

12-10-2007

## Columbia Chronicle (12/10/2007)

Columbia College Chicago

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# THE COLUMBIA CHRONICLE

The Official News Source of Columbia College Chicago December 10, 2007 Volume 43 Number 15 ColumbiaChronicle.com

## Real estate worth the risk?

A Chronicle investigation

College's landlord noncompliant with building codes citations incurred after May 4 fire

by Beth Palmer  
Campus News Editor

A CHRONICLE investigation has found 218 S. Wabash Ave., a rented property some Columbia offices relocated to this month, is in violation of building codes and has a long history of unresolved elevator problems, according to public records.

The college has leased the top three floors of the nine-floor commercial building since December 2006; it's one of a handful the college rents among the many Columbia-owned properties in the South Loop.

Public records obtained by The Chronicle show 218 S. Wabash Ave. has been cited with 43 building code violations over the past 15 years, including a June 20, 2006 failure to file the Life Safety Evaluation Plan with the city's Department of Buildings and the Fire Department by the beginning of that year.

Mark Lloyd, associate vice president and Chief Marketing Officer at Columbia, said the college was aware of the building's condition when it entered into the 10-year lease with property owner R. Bruce Lord last year.

"It was an attractive location for us," he said. "We knew there were some liabilities."

Bill McCaffrey, press contact for the Department of Buildings, said it would be impossible, short of an extensive study, to fairly say whether the number of violations over time is above or below average.

"Our main goal is compliance [to code]," McCaffrey said. "That's what we want."

Mike Debish, associate vice president of Facilities and Operations, said according to Lord, Columbia's three floors have passed final city inspection allowing a number of departments and centers including Information Technology, the Chicago Jazz Ensemble, the Center for Arts Policy and the Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media to move in.

The college's accounting and payroll departments will be the last to relocate into the space in mid-2008.

But public records and photo documen-



A woman approaches the front lobby door of 218 S. Wabash Ave., where Columbia has leased three floors since last December. The college entered the 10-year contract knowing the building had liabilities.

Chuck Wu THE CHRONICLE

tation by The Chronicle show violations cited after the arson fire that damaged 218 S. Wabash Ave. on May 4 remain unfixed.

Five days after the fire, city inspectors ordered several rear windows replaced, graffiti removed from the back door and the address to be posted in the back of the building "in a conspicuous place on or near entrance with figures at least six inches

long for a commercial building," according to the inspection record.

Eight months after the fire, windows facing the alley behind 218 S. Wabash Ave. remain bordered with jagged glass, sealed with plywood, the graffiti is still on the door, and the address is not posted in compliance.

»SEE WABASH, PG. 8



## GETTING SCHOOLED WITH THE SABER

'Star Wars' fans don't have to go to a galaxy far, far away to learn how to use a lightsaber

Michael Flynn started a group called New York Jedi, where participants learn how to battle with a lightsaber through the use of martial arts and staged combat. Currently, the 35-member group is traveling to festivals around the country, showing off their combat skills and trying to get people interested in starting up their own groups.

» SEE PG. 36



## DENZEL DIRECTS YOUTH TO VICTORY

Washington talks about his new directorial project, a film based on a true story

The year is 1935. Texas professor Melvin Tolson invites a swarm of controversy with his progressive teaching methods in a small all-black school. His goal is an audacious one: To lead his debate class to a national championship. This is the premise of *The Great Debaters*, due for release on Christmas Day.

Washington spoke to The Chronicle about his passion to direct, his love of storytelling, and his determination to keep moving forward.

» SEE PG. 13



May 9: "No proper rear address"

Pictured above, the alley address violates the code of six-inch numerals posted in a 'conspicuous' area.

Chuck Wu THE CHRONICLE



May 9: "Replace broken windows"

Pictured above, windows on the west (rear) side remain in violation—broken and/or missing.

Chuck Wu THE CHRONICLE



May 9: "Remove graffiti"

Pictured above, graffiti, or what the city's code calls a 'nuisance,' remains on the alley entrance.

Chuck Wu THE CHRONICLE



# Why wait to be great?



by Amanda Maurer  
Editor-in-Chief

When I started at Columbia, I had one goal in mind: To join The Chronicle. I thought it was essential that journalism students have it listed on their resumes upon graduation, and an overall must if I wanted to succeed in this industry. But it seems that more often than not, students are waiting until after graduation to start producing in their fields, despite the many opportunities Columbia offers. As a young journalism student I tried to do the best in all of my classes and jumped on every opportunity that came my way. I wanted to qualify for a staff position as soon as possible, and did everything necessary to make sure that would happen. One of the opportunities that furthered my journalistic career and prepared me for The Chronicle was a class called College Newspaper Workshop. Every week you could submit one story to the paper, all the while working with the editors and improving your writing and reporting skills. At the time it was very competitive. When I finally finished the class and applied to

work on the paper, I was hoping everything I had accomplished would let me stand out among several others vying for the same position. That was three years ago. Today, the College Newspaper Workshop class is struggling to make an attendance quota. We're hiring at The Chronicle, and yet only a few applications have made it back into our hands. But it's not only The Chronicle. The college's magazine, Echo, has also had a difficult time recruiting students, whereas years ago there would be waiting lists of students wanting to register. And I'm sure there are other college programs struggling to survive because of a lack of student participation. I don't quite understand this. According to college documents, in the Fall 2006 semester, there were more than 150 students concentrating in News Reporting and Writing, without even mentioning the 550 other journalism majors who were concentrating in broadcast fields, magazine editing or another field that focuses on reporting on health, science and the environment. So of all of those students, I have one question. Where is everyone? I know this isn't a problem in this department alone, but several others too. But even if you think one of these classes or programs (to be frank) sucks, join with several friends and work to make it better. Feel a sense of accomplishment. I don't understand how someone can be indifferent or passive when it comes to working in an arts field. After starting my college career as a journalist, I knew if I wanted to make it in the industry I'd need to have three things: experience, experience and experience.

Sure, classes teach you the basics, but when it comes to real-life deadlines and interaction with sources and editors, there's no substitute for the real thing—whether that is a college media job or an internship. Granted, Columbia doesn't make the newspaper class mandatory, or require each journalism student to have at least one article published or item aired before graduation; but that should be every student's goal. Since this is an arts school, I feel like expectations are much more laid back. The college will teach you the basics, and it's up to the individual to do what they choose with that knowledge. How can you be successful in an art or media profession without having any internal drive? It's very puzzling. Why aren't students taking advantage of these opportunities? Yes, classes, internships and on-campus positions like those on The Chronicle, use up an obscene amount of time during the week for comparatively low, if any, pay. But it's worth it to pay the price now than to pay the price of not getting a job during an interview. How can you walk across that stage during graduation feeling prepared for the real world when you have yet to experience it? Sure, I'm all for going out and trying things on your own, but when it comes to spending your time productively and efficiently while at Columbia, step up to the plate and take advantage of these opportunities. There's only so much time to get involved and take chances in your field before it's too late. And yes, we're hiring.

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## IN YOUR OPINION: Should Columbia have a dead week?



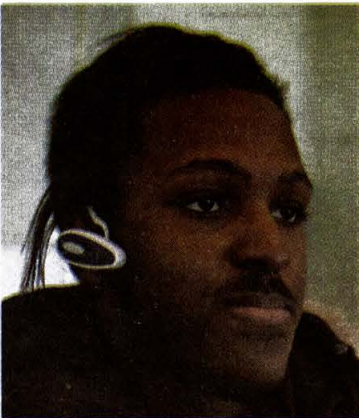
"[I] can't really say. On one hand, it's good that you're keeping people focused, but at the same time, some people need a chance to blow off steam."

Kevin Czarnecki  
Sophomore  
Theater/Fiction Writing



"Yes, my sister had that at a normal university and she said it helped a lot to cram."

Erica Vaughn  
Junior  
Art and Design



"Yes, because especially around this time, it gets very stressful, especially for students who work after school. It's hard for them to find time to study for every single class."

Dominique Campbell  
Freshman  
Graphic Design

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# Campus News

## Council focuses on new web features

Officials announce CTA art project, department relocation

by Robert Bykowski  
Assistant Campus News Editor

STUDENT RELATED items including web initiatives, art installations and the consolidation of a department peppered the agenda at the Dec. 7 College Council meeting.

Starting in January, students will be able to communicate with each other via The Loop, an online interface for Columbia students. The Loop combines elements of networking sites MySpace, Craigslist and Facebook, and is already available to alumni and staff.

Mark Kelly, vice president of Student Affairs, told the audience that there is currently no equivalent, and he expects The Loop to change the way students at Columbia function.

"In a way, I believe that the old system of flyers and posters and announcements, which really don't work, are replaced by this Loop system," Kelly said.

Kelly shared a statistic that the Student Life webpage on Columbia's main website receives between 50,000 and 100,000 student hits a week, and according to Kelly, that points to a bright future for The Loop.

"I think it's just going to transform how

students live on this campus," Kelly said. "It's going to take probably six months for all of us to understand its power and how we can deliver messages to students, and students in turn will decide how they want to use this system and adapt it to their own uses."

Kelly also mentioned a web portfolio initiative that will allow prospective employers to check out the portfolios of Columbia seniors, graduates and recent alumni. The Portfolio Lab, as Kelly referred to it, will allow students to build and maintain portfolio websites utilizing "home-grown" Columbia software. A side arm of the Portfolio Lab, Portfolio Agent, will be a searchable database which Kelly said will allow Columbia to market its graduates nationally throughout numerous creative industries, and the database will be searchable by discipline.

"We don't think there's another college in the country that has such a system, so we think that every department needs to jump on board," Kelly said.

Later in the meeting, Columbia's vice president of Campus Environment Alicia Berg spoke about an upcoming art installation inside of the CTA Harrison Red Line station. The installation, originally conceived by students in the Interior Architecture program, will have a "haiku" theme

and feature poetry from both Columbia students and students at Jones College Prep school, according to Berg.

"I think the CTA kind of got excited about it because often times the adopt-a-station projects are usually art where there are usually ads," Berg said. "This is a much more conceptual idea."

The installation will be broken up into three parts, much like the Japanese poem style it's named after. Berg said the ticketing area, escalator area and train platform area make up the three parts.

The ticketing level will feature an explanation and the poetry will start at the ticketing area and work its way down to the train platform, where the vaulted ceiling of the stop will be painted with a Japanese maple tree color scheme.

"It's something I'm really, really interested in seeing because I use that station and it's the sorriest," said Louise Love, vice president of Academic Affairs.

Other highlights from Berg during the meeting included the consolidation of the Interactive Arts and Media Department into the 900-1000 S. Wabash Ave. building and new passenger elevators in the Residence Center, 731 S. Plymouth Court and in the 11th Street Campus building, 72 E. 11th Street.

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Members of Columbia's College Council review documents during its Dec. 7 meeting on the 8th floor of the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.

Rachael Strecher THE CHRONICLE

## Columbia in 10 seconds ... or less

### Media Production Center to be completed by January 2010

A proposal to spend \$21 million to purchase property and to construct and furnish the college's long-planned Media Production Center was approved by the board of trustees on Dec. 6.

The center is planned for a lot of land at 16th and State Streets.

### Annual tuition increase approved by board of trustees

Effective fall 2008, annual tuition will cost \$17,950.

The board of trustees approved this 4.95 percent increase at its Dec. 6 meeting.

The board separately approved a \$5 increase to the Student Health Center fee, which is included in tuition.

### Gender Institute renamed in honor of Columbia trustee

The Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media is being renamed in honor of Ellen Stone Belic, a member of Columbia's board of trustees.

It will be known as the Ellen Stone Belic Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media.

## Calendar

### Papel Mexicano

The Latino Alliance will take part in creating a Dia de los Muertos altar to honor Dard Hunter, a seminal papermaker with local Mexican Americans. The result of their efforts is an exhibit which runs through Dec. 15. The event is located in the Center for Book and Paper Arts on the second floor of the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, call Bill Drendel at (312) 344-6684.

### 'Cinema Slapdown'

The seventh round of this event will feature a screening of *It's a Wonderful Life*, presented by the Film and Video Department, and will be followed with a debate about the film by Columbia faculty member Brigid Murphy and Chicago Tribune film critic Michael Phillips. The screening starts at 7 p.m. on Dec. 12 in the Film Row Cinema in the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.

For more information, call Sandy Cuprisin at (312) 344-6708.

### 'Translations—One Scene, Eleven Scores'

Eleven original compositions by students enrolled in the MFA in Music Composition for the Screen program will be the focus of this Dec. 12 event. The compositions will be performed by the New Millennium Orchestra. The event starts at 7 p.m. in the Music Center Concert Hall, 1014 S. Michigan Ave.

For more information, call Kat Keers at (312) 344-6459.

### Repertory Workshop/Faculty Concert

This Dec. 13 and 14 concert will feature works of both faculty members and students. The faculty portion of the concert will feature students from the Dance Center. The student portion is the culmination of a course in which students worked with professional choreographers as a student dance company. The event starts at 8 p.m. in the Dance Center, 1306 S. Michigan Ave.

