Gender Fusion event

By George P. Slefo
Assistant Campus News Editor

Anyone looking for men in neon fur coats or women in torn fishnet outfits should have come to the HotHouse, 31 E. Balbo Drive, on April 17.

A darkly lit stairwell had patrons pressed and lined up against the wall, leaving some standing outside of the building's entrance.

Everyone was waiting to get into the biggest gay, lesbian, transsexual, straight and bisexual show in the South Loop: Gender Fusions.

And even though it was a Columbia-sponsored event, Julie McLaughlin, a 24-year-old registered nurse and graduate of Xavier University, traveled with three friends from Cleveland to see Leslie and the Lys, a rock-rap band that was one of many performers at Gender Fusions.

The four were "die hard" Leslie and the Lys fans and while it seemed unlikely they would get in, McLaughlin and company

stayed optimistic—even though they were at the end of the line.

The wide stairs inside gave McLaughlin and her friends enough space to sit in a circular formation while waiting. Her friend, Ryan Ramer, a 22-year-old comedy club employee from Cleveland, sat draped in what appeared to be a shiny silver cape, bootleg money-symbol medallion and a turquoise hat.

Leslie, the lead singer of Leslie and the Lys, is a bedazzling "nut," Ramer said.

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'Right-wing,' wrong week

Conservatives cut controversial Coming Out Week

By Amanda Maurer
Campus News Editor

After weeks of controversy and numerous threats to students, the Conservative Coming Out Week has been canceled.

The decision came after the Columbia Conservatives, a student organization, wanted to host a series of events April 23 to 28. In place of the events, the group plans to release a report to the college community that includes recent hate messages and threats the conservative students have received.

Some of the events included "Catch an Illegal Immigrant," "Affirmative Action Bake Sale" and an art show called "Talkin' Bout Our Dicks," a satirical spoof on the "The Vagina Monologues." The topics sparked concern among several of Columbia's minority student groups.

Blake Hausman, president of the Columbia Conservatives, said students misunderstood the purpose behind the events, which the group considered political satire.

News of the controversy began in early March when the week's events were posted on the student-networking website Facebook.com, before the events had been approved by the college, Hausman said. Soon afterward, an opposing group popped onto the website, Columbia College Students Against the Group: Columbia College Conservatives.

The Columbia Conservatives group had 90 members as of press time; the opposing group had 251.

Since students and faculty voiced concern, Kari Sommers, assistant dean of Student Life, met with Hausman to discuss what security issues may result from the threats.

Sommers told Hausman the student group would need to provide its own security if the college did not approve the events, she said. Hausman said the group would not have been able to afford hiring police, had they needed to. Since the Columbia Conservative members had not yet submitted the appropriate paperwork to the Student Organizations Council, or SOC, a board that oversees,

See Conservatives, Page 7

Dogs hate Johnny Cash

What songs make your dog happy? Why not ask them?

By Kristin Kalter
Assistant A&E Editor

Dr. Kim Ogden-Avrutik, an animal communicator, wondered what type of music dogs liked. So she decided to ask them.

And this is what Ogden-Avrutik, songwriter Skip Haynes and the people at the Laurel Canyon Animal Company did when they compiled the CD *Songs to Make Dogs Happy*.

The CD, which has sold about 100,000 copies since its release in 2005, is gaining even more popularity because of the recent pet food recall, which caused many pets across the country to get sick after eating tainted pet food products in March. The songs on the CD are not only supposed to make dogs happier but also help sick or

sheltered dogs feel better.

In 1999, Haynes and Dana Walden founded the Laurel Canyon Animal Company, the only record company that creates music exclusively for, about and with animals.

They collaborated with Ogden-Avrutik and more than 200 dogs to select and compose the music based on the dogs' responses after listening to the songs. Haynes wrote the compositions of the songs with help from others at his company, and Ogden-Avrutik wrote the lyrics.

Haynes said they tested various forms of music and lyrics in focus groups of 10 to 15 dogs. Ogden-Avrutik would ask each dog what it thought of the song after it played.

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Andrew A. Nelles/The Chronicle

Champ, a 2-year-old Siberian Husky, listens to music in his favorite spot in his owner's townhouse.

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CTA: Crappy Transportation Association

By Hunter Clauss, Editor-in-Chief

Chicago Transit Authority President Frank Kruesi has been a flat tire for the decaying transportation agency for more than a decade. But replacing Kruesi with Daley's chief of staff, Ron Huberman, sounds like substituting that flat tire with a bicycle wheel.

The effects of the CTA's mismanagement continue to cripple the city. A friend of mine told me the other day that he refuses to take the el to work. Instead, he rides the Metra. His last straw with the CTA happened when the Red Line shut down during rush hour, resulting in my friend rolling into work two hours late.

I have also given up on the el because of the Belmont Red Line expansion construction. Instead, I take the bus to work and school. But I recently grew weary of my switch. During my ride home from work, I'd see empty, broken down buses on the side of the street like road-kill. Then, during one morning commute, the bus I was on broke down at a stoplight on Michigan Avenue.

And that's when the excrement hit the fan. Some of the other commuters on the bus went into a gorilla-like rage, screaming and demanding the bus driver get the bus running. It was a hard sight to see because despite how frustrating the CTA is, the lonely bus driver wasn't to blame.

But who is?

The CTA and its myriad of problems have been increasingly under fire by the Chicago City Council. The transit agency has also garnered national attention from the likes of The New York Times. Late last year, Aldermen Joe

Moore and Ricardo Munoz deemed the CTA a "third-world transit system."

And who wouldn't be mystified by the rapidly decreasing quality of public transportation in a city with a population hovering close to 3 million? With the U.S. Olympic bid for 2016 in the city's hands, the urgency for solving the mess known as the CTA is ever-growing.

Chicago, more than ever, needs a qualified expert to reign in the derailed CTA. But instead of initiating a nationwide search for experienced candidates in transportation, Daley appoints his pal, Huberman.

In an April 20 Chicago Sun-Times article, Daley said Huberman's qualifications for the position was that he "works with people well." But in terms of qualifications that actually matter for leading a multi-million dollar agency, which has the power to cripple Chicago, Huberman's only experience in transportation is driving a

school bus for three years while he was in college. Daley backhandedly acknowledged Huberman's limited experience by telling Fran Spielman of the Sun-Times that "if you start selecting people because of their background ... dealing with one issue, many times, they cannot manage."

Hold on a second. A person's background shouldn't bear any weight when it comes to applying for a job? That's like saying the only requirement a person needs to become an alderman is to know Daley. Uh, well, maybe that's a bad example. But Daley's decision to promote Huberman couldn't be more of a slap in the face to Chicago commuters.

The real tragedy, however, is that it might take another decade for Daley to realize his error in judgment. And by that time, we might not have a CTA at all.

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Andrew A. Nelles/The Chronicle

In Your Opinion

What do you think will change now that the South Loop has a new 2nd Ward alderman?



"Absolutely nothing. Politics is a bunch of divide-and-conquer nonsense."

—Kevin Mohr, 2nd Ward resident, Plymouth and 9th



"I don't even know who the new alderman is. You stumped me."

—Sara Grant, sophomore film and video major



"I don't know what will change."

—Sam Poston, freshman journalism major



"Haithcock walked in here yesterday and I was like, 'Who is this person shaking hands with everyone?'"

—Nicole Flora, Kasey's Tavern bartender

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Calendar April 23-28

PR Portfolio Brainstorming

Public relations professionals will work with PR students to develop a portfolio to complement the traditional resume. The session will take place on April 23 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Portfolio Center, Suite 307, in the Wabash Campus Building, 623 S. Wabash Ave.

For more information, call Mercedes Cooper at (312) 344-8612.

Project K'inJa Fundraiser

Three Columbia student photographers are holding a fundraiser for Project K'inJa, their summer 2007 excursion to photograph places in Kenya and Mexico in order to raise cultural awareness. The event runs from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. at Funky Buddha Lounge, 728 W. Grand Ave., on April 26. The \$10 door fee will support Project K'inJa.

To RSVP, e-mail Angelica Robles at ra.kinja7@gmail.com.

Engage Your Inner Entrepreneur

Attend "The Secret to Engaging Your Inner Entrepreneur," a full-day workshop that covers types of businesses, how to grow a business and also serves as a networking opportunity. The event, which includes lunch, costs \$99. It runs from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Grand Piazza Chicago, 1431 W. Taylor St., on April 26.

For more information, call Niquenya Fulbright at (773) 368-3575.

Big Screen 2007

The 11th annual Big Screen is the Film and Video Department's presentation of its best student work. This year, the movies include narrative, documentary, experimental and animation. After the screening, two prizes will be given: the Best of the Fest Award and the Audience Award. The festival begins at 7 p.m. in Film Row Cinema, 8th floor of the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., on April 26.

For more information, call Eileen Dominick at (312) 344-6709.

Hip-Hop Film Screening/Discussion

After a viewing of award-winning producer and director Byron Hurt's 2006 documentary, *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*, a panel will discuss issues like violence and hyper-aggression in hip-hop. The panel includes Cathy Cohen, professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, and Natalie Moore and Natalie Hopkinson, co-authors of *Deconstructing Tyrone: A New Look at Black Masculinity in the Hip-Hop Generation*. The night begins at 6 p.m. at the Max Palevsky Theater, 1212 E. 59th St., on April 27. It costs \$5.

For more information call Sara Slawnik at (312) 344-8845.

THE COLUMBIA CHRONICLE

If you have an upcoming event or announcement, contact the news desk
chronicle@colum.edu
(312) 344-8964

Columbia celebrates spring sports



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

The Student Athletics Association will host the first Spring Field Day, an outdoor sporting event, at Grant Park on April 27. The association hopes students, faculty, staff, administrators and alumni will participate.

Student Athletics Association introduces Spring Field Day

By Becky Schlikerman
Staff Writer

For the first time, the Student Athletics Association will host its first Spring Field Day, a sporting event for Columbia in Grant Park.

On April 27, Spring Field Day will provide an opportunity for the college community to participate in competitive and non-competitive events.

The event is designed to connect students, faculty, administrators and alumni, said Chris Schroeder, president of the Student Athletics Association.

Some of the competitive activities include flag football, volleyball and softball. A water balloon toss, three-legged race and ultimate Frisbee will be available for the

less competitive, said Anthony Ortega, marketing coordinator of the Student Athletics Association.

"A lot of the students will definitely be interested in having fun with their fellow students, alumni and faculty," Ortega said.

Participants will be able to join teams and organize their own games, but Spring Field Day is mostly about fun, Ortega said, adding that it is a way to relax and socialize before finals.

Felise Pomerantz, a junior photography major, thinks Spring Field Day is a great idea.

"I know people that would like more options to make friends at school," Pomerantz said. "It would be a good way to [do that]."

Red Bull will have a booth at Spring Field Day and will be giving out complimentary energy drinks. Sandwiches by Jimmy John's will be provided by Columbia administration, according to Schroeder.

Ortega and Schroeder hope Spring Field Day becomes an annual event. In addition, Ortega plans to invite other schools to par-

ticipate in the future. He would also like to have bigger activities like a rock climbing wall and a dunk tank, he said.

These events come during a surge of sporting events at the college. Most notable is the Columbia Renegades baseball team that started the season with a 27-0 triumph against the Roosevelt University Lakers.

There is a demand for athletics at Columbia, Schroeder said.

"We want the school to not be opposed to Renegades or athletics coming to Columbia," Ortega said. "[We want to] hold on to our roots as an art school."

Spring Field Day is on April 27 from noon to 6 p.m. It is at Grant Park in Upper Hutchinson Field.

The event is free; however, for \$10 students will receive lunch, a t-shirt and goodie bag. For more information, contact the Student Athletics Association at (312) 344-6917.

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Music schools merge melodies

By Steve Yaccino
Assistant Campus News Editor

Columbia intends to expand its campus three blocks south after announcing plans April 18 to combine with the 112-year-old Sherwood Conservatory of Music, 1312 S. Michigan Ave.

The merger comes at a crucial point for both organizations and will attempt to solve financial and administrative burdens for Sherwood, while tackling the Columbia Music Department's increasing need for practice space, according to college officials.

"Our connection is one that would really complete their services and ours," said Richard Dunscomb, chair of Columbia's Music Department.

Three quarters of Sherwood's students are between kindergarten and 12th grades. They also offer programs for children up to 8-month-olds, preschoolers and some senior citizens.

After approaching Columbia three months ago with the proposal and weeks of deliberation, the conservatory is on track to become a college entity, much like the Center for Black Music Research, the Center for Arts Policy and many other Columbia-affiliated organizations, Dunscomb said.

The two organizations have signed a memorandum of understanding and have entered a period of "due diligence," which allows 45 days of discussions before the merger is official. Dunscomb said the process will most likely be

See Merger, Page 10

College chooses commencement honorees

2007 graduation speakers to be awarded for art achievements

By Annie Slezick
Staff Writer

After reviewing nominations for honorees all year, the commencement speakers for the 2007 graduation ceremony were recently chosen by the Office of the President and vice president of Student Affairs.

Dionne Warwick, Joe Adams and Army Bernstein were selected among a running list of eligible individuals. At commencement, each speaker will be presented with an honorary degree from the college to mark their achievements in the arts.

"Individuals that are a good fit and have a strong connection with the college are formally invited by the president to accept the honor," said Jill Summers, director of College-Wide Events.

Warwick and Adams will attend the morning ceremony for the School of Fine and

Performing Arts and the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, while Bernstein will attend the afternoon ceremony for the School of Media Arts.

Adams is best known as Ray Charles' manager and producer, and is also an experienced radio and television personality and a Broadway stage actor. Bernstein, a screenwriter, producer and director, is chairman of the independent film company Beacon Communications. Warwick, who is well known for such singles as "That's What Friends Are For," is a Grammy Award-winning recording artist.

"The speakers who have been selected can touch on a range of careers that will appeal to the future interests of graduating students," said Jacob Holland, president of the senior class.

Summers said the Office of the President and Mark Kelly, the vice president of Student Affairs, accept nominations year-round for commencement speakers. Columbia is open to suggestions from graduating seniors; however, the students have no input as to who is chosen, according to Summers.

Nominations are submitted

from throughout the campus community. Summers said the selection for each year is largely based on scheduling availability and the school looks for nominees whose work embodies the mission of Columbia.

"Columbia honors individuals in the arts and media, education and public information and individuals that have engaged their talents in human service," Summers said.

Each speaker has been involved in philanthropy which is something that can inspire all students, Holland said.

Adam Countryman completed his education at Columbia last fall and will walk in the graduation ceremony on May 12.

Though he hasn't been an active part of the student body since last semester, Countryman said he wants commencement to offer closure for his entire Columbia experience.

"Mostly I want my family to know how important my education at Columbia is," Countryman said.

He said most students are looking forward to hearing strong speakers who can inspire them—a sentiment Holland agrees with.

"Overall, I think the commencement speakers match up to what Columbia is all about," Holland said. "I think they will

help to make commencement a truly memorable experience."

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Courtesy Red Entertainment Agency

Award-winning artist Dionne Warwick is one of three commencement speakers to be honored at Columbia's May 12 graduation.

Graduation rates low, but rising

By Becky Schilkerman
Staff Writer

Columbia's graduation rates are lower than some Chicago area colleges and universities, which could be attributed to the school's admissions policy.

The graduation rate at Columbia, which only accounts for students starting as freshmen, is 30 percent for students graduating in six years, according to the Department of Education.

College officials say students graduating in five or six years have become the industry standard.

The graduation rate rose from 27 percent for freshmen starting in the fall of 1995 to 30 percent for freshmen who began in 1999, according to Columbia's Fact Book.

Columbia officials said the rate increase is due to factors such as the steady swell in enrollment, the development of on-campus housing and the expansion of student programs. Columbia's lower-than-average graduation rate is likely due to the generous admissions policy, the fine arts curriculum and financial burden, administrators said.

"Columbia's graduation rates need to be higher," said Mark Kelly, vice president of Student Affairs.

Kelly said many factors play into why Columbia's graduation rates are lower than average. He said there is a direct correlation between graduation rates and selectivity. Highly selective

schools usually have a high graduation rate, and Columbia, due to the open admissions policy, is highly accepting rather than highly selective.

Some area colleges and universities have a higher graduation rate than Columbia. According to the Department of Education, DePaul University has a 63 percent graduation rate in six years and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago has a 54 percent graduation rate in six years. However, similar to Columbia, Roosevelt University has a 34 percent graduation rate in six years.

The rates are different for transfer students. Fourteen percent of students at Columbia are transfers, according to the Fact Book. For students who transferred in 1999, the 2005 graduation rate was 52 percent.

Kelly said the rate for transfer students is higher because they are more serious about their studies. Transfer students are more focused and arrive at Columbia with college experience already under their belt, he said.

He said Columbia will not change the admissions policy, which he said generates an academically diverse student body.

"We are very proud of our generous admissions policy," Kelly said.

He also attributed the low graduation rate to the narrow curriculum Columbia offers. Columbia has an arts-focused curriculum and students are not able to switch from major to

major, due to the college's limited range of degree programs.

Students like Ryan Svitak, a sophomore journalism major, agree that the lack of majors affects whether or not students graduate. Field options are limited and job opportunities are scarce after graduation.

"A lot has to do with it being a fine arts school," Svitak said.

Finances may also be an issue for some students. According to Mark Lloyd, vice president of Marketing and Communications at Columbia, approximately 30 percent of students at Columbia come from low-income families.

The administration believes that a graduation time of five or six years is both a positive and a negative for students, Lloyd said. The longer students are in school, the more they have to pay.

"It is clearly a financial negative," Lloyd said.

However, students taking their time and not rushing through classes are able to benefit from Columbia and take advantage of all the opportunities on campus, he said.

The graduation rate for students who received their diploma in four years was 19 percent

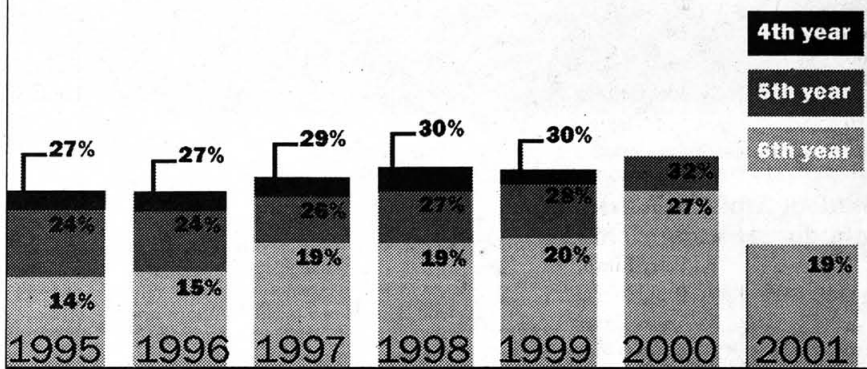
in 2001, compared to 27 percent in 2000.

Lloyd attributes the continuous increase of graduation rates to Columbia's expansion. In the past seven years, Columbia student services have expanded. Support programs, such as remedial classes, are in place to promote academic success, and about 700 scholarships are available to lessen financial burdens.

Graduation rates have also increased because there are more students who are staying and living on campus, Lloyd said.

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Columbia College Graduation Rates



Kimi Badger/The Chronicle

The Music Center of Columbia College Chicago 1014 S. Michigan at 11th St.

Concert Hall Events

Monday April 23

Blues Ensemble Recital
12:00 PM

Tuesday November 24

R&B Ensemble Recital
12:00 PM

Jazz Guitar Ensemble I Recital
7:00 PM

Wednesday April 25

Jazz Guitar Ensemble II Recital
12:00 PM

3CVJE & Pop Choir Recital
7:00 PM

Thursday April 26

Jazz Guitar Ensemble III
12:00 PM

Piano Concert
7:00 PM

All events are free. For more info: 312/344-6300

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Administrative Professionals Day is Wednesday, April 25, 2007 please take this opportunity to show your appreciation for all their hard work!

Virginia governor names panel to investigate shootings

Students mourn as officials seek answers

By Hugh Lessig

The state panel that will investigate the Virginia Tech shootings will include the nation's first homeland security czar, an FBI veteran and a noted child psychiatrist.

And its broad mandate will allow these experts to construct a minute-by-minute account of the rampage, assess how Virginia Tech handled it and examine the state mental health system, which

flagged shooter Cho Seung-Hui and tried to help him, but did not confine him.

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine on April 19 named additional members of the group, which is expected to publish its findings by the fall.

The most recognizable name is former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, who served as the first U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security from 2003-05.

Heading the group will be former state police superintendent Gerald Massengill, who led the Virginia State Police during the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon and

the Beltway sniper shootings in 2002.

As it examines what happened on April 16, the panel will confront questions that could affect how Virginia controls access to firearms, treats its mentally ill and responds to campus emergencies. The one thing it won't do, said Massengill, is seek to pin blame.

"While we're not going out there to second guess people," he said, "we are going out there to find some lessons to learn."

Kaine wouldn't speculate on how he might respond if the panel uncovers errors that point

to an individual or a department.

"It's premature to talk about action before we have the facts on the table," he said.

One focus will be what happened during the two hours between the first and second shootings. Some have criticized the university for not imposing a lockdown after the first shooting, where two people died and the killer remained on the loose.

Tech officials said they were pursuing a lead on the first shooting, but that lead was not about Seung-Hui, who went on his rampage later in the morning in a different building.

"Had the campus police put out a lookout for a white male driving a black pickup, it wouldn't have helped very much," Massengill said. "On the other hand, to lock the college down because of the fact that a murder weapon had not been located, maybe is deserving of a conversation."

The panel will also examine Seung-Hui's interaction with the mental health system.

More than a year before the Virginia Tech massacre, Seung-Hui was accused of stalking two women and was taken to a psychiatric hospital because of fears he was suicidal, authorities have said.

A court found Seung-Hui presented "an imminent danger to himself as a result of mental illness" and ordered outpatient treatment, not admission to a hospital or treatment center.

State Sen. Ken Cuccinelli (R-Fairfax), is not on the task force, but he deals extensively in mental

health issues and said the imminent danger standard is too high. He has introduced bills that would allow commitment if a person represents "a significant risk."

Cuccinelli, an attorney, represents people who are detained under a temporary detention order or TDO. Sometimes, by the time the case is considered, the person's condition has improved through medication and the danger is no longer imminent, so he or she is released.

"I thought people were walking around that shouldn't be," he said. "I also thought people were coming back as repeats because they weren't getting the right treatment the first time around."

It is unclear how changing the standard would have affected Cho's case.

Del. Phil Hamilton (R-Newport News) said the state must strike a balance between protecting the public and preserving individual rights.

"It's a very tough issue because unless the person had done something to lose their rights, you've got just as much responsibility to protect their rights as others," he said.

Cuccinelli said there is a concern that policymakers will make it too easy for the state to commit someone.

"Looking back, it would have been nice if we could have cured him of whatever the problem was," he said. "It is equally important that whole system not be dismantled and rebuilt for one instance."



MCT

Families and students join in prayer at Virginia Tech's Drill Field on April 18, near the area where more than 30 people were killed in a shooting rampage on the Virginia Tech University campus on April 16.