For more information, call Ligia Himebaugh at (312) 344-8345.



# Music acts 'Rock the Mic,' the crowd

CUMA garners good vibes for hosting talent competition

Shay Bapple  
Staff Writer

A PERFORMANCE reminiscent of an '80s hip hop track with alternating verses and simplistic, fast-paced, bass-heavy beats won second place at the Columbia Urban Music Association's "Rock the Mic" competition at the Conaway Center in the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., on Dec. 5. The trio, a rap group called EMS, had the crowd jumping and one audience member yelling out, "Those guys are hot."

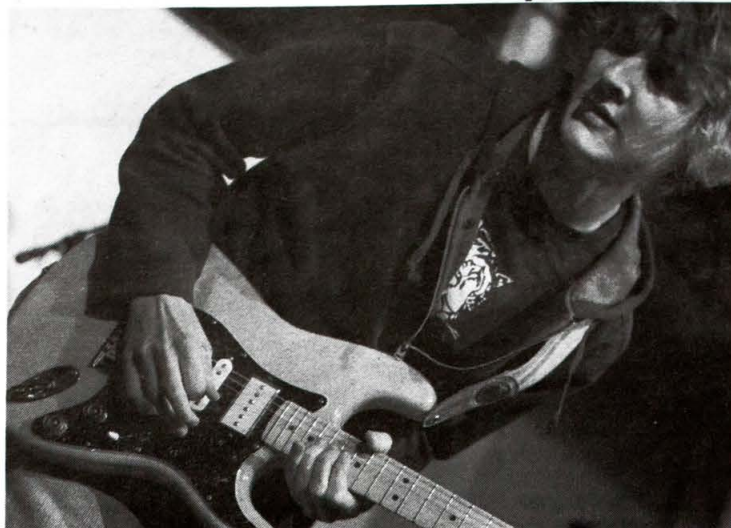
The Down and Dirty Blues Band, a six-person rock group, won first place and Color Radio, a quintet from Logan Square, placed third.

Twelve acts performed in front of a crowd of about 100 for a chance to win a spot on a CUMA compilation CD and a photo shoot. Participating bands had to consist of at least one Columbia student and performed one song each.

CUMA members were on hand to vote on the winning acts and announce the winners after the show. They said the organization was founded by former graduate students James "June" McDowell and Earnest Perry Jr. in 1995 to help Columbia students in the urban art industry gain hands-on experience in event creation and management and creating networking opportunities, according to CUMA members.

The current CUMA president, senior music business major Oronde Jenkins, said the competition was a showcase avenue for all types of music.

"We were originally getting call after call



Derek Bahr of The Down and Dirty Blues Band jams at 'Rock the Mic' in the Conaway Center in the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., on Dec. 5.

Russell Augustine THE CHRONICLE

for rap acts so we had to stop taking them in favor of other genres of music so that as many different types of music are represented," Jenkins said.

The group EMS consists of junior audio arts and acoustics major Lewis "Half Star" Zambrano, 20-year-old Jeffery "Klassick" Williams of Chicago and the DJ, Davy Greenberg, a junior film and video major. Williams said their style is influenced by rap groups Run DMC, Eric B. and Rakim and Nas.

EMS has been together for about eight months and "Rock the Mic" was their second live performance as a group, Zam-

brano said. Zambrano and Williams met while working at a clothing store, and after learning that they were into freestyle rapping, joined together with Greenberg who they met through a friend.

Zambrano said the group performance lived up to their expectations.

"I think we did pretty good, considering there were a lot of other good groups out there," Zambrano said. "We definitely held our own."

Williams agreed with Zambrano's appraisal of their performance.

"We did a good job," Williams said. "This was a good opportunity for us and we hope

to be at other venues in Chicago soon and maybe get signed."

Audience members were asked to give a \$2 donation at the door that went to a raffle ticket. After all the groups were finished performing, gift certificates were given out and the grand prize was two tickets to see rapper Common perform live. The proceeds of the event went toward helping Chicago Public Schools.

Daphne Francois, a junior marketing communication major who was part of the audience, said she is always impressed with shows that are put together at Columbia, but this CUMA show was by far better than most.

However, Francois said she would have liked to see a bigger set list in the future.

"I would have liked to see more acts," Francois said. "It was too short; twelve acts were not enough. I think they could have gone above and beyond."

The Solomon Brown Band, another act that performed, combines elements of gospel, rock, rap and jazz. The group, named after the lead singer, played a cover that combined Kanye West's "Stronger" and Aerosmith's "Dream On."

Brown, a freshman vocal performance major, said he made it to the second round during last season's "American Idol" try-outs.

He said he was thankful for the opportunity to perform at "Rock the Mic."

"This was a great audience, they were wonderful," Brown said. "That is what I love about Columbia. The students in every department from journalism to radio to music are all great."

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### Concert Hall Events

#### Monday December 10

Singers Showcase  
7:00 PM

#### Tuesday December 11

Composition 1A Recital  
12:30 PM  
NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE  
7:00 PM

#### Wednesday December 12

Composition 1B Recital  
12:30 PM  
MFA Composition: Music & Drama  
7:00 PM  
Columbia College Choir at  
The Sherwood Conservatory  
8:00 PM

#### Thursday December 13

Composition 1C Recital  
12:00 PM  
Counterpoint Recital  
4:00 PM  
ADVANCED COMPOSITION RECITAL  
7:00 PM

#### Friday December 14

MIDI Recitals  
12:00-4:30 PM  
Composition 3 Recital  
7:00 PM

#### Saturday December 15

Composition 3B Recital  
4:00 PM

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



# Student robbed at gunpoint IDs mugger

Same criminal charged for spree of recent incidents around campus

by Robert Bykowski

Assistant Campus News Editor

A COLUMBIA student held up at gunpoint on Dec. 1 helped identify his assailant later the same day and police said the robber is responsible for a recent mugging spree around campus.

A male, senior audio arts and acoustics major who is withholding his name for safety concerns, was robbed on the 800 block of South Wabash Avenue of the only cash in his wallet—two \$5 dollar bills—and said he might not have reported the crime if not for a chance conversation with a Columbia security guard.

The victim was walking on Wabash Avenue at 10:30 a.m. on his way to work at his on-campus job when he was approached by Antonio C. Jackson, who police said has since been charged with four counts of aggravated robbery.

"I don't know why I didn't freak out more, but I really wasn't concerned until he told me he had a gun," the victim said. "Then I just kind of froze up, trying to comply with what he was doing but I still didn't want to give up anything unless I really had to."

Jackson asked the victim if he "had anything" to which the victim told him he didn't and kept walking, the victim said.

"I just thought he was asking for change or something," the victim said.

According to the victim, Jackson then caught up with him and repeatedly demanded money.

"I said 'Sorry, I don't have any money' because I didn't think I had any money," the victim said.

Jackson became irritated, according to the victim, and told him to put his ATM card in the cash machine in front of a nearby bank. The victim told Jackson he didn't have an ATM card, which prompted Jackson to pull out a gun he was concealing and point it at the ATM, demanding the victim put his card into the machine.

Despite having an ATM card in his wallet, the victim continued to tell Jackson he didn't have one. According to the victim, Jackson then told him to pull out his wallet and prove he didn't have an ATM card.

The victim said he pulled out the wallet and put his finger over the part of the ATM card that was exposed and only showed Jackson the money side of his wallet, which contained \$10 dollars, according to the victim. Jackson took the money and demanded to see the front of the wallet, and the victim flashed the front of the card to Jackson before quickly putting the wallet back in his pocket. Jackson then ran off.

The victim proceeded to go to work and was greeted by Columbia security guard Rosylind Powell, who asked how the victim's day was going.

"I told her 'Well, I just got held up at gunpoint,'" the victim said.

Powell then called the police for the victim, and the police arrived within a few minutes. If Powell hadn't insisted on calling the police, the victim said he wasn't sure he would have.

"I was probably just going to go to work and tell the story to the other guy I was working with," the victim said. "I guess for

some reason I didn't feel it was necessary that I tell someone."

When the police arrived, the victim went with them to identify Jackson, who had been picked up by police at Target, 1154 S. Clark St., after allegedly robbing someone else on nearby Roosevelt Road. Both victims later identified Jackson in a line-up.

"We're thrilled," said Martha Meegan, Columbia's director of Campus Safety and Security.

Meegan's office had sent a mass security alert e-mail on Nov. 28 regarding an aggravated robbery incident in the area on Nov. 27. The perpetrator the e-mail described ended up being Jackson, police said.

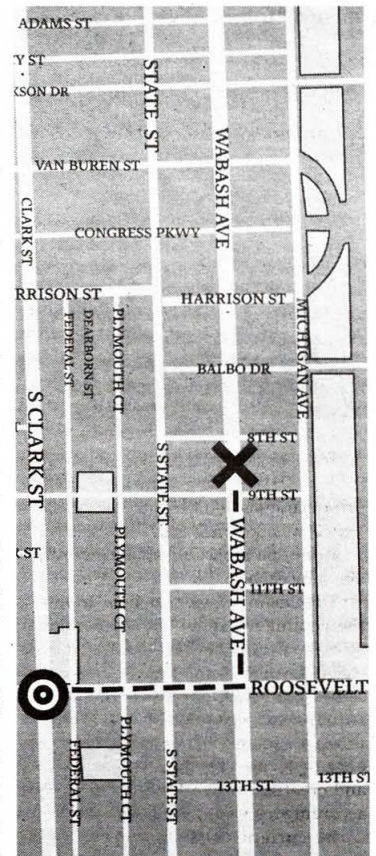
Meegan said she will continue to send e-mails regarding security alerts, in addition to posting the notifications in the lobby of every Columbia building, which Meegan has done in the past.

"It's only going to be the real critical ones," Meegan said regarding the e-mails her office will send out. "I don't want to saturate the students with campus alerts. I only want the pertinent ones out there."

Despite being robbed, the victim doesn't anticipate changing any habits, and doesn't feel security in the area is lacking.

"I figure it's Chicago. There's bound to be stuff like that happening, and you just [have to] make sure you're a little safe," the victim said. "I'm not going to not carry an ATM card or anything like that. It's just being in the wrong place at the wrong time."

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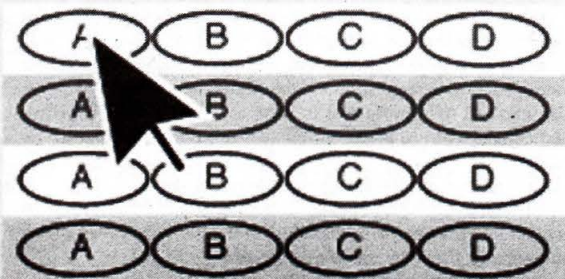
A Columbia student was robbed at gunpoint at 850 S. Wabash Ave. The mugger was apprehended shortly after at the Target store on 1154 S. Clark St.

Allyson McGovern THE CHRONICLE

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# 'Jolly Trolley' collects cash, food for holiday

Radio department raises more than \$2,500, 900 pounds of food during drive

by Derek Kucynda  
Assistant Campus News Editor

WALKING DOWN Wabash Avenue, Columbia students were quick to notice a familiar red Chicago trolley loudly playing Columbia's radio station, WCRX, parked outside of the 33 E. Congress Parkway Building. Taking a step inside the lobby, students were greeted with the smell of freshly toasted bagels and brewed coffee. Walking through the lobby, the sight of students spinning a prize wheel and the sounds of radio students interviewing proverbial personalities including Secretary of State Jesse White and transportation reporter and Columbia alumna Roz Varon echoed through the lobby as the Radio Department and the Greater Chicago Food Depository kicked off the holiday season with the fifth annual Holly Jolly Trolley Food Drive.

The Holly Jolly Trolley Food Drive, which took place on Dec. 6 at the 33 E. Congress

Parkway Building, was hosted by WCRX radio, 88.1 FM. All the proceeds will go to the Greater Chicago Food Depository this week and the donated goods they collected will go to 600 local shelters, food pantries and soup kitchens around the county.

In the past five years, the drive has raised more than \$15,000 and collected more than 2,000 pounds of food. Last year alone, 400 pounds of food were collected and the station was able to raise more than \$5,000. As of press time, more than 900 pounds of food was acquired and fund raising netted an estimated \$2,500-\$3,000, according to Tony Kwiecinski, supervisor for the WCRX radio station.

Every dollar collected at the drive provides four meals to disadvantaged or homeless individuals, however, there was a significant decrease in the money that was raised. But, on the positive side, Kwiecinski said the food collected was more than double the number of pounds collected last year.

Michelle DiSanto, food drive coordinator for the Greater Chicago Food Depository, said she was very pleased with how



Right: Radio host Jeff Frieders interviews Lumino Magazine managing editor Barry Brecheisen in the 33 E. Congress Parkway Building on Dec. 6 while Frieder's co-host Brian Lynch looks on.