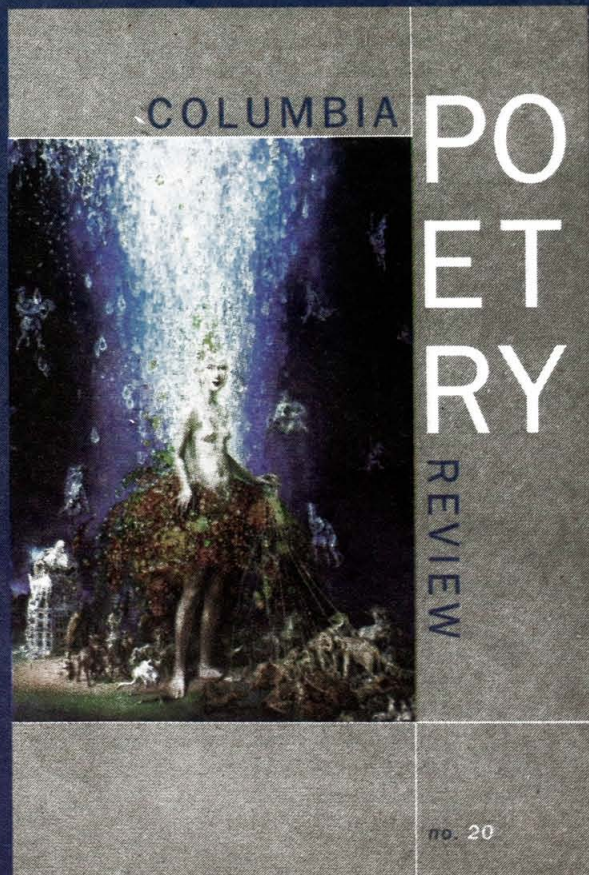
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Conservatives: Event security becomes issue

Continued from Front Page

finances and supports campus groups, Hausman said the group decided to call off the events.

"When people are emotional, it makes everyone vulnerable," Sommers said. "The college's responsibility is to always ensure the safety and security of our students."

She added it would have been inappropriate for the college to intervene, and said events such as

the ones the group planned to host aren't new.

"These things happen nationally all the time," Sommers said. "It's absolutely within their rights to express their beliefs publicly."

Student organizations can host events without filling out the paperwork. However, if they don't, they will not receive funding for that event, according to Brittney Sherman, one of the three directors on the SOC board.

Sherman, a sophomore film major, said the SOC never interfered with the Columbia Conservatives' plans because the events did not contradict any of the college's rules or bylaws.

"As long as everything that the

organization is doing follows the Columbia guidelines, there is nothing that we can step in to do," she said.

Since the Columbia Conservatives did not receive approval, they could not hold the events on campus, said Dominic Cottone, director of Student Organizations and Leadership.

While Sherman was aware of several student organizations voicing complaints about the Conservatives' week, she said things have begun to "simmer down" and she expects students to soon forget about it.

Hausman said the Columbia Conservatives wanted the events to poke fun at the system, but other

students on campus viewed the events differently.

Abraham Velazquez, a senior graphic design and photography major and historian for Latino Alliance, a student organization, said he immigrated to the United States with his mother.

He said he was offended by certain events like "Catch an Illegal Immigrant," a college-wide game that would ask students to find one student marked as an illegal immigrant.

"I think that [the Columbia Conservatives] just took the wrong step and tried to turn this into more of a racial [issue]," he said.

Members from several student organizations including the Black Student Union, Latino Alliance, Q-Force and World Can't Wait, decided to host their own events in response to "Catch an Illegal Immigrant," Velazquez said.

The Latino Alliance students plan to wear white shirts that read "I am an immigrant" and "I love immigrants" regardless of whether or not the conservatives go through with their plans, he said.

Jessica Bloom, a senior photography major, created the Facebook group opposing the Columbia Conservatives' events when she heard about them through her friends.

Bloom said she wanted to raise awareness about the events and provide a forum for students.

"I think that everyone deserves their opinion stated, and I think there's a responsible and irresponsible way to do it," she said.

Velazquez said many students he knew joined the group so they could voice their opinions.

Bloom said she knew students

who were angered by the events, but called the hate messages and threats to the Columbia Conservative students "out of control."

Hausman said the group decided to add its own flavor to familiar conservative student campus events after receiving some negative reactions from students when the group handed out yellow ribbons on Veteran's Day.

"We thought if we're going to do something ... we might as well make it funny, because standing on a soapbox and yelling at people at Columbia is definitely not going to get our point across," he said.

Hausman said the group knew it would be "ruffling some feathers," but did not expect the amount of hate mail he received. He hopes the report will show the administration that diversity isn't only skin color, but ideology. He said he also would like the college to see the comments students and faculty have made to conservative students.

Samantha Hamlin, the president of World Can't Wait at Columbia, said the Columbia Conservative events are linked to a right-wing transformation across college campuses. The issue is not freedom of speech for the students, she said, but rather pushing a larger agenda of racism and ignorance.

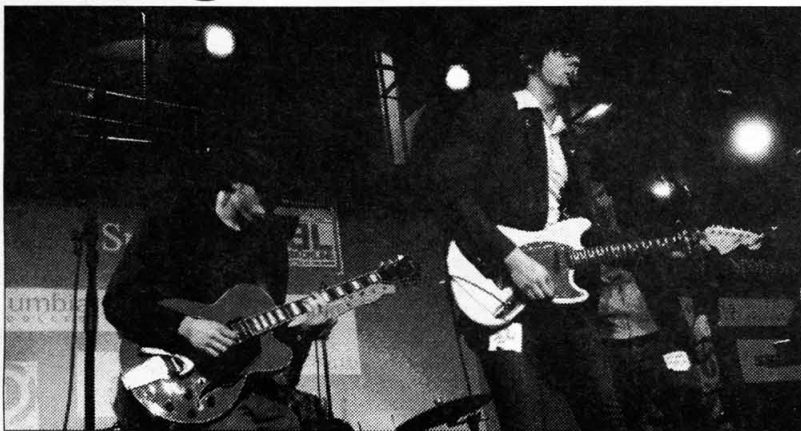
"The issue is, what does this group represent?" Hamlin said. "What are they actually promoting at this school and in society?"

Bloom said she plans to close the Facebook group once the week is over.

Hausman plans to post the Conservative's report online and distribute it to the college community.

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Battling at Backline



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

Miles Benjamin, left, and Mike Kostal, of the band All Things Lucid, perform during Backline: Battle of the Bands, at the Conaway Center in the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., on April 18. The event was co-sponsored by the Chicago Chapter of the Recording Academy. The band has been playing together for about two years.

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Step aside, Nacho Libre

Promoting Latino culture on the silver screen



Courtesy Chicago Latino Film Festival

Two men dress as superheroes to promote the movie 'Super Amigos' at the Chicago Latino Film Festival this month.

By Brett Marlow
Staff Writer

A silent film and a documentary on real-life superheroes are among the shows screening at the 23rd annual Chicago Latino Film Festival. Co-sponsored by Columbia, it aims to promote Latino culture through film and began April 13. It runs through April 25.

"[In *Super Amigos*], four guys are dressed as superheroes using the popularity of Lucha Libre Mexican wrestlers fighting for rights," said Carolina Posse, acting director of the Chicago Latino Film Festival.

According to the movie's synopsis, one superhero, Super Gay, fights homophobia. Another, Super Animal, fights for animal rights.

"The film combines the aesthetics of comic book art and animation," Posse said. "[We want] new people to come in and understand that it's focused on Latino culture. It doesn't mean you have to be Latino to care or understand."

This year's festival is different from those in the past because it will include awards, Posse said.

"We see the value, effort and talent we have," she said.

The festival offers an opportunity for student filmmakers. Columbia is not only co-presenter of the festival, but hosted its annual Student Latino Film Festival on April 18 at the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.

Three winners were selected and their films will be shown as part of the Chicago Latino Film Festival's student showcase. Julio Ramos, a graduate from the Film and Video Department, is still working on projects with the college and won first place at the student festival for his film *Forgiven*.

"It's an interesting opportunity for the students," said Ana Maria Soto, director of Latino Cultural Affairs. "A lot of the directors [from the Chicago festival] come to the student section to view their work."

The student festival showcased around 10 of the best Latino works at Columbia, Soto said.

Mario Contreras, a graduate student majoring in film, has been showcased in the festival before. He showed his short dia-

logue-free film *Brujerías*, or *Witchcraft*, at the student festival last week.

His film, which clocks in at more than three minutes, is about a boy who falls for a girl and goes to a fortune teller to cast a love spell on her. The film follows his quest to get the items needed to successfully carry out the spell.

Contreras, who said he wasn't interested in winning, thought it was better to be screened at student festivals than larger festivals.

"It's hard for a film to compete on the level of the [larger] festival, in my opinion," Contreras said. "Three-minute films get overlooked in a festival that size. It's better to go for a student festival where most films are under eight minutes. As a filmmaker, the most important thing is that people see your work."

Columbia's Latino Cultural Affairs Office and student group Latino Alliance have a "good working relationship," with the Chicago Latino Film Festival, Soto said.

"Students are volunteers who run all the major events for the festival," Soto said. "They also work in the office there."

This year's Chicago Film Festival showcases documentaries, narrative features, short films and animated films from all over the world.

Posse, who also teaches production in the Film and Video Department, said recognition and awards help films "ideally get released to theaters."

Posse had a few film recommendations for Columbia students, including *I Remember*, *What I Know About Lola* and *Super Amigos*.

Films are being screened at three theaters across the city: Pipers Alley, 1608 N. Wells St.; Facets Cinematheque, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave.; and Landmark Century Centre Cinema, 2828 N. Clark St. The festival is hosted by the International Latino Cultural Center.

General admission to a film is \$10, but a 10-admission pass is \$80. For screening times and for more information visit, latinoculturalcenter.org.

chronicle@colum.edu



Rachael Strecher/The Chronicle

Matthew Hollis was one of the many performers at Gender Fusions, a showcase of events for gays, lesbians, transsexuals and bisexuals at the HotHouse, 31 E. Balbo Dr., on April 17.

Fusions:
GLBT office
brings in speakers,
performers

Continued from Page 3

"We bedazzled the hat with Leslie's 'L' logo," Ramer said. "Isn't it pretty?"

"Hell yeah, it's pretty. We're going to give it to [Leslie] when she performs," McLaughlin said.

While the group continued to squander, the doors opened promptly at 6 p.m. and within 15 minutes the bouncer said he counted 216 guests and temporarily capped the line to let everyone inside settle in.

And even though McLaughlin had purchased tickets for Gender Fusions a month ago, the bouncer wouldn't let them inside, because the HotHouse had reached its maximum capacity of 280.

Kathleen McLaughlin, event coordinator and coordinator of GLBT Student Concerns at Columbia, said she chose Leslie and the Lys because students wanted to hear her to perform.

"Gay guys like her. Straight guys like her. Lesbians like her," McLaughlin said. "Though if I had to do it over again, I would have Leslie and the Lys perform separately ... The event lasted past midnight, longer than it should have."

She said Gender Fusions is about students, staff, faculty and Chicagoans coming together.

"When I first got to Columbia I saw that everyone was really separate," McLaughlin said. "[Gender

Fusions] was more like a networking event so everyone could come together and meet people from different aspects of Chicago."

Gender Fusions greeted patrons with multiple tables from different groups and featured an array of different activities. One of the activities had a table set up for women to get a "life like beard," using wig hair, makeup adhesive and a brush to perfect the look.

"Why not see what you look like with a beard," said Billy T. Holly, beard artist and a self-proclaimed drag queen. "It's fun."

"When I first got to Columbia I saw that everyone was really separate. [Gender Fusions] was more like a networking event so everyone could come together and meet people from different aspects of Chicago."

—Kathleen McLaughlin,
event coordinator

The bathrooms behind Holly carried both a female and male symbol with a question mark in between, allowing either gender to use the same restroom. Columbia's queer student organization, Q-Force, even had a petition to make all bathrooms at Columbia unisex.

Some students voiced concerns that they had experienced uncomfortable situations while using the bathroom, because they were mistaken for the opposite gender.

Next to the beard makers and bathrooms was the main room. An

hour into the event, a packed crowd focused on the center stage for the upcoming speaker, Leslie Feinberg, managing editor for Workers World Newspaper in New Jersey.

Feinberg, a lesbian drag king, stood on stage with a sign language interpreter while she gave her speech. She spoke about personal struggles as a "butch" lesbian in Buffalo, N.Y. 40 years ago, standing up with friends against the police in a time and place where it was unacceptable to be a drag king or queen. Feinberg stressed there isn't just one way to be gay or lesbian and it's more about an expression of the individual.

"I never knew anything except humiliation and harassment," she said. "I never knew I would one day be appreciated and applauded by others."

After more than four hours of waiting, patrons were still hanging out by the stairwell in hopes to see Leslie and the Lys.

"We traveled from Cleveland to see Leslie," Ramer said to the bouncer. "Look, three people just walked out; let us in now. We want to see Leslie."

At roughly 11 p.m. Leslie and the Lys finally performed. According to McLaughlin, everyone who came to see Leslie perform saw her show.

"Students got a really personalized performance from [Leslie and the Lys]," McLaughlin said. "Usually she performs to a much larger audience, so students got a chance to mingle with her afterwards."

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Merger: Music department acquires more practice rooms

Continued from Page 3

completed in a shorter period of time because neither side anticipates any problems.

"We realized that we were sitting right next door to the ideal partner," said Barry Sabloff, chair of Sherwood's board of trustees.

Sabloff, who would become a member of Columbia's board of trustees after the merger, said the two organizations share a vision of arts education and music training. He said the merger would provide opportunities for "new operating efficiencies" and collaboration.

"Our tuition and fees do not cover the cost of running the school," he said during the April 18 press conference. "It occurred to us that we would be much better off if we could affiliate with a larger institution and share some of the administrative burden and ... focus our resources on programming."

In exchange for Columbia's stability, the college's students will be able to access Sherwood's practice facilities while its students are in school, a much needed opportunity, Dunscomb said.

The college's Music Department has grown 67 percent over the past three years with more than 400 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled this year, according to department numbers. However, the growth has poised space problems and Dunscomb said the 12 practice rooms currently available to students have

become insufficient.

Corrine Mina, a junior music major, also said space is the department's greatest downfall.

"People are fighting over rooms to practice," she said.

means that eventually they'll be looking at an institution in which to enroll."

While Butera said preparing students to attend Columbia did not drive the merger, the

"Our students are going to be, for the first time, able to practice like they're supposed to."

—Richard Dunscomb, chair of the Music Department

"Every student complains about no space. If you need a piano for an hour, there won't be one available."

Sherwood used to own Columbia's current Music Center, 1014 S. Michigan Ave., before selling it to the school in 1999 to build its current conservatory building three blocks south. The new facility includes 25 practice rooms, three large classrooms and a recital hall, which go mostly unused from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on weekdays, Dunscomb said.

If the merger goes through, Sherwood's new building would become a part of Columbia's campus, allowing students to utilize the practice space.

"Our students are going to be, for the first time, able to practice like they're supposed to," Dunscomb said.

For Columbia President Warrick L. Carter, the relationship could mean more prospective students. He said Columbia is discussing scholarship opportunities reserved for Sherwood students.

"I look at every kid under 18 as pre-college," he said at the April 18 press conference. "It

idea of training pre-college students in the classical tradition is essential for those wishing to continue into any college music program.

"If people want to go to Columbia from here, we're happy to prepare them," she said.

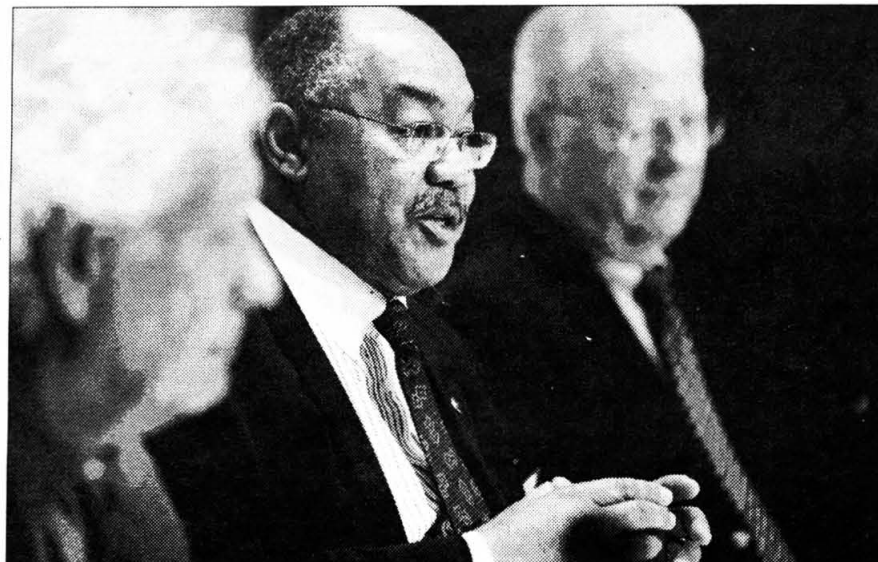
Sherwood was founded in 1895 by piano virtuoso William Sherwood and has been a member of the National Guild of Community School of the Arts since 1983.

The model of collaborating with higher education institutions is common, said Jonathan Herman, the guild's executive director. He said more than 25 percent of the guild's current members are affiliated with colleges or universities.

"We've seen a lot of success with this type of situation," he said.

While teachers at Sherwood will continue to be independent contractors, exact details on whether the conservatory's nine staff members will become a part of Columbia's payroll are not yet determined.

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Rachael Strecher/The Chronicle

Columbia President Warrick L. Carter, flanked by Richard Dunscomb, chair of the Music Department, right, and Allen Turner, chair of the board of trustees, left, speaks at a press conference about the merging of Sherwood Conservatory of Music and Columbia on April 18.

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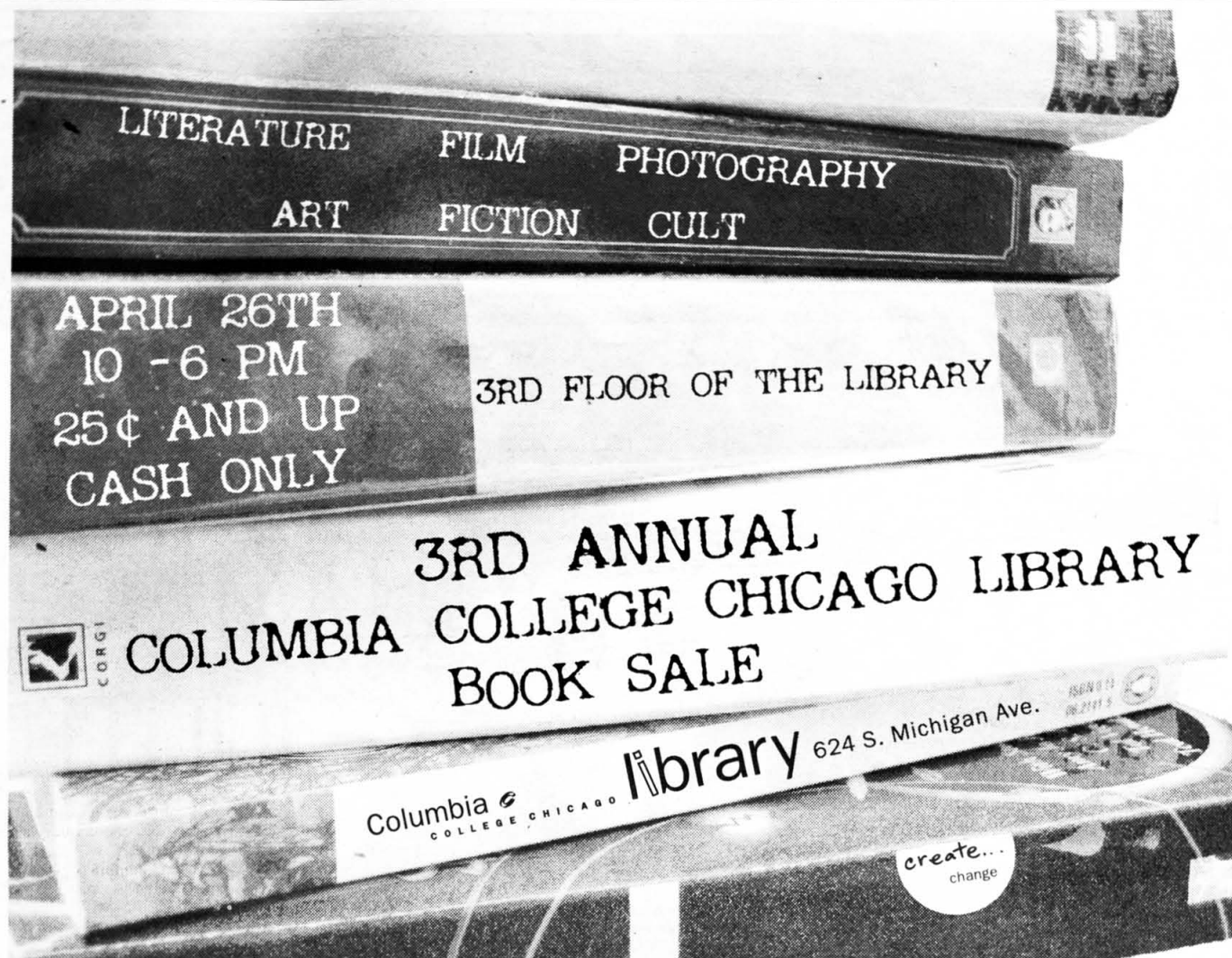
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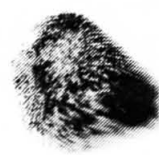
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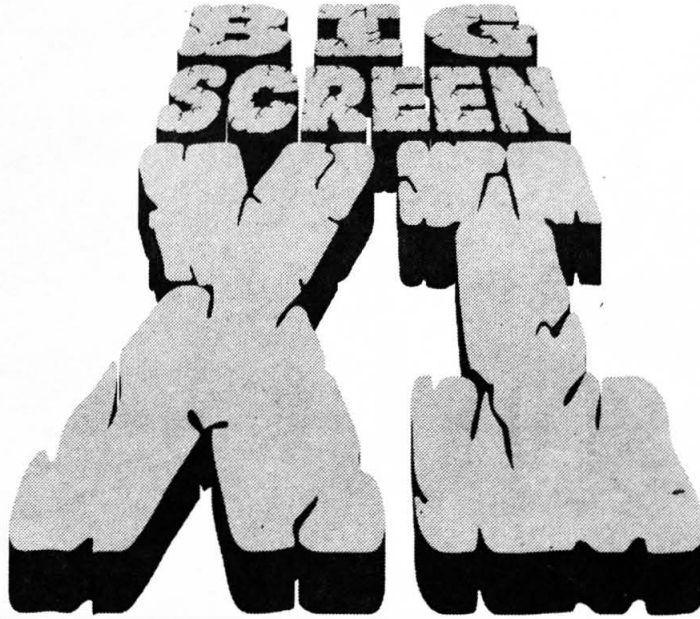


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Editorials

Be prepared for the future

The massacre at Virginia Tech last week—the deadliest school shooting in modern history on a college campus—has unlocked a cold reality about the country in which we live: Psychopaths live in American society but that doesn't mean schools can't do something more to serve their students.

When a tragedy of this magnitude happens on a college campus, student safety comes into the forefront. It becomes a talking point.

Are we safe? Can this happen here?

It goes without saying that school administrators should be prepared for the worse. Whether it's a flood, a bomb threat, a fire or even in extreme cases, a fatal shooting, administrators owe it to students to provide safety.

With that said, Columbia should improve its emergency preparedness plans—because e-mail alone isn't enough.

We are puzzled about the response of the Virginia Tech administration: sending out e-mails on that horrific morning as a means of warning people about a gunman on campus. The first e-mail informed students that two people were shot and asked students to remain cautious as police arrived on the scene.

An e-mail? Why were classes not canceled when people were shot? "Please stay put. A gunman is loose on campus. Stay in buildings until further notice. Stay away from all the windows," the e-mail said.

What does it take to make people understand that e-mails, though great casual communication tools, are not practical emergency communication tools? When gunshots are being fired the last thing on a student's mind is Gmail.

On April 17, Columbia sent out an e-mail too, promising to re-evaluate the safety and welfare of the Columbia community with its Emergency Preparedness Plan.

"The college has security guards at the entrances to each of its buildings who are equipped with electronic communications and computer connections to enhance the flow of information among our buildings through the South Loop," the e-mail said.

We also have telephone messaging systems and e-mail systems, the e-mail said. The point of the e-mail was to show the Columbia community that the administration is re-examining its preparedness.

Translation: The college can do a better job.

Last semester, Columbia

had the chance to test its emergency preparedness when the fire at the Wirt Dexter Building caused havoc in the South Loop. The school sent out e-mails and left messages on office phones about classes being canceled.

Despite the confusion that evening, people knew classes were canceled the following morning.

But something was a miss.

Even something as simple as a P.A. system, for example, would have helped. It tends to work miracles in hospitals and secondary schools where not everyone has immediate access to a computer.

Imagine if students were warned loud and clear through an announcement system that a gunman was on the loose in Virginia Tech. Perhaps it would cause panic, but it would also let students know how to protect themselves or what to do or where to go.

While there is not simple antidote to prevent school shootings, tragedies such as the Virginia Tech massacre open up a discourse about how schools can do something to protect themselves in cases of true emergencies.

Certainly there are better solutions in the 21st century than e-mail. The 32 people who died deserved better than that.

Unclog elevator congestion

There's no love for Columbia's elevators. Elevator gridlock is a problem on campus and it seems it's not going away.

"Usually I take the stairs, because the wait for the elevators is too long," said Craig Taylor, freshman Audio Arts and Acoustics major in an article The Chronicle ran four years ago.

In November of 2003, The Chronicle ran an investigation about the elevator issue, similar to the one published in last week's paper, "A rising problem."

Returning to the elevator dilemma, The Chronicle found out more of the same: Yes, the elevators still stink.

However, the overall dissatisfaction with Columbia's elevators is becoming sort of an urban legend.

"We certainly knew the elevators at 624 [S. Michigan Ave.] were an issue, and that was because they were always an issue," Alicia Berg, vice president of Campus Environment told The Chronicle in the article published last week.

Still, elevator gridlock needs to be fixed.

Four years ago, The Chronicle stated that "another option is to make some elevators stop only on every other floor, forcing students to walk up or down one floor to their classrooms."

Brian Matos, president of the Student Government Association, said an idea like that has been discussed around college council meetings.

"Elevators would go up and come down faster if they only have to stop on certain floors," Matos said. "Then students will know what elevator to wait for—so they wait on the left or the right side."

So what's the problem? If the second-tallest building in the world—the Petronas towers in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia—can have efficient elevators why can't Columbia? Those towers use an advanced elevator system that uses basically the same scheme—even floors on one elevator and odd ones on another.

So what is the issue with Columbia?

In spite of problems with the universal start times, mak-

ing the elevators work in this fashion seems practical. If the elevator's microprocessor controls can be set to go to any floor, setting up this system might work and it shouldn't be that costly.

In a perfect world, Columbia elevators would work like a well-oiled machine, complementing the class schedule.

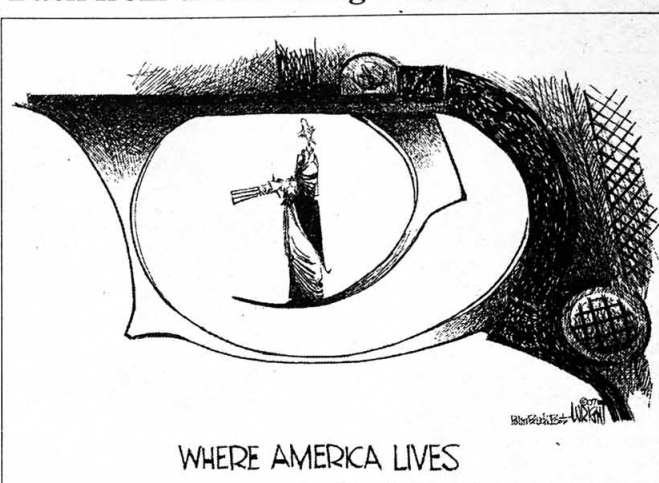
Granted, those elevators are workhorses these days, since enrollment has increased by about 1,000 students since 2004.

Although the administration said that moving many departments from the South Campus Building, 624 S. Michigan Ave., would involve more construction, that doesn't mean it hasn't worked before.

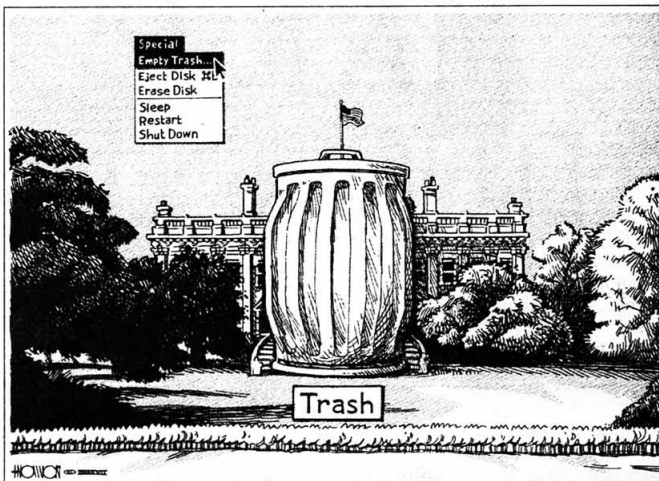
When the Journalism Department moved from the South Campus Building to the 33 E. Congress Parkway Building in 2005, journalism students felt the relief of new space that wasn't dependent on elevators.

Hey, trial and error solutions often times don't work, but it's hard to deny that the administration isn't trying.

Back from the Drawing Boards



Dan Wright/MCT



Terrence Nowicki/MCT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:



Elevator congestion a problem the college will address.

I would like to thank The Chronicle and Allison Riggio for the thorough and balanced investigative article on the elevator congestion in our South Campus Building, 624 S. Michigan Ave.

A number of entities in our Columbia community, including the College Council and Student Government Association, have brought the elevator congestion to our attention. I appreciate the research that Allison conducted to measure the length of the wait times—with the longest observed time, as she

reported, being just 3 minutes and 20 seconds.

Even so, in an effort to provide the best service possible and to minimize the negative side effect of a good policy (the Uniform Start Times), we will be exploring the option of reprogramming the elevators in the South Campus Building to test an alternative floor approach.

I also want to assure the Columbia community that our maintenance contract with Anderson Elevator is consistent with best practices regarding elevator safety. In addition, Anderson provides us with updates on testing procedures, equipment upgrades and new technology that are available for our elevators.

Alicia Berg, Vice President for Campus Environment.

Have an opinion about something you read in this newspaper?

Did you catch a mistake, think we could have covered a story better or believe strongly about an issue that faces all of us here at Columbia?

Why not write a letter to the editor? At the bottom of Page 15 you'll find a set of guidelines on how to do this. Let us hear from you.

—The Columbia Chronicle Editorial Board

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Giving lip to sobriety



By Cyril Jakubowski
Commentary Editor

It was time to get healthy. Call it graduation day jitters, but after a brief stint practicing sobriety, I finally understood this culture's obsession with protective lip balm.

This is coming from a guy who would drink benzene if it was marketed right.

However, before this revelatory enlightenment, I marveled at men and women who would make love to their Carmex and Blistex tubes in public.

There they were, doesn't matter what time of year, guys and pearly dames who pull out their tubes, pucker up and massage their lips like Sebastian from *The Little Mermaid*: "You gotta pucker your lips like this."

Who knew I would soon get into the lip balm craze? And it was all because of sobriety.

Sobriety is the answer for some. Whether it's because of overall health concerns or trouble with the law, many people go sober. Michael Keaton did it in *Clean and Sober*, however, Gary Busey didn't in *Surviving the Game*.

I tried cold turkey, with a few veers off course, of course.

Now, naturally, when regular people quit drinking, they say they feel great. They have more energy and their thoughts are clearer. Some write books about it. About the battle. About the struggle.

But not me, because as soon as I uttered those words, "I quit drinking," that's when I got sick with the flu.

I'm not talking about a regular, take-a-



Joshua Covarrubias/The Chronicle

dozen-shots-of-NyQuil and get-higher-than-a-kite type of flu. No, I'm talking about the beast. It's the type of flu where a 102-degree fever, chills, losing 10 pounds in sweat and having trouble breathing are some of its assets. The type of feverish flu that, like the name says, causes fever blisters.

Or cold sores, if you want to be a genuine dick about it.

Now, besides the flu, sporting a cold sore in a professional environment, such as an office or the back of a garbage truck, is really embarrassing. It really is.

"What did you get sick with? Gonorrhea?" a co-worker would ask.

"No, I slept with your mother." Hey, it's a really, really, really rough world out there. Give me a break here.

First of all, you lose every shred of self-esteem because your lip looks like you've slept with the dirtiest woman in town, swam

through raw sewage, took a shot of Old Crow whiskey and washed out on a beach out of a long forgotten drainpipe. It's the type of embarrassing look that brings on full moons. Because, you know, an infected lip generally suggests health problems.

So I couldn't believe I quit drinking to regain my health. I was puzzled.

But with my lip looking like the final act of *Helraiser*, I ventured on the web to find some "God-damned answers!" And it's not stuff you haven't heard before about stress, fevers or how it's the lack of sleep that causes cold sores. It's about remedies.

Oh, and about porn.

I find something humorous about sitting in front of a computer doing a self-diagnosis and then trying the home remedies like a guinea pig. And people wonder why WebMD is so popular.

However, at some point I lost hope. Do I

really want to read about some online teenager's billboard lament about how nail polish works miracles?

Now I'm sober during this whole ordeal, so naturally, inside I am screaming profanities at the heavens.

"Why God? Why me? I've done all that you've asked for. I gave that guy change, even though I knew he would spend it on booze. I changed the oil in my car. I never drive. I didn't have a drink in two weeks!"

But I replay the scenario in my head. If only I had gotten tanked last week, maybe I wouldn't have gotten sick or an infected lip. I will never go to the beach again. Not even a tanning bed. Screw Kokomo.

Eighty percent of Americans will experience cold sores at some point in their lives, according to ScienceDaily, a web portal for science articles. But despite that number, just once I would like to walk into an office or a classroom and see everyone with an infected lip, like the whole classroom got a hold of some tainted cheese pizza.

So I did what the next sober person would do: I got tanked, good and proper. Hey, WebMD said to get rid of stress.

Now the nightmare is over, and I'm stuck in some weird menage a trois with Carmex and Blistex, and anything else that has the suffix "ex" in it. Now I understand why guys and girls protect their lips. They don't want to go through this again soon. And they, like me, like to pucker their lips, like this.

Kiss my ass, sobriety—at least I'll have healthy lips.

cjakubowski@chroniclemail.com

Editor's Note: A far dirtier and inappropriate version of this commentary was on the author's mind. But due to decency standards, self-censorship took effect.

Roamin' Numerals

2

in his face.

The number of Secret Service officers injured on April 16 because of an accidental shooting at the White House according to The Associated Press. A Secret Service spokeswoman said one officer was shot in the leg and the other had shrapnel

.47

crashes on April 11 in Redmond, Wash. according to The Associated Press. This is nearly six times the legal threshold.

150

The number of graduates from Pat Robertson's law school, Regent University, that are working in the Bush Administration according to MSNBC's Countdown with Keith Olbermann. The American Bar Association denied its accreditation in 1987, but full accreditation didn't occur until 1996. The school was once ranked in the lowest tiers by U.S. News and World Report.

Stay away from abstinence programs



By Jessica Galliard
Copy Editor

"Don't have sex, because you will get pregnant and die. Don't have sex in the missionary position. Don't have sex standing up. Just don't do it, OK? Promise? OK, now everyone take some rubbers." Tim

Meadows said in the film *Mean Girls*.

Well, seeing as there really is no evidence that pregnancy always ends in death and a lot of teachers are no longer allowed to pass out contraception in classrooms, teenagers aren't really taking this abstinence nonsense seriously anymore.

Congress commissioned a study of the sexual behaviors of junior high and high school students who participated in abstinence education programs and students who opted to skip out on the programs. The results? Abstinence-educated teens are having sex at the same age as other teenagers that are spared all the drivel: around 15 years old.

The study followed four abstinence education programs targeted at upper elementary school and middle school stu-

dents and a control group of students who did not attend the programs.

The survey, which was administered in 2005 and 2006, about four to six years after the students began the study, showed that 56 percent of students in the program had remained abstinent, compared to the 55 percent of students in the control group who remained abstinent. Also, about 25 percent of all of the students in both groups had sex with three or more partners, and one in six had sex with four or more partners.

Wait. It gets better.

The response from the Bush administration comes as no shocker: Increase funding efforts for the programs. If something isn't working, you obviously fork up some more cash to extend it further, yes?

But if you think about it, the Bush administration's stance on teenage sex isn't a whole lot different from its stance on the war in Iraq.

In both situations, they frown on pulling out as a solution.

I, like every other college student, have been through the sex education programs in high school. I've gossiped with girlfriends about what "losing it" was like for

them. And though I'm in the definite minority of college students who have yet to "lose it," I'm sure anyone over the age of 12 who has been through the programs can agree that they were pointless endeavors from the start.

Sex is a personal choice—a very personal choice. Yes, it has its consequences. Yes, teenagers in high school sometimes can't handle the emotional trauma that can come with getting it on. But it's also not something that schools can expect to prevent with scare tactics, photos of gonorrhea or even outright denial.

Simply treating teenagers like children with solutions like "Just don't have sex" is irresponsible, and, as the study seems to show, completely ineffective.

If the National Weather Service used the same tactics in trying to prevent Chicagoans from feeling cold in the dead of a Chicago winter by advising them to hibernate and never leave their houses, well, then we'd all be really fat and depressed right now as we vacate our hibernation chambers for the coming of spring.

I can confidently, without shame, say my decision to remain abstinent had absolutely nothing to do with the sex edu-

cation, or the lack thereof, I received in high school. It also has nothing to do with saving myself for my husband—last time I checked, at a wedding the bride doesn't wrap herself in festive wrapping paper with a giant bow on her nether regions—as I'm anything but religious. Like I said, it's a personal choice for everyone.

And the fact is, I don't plan on having sex any time soon. However, I do my best to make sure I am well-educated about my options when I decide to jump on the f—cking bandwagon—pun intended—or when I lose it to an incredibly embarrassing, drunken fling, which I'm sure will happen with my luck.

Teachers and parents do have a responsibility to make sure their students are adequately equipped for battle. Sending the troops to battle without armor in any war isn't only stupid, it's downright dangerous.

Maybe if George Sr. would have had sufficient sex education in high school, he would have known better to use a condom. Then maybe we wouldn't have to face some of the issues our fearless leader has brought to us.

Worthless abstinence programs: best abstained from.

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Bigotry, hypocrisy not absent at Columbia

By Blake Hausman
President of Columbia College Conservatives

During my three years at Columbia, and as the president of the Columbia College Conservatives, I have seen some s—. I have seen people harassed for voting for George W. Bush, demeaned for being Christian and chastised for being straight. I have heard a fetus called a "parasite" and Jesus called "an earlier incarnation of Adolf Hitler." I saw an "art" show with a large piece depicting the president with a gun to the back of his head (so did the Secret Service). I even saw my grades drop in several classes. But I'd never seen the true underbelly of hatred at Columbia until now.

We, the Conservatives, decided to have a "Coming Out Week," with the intention of having humorous events that poke fun at the system and educate students about the selected issues we were satirizing. The illegal immigration game and affirmative action bake sale drew particular ire. We chose the events, along with their comedic elements, to reach a larger audience through humor, and figured on ruffling a few feathers. But what happened next stunned even me.

Several students organized against us over spring break, though none of them contacted any member of the Conservatives at any time to find out about our events' intents or details. An anti-Conservatives group was formed on Facebook, and hatred began to spew.

I received several pieces of vile and racist hate mail from some of Columbia's classiest students. The hatred spread to the campus as well. I was left completely dumbfounded upon hearing that several students thought we were going to be going around campus grabbing random Hispanics for deportation. I've never accused liberals of having a keen grasp of the obvious, but ... wow.

People flooded the offices with phone calls and e-mails threatening protests and



Joshua Covarrubias/The Chronicle

walkouts. I was called into the Assistant Dean's office and berated for 40 minutes in what was less of a dialogue and more of a cry for help. And there were "school-wide"—yet-invitation-only—meetings about the events. The words "hypocrisy" and "irony" come to mind.

Students at this college don't think conservatives belong here. Some are ignorant enough to believe the "liberal" in "liberal arts college" means you should have to be a tree-hugging, anti-war neo-socialist to be enrolled. Several students called us racist, and yet in the same message retorted with blatantly racist tirades. On one occasion I was actually accused of being "white." Guilty as charged.

Some went further, making threats and

spreading rumors about possible violent backlash our group may endure. As a result, the administration placed near-impossible security restrictions on our events. And the little bastard from Virginia Tech didn't much help our cause. Therefore, we will not be holding the events that we should have the right to hold.

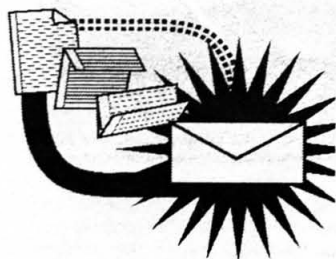
So, congratulations. Several of you who organized against us suppressed our rights to assembly and free speech. You have stifled debate and instigated anger and hatred at our college. You showed that you don't really care about diversity, minority rights or "creating change." You have proved yourselves hypocrites, bigots and hate-mongers. And, most importantly, you have shown that you don't

believe in democracy and true freedom.

We, however, refuse to back down. Lacking the ability to hold the events for our conservative week, we have issued a college-wide report, "The Real State of Diversity," that is available by hard copy in the HUB, in the Wabash Campus Building, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., and online at battle.org.com. It documents several instances of anti-conservative discrimination at Columbia that should be acknowledged and discussed. It's got all the juicy details, with hate mail uncensored and names named. Check it out.

As a college, this behavior must be stopped. Burning flags in the street is bad enough, but silencing people just because you don't agree with them—well, that's called Communism.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:



Clarifying canceled courses

I have received many phone calls from Columbia College faculty and students concerning the article "Canceled courses cause controversy" by Amanda Maurer in the April 9 issue of *The Columbia Chronicle*. These concerned Columbia College citizens urged me to write a Letter to the Editor to state the accurate facts concerning the cancellation of courses, because these facts were absent from the article.

The courses in science visualization which were canceled had been developed by me in collaboration with the chairs of the chemistry departments of Princeton University and Indiana University, with funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF). These courses were evaluated on a regular basis by the curriculum committee of Princeton University and by the NSF. They were considered creative, innovative, challenging and with a high degree of scientific and academic rigor, and have been adopted by 80 universities and colleges around the country. These courses were highlighted on public television by the former Secretary of Education, the hon-

orable Richard Riley, as the model for creativity in science education, which is the solution to take America out of its current crisis in science education—a crisis which was largely created by traditional methods of teaching.

On Sept. 21, 2006, when the Science Institute had as a guest lecturer Roy Tasker (a renowned expert in science visualization from Australia), acting chair of Science and Mathematics Department Constantin Rasinariu asked if Tasker could provide to their department suggestions on how to teach science visualization, as they were interested in offering a course. Tasker responded: "The experts on teaching science visualization and the process of doing it are upstairs on the 14th floor of this building" (referring to the Science Institute in the 624 South Michigan building). It should be evident that if you do not know a subject, you cannot teach it.

It is important to mention that these courses and this innovative method of teaching have received awards for excellence in teaching from the American Chemical Society, the Royal Society of Chemistry (England), the World Cultural Council and the Presidential Award from President Bill Clinton—just to name a few. President Warrick Carter nominated the Science Institute to the Council of Independent Colleges for the Heuer Award as the best program in undergraduate science education, and the Science Institute received this award in 2004.

These courses were rated highly by Nobel Laureate Roald Hoffmann (Cornell University, and former Columbia College board member) and by Dick Zare (chair of the Chemistry Department of Stanford University), both of whom requested examples of material from these courses on DVD. The NSF has funded the Science Institute's labs

and curriculum with millions of dollars.

We must assume that all the individuals and committees who evaluated these courses at Princeton University and the NSF, as well as at the various universities and colleges that adopted the courses, are as qualified as the acting chair and the Curriculum Committee of the Science and Mathematics Department.

Yet it is odd that the Curriculum Committee of the Science and Mathematics Department reached such a different conclusion than the other curriculum committees. It is very sad that instead of admitting that the department is presently unable to teach these courses, acting chair Rasinariu stated in the article:

"Some of these courses are of poor quality." Concerning "Mathematics For Survival," this innovative course was developed by Science Institute faculty member Greg Neul, and has received accolades as a wonderful way to teach the understanding of mathematics. Columbia faculty, advisors and students have lauded this course, and 18 sections of it were filled to capacity each semester when it was offered by the Science Institute. This type of math course is now being taught in several other universities and colleges (for example, the prestigious Williams College). Not everyone with a degree in mathematics can teach this course, as it requires creativity and training, which can take a long time.

These creative science and mathematics courses taught concepts, creative thinking and problem solving, which traditional courses typically do not succeed in teaching.

The Science Institute has on file, for anyone who wishes to read them, letters from students, alumni and scientists who praised these courses. Last year, the *Columbia Chronicle* printed several

Letters to the Editor written by students and alumni who credited these courses for their success in their careers.

In the final paragraph of the article, the Acting Chair of the Science and Mathematics Department states: "The main concern for which we have is quality and substance ... To have respect for our students means we have to offer what they're paying for." The acting chair, by canceling these innovative award-winning and internationally-renowned courses, which have high quality, substance, creativity and a high level of science, does exactly the opposite of his main concern and is missing an opportunity to really give our students something worth paying for. It is very sad that our current and future students will not benefit from the same education as our esteemed alumni as a result of these cancellations.

Sincerely,

Zafra Lerman, Ph.D., CChem, FRSC
Distinguished Professor of Science and
Public Policy Head, Institute for
Science Education and Science
Communication

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

An Arts and Entertainment Supplement of the Columbia Chronicle

THIS ISSUE
**HALF
PINT
BRAWLERS**
MAADD MEXX THE IMMIGRATION SENSATION
LITTLE KAT THE DWARF DESTROYER
AND OF COURSE
PUPPET THE PSYCHO DWARF
A SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY "SHOWBIZ JOE"
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When love goes to MySpace

I have never been the type to jump on new trends easily. I suppose there have been times I've been able to latch onto a new band before they got big or tried a new restaurant before the prices went up, but when it comes to embracing new technology, I'm a bit slow.

It took a couple of years for me to get an e-mail account; the Internet was still sort of new, even though today it seems as if the web had always been around. I was also the one who held off getting a cell phone until people starting getting frustrated that they could never seem to get a hold of me at the exact moment they wanted to. So it's no surprise I was slow to find the MySpace trail and follow it straight into waste-my-time hell.

The endless list of websites like MySpace, Tribe, LiveJournal and Bebo go on and on. There are 93 social networking sites, according to Wikipedia, and that was just a sampling. I have the option of joining Twitter, which allows me to update

my page via my phone or Go Pets if I want a virtual version of man's best friend. If I want to attempt to meet people in the real world I can first go to the site Multiply, which describes itself through the phrase "Real world relationship"—whatever that means. I wonder if the real world is really for me. If I'd like to find out my socioeconomic rating I can check out Rimzu—but I'm a student. I can tell you that my rating is going to be pretty low.

When my relationship with MySpace began it was fettered with only thoughts of networking, finding old friends and writing comments on my then-boyfriend's page. In fact, come to think of it, the boyfriend is the reason I finally caved and got a MySpace page in the first place. He thought it would be fun, and everyone else had one. When I finally took the time to update my page—which is a real pain—the novelty soon wore off.