Chuck Wu THE CHRONICLE

well the food drive went and the enthusiasm that the students had during the day.

"It was a great atmosphere, and everyone was very willing to help," DiSanto said. "It was very smooth."

Santa was on hand at the food drive to greet students, while vocalists sang holiday carols in the background. The drive also allowed participants to get a start on their Christmas shopping by bidding on various prizes such as iPods, gift certificates, sports and entertainment tickets, gift cards, certificates and other items donated by local businesses, said Cheryl Morton-Langston, director of the WCRX radio station. Students and faculty also gave the WCRX Holiday "Wheel of Fun" a spin in an effort to win DVDs, CDs and other prizes.

Morton-Langston said the food drive was especially important to her this year because the government has decreased its spending on food and monetary assistance for the disadvantaged.

"A lot of federal money has been cut going to the food depository [and] a lot of food pantries," she said.

This year, Columbia individuals and local South Loop establishments gave back to the community at the drive. Columbia's Apple Store donated an iPod for the auction, while President Warrick L. Carter and the staff from the Office of the President donated several bags of food. The Student Government Association donated \$200 to the food drive. Also, White Hen, 600 S. Dearborn St., donated various beverages and snacks, Morton-

Langston said.

The students from the Visual Merchandising class in the Arts, Entertainment and Media Management Department, who held a food drive last month, donated their goods to the Chicago Food Depository as well, Morton-Langston said.

Carter dropped off the food that was donated from his office. He said he supported WCRX and the Radio Department's initiative to give back to the community. He said there are too many cases of colleges that have not become involved in their cities and communities or show interest in giving back to the community, but he said Columbia is clearly different from those institutions.

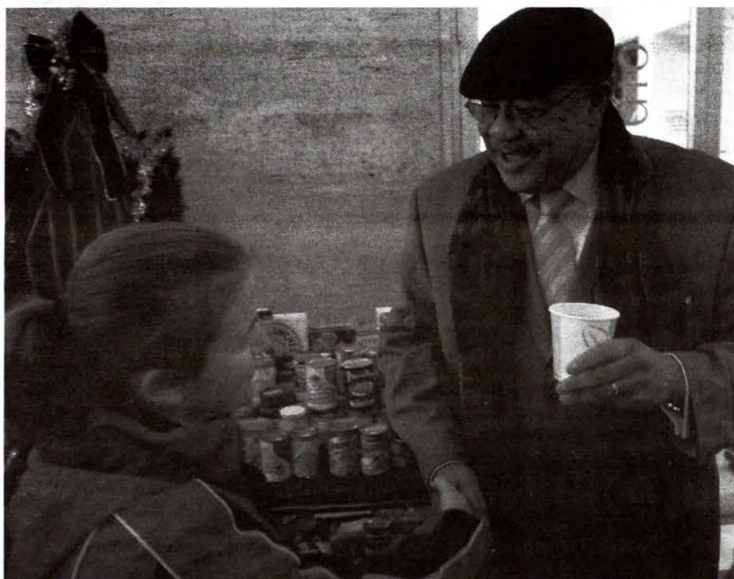
"It's one of the signature events of the college," Carter said. "We are showing that not only are we a good educational institution, but we are concerned about the communities in which we live."

George Kmetty, a sophomore television major, said he was delighted to see Carter attend the event and found the food drive enjoyable.

"It's really great to get out and help people build a stronger community," Kmetty said. "[It's] a great event [and] any opportunity to help the disadvantaged is a great experience."

Individuals can still donate food, canned goods and money to the Greater Chicago Food Depository through its website, [ChicagoFoodBank.org](http://ChicagoFoodBank.org).

[dkucynda@chroniclemail.com](mailto:dkucynda@chroniclemail.com)



Columbia President Warrick L. Carter talks to a Columbia student after donating food at the Holly Jolly Trolley Food Drive at the 33 E. Congress Parkway Building.

Chuck Wu THE CHRONICLE

## More students studying abroad

by Shay Bapple  
Staff Writer

A RECENT study shows a record number of American students have been flocking overseas to study abroad and Columbia students are experiencing reverberations of this mad rush.

During the 2005-2006 school year, 100 Columbia students studied abroad through the college's program and during the 2006-2007 school year that number doubled to 200, according to Chris Greiner, director of International Programs at Columbia. Greiner said he believes the number will double again in 2008.

The increase of students studying abroad at Columbia is a reflection of the rise in the number of students in these programs nationwide, according to a study released on Nov. 12 by the Institute of International Education.

Last year, 223,534 students nationwide decided to study in a foreign country, up from 8.5 percent in 2005, according to the study.

The total number of students who study outside the United States has increased 144 percent over the past decade, the report shows.

Greiner said student interest in study abroad at Columbia has increased because of the college's effort to promote different programs as well as the growing number of students who want to expand their learning on a global level. Currently, Columbia has exchange programs with schools in Dublin, London and Paris, although Greiner's office works with hundreds of schools in countries all over the world for various programs.

Greiner said since Columbia opened its office of Academic Initiatives and International Programs three years ago, he has seen the numbers of students who visit the office multiply.

"Traffic in the office is easily five times what it was three years ago," Greiner said. "Interest is very high right now."

The only study abroad aid currently available from Columbia is the \$1,500 Kamoinge-Ferman, which is offered through the Lib-

eral Education Department.

Greiner said Columbia is currently working on creating more college-wide scholarships and his office does help students to look for outside scholarships.

Some popular destinations for study abroad students at Columbia are European countries including England, France, Italy and Spain, Greiner said. After Europe, Central and South America are the next desired destinations, he said.

Columbia students' favorite programs correlate with the national study's findings and show that the number of traveling students who studied in Western Europe increased by 45 percent in 2006. The study also showed Asia increased in destination popularity by 35 percent from 2005 to 2006.

John Duncan, project manager of StudyAbroad.com, a website that posts a directory of programs and links to scholarship information, said students' increasing interest in studying abroad and in particular coun-

tries could be linked to watching shows like "Survivor" on CBS or the location of the summer Olympics.

"Never underestimate pop culture," Duncan said. "It adds to the popularity of certain countries, like when the Olympics were in Australia a few years ago, there was a big interest in going there."

Not all Columbia students have found study abroad programs in their best interest. Senior radio major, Chris Tourloukis, said he never took advantage of a study abroad program and never had any desire to.

Tourloukis said he can see why other students would want to travel for school, but he would personally have different motivations for traveling overseas.

"If there was a country that I wanted to visit, I wouldn't want to study when I'm there," Tourloukis said. "I would want to party, not read a book."

[chronicle@colum.edu](mailto:chronicle@colum.edu)



# Group has winning year

Columbia's new Amnesty International chapter receives regional award

by Rita Boland  
Staff Writer

NEW TO campus this semester, Columbia's Amnesty International chapter is already receiving regional recognition for its accomplishments in human rights awareness on campus and off.

They received the award for Most Outstanding Student Group at the Amnesty International Midwestern Conference, held Nov. 2-4 in Omaha, Neb.

"They are very proactive about collecting information and getting up to speed about issues involving campus and the broader community," said Dori Dinsmore, Amnesty International Chicago Media Relations director. "Being that they were a brand new group, they really stood out by immediately taking action."

Dinsmore said the group took part in a protest outside the Chinese Consulate for the rights of oppressed Burmese.

Over the course of the semester, the students also organized two movie screenings and a Critical Encounters discussion panel.

"I was really proud of them," said Andre Foisy, the group's faculty adviser. "They were up against schools like University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University and other schools from all over the Midwest."

Currently, the Columbia chapter has eight active members.

"My friends and I felt there was an interest in human rights on campus," said Austin Heredia, who founded the group

with his friends after taking Shayna Plaut's Human Rights class. "In the past, groups had been started but had a hard time gaining momentum."

Since the award, the group has continued its activism by holding a booth at the diversity fair at Jones College Prep on Nov. 30 to encourage others to participate in human rights, and by participating in the Karma Fair, an expo of nonprofit groups, in the Hokin Annex in the Wabash Campus Building, 623 S. Wabash Ave., on Dec. 5.

Heredia said he would like to see more curricula at Columbia pertaining to human rights.

"We would like to see ... more formal education than the two classes offered now or possibly a certificate program or minor," Heredia said.

With the help of Foisy, who is also the head of the Chicago chapter of U.S. Campaign for Burma, the group is tentatively planning a trip to Thailand next summer to work on the Burma border. Several fundraisers are in the works to support this venture, including an event called "Jamnesty."

"Jamnesty" will include a concert, games and a raffle that students can enter by writing two letters to their congressman about a specific cause, Heredia said. The event is tentatively planned for the spring semester.

"They are doing a lot of hard work and a lot of amazing things," said Miranda Nicholson, a junior arts, entertainment and media management major and Student Organization Council chair who organized the Karma Fair. "I have a spot in my heart for them."

chronicle@colum.edu



Left: Stephanie Velasco, a freshman fiction writing major, Casey Hart, a junior art and design major and Austin Heredia, a junior marketing communication major are members of Columbia's Amnesty International Chapter.

Tim Hunt THE CHRONICLE



Left: Seanna Persson works at a booth representing the Beth Uriel Home in South Africa. Fashion design major Georgia Voulgaris peruses the crafts.

Tim Hunt THE CHRONICLE

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## U-PASS

**VERY IMPORTANT:**

- **DO NOT USE YOUR U-PASS BEFORE JANUARY 28, 2008**
- U-Passes are not active until the first day of school.
- If you use your card prior to the activation date, it will be captured and you will be responsible for the \$35 replacement fee.

**Bring your student ID and schedule to verify your full-time student status**

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&  
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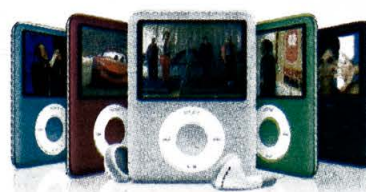
## GET YOUR U-PASS AND AN I-POD THIS WEEK!

Conaway Center  
1104 South Wabash Avenue, First Floor

Friday, January 25:

9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

**Come in on Friday for your chance to win an I-pod Mini!**



### Other Distribution dates:

Monday, January 28: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Tuesday, January 29: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Wednesday, January 30: 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

The I-pod raffle will end on **FRIDAY JANUARY 25.**

[www.colum.edu/upass](http://www.colum.edu/upass)



# 'Intersections' compares views on terrorism

Panelists discuss legal implications of war, terrorism

by Derek Kucynda

Assistant Campus News Editor

IN A post-9/11 world, court systems are afraid of challenging the executive branch and the government has started to refuse basic rights to possible terror suspects, according to panelists at a recent Columbia event.

The panelists at "Intersections," which took place on Dec. 5 at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St., included H. Candace Gorman, a civil rights attorney, Raja Halwani, the chair of the Liberal Arts Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Robert Watkins, a full-time faculty member in Columbia's Liberal Education Department. The panelists discussed the political, philosophical and moral components and consequences of terrorism and how individuals and the government neglect certain social, political, ethical and legal procedures and aspects.

"Intersections" is a collaboration between Columbia's Cultural Studies Department and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. Together they host instructors and guest speakers who present discussions that provoke thought on important issues affecting modern-day society, Watkins said. Topics have ranged from sex and entertainment to globalization and death.

Teresa Prados-Torreira, a full-time faculty member in the Cultural Studies and Liberal Education Department and coordinator of the Dec. 5 "Intersections" event, met Halwani last summer while he served as an external reviewer to assess the performance of the Liberal Education Department at Columbia. During that time, Halwani and Prados-Torreira discussed potential "Intersections" themes and they eventually chose the post-9/11 climate and its connection to terrorism as the topic to be discussed at the panel discussion, Halwani said. After formulating the idea, Prados-Torreira found guest speakers to refine the topic by discussing three specific aspects of terrorism and its relation to the post 9/11 world.

The panelists showed specific presentations illustrating the perception of living in a world filled with governmental denial, innocent bloodshed and media exploitation. Through their presentations, they discussed the philosophical and political definitions of terrorism, the current political environment and the repercussions of

war.

Specifically, Watkins' presentation discussed the concept of vulnerability and its relationship to terrorism. He said the privatization of such contractors like Blackwater will leave the United States more vulnerable to terrorism.

Halwani presented the definitions of terrorism from a political and philosophical standpoint and explored the ethics of terrorism, listing examples of why the war on terror is morally wrong.

Gorman represents two alleged terrorists who are currently prisoners in Guantanamo Bay. She discussed the legalities of terrorism, saying that detainees held at Guantanamo Bay for allegedly committing acts of terrorism were thrown into jail without any justified cause from the United States government.

Gorman said the number of men held at Guantanamo Bay has drastically decreased since the Iraqi war began. She said there were 800 people who were detained at that time. Now, there are 305 detainees at Guantanamo Bay, which she said is attributed to the government's ignorance of proper legal procedures in terrorist cases and the rights these supposed terrorists currently do not have.

Gorman said the current administra-

tion is disregarding the Supreme Court and their decision to give these prisoners basic rights.