After that particular relationship ended, I found that MySpace had turned me into something I never wanted to be: an obsessed cyber-ex. I was constantly checking my former sweetie's page to find out what he had listed his status as; did it read "single," or "in a relationship"? The day I saw it change from "in a relationship" to "single," I burst out crying. The day I saw it change from "single" back to "in a relationship," I started crying again. The fact that I noticed these little

changes in the first place made me want to bury my head in the sand.

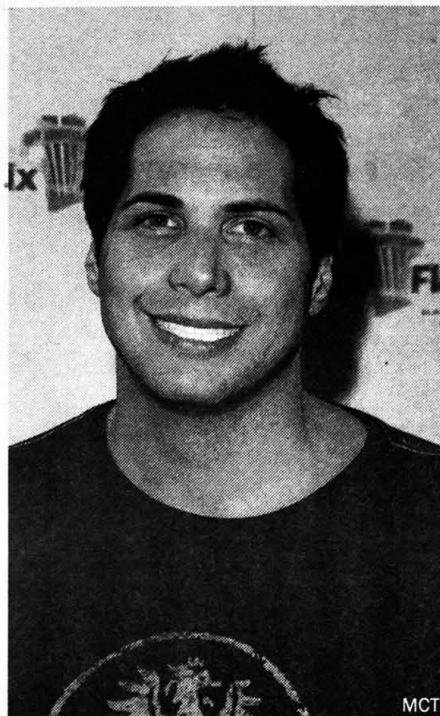
I should never have been able to see that my ex was in a new relationship or who his new girlfriend was without him telling me. This violates some sort of law of nature. I'm sure of it. The cyber-gods are going to strike me down for my actions.

To add to the problem, I was now getting people from out of the blue finding my MySpace page and trying to make up for lost time. I blame it on high school reunions, kids or marriage, but sometimes if you didn't talk to someone in high school, the odds are good that you're not going to have much to say to them as an adult. And where do you start? How was I supposed to recap my life since high school plays and student council has passed? One former high school classmate asked me to bring her up-to-speed with my life. When I did, her reply was, "Well you've taken the path less traveled haven't you?" The path less traveled, of course, was that I wasn't married with children. I have had some good MySpace reunions, though—finding an old friend who now plays in a bluegrass band was kind of cool.

All in all, I'm not sure if I like the new way that people choose to interact. A co-worker of mine said she was told that if it wasn't for Facebook, she and a pal of hers would never talk. I guess it serves its purpose, but I'm afraid MySpace and I are done. It's time to break up and go our separate ways. If it accepted calls, I'd end it over the phone. To just delete MySpace is like removing it from my cyber-friend list without an explanation. It would simply be too tacky.

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JACKASS OF THE WEEK



Meet Joe Francis. He is a 34-year-old self-made millionaire, thanks to his brilliantly creepy idea to start the *Girls Gone Wild* empire. While the videos of drunken, college-age girls making out with their friends and flashing their pierced nipples have brought many good things to the entrepreneur, they have also brought about some bad things as well. His bad behavior speaks for itself:

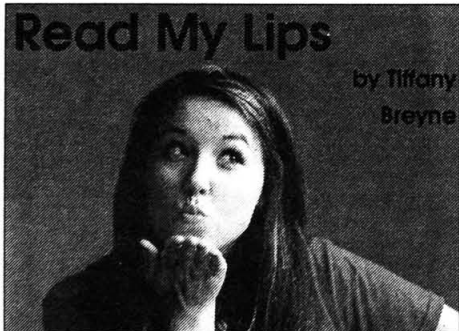
December 2006: Francis is slammed with 30 months of community service, involving at least eight hours a month; plus, his video company, Mantra Films, is ordered to pay \$1.6 million in fines for taping underage girls in the vulgar *GGW* videos four years ago. The man was lucky to escape about 10 years in jail due to legal negotiations. At the time, Francis also faced more than 40 charges of racketeering, prostitution and encouraging minors to perform "X-rated behaviors" while filming a video in Panama City for spring break 2003, according to an E! Online article. Fortunately for the creep, little more than 30 of the cases were dropped due to insufficient evidence, aka the girls were too wasted to remember what happened.

January 2007: E! Online reports that Francis is hit with a \$500,000 fine and two years probation for a similar charge of filming underage girls in his *GGW* videos.

April 2007: Francis receives a contempt-of-court charge after yelling profanities at several people during settlement negotiations from another case against him involving filming underage girls, E! Online reported. Francis, currently in jail awaiting an April 23 hearing for his contempt-of-court charge, manages to get in trouble even behind bars. On April 12 he picked up one charge of bribing a public servant after offering \$500 to a prison guard in exchange for clean water, five counts of bringing contraband into jail and three counts of possessing a controlled substance in prison, as reported by All Headline News. He's also facing possible trouble for hiding \$15 million of revenue from *Girls Gone Wild* videos in off-shore bank accounts and faking \$20 million in expenses for the films in two tax returns.

Meet Joe Francis—34-year-old jackass.

—T. Breyne



Liquid love

Last week I went to a pretty decent Columbia party—which is hard to find nowadays—and managed to get a bit more obliterated than planned. I partially blame this on the 312 beer that flowed almost non-stop at this Goose Island-sponsored party, and mama likes her some 312. Toward the end of the night, another bottled beauty caught my attention—the Imperial IPA. I saw the mysterious liquid in a friend's hand and was quick to ask, "What's that?" His response: something about how if Imperial were a woman, she'd have

the right curves in the right places and basically she'd be a hottie—alcohol deceives my ability to remember exact quotes.

His response was enough to turn me on to the beer, which is the most intense thing I've ever tasted. And it also leads me to think: If I could turn all my usual alcoholic extravagances into men, what would they be like? And here's what I came up with:

Hard alcohol

shots: These would be the guys who seemed good at the time, but ended up being the worst idea ever. The appeal is hidden somewhere in the midst of my hazy brain, so I take the dive and indulge in the forbidden pleasure, only to cringe right after and maybe even throw up a few hours later. I've dated or made out with a fair share of "shots" in my life, and while I'll still partake in the occasional party shot, hopefully I'll never return to the cringe-inducing and thoughtless shot jocks.

Miller Lite: This is the guy who I'll usually hang around because he's dependable. I usually stick to my trusty Miller Lite because it's not too expensive and about 99 percent of places carry it. Therefore, this is my safety guy; he's alright to talk to and while his jokes usually elicit a half-chuckle, he can manage to keep me entertained the majority of the time.

Corona: A Corona man would basically be the hottie that given the chance I'd have my way with, but wouldn't really want to talk to him after ... or before, for that matter. I see Corona as that attractive beer that I can't afford on a regular basis, but it's a smooth and sweet escape that I can't resist from time to time.

Mojitos: This drink has a refreshing mint flavor and the zest of sweet fruit splashed in, plus there's lots of ice, which, when translated into a real-life man, would be the best thing ever. He would always be stimulating to the mind and brain just like the mint. He would be charming and sugary sweet like the fruit; and would provide real emotions and good conversations, or in other words, the icy substance. A mojito man is pretty much a 10 in my book.

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Ratings Guide

So, is that movie worth watching? That CD worth buying? Count the hearts in each review and use this handy chart to find out.

♥	Complete Crap
♥♥	Download It
♥♥♥	Pretty Entertaining
♥♥♥♥	Very Good
♥♥♥♥♥	Word Up



Beth
Palmer



Steve
Yaccino



George P.
Slefo

Top 5

FONDEST SELF-DEPRECATING MOMENTS WITH MY BICYCLE

The time I biked into a parked Ford Explorer: then tried to deny it to the rich, blond owner sitting in the front seat. "What about that dent?" she asked, pointing to where my handlebars had slammed into the trunk. It cost me \$100.

Packing my ivory road bike, White Stallion: in one of the two duct-taped cardboard boxes I checked when I flew cross-country back to Chi-town from California in '05. It made up half of my possessions. It was my love.

When a pick-up truck towing a small bulldozer: smashed me into a curb as it rounded a corner. I flew onto the sidewalk, the White Stallion a mess of gears and fallen chain. No one stopped. In fact, one ignorant sack of (insert mean word) yelled at me to "Get out of the way, f—er!"

Finding an empty sidewalk where I had locked White Stallion: to a pole in Lincoln Park. Mysteriously, my u-lock was still secured around the steel no-parking sign. Either the culprit possessed a magic key, or I, in a hurry to escape frigid Chicago winter wind, placed the lock securely around the pole—and only the pole.

Spending \$50: on a pretty sad lavender '70s road model from Working Bikes just so some co-tenant of my near North Side building could jack it from the basement storage rack months later.

WAYS TO BE A TERRIBLE ROOMMATE

What's yours is mine: Make his food your food, his pillow your pillow, his deodorant your deodorant. To make it even more aggravating, make outrageous statements of denial such as "I don't even use deodorant."

Pity party: This is as simple as not attending class and complaining that your courses are too difficult or never leaving the apartment and whining that there's nothing to do in the city. Your melancholy should saturate your home with a perfect touch of depression and self-loathing.

Privacy is underrated: When your roommate has a date over, don't leave the room. This works best if you listen in on their conversation and interject comments or wear headphones while sitting next to them on the couch and say, "Don't worry, I can't hear you."

Morning practice: Before your roommate gets up, invite your newly founded bowstaffing club over and practice full-contact duels in the living room.

Shower power: Claim the bathroom as your place to unwind. Set your laptop on the sink and watch a movie while you shower. Not only will you waste water, spiking the next month's utility bill, you will leave your roommate crossing his legs for hours.

THINGS WOMEN NEED TO STOP DOING

Bug-style sunglasses: You know those trendy sunglasses that consume one-third of a girl's face? Yeah, they're trendy and real popular; they even make some hot girls look even hotter. But every so often, you will see a girl walk by and say "Wow she's hot!" That is, until she takes off those enormous sunglasses, and she's actually really ugly. Next time this happens to me I'm suing for false advertising.

Pajamas: It doesn't happen as much at the college level as it did in high school, but it still happens. Girls will come to school dressed in their pajamas as if they just rolled out of bed. Yet they paint their faces with excessive makeup to look cute in their pajamas. I just don't get it.

Alcohol consumption: I'll admit it, I'm a lightweight with booze, and every so often, I'll come across a classy girl that drinks me under the table. This really sucks when you take a girl out for drinks and she says "I'm not even drunk" while you're passed out in the back seat of a cab.

Taking pictures: Can somebody please explain why girls pull a 180-degree turn with their head and shy away when someone takes a picture of them? They even do this at weddings when they're all dressed up and look nice.

The thrift shopper: Just because you see a really pretty dress for \$4 at your local thrift store doesn't mean it's going to look good on you. Every time this happens I think of Marla from *Fight Club*.

Calendar of Events

MONDAY

The celebration of everything improv begins today with the kick-off of the **10th annual Chicago Improv Festival**. The opening ceremony is free at the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph St., at 7 p.m. Guests will see a film and video retrospective as well as a live performance by five improv actors who have appeared in the festival the past nine years.

TUESDAY

A free screening of *Salud*, a documentary that explores the Cuban health care system, will be held at 6:30 p.m. at **The School of the Art Institute of Chicago**, 280 S. Columbus Drive, in the second floor auditorium. A panel discussion follows, which asks, "Can Cuba solve the Cook County health care crisis?"

WEDNESDAY

Are you living la vida loca? Then maybe you want to sing and dance the night away with a man who is guaranteed to make you shake your bon bon. **Ricky Martin** is at the **Arling House**, 6920 Mannheim Road, in Rosemont, Ill. tonight at 8 p.m. Tickets range from \$41-\$91.

THURSDAY

Get some knowledge or spread some yourself. Today parents and children alike partake in the annual ritual of "Take your child to work day." If you have a kid, why not bring him or her along with you to your job at Starbucks? Or go along with one of your parents and see what they go through day in and day out to decide whether or not you still want to follow in their footsteps.

FRIDAY

Celebrate **Arbor Day**—plant a tree and help save our lovely planet, or at least make it prettier. You liked climbing trees and chasing cats up them when you were little, didn't you? The National Arbor Day Foundation along with Home Depot, is sponsoring a tree-planting event at the **Altgeld-Murray Housing Area** at 976 E. 133rd St. The time is TBA. Check arborday.org for updates.

SATURDAY

The closest you will find to a rave in the Chicago area is at the **Cross Roads Event Center**, 160 W. Joe Orr Road, in Chicago Heights, Ill. From 7 p.m. until 4 a.m., dance the night away at "Music of Mass Destruction-DnB Liberation Front," which will showcase more than 25 DJs, mostly all drum and bass, including Casper, Stunna, MC Armanni and MC Entro. This event is 18 and up; tickets are \$15-\$20.

SUNDAY

You like to drink and you like music, but every time you go to the club you're too scared to get on the dance floor. Maybe you should try taking the **hip-hop workshop** at **Lou Conte Dance Center**, 1147 W. Jackson Blvd., today from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Nick Gonzalez, from "So You Think You Can Dance," and Dome and Trae of the Hip Hop ConnXion will teach you some steps. The price is \$15-\$25.

Exposure



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

Techniques and tricks are something that you always have to work on with photography. Most people dismiss techniques as cheesy or lazy. Sometimes you have to employ these techniques to make the mundane a little more poppy. In this photo, I kicked up the F-stop and slowed down the shutter speed to create light trails.

Writers who have always wanted their works read and those who love to take-in local prose need to look no further than their backyard.

In Chicago independent publishers and small presses now have a place where their collections can be read, all they have to do is to go underground.

About a year ago, cataloging enthusiast Nell Taylor, 24, and her partner, Emerson Dameron, created the Chicago Underground Library (CUL), a small-scale operation devoted to the love of local authors.

Taylor's idea behind beginning

the CUL was to create a place where small press enthusiasts could read local authors all under one roof. With the help of a handful of volunteers and local community support, the CUL maintains an extensive library and is in the process of filing for a nonprofit status, all while running on a zero-dollar budget.

Located underground at MoJoe's Hothouse, 2849 W. Belmont Ave., the CUL can be found in a dark little corner of the coffeehouse, outfitted with tables and chairs for settling in.

"Being [physically] underground

at MoJoe's was a happy accident," said Taylor, a Columbia graduate. "We would love to have our own space, but that's down the road."

On Saturday afternoons visitors can thumb through and find collections of literary magazines, zines, essays and comic books. There are even art projects available for viewing, such as a collection from The Chicago Tapes Project, a community art and sound project where mixtapes are traded through secret designated locations.

"We try to be non-judgmental in what we collect," Taylor said. "It's not for us to arbitrarily discern what is important."

Taylor explained that the only requirement for contributing works to the CUL is that they are created locally. CUL items cannot be checked out, but items are available for use on the premises. Taylor explained that items need to be made available for everyone in the community to use at any time.

To help round up more independent readings for their collection, the CUL is hoping to create a collection development team, which would circulate around Chicago to generate more buzz.

"I'm a little bit shy; I like to be buried in the books," Taylor said. "I need people to help spread the gospel [about the CUL] for me."

The CUL has trouble keeping volunteers during the winter months due to cold weather, she added.

Lia Burka, 26, a graduate student at Dominican University, works as a volunteer for the CUL. Burka said she has done everything from aiding in the library's website design to cataloging materials, and thinks her time spent with the CUL has been a gem. Burka also chimed in and explained that the core group of volunteers who really put the time and effort in get it all together.

The CUL has managed to gather a range of publications from independent presses such as Fractal Head, Rhino Poetry Magazine, Punk Planet and literary publisher Featherproof Press.

Zack Dodson, 27, and his business partner, Jonathan Messinger, both got the idea for Featherproof Press while they were working at TimeOut Chicago. They began Featherproof with the idea of mini-books, small stories that readers can print out and assemble on their own. Recently, Featherproof has contributed its entire collection of independent works to the CUL.

Dodson explained that through CUL and their digitization program, Featherproof's mini-books can now reach a wider audience.

"They are centralizing things in one place, which is important," Dodson said.

If visitors can't make it to MoJoe's on Saturdays to see their collections, it's OK. About one-third of their collection, around 300

items, is located on the Internet. Authors licensed through Creative Commons, a nonprofit organization which focuses on different copyright terms of use and copyright laws for intellectual property, can have their work digitized and catalogued on the CUL's website.

In order to make this happen, the CUL turns to Joseph Oldaker, a 27-year-old law student at the Chicago-Kent College of Law, who acts as its part-time legal backbone.

With the help of some of his law professors, Oldaker, who will graduate with a certificate in intellectual property law in July 2007, aids and consults the CUL in issues of digital management and nonprofit outreach.

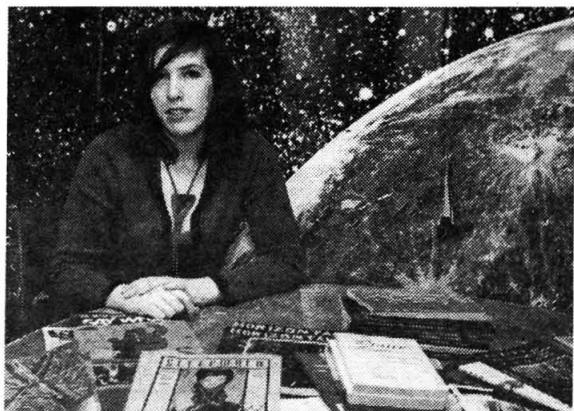
Oldaker said that trying to file for nonprofit status is beneficial but requires a lot of work. One of the advantages of being a nonprofit is that the organization becomes tax exempt.

"[For CUL] it's not about the money; it's more about the community," Oldaker said.

Taylor said visits to the CUL are increasing and its popularity is growing every day.

"It shows what's possible when you have a lot of people coming together to do something they really care about," Oldaker said.

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Rogan Birnie/The Chronicle

Nell Taylor, founder of the Chicago Underground Library, is seated with a selection of the CUL's independent literature and zines.

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LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG RING

Story by Chrissy Mahmeister
Graphics by Joshua Covarrubias

With blood dripping from his forehead, Puppet the Psycho Dwarf aims a staple gun at his opponent's face. The only thing separating the opponent from his ultimate fate is a crumpled dollar bill stuck to his skin from all of the sweat. The crowd shouts and cheers as Puppet props the gun for a perfect shot into his opponent's forehead.

Under the weight of the pressure from the staple gun, the opponent squints his eyes and grimaces as Puppet pretends to shoot a staple right through the dollar bill into his forehead. Smiles in the crowd contrast the phony hurt look on the opponent's face as he tumbles to the floor in the ring. Hands from the crowd go in the air, and the

cheers drown out the dramatic cries of pain from the defeated wrestler.

The crowd gathered to see the Chicago-native hardcore midget wrestling company, Half Pint Brawlers, which tours across the United States in bars, clubs and festivals to showcase their WWE-style fighting. While the fighting may be the main attraction, the Half Pint Brawlers also have a comedy show before the fight to loosen up the crowd and a round of limbo to get the crowd involved in the entertainment.

Puppet describes the Half Pint Brawlers as "Jackass" meets *Girls Gone Wild* meets hardcore midget wrestling, all wrapped up into two unforgettable hours.

The first match is 25-minutes of mayhem—the midgets jump off the top rope and do back flips and tons of extreme-style wrestling, according to Puppet.

"You name it, we do it," Puppet said. "We just fall farther."

The second match is a round of hardcore midget wrestling. For one of the fights, the Half Pint Brawlers wrap barbed wire around the ropes to up the intensity, and their staple for every show is, well, a staple gun.

"My slogan is, 'Midgets are like strippers. If you give us \$1 bills, we'll staple them all over each others' bodies for your pleasure,'" Puppet said.

While both matches are eye-opening entertainment, there is one guarantee at every show, Puppet said. The crowd is promised to see a midget bleed.

"I always tell the pedestrians, 'Don't get midget blood on you. You'll turn into a midget,'" Puppet said.

Then, there's the tables, chairs and ladders brawl inside an 8-foot steel cage. Teo, who is "3-foot-8 and ready to mate," is the smallest athlete alive, according to Puppet. Teo and Puppet have an all-out brawl in the cage. In one match, Teo jumped off the top of the cage and went through a table, taking Puppet down with him, Puppet said.

The Half Pint Brawlers are sports entertainment, so none of the stars of the show actually get hurt, unless it's by accident. According to Puppet, they are all trained athletes and considering how many shows they do a week—up to three shows plus travel—they all stay relatively healthy.

"I'm sure when we're old men we're going to have arthritis and all that good stuff, but it comes with the job," Puppet said.

The rest of the Half Pint Brawlers include Madd Mexx the Immigration Sensation, Little Kato the Dwarf Destroyer and, of course, Puppet the Psycho Dwarf, who "Showbiz Joe" Arrivi, the co-founder and tour promoter of Half Pint Brawlers, said is the "heart of the tour."

While Puppet had his own independent wrestling company and worked on Mancow's Morning Madhouse radio program, he quickly realized that the little guys were the stars of the show. He then opened up his own midget-wrestling company called Bloody Midgets, but once he got onto Pay Per View, he had to change the name to Half Pint Brawlers.

The Half Pint Brawlers' (then called the Bloody Midgets) first show was at Sluggers, 3540 N. Clark St. And even though it was in the middle of January, they packed the place and had a line stretching around the Cubby Bear, 956 W. Addison St., in the freezing temperatures, Puppet said.

That's when he knew he had a hit.

Steven Strauss, a manager at Sluggers, remembers hosting the Half Pint Brawlers a few years ago.

"It was a lot of fun, and [Puppet] is a very sharp promoter," Strauss said. "He was wonderful with the audience."

Even though it was a great success, not all Wrigleyville residents felt comfortable hosting a wrestling match from a company called Bloody Midgets.

"We had some opposition in our community [when a little person] said it's making a mockery of little people," Strauss said. "We didn't want to offend anybody so we



Courtesy: John Sharp

stopped doing it. [Puppet] had already created a name and a following and a website and didn't want to change it."

Strauss originally hosted the Half Pint Brawlers because one of the employees had seen them in a college town in Indiana and he had enjoyed it so much that he brought it to Sluggers, a sports bar.

The Half Pint Brawlers are thought to be objectifying little people and that the word "midget" is discriminatory, but Puppet disagrees.

"The word midget has never been there to degrade people or put people down," Puppet said. "No one is going to come out and see 'little people' wrestling. No one knows what that means. A lot of people say I'm objectifying myself, but I own the company. And every little person is not made fun of in the show—they are the star of the show."

Puppet also said people know exactly what they're going to get when they come to the show, and that's why they have

been touring so steadily.

The success on tour comes from games like drunk midget limbo where a person goes under a limbo stick, and they have to do a shot of "midget blood"—which is really red Pucker, a sour liqueur.

"We start [the limbo stick] off at our heads and no one has ever made it to our belly button," Puppet said.

And the biggest reason the Half Pint Brawlers are such a hot commodity: their unforgettable midget mayhem entertainment.

"I always say you're going to remember my show—even if you don't want to," Puppet said. "It's going to be engraved in your head. We all do something that no one's ever expected us to do. A lot of people come out and they think it's going to be a joke. It's nothing like that. We always get their respect by the time they leave."