"If we are going to give up the fundamental rights for these [prisoners], we will eventually lose our rights ourselves," Gorman said.

Nora Freeman, a senior cultural studies major, was struck by the makeup of the audience. She said she noticed the lack of students at "Intersections," but the older audience members and the panelists were able to shed light on some of the questions Freeman had about terrorism and the legalities surrounding it.

"I got a lot of factual information about our country's acts, [which] I haven't been as responsive [to]," Freeman said. "Hearing about the suspension of Habeas Corpus in [terrorists'] cases was informative."

Freeman said the panel discussion helped her understand how terrorists and their basic liberties relate to the Cultural Studies Department curriculum.

"Cultural Studies is the study of power relations and clearly here [at this panel], they are talking about people who are being marginalized and having their rights taken away," Freeman said.

The goal of "Intersections" is to bring attention to culturally-relevant topics that

have a root in liberal education, Watkins said. He said "Intersections" serves as an opportunity for professors to share their work and their interests with others in the Chicago community.

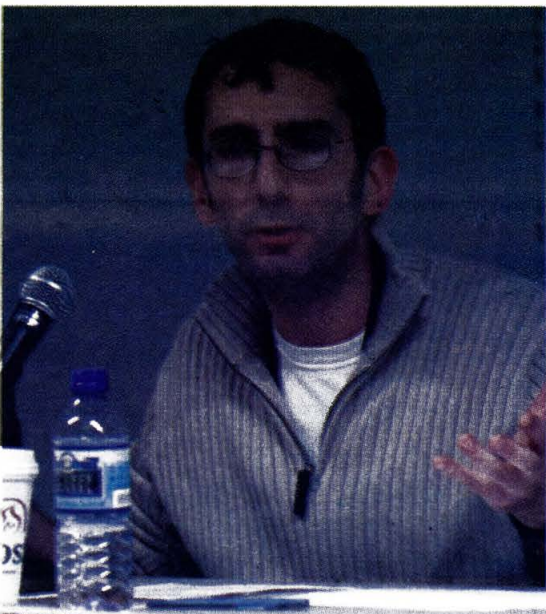
"Intersections" benefits the Cultural Studies Department indirectly by allowing professors to present their ideas and opinions in public and return to class to share what they found by interacting with the public, Watkins said.

Prados-Torreira said the panel discussion is a way for teachers to project themselves and their opinions beyond their respective departments.

"What we want to do is to have an opportunity to talk about social, cultural [and] political issues that we think are important and to discuss those issues with the Chicago community," Prados-Torreira said.

"Intersections" will present a panel discussion on the concept of self and identity in regards to Western and Eastern teachings and identity. It will take place on March 5 at 6 p.m. at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St. For more information, visit [Intersections.Colum.edu](http://Intersections.Colum.edu).

[dkucynda@chroniclemail.com](mailto:dkucynda@chroniclemail.com)



Raja Halwani speaks about the definition of terrorism during 'Intersections,' a panel discussion at the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St.

Andrew A. Nelles THE CHRONICLE



Robert Watkins, a full-time faculty member in the Liberal Education Department, discusses the vulnerability of war and terrorism in society at 'Intersections' on Dec. 5.

Andrew A. Nelles THE CHRONICLE

## » WABASH

Continued from Front Page

College officials say they expect landlord to fix elevators as promised

Records show the building also falls in sync with the pattern of elevator problems that spatter most Columbia property. Tenants of 218 S. Wabash Ave. have been voicing the same complaints for almost 15 years.

Lloyd said Lord has promised to remedy the elevator situation and has already taken steps in that direction.

But when asked if he had chosen a bidder to take on the project, Lord said he did not have any details to share at the time of press, but they would be coming soon.

"It's a process that's undergoing," Lord said.

The building's 11 elevator-related citations to date include several resulting in the freight elevator being ordered to be shut down in 1997 and one citing a defective emergency signal in a passenger elevator in 2002.

Lloyd said the college's rental of 34,500 square feet over three floors makes Columbia an important tenant with the leverage to get Lord to replace the elevators as he has promised.

"We expect the landlord to keep his pledge to us [to replace the elevators]," Lloyd said.

Kelly Saulsberry, assistant to the executive director at the Institute for the Study of Women and Gender in the Arts and Media,

said the elevators she takes to the 7th floor dysfunction on a frequent basis, but not daily.

*"It's a process that's undergoing."*

—R. Bruce Lord, landlord of

218 S. Wabash Ave.

as having the same problems more than a decade ago.

Columbia's Center for Book and Paper Arts occupied the 7th floor of 218 S. Wabash Ave. from 1994 to 1999, when it moved to its current location in the 1104 Center, 1104 S. Wabash Ave.

Bill Drendel, director of the Center for Book and Paper Arts, said he could not believe the building still had not received

new elevators since they were tenants in the early '90s.

"They seemed to be out all the time," Drendel said. "I can't believe [they're still out]."

Drendel said the elevators would either not work at all or stop at the wrong floor.

"All the time, anything you could imagine going wrong with an elevator would happen frequently," he said.

Audrey Niffenegger, an adjunct faculty member in the Center for Book and Paper Arts, said she remembers the 218 S. Wabash Ave. transportation devices as the "elevators of death."

"One of our student interns, who was diabetic, was trapped on one of them for 45 minutes once," Niffenegger said. "She said her life was flashing before her eyes when she was finally released."

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# SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Critical Encounters' Roots and Routes: Weekly personal narratives of Poverty and Privilege

'Robin Hood Fantasy'

by Jennie Fauls  
Faculty member, English Department

COUNTRY CLUBS awaken the criminal in me. For the last 35 years I have attended holiday dinners at my grandparents' exclusive club. I have always been compelled to leave each event with something that doesn't belong to me. As a child, decked out in monogrammed dresses and tiny embroidered gloves, I jacked Tootsie Roll pops from the dining room host's mahogany podium.

As I grew up, my paisley purse would seem to fill itself with matchbooks from the ladies' golf locker room, mini pencils from the caddy stands and tissue-wrapped soaps from the lounge. My desire to rip these people off seemed subconscious until recently. What was it about this shining world of privilege that begged to be Robin Hooded?

My history with this place is actually pretty loaded. My parents did not share the values (or bank accounts) of their parents. We grudgingly participated in these rituals, thinking all the time, "this is not us." But a sick entitlement washed over us each time we entered the oak and leather-rich salons. It's hard not to get somewhat sucked in as champagne flows and the ratio of servants to guests is an obvious 3 to 1. Perhaps that's why, at some point, I decided to appropriate as much of these fancy gentleman's stuff as I could.

The most satisfying element was that no one else in my family was brave or game

critical encounters:

**POVERTY**  
+ privilege

enough to join me. They actually respected the idea that rich people should keep their heinous goods. As if! I absolve myself of any real wrongdoing by musing that, if any of my highbrow, private school-going, sorority-bound cousins had shared in my longing to fight the power, then we would have done this "for fun." And that would be wrong.

But finding myself alone in my repulsion, this endeavor became a noble quest; a gesture toward justice.

Time went on and my heisting instincts reached new heights. It didn't take a master sleuth to discover the women didn't lock their lockers after they trotted off to the green. Nor did it require a Sherlock Holmes-like insight to realize the coat room was left unlocked when the attendant took his breaks.

Look, I never stole a car.

But didn't these blowhard captains of industry deserve to lose a few crisp bills from the pockets of their Burberry coats?

Fast forward to a black tie event at the same club last year. I was 34. I had been educated and joined the workforce. I paid taxes and understood that sometimes it is hard work that merits financial success. And yet, the smugness that blasted me in the face as I surveyed the room conjured a



Jennie Fauls, a faculty member in the English Department, conquers her habit of stealing.

Rachael Strecher THE CHRONICLE

small, convincing voice: "Take them down," it gently whispered. "Liberate what they don't even deserve." Well, if I have learned anything in this life, it's that you should never dismiss the voices in your head.

So, as a creepy cabaret-jazz trio belted Cole Porter tunes, as shrimp was passed on silver trays, as nameless, faceless waitstaff refilled wine glasses, I stealthily ducked into the coatroom.

Resurrecting my childhood crime-wave felt thrilling, but more precarious than in the past. I sought to close the book on needing to take what they had. I wanted to move forward in a way that would allow me to see myself as the wealthy one—wealthy in understanding, compassion and openness.

I closed the door behind me and stood among the cruel furs, silky stoles and Daddy Warbucks topcoats. I scanned the

rows up and down to identify my targets. Even from feet away I could point out the pockets that bulged. These people trusted each other, even their staff, enough to leave valuable items vulnerable.

Alas, after a minute or two, in a huff of defeat, my age overrode my quest. What I thought I needed from my privileged surroundings was ... something I thankfully didn't need anymore. I slipped out of the coatroom, pocketed the Tootsie Roll pops from the host's stand, and sullenly blended back into the crowd.

The cabaret played a melancholy version of "In the Still of the Night."

For more information about Critical Encounters and this weekly column, visit [www.colum.edu/criticalencounters](http://www.colum.edu/criticalencounters).

## Attention Students!

Are you current on your student account balance?

If not, you will be restricted from registering for spring classes. SFS has placed **REGISTRATION HOLDS** on student accounts that are not current on their balance. Students are notified of holds through their Columbia student email account and by the Student Financial Services help line call campaign.

In order to have your hold removed, your student account must be current!

Check your current balance or financial aid status by logging on to OASIS.

Payments can be made online through CCCPay, by mail (sent to the SFS contact address below,) or in person at the cashier window located at 600 S. Michigan Ave on the 3rd floor.

If you have any additional questions, or would like to review your financing options, please contact SFS by dialing our toll-free help line: 1.866.705.0200. You can also visit our Customer Service Options webpage: [www.colum.edu/sfs](http://www.colum.edu/sfs)

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STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

600 S. Michigan Ave, St 303  
Chicago, IL 60605

Columbia 

COLLEGE CHICAGO



# American dreams

*a photo essay by Chuck Wu*

m

y father left China when I was 11 years old. Like many people from different countries, he came to the U.S. because he believed that it offered a better future for him and his family. He didn't speak a word of English when he came, but he knew he could still make a living in

this country as many others before him had succeeded one way or another. I came a year later, followed by my mother. As a family, we are still working hard to create a comfortable living environment.

This project is about people like my father and the families like mine that are at the start of their journey to find and create a better life. They are Chinese immigrants. Some are legal, some are not and some end up at this particular unauthorized hostel in Chicago.

People at the hostel come and go. Some arrived from other cities in search of a better job. Some have returned after losing their jobs, and some just come to rest after an exhausting day of work. Though the way in which they arrive at the hostel varies, they share a common goal: to create a life they want to live.



This man was a cook in China before he came here about five years ago. He is taking a break from the restaurant business. He has lived in the house for about a month and he plans to start work again at the beginning of the year. "When you work in the kitchen for more than 30 years, it really takes a toll on your body," he said. "I'm at a point where my body just can't work anymore."



Breakfast is being prepared in the kitchen on a Saturday morning. Not everyone is awake yet. Most of the people, who share a room, go to sleep around 2 a.m.

They enjoy chatting on the Internet, watching movies on a laptop, playing mah-jong, Chinese chess, poker or just conversing.



Playing mah-jong is one way the men pass the time at night.



## life inside one of Chicago's unauthorized Chinese hostels

This man came to the U.S. more than one month ago. He moved to Los Angeles after not finding work in New York when he arrived. He then found a job in Iowa working in a restaurant. He worked there for about 28 days before the owner replaced him with someone who would work for less. Now he is in Chicago, learning English and searching for a job. He said his son, who is a junior in college, is his inspiration because he is at the top of his class in China.



The older man (left) was a retired army soldier from China when he came here 14 years ago. He worked at restaurants across the U.S. for five years, then opened up his own restaurant nine years after. Now he is retired again, waiting to gain U.S. citizenship. After that, he will bring his family to the U.S. and send his daughter to school. The man on the right, who came to the U.S. three years ago, is looking for a job after being fired from a restaurant in another state.

Two men look at pictures and talk about their families back home. The man on the right is proud to have a wife 20 years his junior.



Playing mah-jong with money makes it easy for the men to concentrate on the game.



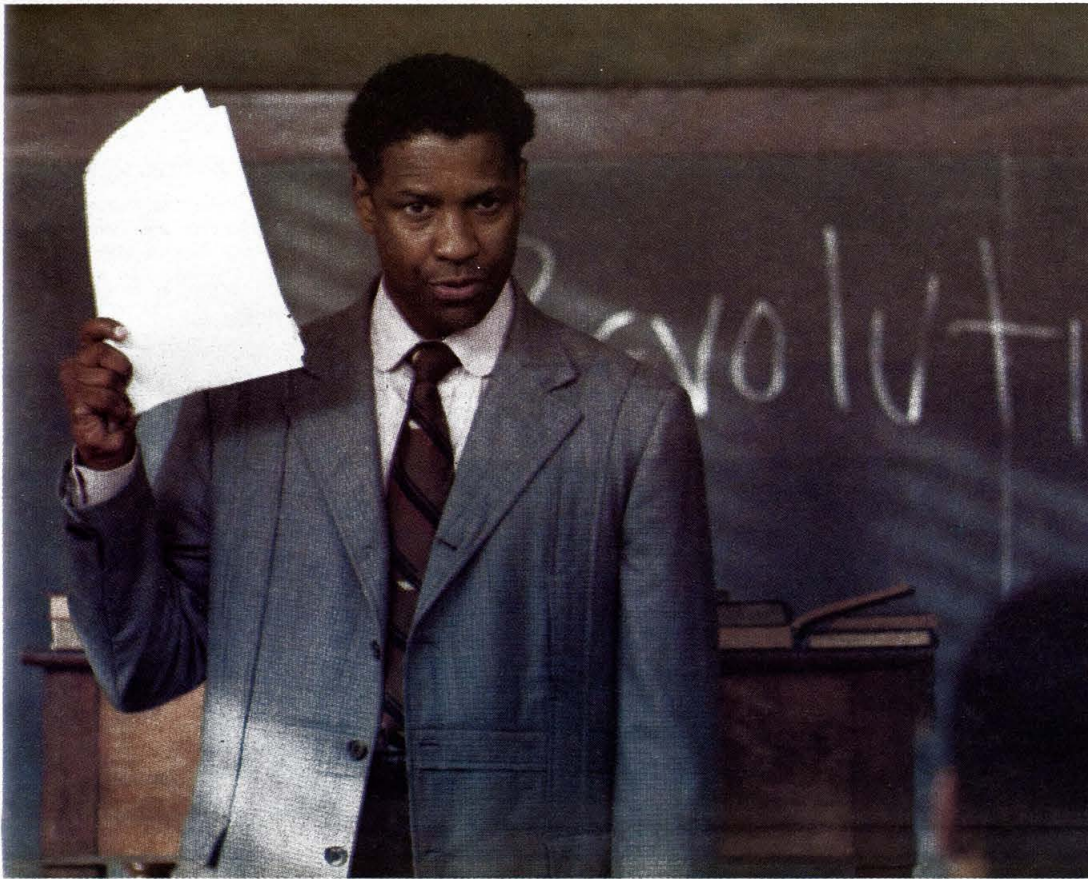
At 2 a.m. a man chats online with a woman from Beijing. He has been here for about four years, and like many others, he is taking a break from the stressful life of working in a restaurant.



The younger man on the left considers the older man his teacher. When they are not opponents in mah-jong, they joke and tease each other.



# Arts & Entertainment



In his second directing endeavor, 'The Great Debaters,' Denzel Washington portrays a teacher at an all-black school who inspires his students to reach their potential.

Courtesy HARPO FILMS

## From gangster to debater

**Denzel Washington discusses directing and starring in his latest film, 'The Great Debaters'**

by Matt Fagerholm  
Assistant A&E Editor

DENZEL WASHINGTON has a very specific vision of success. To him, success is getting every young person in America to see his latest film.

*The Great Debaters*, which opens Dec. 25, is Washington's second directorial effort based on a true story. He stars as Melvin Tolson, a controversial professor in Texas's Wiley College in 1935, who led his class to compete in the national debate championship. The film stars a large cast of fresh-faced unknowns alongside Forest Whitaker and is produced by Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Films.

The Chronicle recently spoke with Washington about directing himself, finding new talent and utilizing his celebrity influence to make films he believes in.

**The Chronicle: What attracted you to this particular script?**

Denzel Washington: As a script it made you laugh, it made you cry, it made you cheer and that's good enough for me. I was just attracted to the fact that it was about the spoken word. One of the dominant aspects of our culture is hip-hop, poetry



Oscar-winner Denzel Washington stars in and directs 'The Great Debaters.'

MCT

and rap, [and] I recognized that link. I think of it as a sports movie. Debate was huge entertainment in those days, before there was television. Everybody used to come out for these events. These young professors could go to the Harvards and the Yales, but they couldn't teach in those schools. So a lot of them came back to these small

schools like Wiley. They had something like 360 students, but they had these excellent teachers. And it was a unique laboratory for learning.

**Among the young ensemble is Jurnee Smollett, who has been receiving buzz similar to Derek Luke in your first film, *Antwone Fisher*.**

In the case of Jurnee, she came in and read with another actor, and I liked her so much that I didn't read any other people for the part. Plus my wife put some pressure on me because she likes her. Before I became an actor I worked for the Boys and Girls Clubs [of America and] the YMCA. I worked with children all my life, so I really am comfortable working with young people and trying to encourage and inspire them. I've had obviously 25 or 30 years of experience, and things have gone pretty well for me as an actor. I'm all for sharing all I know with them and trying to create an environment where they aren't afraid to fail and take chances.

**So far you've starred in both films that you've directed.**

It's strictly business. I didn't want to be in either film. To get the money, basically, the studio said, "Well if you're not in the film, your budget is [decreased]." So they back you into a corner, and they give you

»DENZEL, PG. 19

## Calendar

### Monday

At The Rising Star Showcase at Zanies Comedy Night Club, 1548 N. Wells St., a line-up of 10-15 comics will perform. Tickets are \$10, and the show, 21-and-up, starts at 8:30 p.m.

Call (312) 337-4027 for more information.

### Tuesday

Chris Burden performed "Doomed at the MCA" 32 years ago, laying under glass for 45 hours. Burden discusses his latest works at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave., at 6 p.m. It's free with museum admission, \$6 for students.

Call (312) 280-2660 for more information.

### Wednesday

Perceptual Motion Dance Company, 4057 N. Damen Ave., will host its Dance Dance Party Party, a ladies-only open dance session, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$5.

Visit [DanceDancePartyParty.com](http://DanceDancePartyParty.com) for more information.

### Thursday

The Tattoo Factory, 4441 N. Broadway St., will host its holiday party/food drive with The Spot, 4437 N. Broadway St., at 8 p.m. It's free, but bring non-perishable food items and kids' winter accessories to donate.

Call (312) 280-2660 for more information.

### Friday

"A Charlie Chaplin Christmas" shows at the Studio Theater of the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph St. Tickets are \$15-\$20.

Call (312) 744-6630 for more information.

### Saturday

The 6th annual Great Chicago Anthrax Scare and Santa Hat Run, a four-mile run, is at 2 p.m., followed by post-race drinks. The run starts at The Hidden Shamrock, 2723 N. Halsted St., and costs \$30.

Call (312) 409-2337 for more information.

### Sunday

The Modern Vintage Holiday Market will be at the space once occupied by Tower Records, 2301 N. Clark St., from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10.

Call (312) 951-9939 for more information.



Smucker Spreads the Word

## Give gifts from the heart



by Luke Smucker  
Assistant A&E Editor

Every year, Christmas seems to get more and more expensive. Maybe that has more to do with the fact that my brothers and I are getting older and the things that used to impress them, like cheap *X-Men* and *Power Rangers* action figures, have given way to bigger, more costly things, like the video game *Rock Band* and the Nintendo Wii. So this year, as I was making my list of what I was going to get my close family members, I literally had to check it twice. I realized I wouldn't be able to get everyone everything I wanted to get them with my limited college budget. Then, I began to reflect on one of my most memorable Christmas memories.

While I will be the first to admit that it's great to see someone's face light up when they open a package and see the gift inside, I think the greatest gifts are the ones that are personal, that people really put thought into. Though being left-handed has never been a serious issue for me, I'll always remember the year my father bought me a pair of left-handed scissors.

"Here you go, son," he said. "I know you're always using the right-handed scissors, and I figured you might want a pair just for you."

I remember that at first I thought the gift

was really lame, and I just kind of tossed it aside. But as I thought about it more, I began to realize this pair of scissors, with its red ergonomic handle and gray blades, was a gift just for me. It wasn't expensive, it wasn't anything flashy and yet, I believe it was one of the best gifts I've ever received. To me, it was my dad's way of showing me how much he cared and that he thought of me.

For me, growing closer to family and moving away to go to college has made Christmas shopping more difficult. Whether I'm working, hanging out with friends or studying for a class, I always seem to be too busy to visit home. This isn't really a problem until the holidays come around and I realize I don't have any idea what people want or what they might already have. And I am not the only one who deals with this problem. When I worked at a record store, every day during the holiday season, a few customers would ask me what the cool-

est new toy was or where they could find a Nintendo Xbox.

These days, the meaning of the holidays, family and togetherness, has been replaced with a desire to find the latest and greatest gifts as a way to show you still care. Instead of trying to find something expensive to compensate for a lack of communication, people should try to rebuild the connections they have lost. My favorite holiday memories are when I was glad to see everyone sitting in the living room, happy and healthy. So this year, if you're trying to figure out what to buy people and not really knowing what they have and what they want, stop and think for a second. Instead of seeing where you can find the latest and greatest gifts money can buy, think of something you can get that's more personal. Find those left-handed scissors.

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Chrissy Knows Best

## Clothing hybrids half the fun



by Chrissy Mahlmeister  
Managing Editor

Some clothes confuse the heck out of me. I feel as if some designers have made a mockery of us by trying to make clothing hybrids (aka one piece of clothing that tries to pull off the duties of two).

Personally I think hybrids are never as good as their counterparts. They just can't do both jobs 100 percent. Over the years, we've all fallen victim to these "transitional" or "practical" clothing inventions, but don't listen to anyone else about these garments. They are all huge mistakes in the game of life. Since we now all need a lifetime of retail therapy, let's have a group session and reminisce on the clothes that

baffled us most.

**Skorts:** I used to don the skort from time to time, but really I was just living a big fat lie. Everyone thought I was wearing a skirt but underneath, hidden, were (gasp!) shorts. Why can't people just pick one or the other? If you don't want to wear a skirt, that's fine, but what's with the foolage? I don't know what the deal is with women's obsession to trick the general public on a daily basis. Hair dye, push-up bras, extensions, makeup, fake nails and now skorts. Just wear shorts; there are plenty of other things to worry about. Also, one turn-around to the backside and you're found out!

**Zubaz:** Thank goodness these "pants" somehow worked their way out of existence (er, I hope). With their elastic waistband, tapered cut, billowy crotch and zebra patterns so loud it's deafening, these pants were a huge hit in the early '90s. But what exactly were they? Sweatpants for the gym? Sports-fan wear? A fashionista statement? And the biggest question: Are these even considered real pants? Personally, anything without a fly is a no-go for me. So this seems like a big trick to get the public to walk around in their PJs all day, and I'm no fan.

**Water shoes:** Let me get this straight—

shoes for the water? Last time I checked, we weren't amphibians. Isn't that what flip flops are for? Everyone knows those aren't real shoes. I can't see the point of anyone wanting their entire foot covered in some mesh and then walking around with sopping wet shoes after they've waded in the ocean. Sandals just seem much more practical for this occasion, which is where my confusion of this product arises. They're like useless flippers and terrible jogging shoes combined. They aren't good in either earth arena.

**Culottes:** So, basically, someone somewhere wanted the roomiest shorts possible, so they just made a skirt, kept the fabric, but sewed a seam up the middle. Could these bad boys get any more fabric-happy? I mean, everyone thinks they're so "uncool" and "soccer mom," but look around, my little friends. We have been fooled. Gauchos are culottes that have risen from the dead but in a different form. Let's examine them: Extremely excessive fabric? Check. From far away looks like an A-line skirt? Check. Waves briskly in the wind? Check. Confuses the heck out of everyone? Check.

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## Best Bets

### Music

*Big Head Todd & The Monsters at Dirty Nellie's*

Big Head Todd & The Monsters have a platinum selling album under their belts, 1993's *Sister Sweetly*. The band will be playing a free show at Dirty Nellie's, 180 N. Smith St., in Palatine, Ill., on Dec. 13 at 9 p.m. The show is ages 21-and-up.

Call (847) 589-9150 for more information.

### Film

*Helvetica returns to Gene Siskel Film Center*

No film proved to be as big of a runaway hit at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 N. State St., as British director Gary Hustwit's crowd-pleasing documentary *Helvetica*. The film celebrates the 50th anniversary of the titular typeface, exploring its history and widespread influence. Catch *Helvetica* for what may be its final theatrical run in Chicago, from Dec. 14 through Dec. 20. The show starts at 6:15 p.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Friday; 3 p.m., 4:45 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. on Saturday; 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on Sunday.

Call (312) 111-2600 for more information.

### Food

*Cooking demo at Green Market*

On Dec. 12, Chef Bruce Sherman of North Pond Cafe will give cooking demonstrations at the Green City Market, housed in the Peggy Notebart Nature Museum, 2430 N. Cannon Drive. The market is open from 7 a.m. to noon, and Sherman will begin his class at 10:30 a.m.

For more information, visit [ChicagoGreenCityMarket.org](http://ChicagoGreenCityMarket.org).