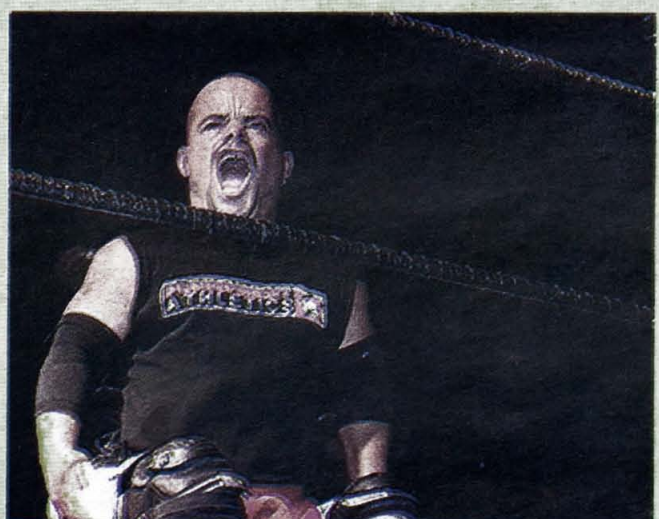
The Half Pint Brawlers are currently on tour, but catch them when they return to Illinois June 6, at Shooters, 1829 S. Pine St.

"My slogan is, 'Midgets are like strippers. If you give us \$1 bills we'll staple them all over each others' bodies for your pleasure,'"

— Puppet the Psycho Dwarf



Courtesy: John Sharp



Left & Right: Courtesy: Puppet the Psycho Dwarf



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Preposterous tomfoolery

Corporate pranksters the Yes Men tell it like it is

By James H. Ewert Jr./City Beat Editor

Andy Bichlbaum is Jude Finisterra, a spokesman for Dow Chemical. He is Dr. Northrop Goody, head of Halliburton's emergency products development unit, and to some, he is Rene Oswin, head of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. But to many political activists and college students, Bichlbaum is one of the Yes Men, the corporate prankster duo that also includes Mike Bonnano.

The two have posed as and perpetrated pranks on some of the leading corporate executives and organizations in the globe including the World Trade Organization and several other international business and trade organizations.

Bichlbaum spoke at Loyola University's Galvin Auditorium, 6339 N. Sheridan Road., on April 16 about the group's latest pranks and provided information to curious up-and-coming pranksters on how to walk and talk like a real-life corporate executive.

The Yes Men first gained attention with their self-titled film, *The Yes Men*, released in 2003, which documented the duo's impersonations as spokesmen from the World Trade Organization, among others. But Bichlbaum was in Chicago for their newest film, which will feature a prank pulled off on the BBC's World news channel, one that ended up affecting the global economy.

On Dec. 2, 1984, a deadly gas leak erupted in a Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, India, killing 8,000 people in three days while injuring hundreds of thousands more. Four days later, Warren Anderson, then-chairman of Union Carbide, was arrested in India but released on bail the following day only to flee the country.

The corporate disaster is regarded by many as the worst ever of its kind. In 2001, Dow Chemical bought Union Carbide but neglected to acquire any of the company's responsibility for the attack. Nearing the disaster's 20th anniversary, the BBC World Television was looking to do a spot on the event: enter Bichlbaum and the Yes Men.

After setting up a fake website meant to look like Dow Chemical's, dowethics.com, the two got an invite from the BBC asking them for a representative to appear on live TV. Bichlbaum obliged and appeared as Jude Finisterra from Dow Chemical with a big announcement: Dow would accept responsibility for the disaster, set up a relief fund and pressure the U.S. government to extradite the former chairman of Union Carbide Warren Anderson back to India for prosecution.

"We had been looking for a way to publicize the event on [its] anniversary and set up the website

hoping to get some takers, but we never thought we'd end up on the most widely-viewed program in the world [BBC World Television]," Bichlbaum said during his appearance at Loyola. "I actually got pretty nervous for this one. I had been living in Paris at the time, and we did it live from there. I had a bunch of bullet points to hit on, but I basically had to just wing it."

Bichlbaum said he knew the prank would draw a considerable reaction, but had no idea the fallout would be so severe.

"Within about 20 minutes after the fake announcement, Dow's share value went down by about \$3 billion," Bichlbaum said. "It shot right back up as soon as it was revealed as a hoax, but the prank affected the whole market."

What's strange is that the Yes Men have yet to face any legal consequences for any of their actions. Bichlbaum said every time they've spoken with lawyers they can't seem to find anything criminally wrong with what they're doing. Any implications, Bichlbaum said, would have to be civil—and it's hard to prove what they are saying is false.

After the prank Bichlbaum said the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission investigated to see if Bichlbaum and Bonnano had profited from the escapade, but the two had no



James H. Ewert Jr./The Chronicle

Political prankster Andy Bichlbaum of the Yes Men gives a friendly hello at Loyola University's Galvin Auditorium, 6339 N. Sheridan Road on April 16.

idea of the hoax's implications.

"Had we known what was going to happen, we probably would have tried to profit from it," Bichlbaum said. "But we didn't. A few people have tried to take legal moves against us, like in the 2000 election we had a fake website that looked a lot like the website of the governor of Texas. The name of it was GWBush.com and we just took a lot of his website, duplicated it and changed some of the images, but basically broke every copyright infringement [law] there is. His legal team sent us a cease and desist letter, but [we] never heard anything more."

Bichlbaum, a computer programmer, said that while previewing clips from the duo's latest prank movie, he simply wanted to help and teach others how to do the same type of thing the Yes Men

are doing.

Bichlbaum said the basic equipment The Yes Men use is relatively inexpensive. The hidden camera they use can be bought for \$150 and placed in a tie or glasses, but Bichlbaum said he prefers the tie because the glasses look conspicuous no matter what. A place to store the footage is also necessary and that can go into a mini-DV recorder or portable hard drive, both of which cost less than \$500. Aside from the recording equipment, Bichlbaum said all a prankster really needs is straight face.

"None of the stuff is hard to do; people have an incredible ability to believe fantastic things. The credibility really just comes from the suit and tie."

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The black, tarred teeth of a rabid child

Author of shock, Chuck Palahniuk, releases 10th novel 'Rant'

By Catherine Rigod/Assistant A&E Editor

In Chuck Palahniuk's latest novel, *Rant: An Oral Biography of Buster Casey*, the author opens the story with the question, "Do you ever wish you'd never been born?" Palahniuk then sets out to explore a twisted and not-so-distant future of curfews, computerized sensory enhancers, underground demolition derbies and a rabies epidemic.

For those who have never read Palahniuk's previous novels, such as the famed *Fight Club* or *Lullaby*, *Rant* is sure to maim the psyche with elements of graphic car crashes and chilling images of rattlesnakes and black widow spiders. For those who are already Palahniuk fans, this new tale aims to please.

The lead character, Buster "Rant" Casey, is a small town boy who goes to the big city to find his biological dad and a gal to fall in love with. At first, it sounds like the average saccharin coming-of-age story: Boy turns 18 years old, boy finds out his dad is dead, boy meets girl and boy ultimately finds a sense of belonging. However, in Palahniuk's world, nothing is ever that sweet.

The protagonist, Casey, is given the nickname Rant after a Halloween stunt where he put his fellow classmate's hands into bowls of actual cow eyes and not the supposed eye imitation of parent-condoned peeled grapes. When smells of decay issued from

the bowl and shock overcame the children, nothing was heard that night except the onomatopoeic "rant!" sound of students losing their lunch.

This is a typical day in the life of Rant Casey, who is nothing close to ordinary. Casey lives the life of a "daytimer" in a futuristic society where the government has regulated people to daytime or nighttime curfews to control overcrowding and to generally segregate the bad seeds of the world to the evening hours, as the daylight is reserved for the "productive" people of society.

Though Casey begins as a daytimer, his life is forever changed when he is bitten by a black widow spider and lives to tell about it. The poison in his veins turns off his sensory "boost" drive, a device that is embedded in the back of everyone's necks and plays and records in 4-D a sort of reality TV mixed with home movies at the flip of a switch. Since Rant can no longer enhance his mood mechanically, he develops an addiction to the venom of wild animals. This addiction and his unusual charm lead him to contract and then spread the deadly virus rabies into such a large population that he earns a new nickname: Patient Zero.

Palahniuk has a way of sucking the reader into his bizarre but

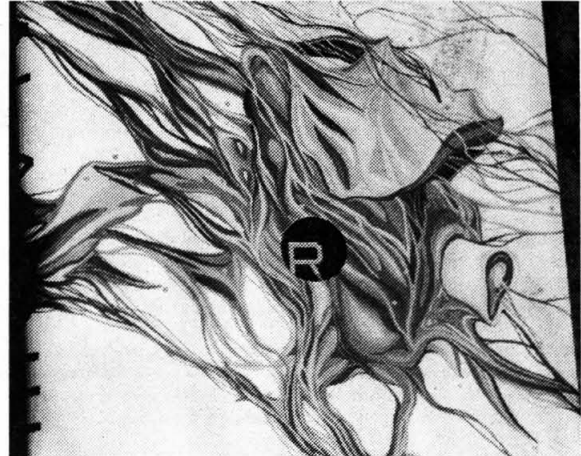
somehow almost plausible world where intimacy and gore know no boundaries. In *Rant*, the themes of control and voyeurism are widely explored through the blatant punishing of society for such acts as rubbernecking, which causes gaper's blocks and the idea of instant gratification as a drug.

Like in a sci-fi novel, Palahniuk has made every character larger and slightly weirder than in real life. He throws in a love story that is as bitter sweet as it is unnerving. He paints Casey's love interest, Echo Lawrence, as a cripple from a childhood car accident.

Rant is written in the form of an oral biography, like a screenplay, a person is reading direct quotes from each of the characters. Their comments intertwine and correct each other, creating a more confusing and sometimes more revealing version of the truth for the reader.

At times, *Rant* is almost compassionate and makes the reader feel bad for his protagonist. Palahniuk illustrates extreme emotion and balances *Rant* on that fine line everyone wishes they could walk on.

Palahniuk's writing style is so descriptive that if the reader isn't ready for overly detailed descriptions of guts and body parts, they might feel like they just got punched in the stomach. Once the queasiness has settled from reading about a severed limb for the



Rachael Strecher/The Chronicle

A graphic illustration of a cow's head covers Chuck Palahniuk's latest novel, *'Rant,'* to be released by Double Day on May 1.

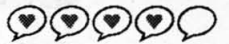
15th time, the reader can then take a step back to capture the actual plot and story going on behind the mask of sensationalized shock value.

Palahniuk has managed to make his latest novel entertaining, though somewhat sad. The pacing of the story is energizing, though, and makes the novel impossible to put down. When given the choice to read it again, the reader should jump on the chance. *Rant* ends up being an amusing and twisted ride, and to get the full effect, like

watching an old episode of the TV show "Twin Peaks," a second dissection is a must.

crigod@chroniclemail.com

'Rant: An Oral Biography of Buster Casey'



NICOLAS CAGE JULIANNE MOORE JESSICA BIEL



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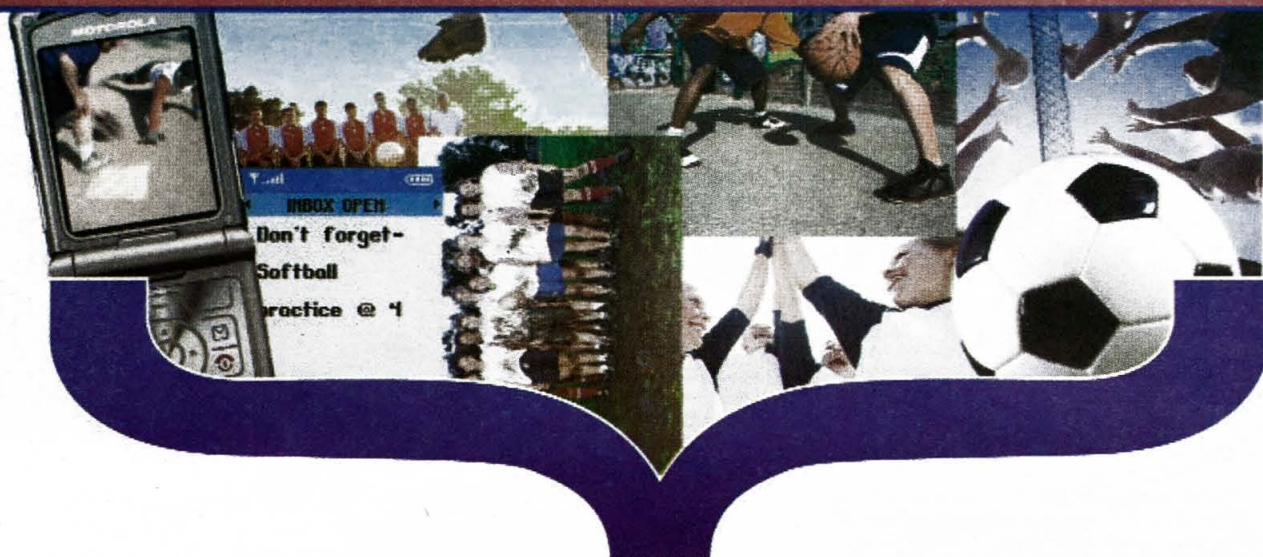
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Smile! You're on Kan-did camera

By Chrissy Mahlmeister/A&E Editor

Justin Kan loves being watched. Whether he's cozied up in his bed, on a nervewracking first date or even sitting on the john, Kan doesn't mind having hundreds of viewers tuning in to watch his every move.

This 23-year-old San Francisco native decided to launch Justin.tv, a website that allows anyone in the world to watch what he's up to as it's happening. For 24 hours a day and seven days a week, Kan has a camera attached to his hat. The footage is then broadcast over cell phone data networks back to his server and straight to viewers' desktops. Under the live footage player on the website, viewers can chat and discuss what Justin is doing and even participate in his life's endeavors (he is currently looking for some dates).

After Google crunched Kan's previous business endeavor of launching an online calendar called Kiko, Kan knew he needed to step it up a notch and think of something that was completely original.

"It's either going to live or die on its own," Kan said. "That's Justin.tv. I wanted to do something crazy."

Kan had thought of the idea

while driving around talking about business endeavors with friends. Kan thought he should try making a broadcast to see if anyone would watch.

Kan has been eating up the attention for the past 32 days, but Dave Escoffery, author of *How Real Is Reality TV? Essays on Representation and Truth*, thinks there is much more to reality TV than Kan has to offer.

"I think [Justin] will appeal to a small group but it won't have the same kind of mainstream effect because people really like stories," Escoffery said. "People that produce the [reality] shows work very hard to edit them into story arcs and character development."

Because of people like Kan and YouTube stars, the image of reality TV and the definition of fame are constantly being redefined because it is just normal people broadcasting themselves.

Escoffery feels people are so attracted to reality TV because it makes it seem easier for anyone to become famous. And the increase of technology has the ability to do just that.

"[People] want their 15 minutes of fame," said media psychologist Bernie Luskin. "It's power to the

people."

Modern technology has furthered the millennium generation, which is people born between 1980 and 2000, he said.

"[The millennium generation] is going to change the world. They have all these regressive thoughts and they think their generation is passing away," Luskin said.

Though Kan is showcasing himself on a daily basis, it's different from typical reality shows—he is the cameraman, not the man in front of the camera.

"[Justin] isn't the subject of the gaze," Escoffery said. "That changes the dynamic a little bit. It sort of gives him more control."

Justin.tv is also different from most reality shows because of the interactive nature of the website. Although there is voting on shows like "American Idol," Kan's setup could be foreshadowing reality TV's potential.

"The interactive nature is interesting. This is sort of on the cutting edge in that way," Escoffery said. "In the future, I think there will be more interaction where you can IM or text message and communicate and shape how the show goes almost in real time."

Though interaction can be posi-



Photo Courtesy of Scott Beale

Justin Kan films his entire life live from a camera headset.

tive for viewers' input, Justin.tv's chatroom has proved to have some less-than-mature followers and even some jokesters that had the cops searching his apartment.

"I get a lot of positive feedback, but there's always that guy in the chatroom that makes fun of people that come on screen," Kan said. "Also, people spoofed our number and called the cops, but we survived."

A huge part of Kan's success comes from the viewers who can't stop checking in on his daily activities.

"People are curious," Luskin said. "We're all trying to figure this out together. Maybe he's

done us all a favor by putting himself out there as an example. It's as much about the people that are asking the questions and why, as the person who is doing the act himself."

Kan feels that people just want to be connected to one another.

"This is kind of an easy way for people to be connected to four guys in San Francisco—even if it's just on the Internet," Kan said. "It's not a commitment. Maybe one day I'll be an Internet personality, but right now I'm just a guy on the Internet."

cmahlmeister@chroniclemail.com

Toys that bypass the by-products

Online sex toy stores specialize in vegan-friendly pleasure

By Brett Marlow/Staff Writer

It's time to leave the vegetables in the kitchen.

Camilla Taylor, a 26-year-old vegan artist living in Phoenix, calls making vegan sex toys her day job.

"[Saying I make vegan bondage gear] is a great party opener. I have a great lead up, and then I'm a real disappointment to everyone because there are no crazy sex parties," Taylor said.

Taylor, a seamstress, is the sole employee of VeganErotica.com, an online vegan sex store that specializes in selling high quality faux leather or "pleather" products and other vegan-friendly bondage gear for those who like to mix pleasure and pain into their sex lives.

"To most people, if you talk about a dildo harness it makes them giggle, and it makes them uncomfortable and they make a joke about it. I'm comfortable; I make [them] every day," Taylor said.

More and more vegan sex products are becoming available online and in sex shops.

The majority of the people who buy these products are vegans who abstain from using animal products and do not eat meat, dairy or any animal by-products. Some concerns are making sure there aren't any animal products in their food by reading ingredient labels and staying away from clothes made out of any animal derived materials. But when it comes to

one-on-one or self-on-self fun, the worry extends.

"The instant image of a vegan sex toy is a cucumber or something, but I think most people get it after the joke subsides," said Furry Girl in an e-mail interview. Furry Girl, who did not give her real name, is the owner of VegSexShop.com and three other vegan adult websites.

Just like some products aren't marked specifically vegan, sex products might not be either.

"When I first became vegan I didn't even think about things like toothpaste, different toiletries or even condoms," said Daniel Peyser, author of *Dispatches From Hell: A Vegan's Guide to Love, Sex, Relationships, and Other Suicidal Tendencies*. "You might not know most condoms aren't vegan, and in some cases, sex toys [aren't] as well."

Peyser said vegans don't lead completely different love and sex lives than non-vegans. Vegans who decide to use vegan sex toys use them as an "extension of their basic level of compassion." Even though vegans abstain from using and consuming animal products, it doesn't mean they can't be into using bondage gear, he said.

"It's the same reason I want [vegan] toothpaste to be similar to toothpaste. I need toothpaste," Peyser said. "For some people, they need bondage gear."

In Peyser's book he tackles some of the issues regarding vegans, relationships and sex. Peyser, a vegan, wrote the book after getting out of two long-term relationships with other vegans. He wasn't sure how to handle getting back into the dating scene.

"The vegan thing makes it like hell," he said. "There are so many questions, having to worry about restaurants and meeting people. In some instances, telling them you're vegan [is] like the death kiss."

For vegans though, at least for Taylor, it's not about the way it tastes or feels; it's about the way it's made.

"You can't really make bondage gear out of hemp and make it look sexy because the aesthetic is so well-engrained," Taylor said. "It is so hard to disengage in that."

Taylor's faux leather products are made from high quality pleather called Lorica, imported from Italy. It's smooth like leather on one side and has the feel of suede on the other.

Most people wouldn't realize it's not leather, she said. She said she has received a few e-mails from customers who thought they were duped into buying real leather. Her products don't smell like leather, but they're easy to clean, she said.

Her products are even dishwasher safe.



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

Thanks to websites like VeganErotica.com, people can now buy sex toys made out of vegan-friendly materials.

The availability of vegan sex products is increasing though. Furry Girl said she has seen a steady rise in her sales since opening her shop online in November 2004, which she said tells her she's "onto something."

Furry Girl said she thinks more quality sex shops are starting to label their products like lubes, lotions and oils as vegan. OMy is a vegan lube that is most widely available, she said, but if it was at a "run-of-the-mill" novelty shop online, the ingredients probably wouldn't be listed to see.

Early To Bed, 5323 N. Sheridan Rd., said they sell more Condomi condoms, vegan-friendly condoms, than any other vegan product.

Although products online are marked as vegan, Lee Jacobs, a sex educator, said if shopping at the store be sure to ask for the list of vegan products available.

"The thing is, the vast majority of sex toys are low-end junk sold for novelty use only. There's no way to even find out what's in them, since their 'jelly' material is a hodge-podge of plastics and other ingredients that are anyone's guess," Furry Girl said.

Her favorite vegan product is Tantus Silicone, which is made out of "high-quality medical-grade silicone."

colum@chroniclemail.com

she speaks volumes

POETRY SLAM +
PANEL DISCUSSION

**FEATURING: DIVA DICTION
BASSEY, AMALIA ORTIZ,
AND ISHLE PARK
APRIL 26, 2007**


She Speaks Volumes is the cornerstone of the "Arts, Advocacy, and Activism" collaboration between the **Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media**, **Columbia College Chicago** and **YWCA Metropolitan Chicago**, held in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. * Headliner, **Diva Diction**, is one of the most powerful female spoken word groups on the page and on stage. **Bassey** (Nigeria), **Amalia Ortiz** (Mexico), and **Ishle Park** (Korea) blend their unique native roots for dynamic performances that have been featured in the National Poetry Slam and HBO's Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry.



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Poetry Slam: April 26, 2007

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. / program 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
HotHouse, 31 E. Balbo

Special tribute will be paid to three outstanding women who demonstrate a commitment to anti-violence and social justice: **Mary Jo Barrett**, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Center for Contextual Change; **C.C. Carter**, artist and Founder, Pow-Wow Inc.; **Kathy Kempke**, Coordinator of Prevention Education, YWCA South Suburban Center. Tickets: \$15 general admission. To purchase tickets or for VIP seating prices, visit www.ywcachicago.org or call 312.762.2743.

Panel Discussion: April 26, 2007

Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Columbia College Chicago,
Conaway Center, 1104 S. Wabash, 1st Floor

"Where Do We Draw the Line? Creative Expression vs. the Perpetuation of a Rape Culture" with **Diva Diction** and the **Wonda Women Project: Ang13** and **Unmuvabo Vendetta**. Free. R.S.V.P. required at www.ywcachicago.org or call 312.762.2743. Bring your lunch, drinks provided.

This project is supported in part by a CityArts Program 1 grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; and Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP. For more information, call 312.344.8829 or visit www.colum.edu/institutewomengender.

create...
change

TV and the geek

Computer programmers trick out TiVo

By Beth Palmer/Assistant Campus News Editor

In January 2007, Joel Nordell hit the television-lovers' jackpot.

Nordell, a Chicago resident, found out about a website that provided free software to "build your own" digital TV recorder that works like a TiVo, but with extra goodies a corporate entity would never allow.

Working full-time as a computer programmer for ONEAC, a Libertyville power supplies manufacturer, didn't stop 30-year-old Nordell from using the website, mythtv.org, to equip his condo in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood with the new technology.

By February, a functioning Myth TV system was recording Nordell's favorite shows like NBC's "Lost."

"It's just fun to tinker with electronics and to build something that actually does stuff," he said. "You can add everything you need."

Myth TV isn't just a bunch of codes that stagnate deep in a hard drive. Once installed, Myth TV's ocean blue-colored menu appears physically on the TV screen and can be accessed on the Internet. However, in order to reach the finished product, a person must be skilled in Linux, a computer source code comparable to Windows or Mac OS X. The only

difference: Linux is free.

Nordell, who studied computer programming in college, is well-versed in Linux. He used the code posted on mythtv.org to set up the inner and outer system: a clunky computer modem that he hides in his bedroom closet, his iMac and his 50-inch flat screen HDTV.

"Myth TV goes out into the Internet and downloads all the television show listings and sets up an interface [that looks like a TV guide channel] so you can choose what you want to record," Nordell said.