### Class

*Whistling workshop at Old Town School of Folk Music*

Whistling has always been a nice way to pass the time with a simple tune. The Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln Ave., is offering a workshop on Dec. 16 that will teach you the basic skills needed to become an expert whistler. Participants will get help with improving pitch, tone control and to possibly move up to advanced skills like musical whistling. Francesco Bonifazi, an experienced "puccalo" player, will teach the class, which costs \$30, from 3 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.

Visit [OldTownSchool.org](http://OldTownSchool.org) to register for the class.



# Young jeweler is head-over-heels for Barbie

Artist makes fashionable accessories from doll parts

by Luke Smucker  
Assistant A&E Editor

SHE KEEPS thousands of torsos, heads, eyes and hands in separate plastic containers. Though this may sound like the calling card of the average Hollywood movie monster, Margaux Lange has combined her love of plastic doll parts and jewelry making to create her own line of sterling silver and gold earrings, necklaces, bracelets and rings.

Lange, 28, from Brooklyn, N.Y., has always had an obsession with Barbie dolls. When she was a girl, she loved how she could make a Barbie's world come to life by creating props, buildings and clothing for the doll out of household materials. Today, she is an artist whose specialty is making jewelry from pieces of Barbie dolls. They were once sold in places like the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave., but can now only be bought on her website. Lange said she does a lot of buying of her own these days; she buys used Barbie dolls.

Lange said she really loved working with sterling silver and wanted to work with metals. She also wanted to integrate her love of Barbie into her work and decided to implement used Barbie dolls that she finds on eBay, at garage sales or through donations.

"I am a big-time thrifter and garage-sale hunter," Lange said. "I was just thrilled I had come up with something that was very original. [Barbie] meant something to me growing up, so I felt a strong connection to [her]."

When she went to Maryland Institute

College of Art in 1997, the school didn't offer a specific jewelry course, so she had to take classes through the continuing education program. She began to take her love for making jewelry more seriously in 2002, when a curator of Chicago's Woman Made Gallery exhibit, 685 N. Milwaukee Ave., chose to purchase one of her pieces. It was a necklace consisting of multiple eyes that Lange made for her own personal collection while she was in college.

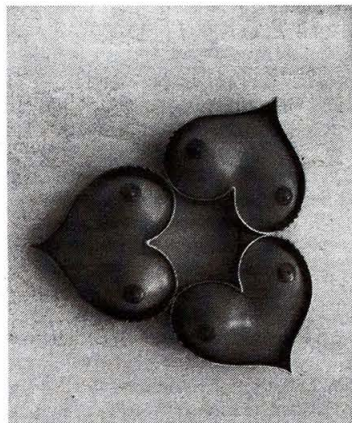
Maxine Weintraub, the jewelry and accessory buyer for the Museum of Contemporary Art, saw some of Lange's earrings and pins at a gallery in New York City and thought they were so outstanding that she e-mailed Lange and asked if she could sell it in the jewelry section of store at the museum gift shop.

Weintraub said she is always looking for unusual or unexpected uses of materials to sell for the Museum of Contemporary Art. She said at the museum, they sell jewelry made out of things including rubber, zippers, polyurethane, hot glue and stones. She thought Lange's work was very imaginative. A few years ago, Weintraub bought earrings and pins from Lange and said people's reactions to the jewelry were very positive.

"They loved it," Weintraub said. "There was someone in just the other day looking for a piece."

Another person who has always loved Lange's work is her college roommate Kate Cusack. She said when they began living together, Lange showed her a special box that she kept full of jewelry she made in high school.

Sterling silver rings with the right half of Ken's plastic head protruding from in the center, bracelets made up of Barbie arms nailed together at the elbow and a



Brooklyn, N.Y. resident Margaux Lange hand-makes all her own original pieces with plastic body parts and cuts the silver out of sheets before it is formed, soldered and shaped.

Courtesy MARGAUX LANGE

necklace with four hearts on it made out of sets of Lange's Barbie torsos are just a few examples of Margaux's hand-crafted work. Some of the examples on her website, MargauxLange.com, can even be purchased for \$70-\$165.

"I always remember she was very proud of her work," Cusack said.

Lange said it takes a specific kind of person to appreciate her jewelry. Lange said the galleries she has chosen to sell her art are places that have a solid base of clients who are bold enough to wear something that is going to spark a conversation.

"It takes a certain person with a little more boldness [who is] daring enough [to wear it]," she said.

One person who said she would not feel comfortable wearing Lange's jewelry is Gina Castiglioni, a Columbia arts, entertainment and media management

student who graduated in Fall 2006. Castiglioni said she would not wear the jewelry because of the ideology that the doll stands for.

"Barbie is a stereotype of how society thinks a woman should look; I wouldn't want [anyone] to [think I support] that," Castiglioni said.

Despite the fact that not everyone is a fan of her art, Lange said her online store at Etsy.com, which she describes as the MySpace.com of the craft world, has been selling a lot of products to people who find her style of art to be very intriguing.

"This is how I make my living," Lange said. "The popularity and demand for this work has been so great, it would be foolish to step away from that now; the ideas are still coming."

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## Top 5



Billy Montgomery, Co-Faculty Adviser

### Gifts that last beyond the holidays

**Peace:** So many people crave it, but few people get it. Perhaps it is because it is already inside of us, if we learn to tap into it.

**Love:** Can't really wrap it up in a nice, neat box, but it is something you can take anywhere and give to anyone. It never goes out of style.

**Joy:** Just look back on 2007 and everything you experience and realize you are still here. We have another chance at this thing called life. That is more than enough to give us joy!

**Release:** The year is almost over. It's a good time to release a few 2007 issues to prepare for what the new year has to offer. Next year 2008 is weeks away. In many numerological and spiritual circles, eight is said to be either the number of closure or new beginnings. So take your pick. Do you want to bring closure to something or start a new beginning?

**Rest:** When it is all said and done, isn't this truly the best gift we all can have right about now?



Chris Richert, General Manager

### Things I have always wanted to do

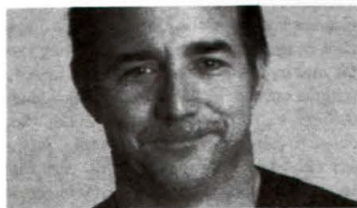
**Own a casino in Vegas:** Can you imagine all the stress, responsibility, work, and oh right ... money? But my entire paycheck would go to the "Wheel of Fortune" slot machine.

**Learn another language:** OK, you all probably think, "He should have done that in high school." Well, I did, but I chose German. I was in it for two years and was only one of seven students in the class. So you would have thought the ratio of teacher time I had was a lot, but I still can't remember anything.

**Shoot a gun:** Clarification: at a target/gun range. My father is recently retired from the police force and an expert shooter. Growing up, I never saw his gun, held it or even really knew it existed, so I feel it necessary to shoot a gun at least once at a range with him. Sort of a sappy father and son moment.

**Win something:** I have won awards and honors, but have never won the lottery, cars, furniture, gift certificates or anything in a raffle. I just have plain bad luck.

**Get a personal driver:** I am very tired of driving myself to and from work, to the grocery store, for errands and to pick up my kids. I don't want a fancy person in a tux, just a regular old driver to pick me up and take me to the places I need to go.



Jim Sulski, Co-Faculty Adviser

### People I spend way too much time with on the couch

**'Doctor Who':** OK, I am a geek. But the re-launch of this classic BBC science fiction show has me re-addicted (I was a fan back in the 1980s). And yes, I have purchased a sonic screwdriver. Stop laughing, please.

**The 'Ace of Cakes':** Take all those trendy, tattooed art students from Columbia and actually have them do something—like work with flour and fondant. That is the gist of the "Ace of Cakes" from the Food Network—edible art that amazes both the palate and the eye.

**Jon Stewart:** No, he is not a journalist (nor does he pretend to be). But "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" is about the news. And it is equal parts smart and funny.

**Sarah Silverman:** Just when you thought sitcoms were starting to wither, along comes "The Sarah Silverman Program." No topic is taboo, and there is a funny dog named Doug to boot.

**My wife:** Actually, I could never get too much time on the couch with her.

## Jack Ass

OF THE WEEK

### Idol Inmate



AP

They sure know how to pick them on "American Idol." The judges must use a fine tooth comb to select the finest talent America has to offer. The contestants might be able to sing, but being civil is another skill that might need its own reality show. If this is what we're to idolize, America, we're in trouble.

Former "American Idol" contestant Jessica Sierra was arrested Dec. 1 outside of a bar in Tampa, Fla. According to WTVT-TV Fox Channel 13 in Tampa, Sierra muttered racial slurs and hit a police officer before offering up sexual favors in return for her release.

The former "Idol" contestant was denied bail Dec. 2, and a judge told the 22-year-old she could face up to 11 years in prison if she is convicted of violating probation for a bar incident earlier this year, according to the Orlando Sentinel.

Club bouncers called two off-duty Tampa Police officers when Sierra refused to leave the bar. Sierra yelled at other patrons and got into an altercation with a friend who was trying to calm her down, FOX 13 reported. The incident happened when Sierra was thrown out of the Full Moon Saloon around 2 a.m. Tampa police told FOX 13 Sierra tried to run when she was getting arrested, but once she was in the back of the police car, she yelled that her aunt was the mayor and the officers would be out of a job before vomiting in the back of the car several times.

Paramedics were called to the scene. An officer told the paramedics that Sierra's eyes were dilated and she could be on narcotics, FOX 13 reported. Hillsborough County Judge Margaret T. Courtney told Sierra at a hearing Dec. 2, "Obviously the bar scene isn't working out so well for you. I suggest you find another form of entertainment. Good luck," the Orlando Sentinel reported. Bond was not set for Sierra as she violated her probation, FOX 13 reported.

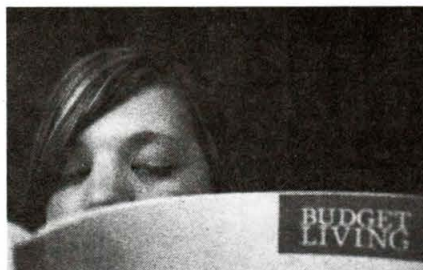
Maybe a different name for the show should be "American Scandal," because it seems contestants and judges on the show seem to be getting themselves into trouble. Does Sierra think being on a popular national television show affords her the opportunity to use that as a means to get out of trouble? So she had some people phone in a few votes here and there for her each week and sang some lame pop ballads with instrumental backups. Big deal. Maybe Sierra should just shut up and sing instead of mouthing off. I'm sure Paula would be proud.

—B. Marlow

# HOW TO:

## Spread holiday cheer

with Jessica Galliard



Consumers pack department stores looking for the best gifts for the holiday season, the radio airwaves are flooded with tunes about wintry weather and workplaces across the country host holiday parties for co-workers to awkwardly mingle: It must be Christmastime!

Though it's the season to be jolly, some may feel overwhelmed by the pressure and stress of the holidays. But if the holidays give you a little pep in your step, here are a few ways to make sure you spread the joy of the season to anyone and everyone you come into contact with.

### Wardrobe

- Holiday sweaters are a must. Guys and girls can sport a bright green and red patterned sweater every day of the week or blue and white patterns for Hanukkah to showcase their pride for the holiday season. Jeans are an OK pairing with the holiday sweater, but, if possible, try to bust out some bright, matching

sweatpants.

- Keep at least one bell on you at all times. Whether this accessory is hung around your neck, attached to a sweater or hanging from an earlobe, co-workers and classmates will be able to hear you coming and anticipate your arrival. They'll say, "It sounds like Christmas!" whenever you walk into a room.

- Switch your perfume/cologne to a sugar cookie scent. This goes for both girls and guys. Nothing says "Christmastime" or "Happy holidays" more than a co-worker who smells like a freshly baked sugar cookie.

### Tunes

- People can't get enough of those catchy Christmas songs. Show your appreciation for holiday harmonies by setting "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" or "I Have a Little Dreidel" as your ringtone on your cell phone. Even better, show everyone how hip and up-to-date you are by download-

ing newer pop renditions of old favorites. Anything from Mariah Carey's Christmas album will do fine.

- Don't want to download? Just hum a tune whenever the mood strikes, especially during class when all of your peers need seasonal cheer the most.

- What says "Happy holidays" more than caroling? Take a lap around your neighborhood with some Christmas spirit and a cowbell or triangle in tow. If your neighbor gets upset with you, tell him that you will kindly take requests.

### Language

- Through all of the stress of holiday shopping and cold weather, some people forget it's the season to be jolly. Remind them with catchphrases like "Tis the reason for the season!" or "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!" Rhyming is key here.

- Wish everyone a happy holiday by saying "Happy Christmahanakwanzaka!" Everybody loves that one.



# A galaxy of stars are born in the lovely 'Juno'

Ellen Page shines in this flawless coming-of-age comedy

by Matt Fagerholm  
Assistant A&E Editor

A FILM like *Juno* comes along once in a blue moon. So many quirky feel-good indies fall flat on their face, settling for easy one-liners instead of insight, thinly drawn caricatures instead of people and smug self-satisfaction instead of human emotion. What makes *Juno* so special is that it is truly the vision of an individual artist, not a crowd-pleasing committee.