Isaac Richards created Myth TV in 2002, but was out of the country and unreachable as of press time. Myth TV is non-profit; it was created as part of the programming philosophy that all software should be free and available to everyone, a belief that led to the now-mainstream Internet browser Mozilla Firefox.

Myth TV provides certain features TiVo can't compete with: It's free, minus the one-time cost of physical hardware programmers can pick up at Best Buy; its open source code allows programmers to submit new software features all users can download from the website; its technology has the ability to automatically detect and

skip commercials; and since it works digitally through the Internet, Myth TV is capable of importing RSS feeds and MP3s to be viewed or listened to, for example, Nordell's big screen.

Chris Peterson is one of about 30 volunteer programmers, Myth TV Core Developers, who help Richards read through and apply code changes suggested by Myth TV users.

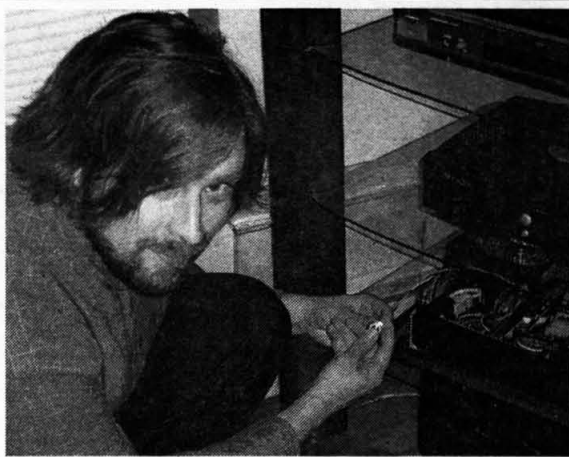
Like Nordell, Peterson has a day job—he works as a web developer in Seattle—but said he works on Myth TV for practice, for fun and also out of a little bit of altruism.

"I think software should be free to a certain extent," Peterson said. "That's the great thing about open source code—it's changing and evolving all the time."

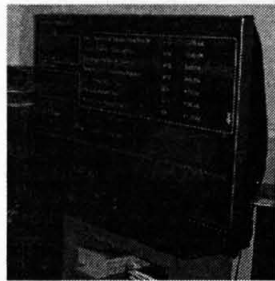
Linux knowledge is required to initially set up Myth TV, but its features are very user-friendly once finished, said Peterson, who began contributing to Myth TV four years ago.

"We say Myth TV has a 'high spousal acceptance factor,' meaning the non-geek member of the household can still easily maneuver its functions," Peterson said.

Mike Moline, Nordell's roommate, said he likes Myth TV but has to keep up with the frequent



Beth Palmer/The Chronicle



Top: Joel Nordell built a customized digital video recorder, similar to TiVo, using free software from mythtv.org.

Left: Nordell's 50-inch HDTV tuned in to the Myth TV menu guide. Right: Detailed look into the Myth TV front end box Nordell created.

changes to the system.

"I'm getting updated every couple of weeks—how to access Myth TV, how to access the Xbox and how to play a DVD," Moline said. "But it's not that difficult to use—when I have used it I liked it."

Nordell had not submitted a code change to Myth TV by press time, but he has an idea of what

he plans to suggest. He said a digital date should appear above the neon digital time that glows on the faceplate of the Myth TV box, which Nordell is currently customizing to blend in with his other tech-toys.

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Happy dogs: Songs for dogs a real treat

Continued from Front Page

"[She] does it telepathically and mentally, because that's how animals communicate," he said.

Some of the responses Ogden-Avrutik got from the dogs included "That song makes me happy," "That song makes me sad" or "That's okay but I've heard better," she said.

The group tested different genres of music on the animals, but samba and uptempo styles worked the best.

"We learned dogs associate faster tempos with fun," Haynes said. "Dogs don't like sad stuff, so we had to make all the songs very happy."

Some of the styles and sounds dogs didn't like include classical music as well as the sounds of drum cymbals, side sticks and rim shots, because they sound like gunshots or thunder to dogs, Haynes said.

Pets don't always appreciate their guardian's favorite CDs.

"Dogs hate Johnny Cash, and they're not happy with the Rolling Stones," Ogden-Avrutik said.

The lyrical content was equally important to them when compiling the music. Ogden-Avrutik and Haynes said dogs wanted to hear about food, dog toys, the outdoors, dog beds and love and praise from their guardians.

One of the most popular songs, "Squeaky Deaky," makes a lot of dogs want to dance, Haynes said.

"About 75 to 80 percent of dogs will react immediately," he said. "They'll get their squeaky toys; they'll all start howling, dancing

around and jumping up. It's very, very awesome."

Another song, "I'll Be Back," was made because it is what Ogden-Avrutik said is the most important thing an owner should tell his or her dog.

She said so many dog owners leave their pets unattended every day for periods of time, and dogs want some reassurance they aren't forgotten about.

"Dogs want to hear 'I'll be back,'" she said.

That song only tested well with dogs that lived in homes. When it was played for dogs in shelters, the response wasn't as uplifting because those dogs didn't have anyone that was coming back to them.

Although Haynes and Ogden-Avrutik said these songs really do help and come from the animals "feedback," there is still some level of skepticism.

Even Haynes had to get over his own doubts at first.

"About 98 percent of what the communicators say is like, 'Yeah, yeah,' but there's always that 2 to 5 percent that absolutely turns your head around," he said. "Like how did she know that? The only way they could have known that is through the animal."

Ogden-Avrutik said she had the talent to communicate with dogs ever since she was a child, but she forgot about it until a series of incidents occurred about a decade ago, with an interaction with her cat.

She said that her cat was having a problem and told her something

one morning, so she decided to call up another animal communicator to talk with her pet. He told her that the cat said the same thing to him, which she would not reveal, because "my cat was very secretive and wouldn't have wanted me to disclose that," she said.

Ogden-Avrutik believes almost anyone can learn to communicate with their pets as long as they trust themselves and believe in it. She teaches classes and said everyone from truck drivers to babysitters and airline pilots have shown interest in learning those skills.

Others still aren't sure of these powers or methods for their use in training a dog's behavior.

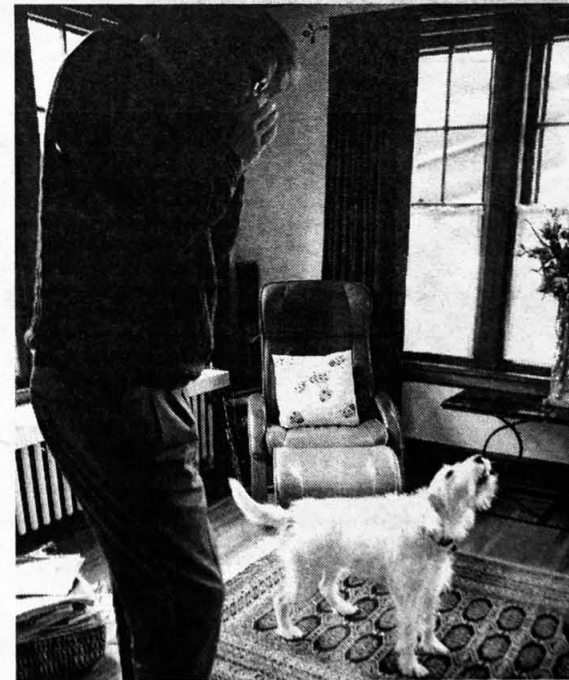
Jeff Millman, who owns a dog training and behavior counseling service, Chicago Paws, said he wouldn't recommend the CD until very specific research proved its effectiveness.

"I believe certain people are more in tune to reacting to how dogs react to things, but more than that and the jury is still out," Millman said. "It's one of those topics, like religion and other things. It really depends on a lot of different factors."

While he hasn't experienced or witnessed any kind of communication with dogs himself, he said he has talked to people who swear by it.

Millman doesn't necessarily think music is always the best answer for things like their pets' behavior and obedience issues. He doesn't use it when training the dogs, but some of his clients try to use music to help them in their home.

"People say when they turn the radio on when they leave, it helps prevent separation anxiety," he said. "In reality, you can actually cause anxiety [that way], because



Rachael Strecher/The Chronicle

Victor Strecher plays the harmonica for his dog, Fred, who "absolutely loves" it and howls along with the tunes.

a dog can get anxious every time the radio then comes on."

Despite the skepticism, Haynes said that since the CD release, they have received thousands of praising letters and e-mails from people all across the country. After an interview on National Public Radio's "Living On Earth" program, he said they became the most e-mailed interview on NPR because so many dogs reacted to the music played over the radio during it.

Haynes heard back from a veterinarian who played the CD for a

puppy he thought was going to have to be euthanized. The veterinarian told Haynes the CD had an "immediate calming effect on the puppy and contributed to the pup's successful recovery."

Samples of the songs are available on the Laurel Canyon Animal Company website at petcds.com. The CD can be purchased there and on Amazon. For more information about Dr. Kim Ogden-Avrutik, visit her website at kimogden.com.

kkalter@chroniclemail.com

Gender Hip-Hop Community Dialogue

Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes

DOCUMENTARY FILM SCREENING AND DISCUSSION
WITH DIRECTOR BYRON HURT

April 27, 2007

6:00 p.m. reception, 7:00 p.m. screening
Doc Films, Ida Noyes Hall, Max Palevsky Theater,
1212 East 59th Street
\$5.00 admission

Discussion with Director **Byron Hurt**, moderated by
Cathy Cohen (Professor of Political Science, University
of Chicago), with **Natalie Hopkinson** and **Natalie Y. Moore**
(*Deconstructing Tyrone: A New Look at Black Masculinity
in the Hip-Hop Generation*) and **Stephanie Shonekan**
(Professor of Humanities and Cultural Studies; Director,
Black World Studies Program, Columbia College Chicago).



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Does Hip-Hop Hate Women?

PANEL AND COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

April 28, 2007

1:00 – 3:00 p.m. reception to follow
International House Assembly Hall, 1414 East 59th Street
Free and open to the public

Moderated by **Bakari Kitwana** (*Why White Kids Love Hip-Hop*),
with **Byron Hurt** (*Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats & Rhymes*), **Joan
Morgan** (*When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: My Life
as a Hip-Hop Feminist*), **Mark Anthony Neal** (*New Black Man:
Rethinking Black Masculinity*), and **Tracy Sharpley-Whiting**
(*Pimp's Up, Ho's Down: Hip-Hop's Hold on Young Black Women*).

Co-presented by the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture
at the University of Chicago, Institute for the Study of Women and
Gender in the Arts and Media, Columbia College Chicago, International
House Global Voices Performing Arts Series, and Doc Films at the
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Persons with disabilities may request assistance in advance by contacting
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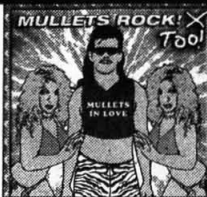
Reviews

MUSIC



Nine Inch Nails
Year Zero

Well, Trent Reznor probably should've focused a little bit more on composing some better melodies and using a little more guitar on this one instead of spending so much time on the album's crazy sci-fi marketing campaign. Though it's not as good as his previous efforts, it still sounds like the NIN that we've all grown to love, and I'll take it. —J. Gallart



Various Artists
Mulletts Rock! Too!

Music compilation album *Mulletts Rock! Too!* recreates the awkward 80s junior high dance experience all over again. In between sips of orange drink, imagine dancing at arms' length to Boston's "More Than a Feeling," Nazareth's "Love Hurts" and Bonnie Taylor's "Total Eclipse of the Heart." Let these schlock rock songs bring back those self-conscious early teen years. —E. Kasang



Modest Mouse
We Were Dead Before the Ship Even Sank

It's a lot better than the band's last album, *Good News For People Who Love Bad News*. This new album has that certain intellectual fury to it that made Modest Mouse's music so interesting when they first started. I could've used a little more primitive recording like they've utilized in years past, but the song writing doesn't let down. —J. Ewert

PRINT



Chicago Sun-Times

Yes, the Sun-Times' redesign has made some pages exaggeratedly ad-heavy. But this allows for beautiful two-page, ad-free, open spreads like Lori Rackl's Travel and Health sections. The Sun-Times has also cut story length allowing for more to be covered. Brevity shouldn't be associated with "dumbing down" writing. —B. Palmer



Esquire Magazine
May 2007 Issue

This issue is a must for anyone that hopes to understand their body more. Dr. Mehmet Oz and doctor friends let readers know plenty of useful facts like how hunger is more about the brain than the stomach. Everything else is okay, but this portion makes it worth spending a pretty penny. —T. Breyne



My America
By Christopher Morris

Everytime I look at this wonderful collection of photographs from George W's campaign trail, I realize how deeply talented and methodical Christopher Morris is. His use of color and sense of composition are incredible. All photo students should pick this book up. —M. Rubio

FILM & TV



Aqua Teen Hunger Force
Dir. by Matt Maiellaro & Dave Willis

If any two words were to describe this 90-minute version of an 11-minute cartoon, they would be "celluloid Dadaism." They aren't lying when they let you know in the first 10 minutes that they already have your money and there's no way you're getting it back. Maybe this would have been worth renting. —S. Baltrukonis



Bobby
Dir. by Emilio Estevez

Directed by Emilio Estevez, this fictionalized glimpse into the night Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated is not only good, but it dives deep into the core of the human spirit. Well maybe not quite that deep, but the ensemble cast, which includes Anthony Hopkins, William H. Macy, Demi Moore and Shia LaBeauf, delivers the message: violence begets violence. —C. Jakubowski



Children of Men released on DVD 2006
Dir. By Alfonso Cuarón

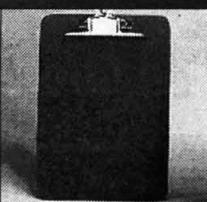
Set in 2027, the world is in chaos due to a phenomenon where women are no longer able to bear children. A London bureaucrat, Theo Faron (Clive Owen), joins forces with a band of activists who harbor a secret: a pregnant girl. The film is action-packed but sad. Watch out for the ending. It's too bittersweet for its setting. —C. Rigod

MISC.



Sacagawea \$1 coins

After a cranky cashier gave me my change from a donut purchase the other day, my frown turned upside-down as I saw Sacagawea laying in my hand. This \$1 coin is shiny, cute and worth a curious gander; forget about Benjamin, it's all about the Sacagawea! —T. Breyne



Clipboards

When I don't want to be at my desk (which is the majority of the day) I can bust out my handy dandy clipboard and do my work in the exotic location of my choice. This usually ends up being the windowsill or the hallway, but at least it's an escape from the daily grind. —A. Riggio



Prank phone calls from co-workers

Nothing is better than getting a phone call from a frantic co-worker who slept through his alarm in a drunken haze from the wild Thursday night he had at bars and strip clubs. But it gets even better when I come into work to find him already sitting at his desk laughing to himself because he made me panic. —H. Graham

Premium Blend

Taking a closer look at Chicago's local bands

When poppy indie rock riffs team up with sincere vocals and occasional tinkering on the keyboard, it produces Yourself and The Air—a four, sometimes five, piece band from areas around Chicago. Though the band itself is relatively new, members Nicholas Sinclair-David, guitar; Drew Rasmussen, drums; Erick Bryan Crosby, vocals and guitar; James Sinclair-David, bass; and sometimes Jeff Pappendorf, keyboard, have known each other for years.

After their release of *Hola mi Cielito!* in 2006, Yourself and The Air show no signs of slowing down. Nicholas Sinclair-David took some time to speak with The Chronicle about what keeps Yourself and The Air grounded.

The Chronicle: How would you describe your sound?

Nicholas Sinclair-David: A natural indie rock. It's more of an organic sound. Of course you don't want to describe your music as somebody else's music.

What inspires you as a musician?

Just having fun and live performances and feeling the energy of the music. Less of a rehearsed sound and more of a live

sound make up our songs. We don't sit in a studio and make them up—we kind of just rock out at a practice and then just feel everything out.

What's a live show like for you?

It's energy. It depends. We like being on stages set a little bit lower so you can see everyone's faces and kind of feed off of them, especially if they're digging it. What we love to see is people come out and dig what we're doing. It makes us feel it a lot more. We just try to stay natural and move around.

How did you guys find each other?

We've always been interested in music since we were young. A few of us just started playing music together for fun. First it was me and Drew, the drummer, playing, then him and Eric got together and played for a couple of months just in a basement, messing around. I came over one day and we were playing a little bit, and it was just kind of brought up that we wanted to start a band. We've all been intertwined friends for awhile—since high school.

What do you like to do when you're not playing music?

Yourself and The Air



Courtesy of Jason Little

We like to party. [laughs] I mean, we all have jobs. We're pretty busy. Drew went to school for graphic design, so when we're not actually playing music a lot of our time is spent on working toward the band and trying to gain momentum. We've only been a band for less than a year, so we're not very familiar to all of the processes. As we go along we realize how much work, other than music, it actually is. Especially when you

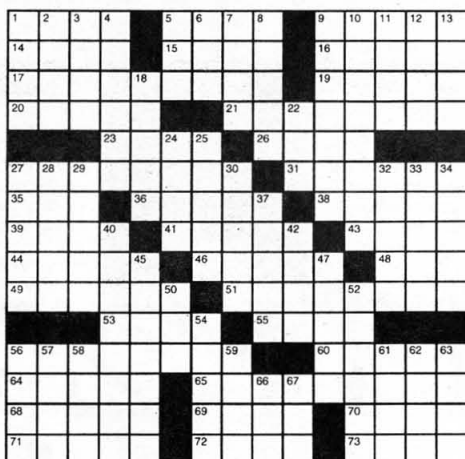
don't have someone helping you or showing you the way. It's pretty time-consuming.

To catch Yourself and The Air live, check them out at The Brauerhaus, 57 N. Hillside Ave., May 11 at 8 p.m. for \$5. For more information, visit www.myspace.com/yourselfandtheair.

—C. Mahlmeister

Crossword

- ACROSS
1 Wild party
5 Shoshones
9 Heronlike wading bird
14 Mature
15 Shaker contents
16 Slalom incline
17 Resourceful
19 Uses as a reference
20 Jig or reel
21 Decorates with a raised design
23 and crafts
26 lik
27 Distinct parts
31 Knights' chargers
35 Santa winds
36 Seat at a bar
38 Type of drum
39 "Blue Horses" artist
41 Sneaker bottoms
43 Put away cargo
44 Central Florida city
46 Turner and Brown
48 "All About ____"
49 Be present at
51 Shaded
53 Sara and Farrow
55 Jib, e.g.
56 Estimated value for taxes
60 Positive thinking proponent
64 Plainsong
65 Spiral
68 Kemo Sabe's friend
69 "Star Trek: TNG" character
70 Fork point
71 Painter Jan
72 Dune material
73 Give guff to



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4/23/07

Solutions

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E	D	O	T	S		L	T	V	S		E	D	I
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- 7 Glamour rival
8 Parts of pipes
9 Accompanies
10 Shines
11 Goes bad
12 Fencing sword
13 Actress Harper
18 Copley and Garr
22 Derek and Diddle
24 Day-care charges
25 Nose
27 Pago Pago's country
28 Make into law
29 Gem weight
30 Firm
32 Consumed
33 Took the wheel
34 Stitched up
37 Horne and Olin
40 San ____ CA
42 Poet Teasdale
45 "Friends" co-star
47 Omits

- 50 " ____ Kapital"
52 Votes in
54 Offshoot groups
56 Play divisions
57 Injection
58 Rational
59 Mrs. Copperfield
61 Opera song
62 Eye part
63 Rams' mates
66 Gadeteer
67 Goat's offspring

TO THE NINES



We spotted Denise Adan, a senior traditional animation major, among a group of students outside the Wabash Company Building, 623 S. Wabash Ave. She stood out in the crowd, dressed in a baby blue lab coat and goggles; we almost thought she was the teacher.

"It keeps my clothing safe," she said as she and the rest of her class were working on a project for their chemistry photography class.

Even though she complained of the coat being a little too big for her, she wore it well with her matching attire. Under the coat she wore a pink linen skirt from a thrift store, a black t-shirt with a cartoon sketch that her friend gave her and some black Asian-style flats from Chinatown.

Perhaps the rest of the class can take a lesson from her and choose their outfit accordingly to help properly pull off the lab look and protect their precious threads at the same time.

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Kristin Kalter/The Chronicle

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★ Horoscopes ★



Aquarius (Jan. 21—Feb. 19):
In spite of what George Clinton of Parliament will tell you, most funk is better left unfelt.



Pisces (Feb. 20—March 20):
Due to a bizarre twist of fate, you will unintentionally become involved in a recreation of the "is it safe?" scene from *Marathon Man*.



Aries (March 21—April 20):
If you're one of those people who is always late for everything, you'd better hope the CTA stays crappy...or think of better excuses for your tardiness.



Taurus (April 21—May 21): You will be rescued by the Calvary Cavalry in your darkest hour.



Gemini (May 22—June 21): Pluto the reject planet joins the stars in apologizing for your dumb luck: Your roommate from hell will reappear this summer as your coworker, sweating in the same tiny concession stand at the park.



Cancer (June 22—July 23): Ever seen the movie *Toys*? Stay away from the Spectacle Fortuna puppets at Manifest. You'll thank us later.



Leo (July 24—Aug. 23): April showers bring May flowers. For you? April cohorts bring genital warts.



Virgo (Aug. 24—Sept. 23): Check your cell phone on Friday at approximately 4:17 a.m. You will get a text message from God that says, "Don't look under the bed."



Libra (Sept. 24—Oct. 23): If you don't go to a Cubs game this week, they will never win another game, and Cubs fans will piss on your pillow while you're at work.



Scorpio (Oct. 24—Nov. 22): Don't feel bad for crying like a little girl when you saw *Grindhouse*. You probably should be afraid of zombies, considering what your significant other looks like.



Sagittarius (Nov. 23—Dec. 21): While seeking a job with A.P., you will learn the true meaning of the term "tough interview" when you are strapped into a G-force simulator for the length of the reporting test.



Capricorn (Dec. 22—Jan. 20): After four long years in med. school you'll learn that it doesn't take a degree to get into organ thievery.



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THE FISCHETTI STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Election: Nine new aldermen bring independence to City Council

Continued from Back Page

The nine new members coming into Chicago's City Council represent the biggest turnover in more than a decade.

Numerous political reporters for the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun-Times as well as expert professors such as Dick Simpson agree that this development could drastically change Mayor Daley's influence on the city.

Daley's influence, or lack thereof, will be more apparent in the 2nd and 42nd Wards than the rest of Chicago because much of the development in those areas has been facilitated by the aldermen.

With a slew of new developments, including the Spire Building north of Grant Park in the 42nd Ward and several new condos going up in the South Loop's 2nd Ward, look for some interesting showdowns with the mayor. Calls for an "independent city council" were a major rallying cry this year among challengers and the results show that change is on the way for the "rubber stamp" city council.

Students have concerns

It may be true that not many students vote nor are politically



Andrew A. Nelles/The Chronicle

Bob Fioretti shakes the hands of supporters while entering his election night party on Tues. April 17 at Buddy Guy's Legends, 754 S. Wabash Ave.

motivated or aware, but neither is the general population for that matter. Not even a third of Chicago's voting populace turned out to vote, let alone the number of those who are eligible but not registered.

The public seems to be growing more disinterested in politics, and this must be addressed by the candidates in future elections. This can be done by dramatically increasing voter registration drives, and doing so more than just a few weeks before the election.

Despite a passivity to politics

and this election, several issues revealed themselves as pertinent to the student body. Many students who were interviewed for election stories voiced legitimate concerns about their community. For example, most were unaware of who their alderman was to begin with, others questioned the alderman's availability and brought transportation issues such as parking on campus.

It is up to the student body to hold Fioretti to his statements and promises he made about better incorporating the college constituency in his plans for the

community. He called on the students for help with the public education system by volunteering for mentoring programs and after-school activities. If students don't stand up for their concerns and call out officials when appropriate, no one will.

At the very least, the 2007 election showed the city that if students want to be involved, there is a place for them.

Money Matters

Much has been said in the newspapers and post-election

bantering about the impact of labor-union-contributed money. Labor unions did have a tremendous impact on the election, but it was no bigger than the impact businesses have.

In the past, when labor unions didn't play such a high profile role in elections, there was no talk from political experts about the outrageous amounts of money being contributed by the business community.

This would suppose that only the bosses of businesses should have a say in local politics, not the workers themselves.

Yes, unions flooded candidates with gobs of money, but when is raising gobs of money new to politics?

No matter who is contributing to a candidate's campaign, be it a business or labor union, the candidate with more money is still most likely to win.

Estimates regarding the amount of money unions contributed hover around \$2 million, but the total amount of money pumped into the election is more like \$12 million, and much of that was contributed by businesses.

If those who are complaining about the influence of the union's money want campaign finance reform to level the playing field, then lessen the impact of money on elections entirely. That way, it would allow people who aren't filthy rich to run for public office.

jewert@chroniclemail.com

Once in a lifetime



Rogan Birnie/The Chronicle

Mayor Richard M. Daley celebrates Chicago's winning U.S. bid to host the the 2016 summer Olympics during a rally in Daley Plaza, 100 N. Dearborn St., on April 16. A decision on what global city will host the games is not expected to come for at least two years.

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Recovery: Experts argue survey results are inaccurate

Continued from Back Page

abusing some form of drugs or alcohol waiting up to a month for rehabilitative treatment, Radd only had to wait a week to be admitted and get help.

For the first time in Illinois, the Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association

(IADDA) tracked how many people were currently awaiting some form of substance abuse care and the average wait times they experienced. According to the survey, an average of 6,467 people statewide are experiencing wait times of 32 days while trying to receive some sort of treatment—something officials say won't change until they can receive more funding and staff.

"When somebody's ready for treatment today, they may not be ready tomorrow. You need to get them in the day they say, 'I need help,'" said Sarah Moscato, chief executive officer of IADDA.

Moscato, along with other experts in the substance abuse treatment field, worry that without proper funding to provide more staff and space to help drug and alcohol abusers, the waiting list will continue to grow and more people will go without the treatment they need.

Anthony Cole, vice president of government relations at Haymarket Center, a substance and alcohol treatment center that

was included in the survey, said at the time it was taken, 150 people were waiting just to be seen for the first time by someone in the facility. Forty people were also waiting to be admitted for inpatient care.

Haymarket also helps patients who are HIV positive, pregnant or are parents.

The survey also said 4,429 people are waiting an average of 32 days for a first treatment appointment, 1,670 have been assessed but are waiting an average of 15 days to begin treatment and 372 are waiting to be moved into some form of inpatient care.

Like the other 150 state-funded programs in Illinois (all but 22 were included in the survey), Haymarket provides free services for those seeking help. However, an average wait time at the center for an initial appointment is three weeks—a frustrating and devastating process for those being asked to wait.

"People drop out of the process of getting help when they are told they have to wait 2 to 3 weeks just to get an appointment," Cole said. "In that time frame, a lot of people continue to use and don't show for their appointment and they lose hope and won't follow up at that point."

Radd also agreed that although he only had to wait a week to be admitted, once he discovered his insurance wouldn't cover an immediate admittance to a recovery program, a month wait time could be damaging to a person trying to get into some sort of treatment program.

"If I would have had to wait a month or so, I doubt I would have gone through with it if I stayed clean," he said.

The domino effect

However, not everyone agrees with the results nor the problems connected to drug and alcohol abuse.

Tom Green, a spokesman from the Department of Human Services, which is responsible for the funding of the different clinics, said the statistics provided by IADDA aren't entirely true.

Patients considered high priority by the state are admitted immediately. Those who admit to being HIV positive, pregnant, recently having a child, injecting drugs, receiving welfare or just released from a correctional facility do not have to wait, according to Green.

But Cole argued that even though patients who are high priority are immediately admitted, the risk still lies that abusers may not know they have HIV or are pregnant. Without being properly diagnosed, the risk of abusers infecting others, actually contracting HIV or hurting their unborn child greatly increases.

And even at facilities like Sheridan Prison, there is a wait time. Located in Northern Illinois, it is seen as the national model of drug treatment among prisoners, according to Derek Schnapp, a spokesman for the Illinois Department of Corrections.

"Is there a waiting list? Yes, but we would expect that anywhere we go for something like that," Schnapp said.

Despite the wait time, Schnapp said prison drug and substance abuse officials don't want to rush the process of getting prisoners help. With 45,000 inmates statewide, they don't want to overload the system and risk not pro-

viding adequate care.

In 2005, 26.3 percent of the 1.6 million adults age 18 and older on parole or released from prison were illicit drug users, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Experts agree there is a major connection between people abusing drugs and committing crimes.

"You are putting the entire process on hold and you are continuing to put them at risk for a host of health issues [and] criminal justice issues," Moscato said.

Requesting new funds

As the wait continues for those seeking treatment, IADDA is seeking an additional \$32.8 million in state funds in order to help those on the waiting list, create more prevention services and be able to staff more employees necessary to help drug and alcohol abusers—a small number compared to the \$1.1 billion spent on the state's

prison system. Moscato said the prison population could be seriously reduced with more funding for prevention services because of how closely tied drug abuse is with people committing crimes.

"It's absurd that we recognize that there is a major, major problem in American society of drug and alcohol addiction and yet it's put way down in the priority level," Moscato said.

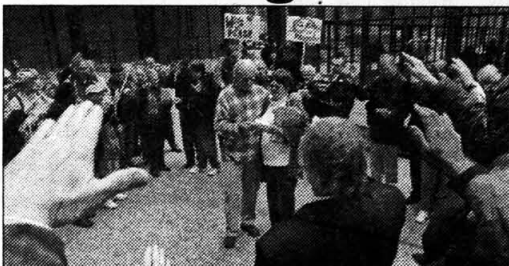
Green argued the state already supplies \$260 million to drug and alcohol abuse programs, and facilities need to budget their funds better.

"We think treatment providers need to manage the funding that they have in order to ensure that people are getting access to the treatment," he said.

However, he added the state was recently given a grant to look into the wait times of treatment facilities and "study the situation and improve the rates."

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Protest rages on



Andrew A. Nelles/The Chronicle

Friends, family and supporters of Don Coleman from the group School of the America's Watch join in prayer prior to marching to the Metropolitan Correctional Center on April 17, where Coleman began his 60-day sentence.

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Laughing out loud

University of Chicago students get comedy lessons

By Quinn Milton
Staff Writer

Over the past few years, with the creation and success of programs such as "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report," political satire has become a widely discussed topic.

A mass of students formed a line in Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th St., at the University of Chicago April 17 to attend a panel discussion called "LOL 101: Comedy as Commentary." The discussion was meant to give students insight into the impact political satire has on society.

The speakers included Jordan Carlos, a stand-up comedian and "Steven Colbert's black friend" on "The Colbert Report"; Lizz Winstead, co-creator of "The Daily Show"; Mike Reiss, four-time Emmy award-winning producer of "The Simpsons" and co-creator of "The Critic"; and Andy Borowitz, award-winning political satirist and author, as well as creator of "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air."

The event was moderated by University of Chicago professor of philosophy Ted Cohen, who immediately opened up the discussion, encouraging the audience to ask questions relating to comedy and politics.

Carlos, who couldn't be present at the discussion, communicated via satellite on a big screen next to the other panelists, who fielded questions ranging from censorship in satirical comedy to why "Saturday Night Live" isn't funny anymore.

"The Fox network only has one censor, and trying to censor Fox with one person is like trying to clean a sewer with one wet nap," Reiss said. "So doing 'The Simpsons,' we just stay within the lines of good taste set by 'Family Guy.'"

A student in the audience asked what events are off-limits in comedy and how long comedians have to wait before they can make a joke about them.

Winstead said comedians do not need time before joking about an event in the news; it's simply about what they are trying to say about the event. Borowitz agreed, but said it's important to understand how to go about making a joke in an appropriate way.

"I think almost nothing is off-limits; to me it's a question of what's a worthy target," Borowitz said. "I think some people mistake satire for sick jokes. To me, a sick joke is when you're making fun of innocent victims, and I don't think there's anything funny about that."

The panel also discussed how politicians have recently joined the world of comedy, with more and more politicians appearing on "The Daily Show" and "The Colbert Report," trying to keep up

with their comedian hosts. Borowitz said politicians should not be expected to be funny; they should be focusing on their job.

"Politicians are told they have to be funny because that's hip," Borowitz said. "It's an unfair standard we're holding them to."

Although, Reiss pointed out "The Simpsons" has yet to have a past or present president appear on the show; all have refused.

"It's easy to be sarcastic now; we live in a very snarky society," Borowitz said. "Barack Obama is pretty earnest and straightforward, and I think people really respond to it."

Generally, the panelists said they don't believe they are changing the world with what they do.

Borowitz said people have suggested he run for office, but as a comedian, he's just "trying to entertain."

"I'm part of the problem," he said.

Reiss said he wishes people responded more to political satire, but doesn't think what he does changes the way people think.

"I don't think we change anything, I don't think we affect anything," Reiss said. "It's nice to be able to vent, and to make people laugh."

Borowitz agreed, saying that there are many other things he could do to change the world besides comedy.

"If I really wanted to change the world I wouldn't be in comedy. I'd be working for Halliburton,"



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

From left, Andy Borowitz, Lizz Winstead and Mike Reiss chat with each other in Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E. 59th St., at the University of Chicago before speaking at the panel discussion, "LOL 101: Comedy as Commentary."

Borowitz said.

Near the end of the discussion, a small argument erupted between Winstead and Carlos about the lack of black writers in comedy. Carlos said if people want more daring material, there need to be more black writers.

In response, Winstead argued that when hiring writers for "The Daily Show," she doesn't know the race of those applying. Race doesn't matter, she said.

As the two exchanged heated words, mostly from Carlos, the moderator tried to wrap up the discussion. When Carlos carried on after the moderator insisted he stop, the moderator suggested they turn off Carlos' microphone. Reiss then addressed the audience.

"We have a saying in show busi-

ness: Always leave them uncomfortable and tense," Reiss said.

The crowd laughed and applauded the panelists before filing outside where Borowitz was signing copies of his book, *The Republican Playbook*, and where Reiss answered questions about "The Simpsons."

After, Sarah Pickman, a University of Chicago student, snapped a picture with Borowitz. She said she didn't know what to expect going into the discussion but liked how it turned out.

"I thought it would be more structured, but I like that it was more of an Q and A," Pickman said. "They chose a really great group of people."

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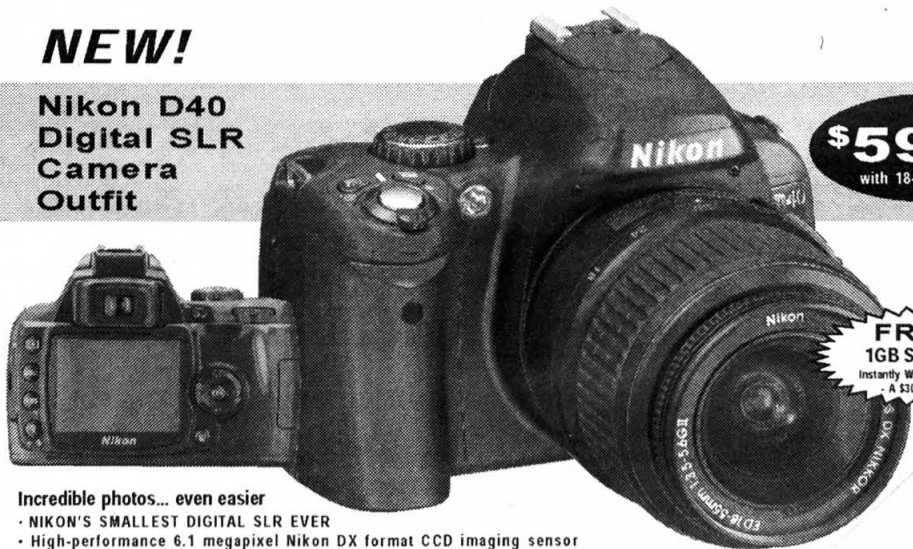
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Reform: Immigration bill includes guest- worker program

Continued from Back Page

together by U.S. Reps. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.) and Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), is generating an increasing amount of attention from lawmakers, special interest groups, critics and immigrants.

Dubbed the STRIVE Act of 2007, or Security Through Regularized Immigration and a Vibrant Economy, it promises to fix what Gutierrez and Flake are calling "a badly broken immigration system." The bill was introduced last March, and would provide undocumented workers—like Jose and Robert—a legal way to work and, eventually, earn U.S. citizenship.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

The STRIVE Act, in more than 700 pages, aims to modernize America's archaic immigration system. In a nutshell, the bill would (create a legal way for foreign laborers to enter the United States and work) increase border security, expand and increase the criminal penalties for those caught entering the United States illegally, establish a new employment verification system and change the family-based immigration system, clearing up many months of backlog.

Perhaps the area of the bill generating the most attention, and criticism, is its mandate to create the H-2C visa. This guest worker program would establish a legal way for immigrants to enter the country and work for up to six years, as well as provide the visa-holders with the means to apply for permanent U.S. citizenship. Current immigrants living in the United States illegally could also qualify for the visa, but would have to exit the country to apply.

Stipulations for the H-2C visa do exist. Employers must first attempt to hire a qualified U.S. citizen before a visa-holder. In addition, employers can't hire an immigrant worker if the business is located in an area where the unemployment rate is higher than 9 percent, and if the general populace's educational level in that area is at or below a high school diploma.

Further stipulated in the bill is

an annual cap of 400,000 guest-workers, and they have to exit the country if unemployed for more than 60 days. Applicants also pay a \$500 application fee and undergo complete background checks and a medical exam.

Many special interest groups, including the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), a Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization, are applauding the bill.

"The United States is currently in dire need of new immigration laws," said Flavia Jimenez, an Immigration Policy Analyst for NCLR. "We have an outdated, unreasonable immigration system that's needed reform for many years, and the types of reforms that are included in the STRIVE Act are a very good starting point."

Jimenez said the bill addresses many of the NCLR's concerns. Chief among them is the earned citizenship of undocumented people living in the United States. She further noted that should the bill pass, undocumented workers, who are often subjected to wage theft and abuse from employers, would be in a better position to organize themselves to see a shift in wages and benefits.

Douglas Rivlin, director of Communications for the National Immigration Forum, an immigration and refugee advocacy group, also said his organization also supports the STRIVE Act. He said STRIVE would work because it would combine enhanced border security with moving forward an immigration system that would meet the needs of the American economy.

The current immigration system is "completely broken," Rivlin said.

"We have nearly 500,000 undocumented immigrants coming to this country and settling each year, yet only 5,000 visas are issued each year for permanent immigration for low skill work," Rivlin said. "There's a big mismatch."

Rivlin pointed toward the United States possessing a labor market that is partnering up Latin America at an exponential rate. As such, using the same immigration standards for Mongolia as the U.S. does we do for Mexico doesn't make sense, he said.

The Gutierrez-Flake bill is a far cry from last year's proposed amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act. Introduced in early 2006 by U.S. Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. (R-Wis.), the amendment would have made it a felony to be in the United States illegally. Controversial and widely disliked, millions marched in protest in cities all around the



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

Men looking for work gather around a contractor. In this area, day laborers generally make between \$10 and \$12 an hour.

nation, denouncing the amendment. In Chicago, an estimated crowd of 100,000 marched.

Criticism of STRIVE

Many critics of the STRIVE Act argue that the government, both at local and federal levels, should be focusing on enforcing current immigration laws and punishing employers for hiring undocumented citizens, rather than creating a guest-worker program. Critics further note that undocumented citizens, many of whom come here to work, are frequently forced to live in poverty.

"Forty-plus years after Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty

"They need to march in the streets, like we did here, and they need to change their laws. And that might include spilling blood, just like our forefathers did, but freedom is not free."

—Rosanna Pulido, state director of the Illinois Minuteman Civil Defense

in this country, Jeff Flake and Luis Gutierrez have defected to the other side," said Ira Mehlman, spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization based in Washington D.C. "They're going to work on behalf of poverty."

Mehlman said FAIR is "absolutely opposed" to the STRIVE Act because it's "amnesty for millions of people who broke the law." He said immigrants participating in the guest worker program are "guaranteed" to live in poverty. He further noted that a flaw in the 400,000-immigrant-a-year cap in the H-2C visa exists because it doesn't account for the dependents of those immigrating to the United States.

"We [would be] taking easily over 1 million people [each year] specifically to live in poverty," Mehlman said. "Illegal immigrants are sane, rational people. They come here because they believe there is something waiting for them. But if you make it clear that you're not going to get a job, get access to most services and benefits, then many will make the decision not to come."

Mehlman said the real focus shouldn't be STRIVE-type reform. Instead, it should be work-site enforcement, the elimination of non-essential benefits for undocumented people and fining

employers who hire undocumented workers.

When asked if America should send the message that Mexicans aren't welcome, Mehlman answered: "Yes."

"If you don't want people breaking the law, then you make it clear that there's no benefit to breaking the law," he said.

Rosanna Pulido, state director of the Illinois Minuteman Civil Defense, an organization whose agenda, according to its website, includes pushing for a deportation of all illegal immigrants, echoed Mehlman's sentiment. She said government shouldn't be creating a guest-worker program—it should be enforcing current laws.

"Our position has never changed—enforce the laws on the books," Pulido said. "If laws are enforced against employers, it will [discourage them from] hiring these people, and there won't be a draw for [illegal immigrants] to come here."

To decrease the influx of Mexican immigrants coming here to work, Pulido said Mexican citizens should push their government to provide them with a better social and economic infrastructure. Mexicans should be demanding from their government what they have no right to demand from our government, she said.

"They need to march in the streets, like we did here, and they need to change their laws," Pulido said. "And that might include spilling their blood, just like our forefathers did, but freedom is not free."

Some undocumented workers are also skeptical of the STRIVE act. Both Jose and Robert said they don't agree with it.

"It's something political," Jose said about the STRIVE Act. "I have been hearing the same thing for 16 years."

Robert agreed, saying through an interpreter, "There should be a proposal that does more justice and that does not require as much money."

If there was a better proposal, one that benefited him more and cost less, Robert said he would work toward becoming a legal resident.

Abuse and Anti-Immigration Sentiment

When he finds employment, Jose said he usually works between eight and 10 hours a day and receives \$10 to \$12 per hour. However, since he isn't protected under U.S. employment laws, Jose said he's been the victim of contractors not paying him.

He isn't alone. A February 2006

study by the Center for the Study of Labor and Democracy found significant human rights abuses occurring against undocumented workers.

The survey, headed by sociologist Greg Maney, a professor at Hofstra University in Hempstead, N.Y., polled 146 undocumented workers in Long Island, N.Y., and found nearly 50 percent were victims of contractors not paying them.

The study also found more than 43 percent were degraded based on nationality, 25 percent were physically assaulted while looking for work or while working, 39 percent were pressured to work if injured on the job and 57 percent worked a full day without a break.

But should STRIVE pass, immigrant workers under the H-2C visa would receive all the same rights as U.S. workers. In addition, the Department of Labor would create 2,000 new jobs for investigators to look into claims of employer abuse.

"The power of the employee/employer relationship will significantly shift," Jimenez said.

She also noted that passing a bill like STRIVE would lessen some of the anti-immigration sentiment in the U.S., much of which leads to abuse against undocumented workers. Although it would decrease some local and state lawmakers' efforts to pass anti-immigration-type laws, it won't end all the prejudice, she said.

"There has been much misinformation about what immigrants come here to do," Jimenez said. "Do we need comprehensive immigration reform? Absolutely. Is it going to deflate some of the tension that exists in our communities? Yes. Will it absolutely erase all anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States? No. Because that is rooted in other historical and societal problems."

The answer to eliminating anti-immigration sentiment, she said, is to educate the American public.

"The United States is a beacon of opportunity to improve [your] life, flee persecution, be united with [your] family and work hard," Jimenez said. "And I think those are the core American values that a vast majority of immigrants embrace."

Additional reporting by Lourdes Vazquez.

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Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

A group of men approach a contractor in a truck, hoping to receive work for the day.

Where the sirens go

Photo essay by
Rogan Birnie

Every day we hear the sirens of fire trucks and ambulances as they roar past us. Yet where are they going? A car crash, a medical emergency or a fire?

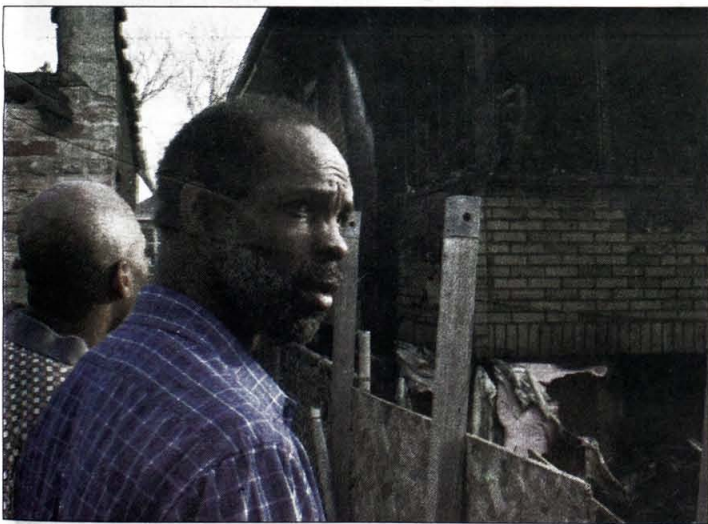
There are three to five residential fires a day and about 1,100 fires each year in the Chicagoland area, according to the American Red Cross.

The Red Cross steps in whenever there's a devastating fire to provide basic emergency services to people affected by disasters.

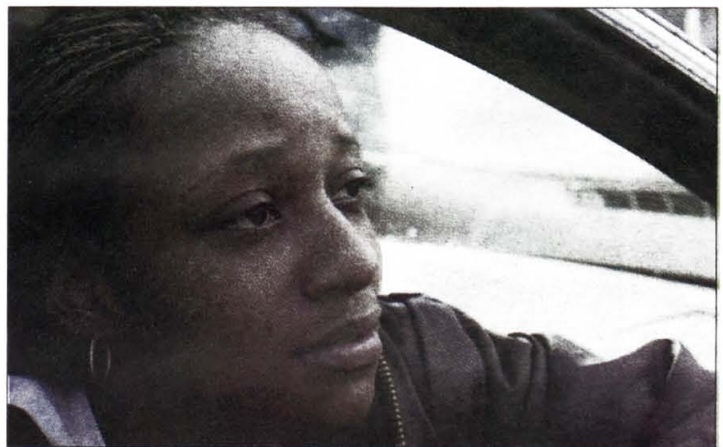
In a city with more than 2.8 million people, the Red Cross aids residents on a day to day basis, helping those in need when tragedy strikes.



Water pours through light fixtures and small personal items remain in the house located at 1404 W. 72nd St., which was destroyed by a fire on March 26.



Kenny Sullivan looks at the damage caused to his residence at 1404 W. 72nd St. Sullivan lived in the basement unit and was one of the few not seriously injured in the fire on March 26.



A woman who identified herself as Asia looks at her residence, located at 107th Street and Eggleston Avenue, on March 15, the morning after her boyfriend allegedly fire-bombed the house.



The extreme heat caused in this fire began melting the fridge before firefighters got it under control at 1404 W. 72nd St. on March 26.



Red Cross Volunteer Nancy Rose assesses the needs of a young girl at the scene of a fire that destroyed a home at 3509 W. McLean Ave.