Much has been written in the last few weeks about how *Juno*'s screenwriter Diablo Cody penned the script while working as a phone-sex operator in Minneapolis. Such a profession immediately sparks judgment in the minds of puritanical Americans, who upon learning that fact might have already decided to skip this film. Yet Cody is someone who refuses to be easily labeled or stereotyped, and she infuses that conviction in each of her characters.

Consider Juno herself, the film's 16-year-old protagonist. Viewers could easily pass judgment on the tragic carelessness of her teenage pregnancy. Yet Juno is not the ultra-naive, self-pitying head-case who usually headlines Lifetime films with a similar plot. As played by the phenomenal Ellen Page, Juno is an effortlessly verbal and intelligent young woman who utilizes a barrier of sarcastic wit to shield herself from life's more perplexing patches. She was abandoned by her mother at a young age, an event that has further muddled her

understanding of motherhood. Like many teenagers, she submits to her hormonal yearnings one fateful day with her soft-spoken friend Paulie Bleeker, played by *Superbad*'s astonishingly natural Michael Cera. Now faced with a baby, Juno matter-of-factly sets out to find an infertile couple willing to welcome the unplanned bundle of joy into their home.

What makes Cody's writing so exhilarating is its thorough lack of sanctimoniousness. She offers no preachy speechifying about the inherent rights or wrongs of Juno's decisions. The biggest scolding she gets from her father, played wonderfully by J.K. Simmons, is "I thought you were the kind of girl who knew when to say when," to which she replies, "I don't really know what kind of girl I am."

After Cody's years of Catholic schooling, she decided to temporarily take up stripping out of "curiosity." During her hilarious appearance on "Late Show with David Letterman," which can be found on YouTube, she spoke of how her job choice was anthropologically motivated, while declaring herself as "a naked Margaret Mead."

Cody's unapologetic self-confidence is a trait clearly inherited by the people in Juno, who exist onscreen in all their flawed, endearingly three-dimensional glory. This lends a refreshing directness to her dialogue, such as when Juno asks over the phone to "procure a hasty abortion."

The enthusiastic reception Juno received at the Toronto Film Festival drew comparison to the similar effect last year's miraculous comedy *Little Miss Sunshine* had on audiences. A key strength of both films is

the impeccability of their ensembles.

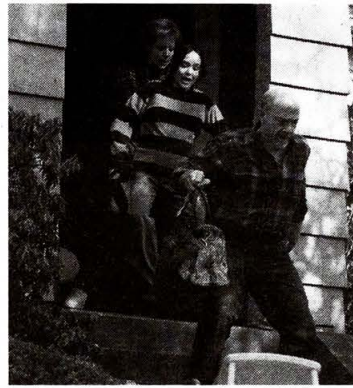
*Juno* is so immaculately cast that the actors don't really play their roles so much as embody them. Juno's chosen adoptive couple, Jennifer Garner and Jason Bateman, use their limited screen time to create individuals of such surprising depth that their story alone could sustain a feature length film. It's simply an immense joy to watch Alison Janney sink her teeth into the role of perhaps the single-coolest stepmom in film history, as she heroically defends her daughter from the condescension of an ultrasound technician. Olivia Thirlby is pitch-perfect as Juno's devoted friend, while "The Office's" Rainn Wilson masters yet another offbeat character whose weird humor succeeds only in amusing himself.

Yet the film's best moments belong to Page

and Cera, who share the purest, most unaffected chemistry in recent memory. After performing a memorable faux-castration on Patrick Wilson in *Hard Candy*, Page has already proven to be a pro at playing characters wise beyond their years. Yet in *Juno*, she captures with breathtaking nuance the razor-sharp divide between childish precociousness and grounded maturity that the vital juncture of adolescence has caused her character to shift between.

Page is one of the most exciting film actors of her generation, and Cera is every bit her equal. The painfully honest, insanely funny comic persona he created in "Arrested Development" has become his acting trademark, yet *Juno* allows him to expose the poignant delicacy beneath the perpetual stuttering and double-takes. To watch both of these extraordinary young talents share the same screen is to experience cinematic heaven itself.

While director Jason Reitman showed great promise with his debut feature *Thank You for Smoking*, he tops himself here beyond any expectation. His sensitivity and insight only enriches the heart in Cody's dialogue, which could have easily come off as glib in less feeling hands. In a year where multiplexes are practically drowning in bloodshed, here is a film with the ability to lift spirits further than most films could only hope to reach. *Juno* is more than a series of comic shenanigans—it is the best time I've had at the movies in 2007.



LEFT: Alison Janney, Ellen Page and J.K. Simmons are among the ensemble in 'Juno.'

Courtesy FOX SEARCHLIGHT

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I AM  
LEGEND

OPENS NATIONWIDE  
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14TH!



# Joffrey Ballet gives all dancers a chance to shine

**'Nutcracker' tradition includes wheelchair-bound children**

by Betsy Taylor

WITH HER hair neatly pulled back in a dancer's bun and a gym bag of exercise clothes by her side, 8-year-old Morgan Fritz is ready to talk about her role in "The Nutcracker."

Her father Ron has lifted her off a device called a Standing Dani, a system similar to a wheelchair but one that allows her to stand up and be mobile. He places her in a seat at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis before rehearsal begins.

"My body is weak all over. I can't walk," Fritz said. She has spinal muscular atrophy, a genetic disorder that destroys the nerves controlling voluntary muscle movement.

She has discovered, however, that she can dance.

The Chicago-based Joffrey Ballet, in a company tradition, includes disabled children in its holiday productions of the iconic ballet. The entire production has been double cast, so the children involved take turns in performances. Morgan and another child, 11-year-old Libby Schueddig, share a role that they've rehearsed on weekends with the other kids.

"It's fun, and when I'm having fun, I don't get tired," Fritz said.

Charthel Arthur, a ballet master for the Joffrey, said a disabled boy saw a 1995 summer dance performance involving people in wheelchairs. Inspired, the boy showed up later that year when the company held open auditions for its holiday production. He was cast in a role in the Act 1 party scene. The unconventional casting of "chair dancers"—children in wheelchairs—

for the role of "Party Boy No. 8" in the Joffrey's "The Nutcracker" has continued.

In the St. Louis performances, which began Dec. 5, Morgan and Libby have rehearsed to the point that they look like veterans. Schueddig has spina bifida, a congenital defect in which the spinal column fails to close properly.

The girls don't dwell on the logistics of being in a ballet while in a wheelchair. Rather, each is excited about appearing on stage with professional dancers. Both are caught up with the fact that they are girls portraying boys, but explain that a lot of other girls are also playing boys. A quick glance around the lavish theater, where young female dancers in their black rehearsal leotards and white tights greatly outnumber the guys, makes it clear why.

Libby shows how she has practiced for the part, counting the beats of music and moving her head and arms in time. Onstage, the girls are among dozens of area children taking part, a little entranced by the family parlor set decorated to celebrate Christmas, and the Joffrey dancers who make their complex steps and lifts look effortless.

The girls sit in wheelchairs designed to look like ones from the 1850s, the time when this Tchaikovsky ballet is set.

Can Morgan tell the story of "The Nutcracker?"

"Kind of," she said.

"Fritz and Clara have a big party at their house. She gets a nutcracker and then her brother Fritz smashes it. Then she gets sad. Then, she sleeps on the floor. Then she has this dream about her nutcracker and she goes in this world where there's a fairy, I think, who guides her through this world. She meets a lot of people. The Mouse King



Libby Schueddig, 11, receives help putting on her ballet shoes from Charthel Arthur, a ballet master with the Joffrey Ballet's visiting production of 'The Nutcracker.'

AP

and the Nutcracker have a fight. Then, the Nutcracker turns into a prince."

Clara's godfather in the ballet, Drosselmeyer, is a toy maker and magician who gives her the nutcracker who magically leads her on her adventures.

"At the end of the party scene, Mr. Drosselmeyer takes glitter and sprinkles it on the chair dancer," Libby said.

Assistant ballet master and dancer Willy Shives, 46, who portrays Drosselmeyer at this rehearsal, said the company's co-founder, Gerald Arpino, choreographed that moment as a special one for the disabled child in each production.

Shives and Arthur say the children in wheelchairs are always considered dancers

in the ballet. Shives points out that everyone has limitations. When he's raising a partner in a lift, her feet can't touch the ground, he noted. He credits Arpino for the unconventional casting, "for bringing this in, and opening our eyes to those that can't stand on their own feet," he said.

"They have their own way of expressing their artistry," Shives said. "We all have different ways of dancing."

*The Joffrey Ballet's regular Chicago production of "The Nutcracker" opens Dec. 12 at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress Parkway.*

AP

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MONSTER'S BALL AND FINDING NEVERLAND

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**IN THEATRES FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14TH!**



## » DENZEL

Continued from PG. 13

Washington aspires to film stories, not 'vanity projects'

a budget that they know you can't make the movie [with]. We spent \$25 million, but without me the film was going to be \$10 [million] or \$12 million. It's still a lot of money, but [to make] a period film, it would've been very difficult. I am assuredly not interested in being in the films I direct. I don't waste a lot of time on my own performance, just three or four takes and then keep moving. I really play all the parts because in the development process, I would read the parts out loud, think of what I would do or what I would say and that's how I would work on the screenplay. These aren't vanity projects. I've had great success as an actor, and I had no desire to direct myself. These kinds of stories are tougher to get made. I have a lot of box office clout, so I [use] some of that in order to get them told.

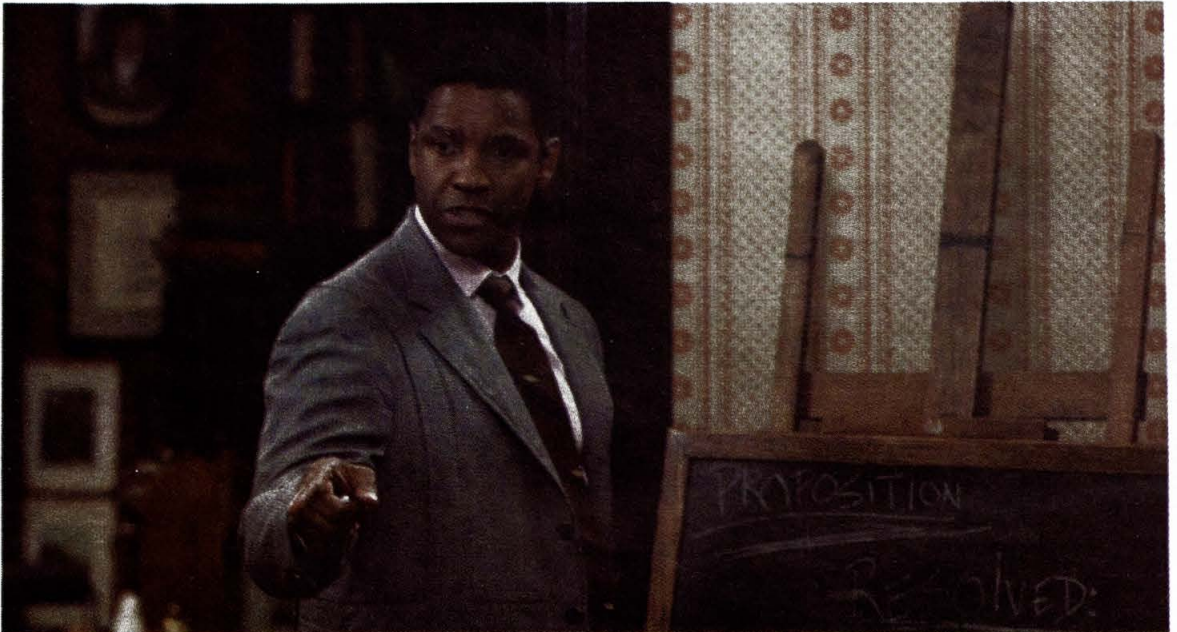
**In your mind, how important are the critical and public responses to your films?**

For me the joy is making the film and finding out that people are responding to it. We had a great screening last night for the Director's Guild [of America] because it is the toughest audience—a room full of directors. It got a standing ovation, and everyone loved it. So from here through the Oscars you have to keep an even keel. I don't deflect criticism. I think if you operate in fear you'll be paralyzed. You can't let circumstances control your life. Worrying about your professor's opinion of you is not going to help on your exam.

**How does this film's message connect to your own beliefs about the progression of racial tolerance in America?**

My father was a minister, and he always [said], "Jesus is coming soon, and the world is ending," and as a young wise guy I asked, "What makes you think it's going to happen when you're here?" We look at the world in terms of the years we're here. If you look back at the 300 or 400 years of slavery, and five and 10 years of legislation, we have to understand our place in history in that we have to keep moving forward.