Red Cross volunteer Margo Harrison waits with a family to begin an assessment of the their home's fire damage as other residents of the neighborhood watch on. A fire destroyed the family's house at 3509 W. McLean Ave. on March 7.



Fire destroys a house at 3509 W. McLean Ave. on March 7. Margo Harrison assesses the scene and waits for the fire department to arrive and inspect the scene.



Asia's mother holds a Red Cross teddy bear after a fire severely damaged the home that she shared with her daughter at 107th Street and Eggleston Avenue.

Reaching heights by lowering standards

NCLB highlights existing problems with education

By Dana Nelson
Assistant City Beat Editor

Chicago schools are under more pressure to perform well on state tests, and with the federal government threatening school closures or funding cuts, they're finding better ways to reach the bar—by lowering it.

The No Child Left Behind Act, which provides federal funding to states that agree to establish learning standards and assessment tests in English and mathematics, has been a source of controversy among educators and parents since its passage in 2002.

One of the arguments involves states that set different test score standards, meaning that some states with lower standards may rank at the same level as those with high ones.

"Essentially, the states are under enormous pressure to show that poor kids are 'proficient,'" said Bruce Fuller, professor of education and public policy at the University of California at Berkeley. "So they're finding ways to do that."

The American Institute of Educational Research (AERA), a national research and reform/advocacy group, met April 9-13 to speak about an array of topics, ranging from school bullying to high school reform and international comparisons to No Child. The theme: "The World of Educational Quality."

No Child was a particularly hot topic for AERA, with more than 12 sessions focusing on the subject.

Fuller said he had been comparing state test results to results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a federally-funded national test with subjects such as reading,

mathematics, science, writing, history and geography. The test is administered once in fourth grade and again in eighth.

"You have this strange situation where NAEP [test] scores in the last several years have been quite flat or remedial [in English tests] and inching upwards slowly in mathematics," Fuller said. "Whereas in state scores, governors and state school teachers keep reporting these significant gains."

Alexander Russo, a former U.S. Senate education advisor and journalist who blogs on education and Chicago Public Schools, said he would describe the state's standards as being middle to easy compared to national assessments.

Russo said Illinois has set low standards to sell the idea that Chicago public schools are doing better than they actually are.

"It's like what they do in stores with dress sizes," Russo said, referring to shops that make dresses smaller than they actually are. "It makes you feel better, but you're not in any better shape and it doesn't really help anybody. It just helps sell the dress."

The goal of No Child is for all students in grades K-12 to score at the "proficient" level on standardized tests by the year 2014. This goal is absurd, said Patricia Gándara, professor of education and associate director of the Linguistic Minority Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"This is a hard, hard job," Gándara said. "And schools are getting sanctioned because you can't create miracles."

While lowering state standards seems like an easy way to meet the bar, students may end up graduating and going into college unprepared. Russo said about a third of college students end up taking remedial courses at a high



Andrew A. Nelles/The Chronicle

Patricia Gándara, professor of education and associate director of the Linguistic Minority Research Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, speaks at the annual American Educational Research Association meeting on April 10 about the problems with the No Child Left Behind Act.

school level. In some instances, students pass into upper elementary and high school without knowing how to read, he said, something they should have learned early on.

Schools less likely to perform well have higher populations of minority students and English language learners, and are located in high-poverty areas, according to numerous studies on No Child results.

According to NAEP test results from 2005, only 30 percent of Illinois fourth-graders rated "proficient" or above in English. Of these, 52 percent were white, 10 percent were black, and 16 percent were Hispanic. Additionally, 51 percent were ineligible for free or reduced-price lunch, while 15 percent were eligible.

Illinois has the largest achievement gap between poor and non-poor fourth-graders in the country, according to a study from A+ Illinois, a campaign to reform quality and funding of public education in Illinois, using statistics from the 2005 NAEP test results.

"In a wealthy community, a lot of your kids have already reached proficiency," Fuller said. "You're already at the top of that staircase. There's this vile disincentive for teachers to go into low-income communities because it's much more likely they'll fail."

Russo said much of the problem has to do with the child's quality of education before and during school. Before kindergarten, wealthy children whose parents went to college are more likely to be exposed to millions of words and ideas than poor children. The parents of poorer students may not have the time or educational background to help them.

"There's a gap there at the start," Russo said. "And that gap gets larger as school goes on."

However, just because a school is in a high-poverty area or has a lot of minorities doesn't necessarily mean that it will always perform poorly.

"There are a lot of schools in a lot of places where there's 100 percent poverty and 100 percent minority and they're doing great," Russo said.

And in the case of Benjamin Banneker Elementary, a predominantly black private school in Gary, Ind., with a 39 percent poverty rate, 94 percent of the students are meeting state proficiency, according to the school's principal, Sarah Givens. She said sometimes the students in the poverty range would achieve the highest test scores.

"Just because you're poor doesn't mean you can't learn," Givens said. "I'm still not pleased with 94 percent, because I believe we can achieve 100 percent. That's my goal."

At Benjamin Banneker Elementary, all of the teachers have been in the field for at least four or five years before they are hired, Givens said. Additionally, the school tests students before they are accepted to see if they are proficient in basic skills.

Many other schools in high-poverty areas, however, have teachers who have only been in the field for a year or two.

"The neighborhood that should have the best schools doesn't,"

Russo said. "The school will be filled with substitute teachers, or uncertified teachers, or rookies, who are excited and love the kids but don't really know how to teach someone to read."

While teachers have a strong desire to help students learn, they have difficulty raising test scores in low-performing schools, especially if they're new. This puts the teachers under extreme pressure to perform better, though they often do not have the resources, experience or knowledge they need, Russo said.

"We're just burning out teachers," Gándara said.

Russo said the best way to help put highly-qualified, experienced teachers in struggling schools is to create incentives for the teachers, such as more prep time or a lighter teaching load, or an extra \$5,000 from the district if they are highly-qualified or nationally-certified. By creating incentives like these, problems with bringing teachers to low-performing schools would hopefully be eliminated.

He added that bringing experienced teachers into low-performing schools would draw in other experienced teachers. And putting rookie teachers into high-performing schools would help them grow at a faster rate because they will learn from more seasoned teachers, he said.

No Child has been one of the most unpopular laws among educators and parents who are now finding their students doing poorer than before, Russo said. He also said educators were now aware of what problems existed and would have a better idea of how to fix them because of it.

"I think it shined a bright light on inequities within the school district and shined a bright light on the gap between kids who are achieving and kids who aren't, and made educators work much harder and smarter than they were before," Russo said. "Certainly, it's not perfect; there are a lot of problems with it ... but my assessment is more good than bad."

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Illinois standardized test score results for fourth-graders

According to the "Nation's Report Card," the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), students in fourth grade are much less proficient than reported on state tests.

NAEP proficiency based on race

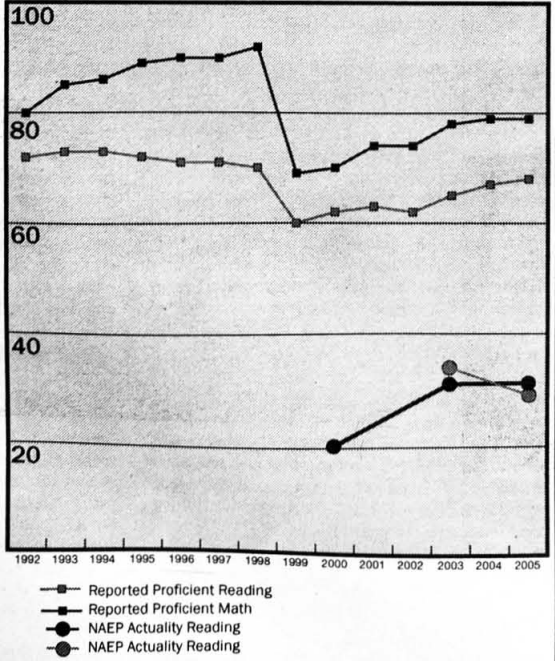
English	
White	52 percent
Black	10 percent
Hispanic	16 percent

Math	
White	50 percent
Black	10 percent
Hispanic	15 percent

NAEP proficiency based on free/reduced price lunch eligibility

English	
Eligible	15 percent
Ineligible	51 percent

Math	
Eligible	16 percent
Ineligible	52 percent



Scoop in the Loop: Speechless and blown away



By Jenn Zimmerman
Assistant City Beat Editor

I'm back.

Like the thousands of other college students about to graduate, I haven't heard back from any of the now 33 jobs I have applied for, and I was feeling a little bit frustrated—then I met Horace. Everyone needs a Horace in their life.

Two weeks ago, I was out on assignment visiting an art museum for a story I was working on. It wasn't a good day, and frankly I didn't feel like going out in the snow—thank you, Chicago—to an exhibit not exactly close by. I checked my e-mail before I left, and, once again, not one potential employer had contacted me about my applications.

I called my mom on the way, tearfully discussing my frustrations of not being able to get any newspaper or social service agency to even be interested enough to give me an interview. Despite my mom's advice, I knew she was worried. Just the week before I had told her and my dad about how I was considering going into social services work with the homeless once I graduate. Their eyes said it all, sadly expressing their thoughts of the lack of pay and opportunity available to me.

I hung up and walked into the

museum with my mind still racing. I casually walked up to the third floor looking for a statue of Barack Obama dressed as Jesus. It was making national headlines and I had to see for myself what it was all about and write more of the student's perspective on all the media chaos. That's when I met Horace.

Next to Jesus-Obama was an older man dressed in a security uniform reading his Bible. It was an interesting image to me—a man reading his Bible next to a political figure representing "The Man" himself.

I interviewed a few visitors on their thoughts as they passed by the statue, but my eyes keep reverting back to the security guard. So, I walked over and struck up a conversation.

The security guard, who I later found out was named Horace, started talking to me about what he thought about the work of art and his experiences working at the museum during all the media fuss. But suddenly he paused, looked carefully at me and asked, "I'm sorry, but are you a reporter?"

I then realized I had never introduced myself and politely responded with a yes. That's when I realized Horace wasn't just a security guard.

"I don't mean to be rude, but are you sure you are a reporter?" he asked.

Again, I responded with a yes.

"You have such a strong sense of patience about yourself," Horace said. "I have never seen that in a reporter before. You listened to everything everyone told you when you were interviewing them and really seemed to care."

I chuckled along with him

about how pushy media people can be and how I am just one to love conversation, but Horace insisted there was something else. I suddenly felt the mood change as if someone had hit a switch to bring the mood down to serious in the room.

"I want you to know you are going to be OK. I know you are at the bottom of the ladder, but you need to keep going," Horace said. "Promise me you will keep going, because you are going to do big things with your life. High-up people are going to respect you."

I was puzzled. Not only did he not know I was a college student, but he also had no idea that I walked into the exhibit feeling as though my chance was never going to come.

"You see things no one else cares to see. You see what everyone else considers garbage, and you want to change that. Promise me you will keep going and you won't change," he said.

I looked at Horace for a long time, wondering where all of this was coming from. He wasn't some crazy man mumbling nothings to me, nor some pervert hitting on me. He was a genuinely nice man who, for some reason, thought I needed to know these things.

I'm not going to lie, I was somewhat overwhelmed with everything he was telling me. How could he know these things I thought? But then Horace said something that made me see I hadn't just met a security guard, I had met my own little messenger in some way.

"Tell your mom you are going to be OK and to stop worrying."

For the first time in my life I was

speechless. I was, and still am shocked by how much a man I had never met before in my life was able to speak directly to me without knowing a thing about me. I promised to tell my mother, knowing I really would, that I will never change, and continue on with my job search.

For the next hour I sat and talked with Horace. He was kind enough to tell me about his son and what he did before becoming a security guard. He told me about his ex-wife and how if he had the chance again, he would have never left her. We both then realized our conversation was nearing an end, so we decided to say our goodbyes.

I thanked him for everything he told me, trying to express as much as I could how much it meant to me and how much I really needed to hear all of it. Horace made it very clear how hard I should hold onto his advice.

"Well, I'm on my way out," he said.

I assumed he was talking about work and wished him a good rest of the day, but realized that wasn't exactly what he meant.

"You know when you go to a party and you drank all you needed to drink, danced all you needed to dance and ate all you needed to eat? And then you look at your watch and think it's time for me go?" he asked. "I know time is almost up for me, and I'm ready to go, but I needed you to know these things before I make my visit to the man in the sky."

I looked at him calmly and couldn't say anything but "Thank you" before I walked away.

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In Public

Tuesday, April 24

Frigg, a folk group from Finland and Norway mix together acoustic Nordic folk music with Appalachian, country and western music to create a new innovative sound. They will be performing at the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph St., in Preston Bradley Hall. This event is free and starts at 7 p.m. For more information, call (312) 744-6630.

Wednesday, April 25

Neo-Futurist Bilal Dardai will be presenting the opening night of his show "Vox Pandora," a modern retelling of the Pandora myth at the New Leaf Theatre, 2045 N. Lincoln Park West. The show begins at 8 p.m. and tickets are \$12 for students. Call (773) 516-3546 for more information or to order tickets.

Thursday, April 26

Eat out tonight! Dozens of Chicagoland restaurants are raising money for HIV/AIDS care by participating in Dining Out for Life, an event in which part of your bill is donated to AIDS Care Chicago to help provide housing, care and support services to those with HIV/AIDS. For a complete list of participating restaurants, check out diningoutforlife.com.

Friday, April 27

The Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St. will be presenting the four films nominated at the Oscars for Best Documentary Short at 8:15 p.m. These include *Recycled Life*, *Rehearsing the Dream*, *Two Hands* and the winning film, *The Blood of Yingzhou District*. Tickets are \$7 for students. The films will also be shown on April 29 and May 2. For more information, call (312) 846-2600.

Metro news briefs: a short week in review

Parents indicted for child abuse

Mila Petrov and Carlos Beltran, the parents of 5-year-old Melanie Beltran were indicted on first-degree murder charges, according to the Chicago Tribune. The child was found unconscious March 13 in her home in the 8900 block of Kennedy Drive and died the next day at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge. Autopsy results revealed she died of head trauma, child abuse and neglect. Melanie had old burns from scalding bath water, a broken nose,

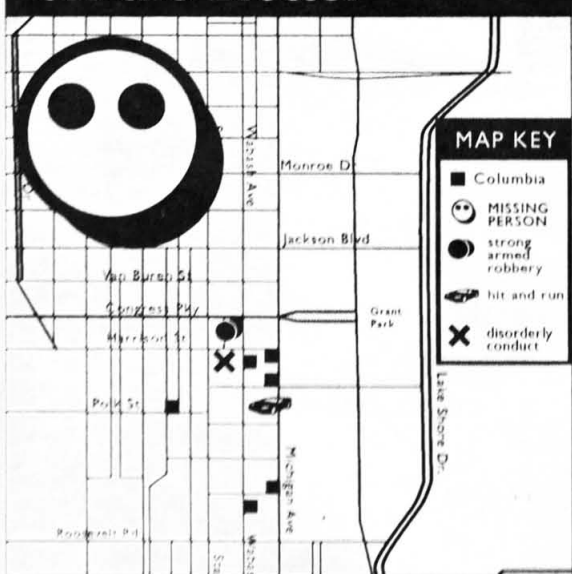
bruises on her abdomen and other marks, according to the medical examiners office. Petrov was accused of the beating that resulted in death and Beltran was charged with murder for not protecting the child. Melanie's siblings have been placed with relatives.

Chicago Spire advances

Zoning requirements for the Chicago Spire, a twisting, 2,000-foot structure that will have 150 stories, were approved by the Chicago Plan Commission on April 19,

according to the Chicago Tribune. The plans move on to City Council, which could approve it May 9. Designed by famed architect Santiago Calatrava, the building is going to be built on the vacant land at 410 N. Lake Shore Drive and DuSable Park. The structure is being developed by Garrett Kelleher, the executive chairman of Shelbourne Development Ltd. If completed, it will be the tallest tower in the world.

Off the Blotter



Kirill Badger/The Chronicle

Missing Person

After asking her niece to "stay put" on April 9, Mia Juaneza's aunt returned five hours later to her home at 1214 S. Federal St., to find her niece missing. The woman told police that Juaneza was last seen wearing a black coat with a hood, white Keds and usually carries a black Berlina shoulder bag. Juaneza is 34 years old, has long black hair, brown eyes, is 4'10 and weighs 105 pounds. She is a resident of the Philippines and has only been in Chicago for four weeks.

A hit and run

On April 13, a 51-year-old taxicab driver called police after a man between the ages of 30 and 33 years old got into a verbal altercation with him and stole the taxi driver's car. The victim told police the offender punched him in the upper body before leaving with his car at 720 S. Michigan Ave. Police have not located the vehicle.

Alley Assault

A 20-year-old man told police that while walking down an alleyway at 19 E. Congress Parkway on April 13, two men in their 20s wearing blue jeans and grey hooded sweatshirts grabbed him and continued to punch and kick him until he fell to the ground. One of the offenders then proceeded to kick the man, calling him homosexual slurs, while the other offender took his money, which totaled \$200. The victim then lost consciousness and didn't see where the offenders had fled.

A HOT house

Police responded to a call on April 13 from an employee at HotHouse, 31 E. Balbo Ave., about several men fighting out front. After arriving at the scene, police discovered the fight ensued because one of the offenders grabbed a woman's buttock while making kissing noises. The 25-year-old victim said she told the man to leave her alone but he pushed her. Her boyfriend and a few other men who were attending an art presentation at the HotHouse then began fighting with the offender outside. No arrests were made.

Compiled by Chronicle staff through information provided by the Chicago Police Department.

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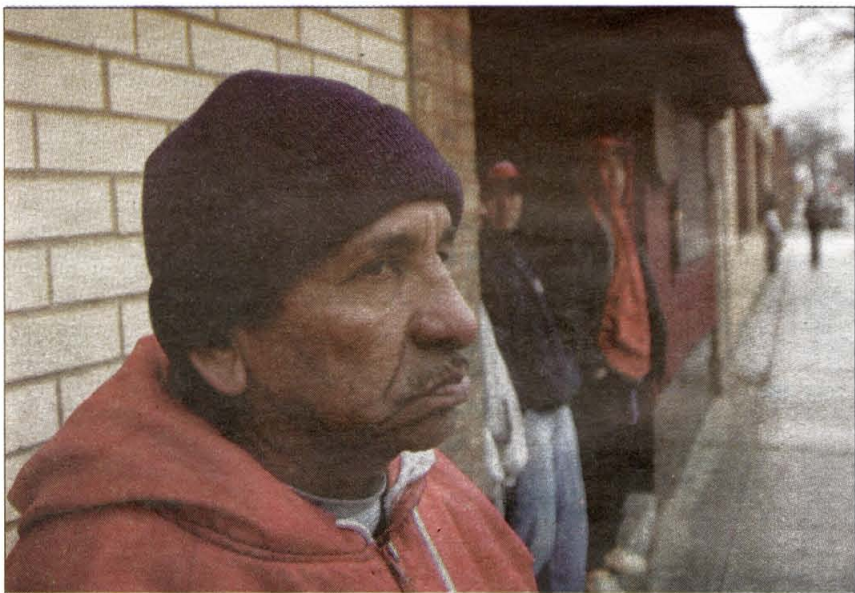
WEEKENDS 12-5 PM



DIRECTIONS

Take the CTA blue line west two stops to UIC-Halsted. Get off the train and exit on Morgan St. Building is immediately North of expressway and steps from the station.

Working toward a documented freedom



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle

An undocumented worker, top, stands on a corner on the northwest side waiting for work. A police car, top right, patrols the area where undocumented workers stand. Chicago police come each morning at 10:00 a.m. to disperse the men. Two men, bottom right, speak with somebody looking for workers.

New immigration bill could affect millions of undocumented workers

By Brent Steven White
Associate Editor

While sleet fell on an unseasonably cold April morning, Jose A. stood shivering on a corner on Chicago's northwest side. About 50 men were with him, and all eagerly waited for an independ-

ent contractor to offer them a day's work.

Jose, a friendly 38-year-old laborer from El Salvador who asked The Chronicle to withhold his last name, immigrated to the United States at 16 on a six-year work permit. He settled in New York City and worked in demolition and house painting.

But Jose, who moved to Chicago 11 months ago to find work, never renewed his work per-

mit. Now, like an estimated 12 million others, he is living in the United States illegally.

"I am worried [about getting deported]," Jose said through an interpreter, while pointing toward a police car parked in a Shell gas station, the location where the men congregate each morning. "But there's nothing I can do."

Next to him stood Robert R., an immigrant from Chihuahua, Mexico who left his wife and child

four years ago to find work painting and dry walling. Living in the country illegally, Robert, who asked his last name be withheld, paid a smuggler \$4,000 to take him through the Arizona desert. As one of the nearly 960,000 undocumented citizens in Illinois, according to recent U.S. census numbers, Robert, like Jose, struggles as an undocumented worker.

While illegal immigration continues to stir up debate in the

United States, and as the special interest groups fight an uphill battle against the critics and cynics of immigration reform, lawmakers have failed to adopt a new comprehensive immigration system. Bills have been introduced in the past from both parties, but none have gained enough momentum and bipartisan support in the current push-and-pull Congress.

But a new bipartisan bill, put

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Voters show Madeline the door



Mauricio Rubio/The Chronicle



Andrew A. Nelles/The Chronicle

Incumbent 2nd Ward Alderman Madeline Haithcock, left, shrieks in surprise when the returns come in for the 2007 Chicago municipal election runoff April 17. Bob Fioretti, right, won his first bid for office in a landslide victory with 65 percent of the vote to Haithcock's 35 percent.

Runoff election sends 5 incumbents packing, including Haithcock

The end of The Chronicle's 2007 election coverage; an election news analysis

By James H. Ewert Jr.
City Beat Editor

For the past four months, every political reporter and expert in Chicago has been trying to make sense of the 2007 Chicago municipal election, its significance, implications and consequences.

With the election finally over, there is much to be gained from the furious intensity of all the coverage. Not only will this election go down as one of the most influential in more than a decade, but labor unions and students will also remember the 2007 election as a benchmark.

The times will be a changin'

Bob Fioretti beat incumbent Madeline Haithcock for 2nd Ward alderman, and for the first time in generations, a caucasian will represent the 2nd Ward, the home to the first black alderman in City

Council. The takeover may symbolize the changing demographic conditions in the ward.

In the Loop's 42nd Ward, Alderman Burton Natarus, another long-time council journeyman, was ejected from office by challenger Brendan Riley. For the first time in more than a decade, Chicago's downtown will be under new management.

Both Fioretti and Riley ultimately won in landslides and all four candidates were among some of the most highly funded of all candidates for alderman.

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Waiting to recover

Long lines continue to grow at rehabilitation centers across Illinois

By Jenn Zimmerman
Assistant City Beat Editor

It was Christmas night of 2006 when James Radd, a 19-year-old film and video major, thought, "Tonight I'm going to die." Despite staying clean for three weeks, Radd and his friend decided to have a true "white Christmas" and snort \$100 worth of cocaine, which was only the

beginning of a long night for the Columbia freshman.

Radd (whose name has been changed) began panicking, unable to get his body or mind to relax. He decided to drive himself to the hospital while on the phone with 9-1-1 out of fear he could die.

"I got about a block away and suddenly started to lose feeling in my legs and arms," he said.

Though Radd suffered a minor heart attack from his overdose on cocaine, he was lucky. Unlike nearly 6,500 people in Illinois

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Substance Abuse Treatment



6,467

people are currently waiting for full assessment, to begin treatment, or to move to full assessed level of care.

17.5
DAYS

Average days wait between initial contact and assessment

15.4
DAYS

Average days wait between assessment and first treatment appointment

32.4
DAYS

Total average days between initial contact and first treatment appointment

Kimi Badger/The Chronicle