One aspect I tried to instill in the film is how [persecution] affected the kids. Racism is taught and ignorance is taught. You're not born ignorant, it takes education. One of my favorite lines from this film is something I've always said to my children which is, "Do what you gotta do so that you can do what you want to do. It doesn't work the other way around." And that applies to homework. Don't wait till the eleventh hour, which you guys probably do, and of course I did too. You can be more relaxed when you do what you want to do, because you've taken care of business.



Denzel Washington, director and star of 'The Great Debaters,' said he never wanted to star in the films he directs, but studios only offer reasonable budgets for the films he stars in.


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# JEDI

Story by Luke Snuckel  
Graphics by Kim Badger

The lights go out and darkness engulfs the room. Within seconds, the room is bathed in a green glow emitting from a lightsaber held by a lone warrior in the center. The warrior brings the bright beam close to the bridge of his nose, making his face glow before he begins moving. Although he is fighting opponents who can only be seen in his mind's eye, each stroke of the lightsaber is quick, calculated and fluid like a vicious dance. In his final movements, he thrusts the weapon forward, fully extending it, before bringing it back to the bridge of his nose once more, signifying the end of his routine.

This performance is just one example of what people are learning at New York Jedi, a class for Star Wars fans. There they learn how to use staged combat combined with martial arts techniques to perform and re-enact battles with the iconic Star Wars weapon, the lightsaber, at festivals, private parties and comic conventions. Although there is no Jedi group in Illinois yet, Michael Flynn, who started New York Jedi in 2005, said one may open in the near future.

Flynn said he and his group in New York have set up a template that shows factions how to put on shows and get the community involved. The groups are starting to appear all over the country, including Rhode Island, California, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, New Jersey, Florida and Texas. Participants from one group in Pennsylvania performed at a convention on Sept. 24 to gain awareness for the class at the Philadelphia Super Show. Flynn said the event was significant because it means that other people

Form 1: Shi Cho  
Form 2: Maka Shi  
Form 3: Soreso  
Form 4: Ataru  
Form 5: Shien  
Form 6: Ninan  
Form 7: Ju Yo

Moves:  
Perry, Thrus  
Strike



# KNIGHT SCHOOL

share his dream and ambition and that people are taking his idea and making it their own, which is what he hoped would happen.

Flynn said what draws people to the class is the chance to use a lightsaber, a weapon Flynn said goes way beyond Star Wars. He said the icon of a blazing sword has always stood for cutting through evil to get to the truth. For the New York Jedi's purposes, a lightsaber is made out of polycarbonate tubing with a diffusion sheet, or ribbon, in the center used to conduct light through the tube. If students can't afford the lightsabers, which Flynn said cost upwards of \$70 on eBay, some come to class with wooden staffs.

"When George Lucas produced *Star Wars* and included that iconic weapon, he tapped into a subconscious level of every human," Flynn said. "There is a warrior in us that needs the perfect tool, and this light of truth to guide you [is that tool]."

Flynn found the warrior within himself, as well as the idea for New York Jedi, when a friend of his, James Bogel, suggested Flynn teach him some sword movements using a pair of lightsabers. The two began goofing around on the roof of Bogel's apartment building.

"Before we knew it, we were hearing hoots and hollers from [people who had begun to congregate on the] rooftops around us," Flynn said.

Though people were interested, Flynn's fantasy of participating in a lightsaber battle in public finally came in the form of a float at the Greenwich Village Halloween

parade. In 2005, they performed a *Star Wars* lightsaber battle in the middle of a half-dozen storm troopers on a float during the parade.

"[We] were a huge hit," Flynn said. "People [said], 'What is this? Where do you guys do this?'"

Today, two years later, the group consists of 35 regular students compared to the more than 50 people who show up for the public events that the group initiates. Everyone portrays at least one character, a few portraying more than one. Participants include actors, costume designers, dancers, martial artists and fans of science fiction and fantasy. Each character's back story and how he or she looks are defined by the participant, as is the way the character interacts with others.

"Since we're a fan-based organization, it doesn't really matter what people are pulling their history from," Flynn said. "The only real rule is to have fun."

Alfie Supan, who has been participating in New York Jedi since May 2007, was informed that he would become an instructor at New York Jedi while he was performing a traveling show with the Alma Dance Company at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, Ill.

"They decided to make me a master," Supan said. "It surprised the hell out of me."

Supan said along with dancing, he has always been interested in martial arts, specifically Japanese-oriented martial arts. He said before he became an instructor, he would often lead warm-ups and was usually asked by

classmates and instructors how to do something related to martial arts. Kung fu, Capoeira and other Japanese and Filipino styles of martial arts are integrated at New York Jedi. Supan said the instructors don't teach how to harm other people, but how to move with them in order to make the movements look authentic.

"We have to be able to execute these techniques safely without causing damage to [each other]," Supan said. "He [or she is] not your enemy. He or she is a scene partner."

At New York Jedi, there are three classes of students. There are padawans, who are people new to New York Jedi but whom the masters feel show a desire to excel. Padawans each have one master who monitors their progress individually and teaches them one-on-one to help them excel in the class. There are knights, who are more experienced but not quite advanced enough to teach, and also masters like Supan, who become teachers because of their vast knowledge in martial arts and the craft of staged combat or other kinds of professional experience that relates to an aspect of the class.

Although the students want to learn how to move with a partner without hurting him or her, Flynn said accidents do happen. Since he started the group, he has seen one person get a hairline fracture in the elbow and another person get a cut on the face, which required stitches.

"When you get into the heat of battle, if you're not watching what you are doing and maintaining your level as a professional, sometimes you get a little carried away," Flynn said.

Even knowing that people get hurt, many fans in Chicago are still interested in the idea. Tim Weaver, a senior fiction major at Columbia who has been a *Star Wars* fan since he was six, said he would be very interested in joining a group like New York Jedi if it were based in Chicago.

"I think there is absolutely a market in Chicago," Weaver said. "I think we could definitely benefit from something like that."

Weaver said he is excited to see fans taking the *Star Wars* story and making it their own.

"It really doesn't need to be [commercialized] anymore; it's really a fan-based story now," Weaver said. "[George Lucas has] done a pretty good job of letting the fans take over. It's really our story now."

*"There is a warrior in us that needs the perfect tool, and this light of truth to guide you [is that tool]."*

*—Michael Flynn, New York Jedi founder*

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# Guitar lessons strike a chord with busy workers

by Brett Marlow  
Assistant A&E Editor

**WORKERS DOWNTOWN** aren't just going out to grab a bite during lunch; they've got their hands on guitars.

For Scott Corley, guitar is on his menu for lunch once a week. Corley, who works at Wideload Games, a video game studio in the West Loop, wanted to learn how to play guitar, but could never find the time. After he started working in the Loop nearly a year-and-a-half ago, he thought he might be able to squeeze in guitar lessons during his lunch breaks. With a day job and two kids at home waiting on dinner and story time each night, it wasn't impossible to take lessons in the evenings or weekends, just a bit hectic.

Five months ago, Corley found exactly what he was looking for—a guitar instructor who taught lessons to people with busy work schedules.

"This way I can sneak away and do it," Corley said. "I do my lessons on Fridays, and it's a nice break from work."

Corley's instructor is Jim Lenger, who teaches guitar lessons and runs Guitar Chicago, a professional musical instruction school at 150 N. Michigan Ave., to business professionals, lawyers, and students who have busy schedules but can find a time to come in throughout the day. He also has students like Corley, who come in on their lunch breaks and after work.

Guitar Chicago is in a downtown office building where Lenger has office space geared with a computer, a mixer and other audio equipment where his students can record some of their own compositions. The lessons are taught on electric and elec-

tric-acoustic guitars.

"Sometimes [lessons] have to be done through headphones because it is an office space," Lenger said. "There are people walking by in suits."

Lenger has been teaching for 15 years. He spends his time teaching guitar in the city and in Michigan throughout the week.

"What I had been seeing from teaching for a while is that I had a number of business professionals who had come to me and were interested in doing lessons during the day," Lenger said. "So I saw that it was a good niche for me."

Lenger started teaching lessons to professional clientele in February of 2006. He now spends three days a week teaching in Chicago, and hopes next year to hire more instructors and recruit more students. Lenger currently teaches more than 50 students. Lessons range from half-hour to hour sessions and cost \$25 per half-hour. Students can also buy four-to-six month tuition packages at a discounted rate for weekly lessons, Lenger said.

Lenger said his students range from 18 to 70 years old. He teaches college students, some from Columbia, but the majority of his clients are lawyers, who are also beginners, he said.

"[My students] are looking to leave work for a bit. Some of them take about five minutes just to sit, relax and talk. It's a nice rest during the day," Lenger said. "For people who don't have the time to leave and go to the gym or do something like that, this is a nice alternative."

Linella Gavin is a lawyer who works a block away from Guitar Chicago. For a month-and-a-half, she's been taking lessons with Lenger.

"I always wanted to play [guitar], but



Jim Lenger teaches guitar to busy professionals downtown on their lunch breaks and after work.

Tim Hunt THE CHRONICLE

I hadn't had much success," Gavin said. "Then I picked it up again and was looking for a way to fit it into my schedule."

She did, and like Corley, she ventures off to Guitar Chicago during her lunch hour from work.

"I think if I tried to do lessons when I wasn't at work in my off-time, I would never make it; it just wouldn't happen," Gavin said. Other students feel the same.

Susan Pak, a commercial real estate broker who works in the Loop, said she likes the convenience of working in a building connected by a pedway to Lenger's. Pak started taking lessons with him five months ago when her boyfriend bought her a guitar, and she wasn't learning on her own, Pak said. But five months later, Pak gushed about her progress.

"I'm getting really good. You would die if you heard me," Pak said. "I don't know if Jim would think so, but considering how

bad I was when I started, the progress has been incredible. I love it."

Pak, who goes to lessons after work one day a week, said she has learned by ear and by using what Lenger has taught her to play songs like "With or Without You" by U2, "Let It Be" by The Beatles and "Crimson & Clover" by Joan Jett and The Blackhearts.

Lenger said he hopes to expand this type of setup to other major cities in the near future. He is also working on a volume of guitar books about his teaching approach.

"It's been fun to watch [my students'] progress," Lenger said. "They're growing as players. Having the guitar become a good stress reliever, they're really picking up on [that]."

For more information on Guitar Chicago, visit [GuitarChicago.com](http://GuitarChicago.com).

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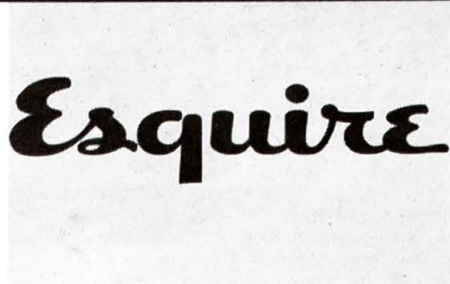
HAPPY DANCE!

## PRINT



## CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, DEC. 6

The Chicago Sun-Times' front page can be hit or miss. Sometimes the newspaper will lead with a great investigative story, and other times it will promote something Oprah said or what a crazy man like Drew Peterson may have done. There are more pressing issues than Hannah Montana's visit to Chicago or Don-da West's last interview. —B. Schlickerman



## ESQUIRE, DEC. 2007

The once-lauded men's magazine has become a pathetic amalgam of U.S. Weekly-style infographics, difficult and unattractive design, and "sex" coverage that would hit Maxim's cutting room floor. Oh, and the magazine also features a weekly column from Chuck Klosterman, the emperor of awful writing and ridiculous conclusions glossed over with a hipsterish style. I hate Chuck Klosterman. —W. Giglio



no smiles



## 50 CENT'S 'CURTIS' CD BOOKLET

I found the Curtis CD booklet far more interesting than 50 Cent's new wangster-gangster music I've been hearing in the club. I took myself to the candy shop and I didn't see anything as sweet as the pictures in the booklet of Fiddy, shirtless and groping a half-naked woman or the photo of him eating a gun with a fork. They all inspire me to get rich or die trying. —B. Palmer



## MOVIES / DVD / TV



## 'PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END' DVD

After watching the convoluted third installment of the Pirates saga, I found solace in the fact that the blooper reel was five minutes long. There's no commentary on this DVD, but the rest of the featurettes make up for it ... even if there are only two deleted scenes. —S. Harvey



## NEW SEASON OF 'INTERVENTION'

I'll admit I'm somewhat addicted to this show. The season premiere was a little depressing, but I recently found out that one of the interventionists on the show, good old Candy Finnegan, is the mom of my brother's neighbor. Pretty sweet, right? —Q. Milton



## 'MARGOT AT THE WEDDING'

Noah Baumbach directed this well-acted, but ultimately over-written short story about a fractured family that comes together for a small wedding by the sea. Jennifer Jason Leigh and Nicole Kidman are wonderful, but the rings Baumbach makes them jump through grow in dissonance. In the end, I didn't believe this well-made film. —W. Giglio



## MUSIC



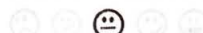
## BLAKE LEWIS: 'AUDIO DAY DREAM'

I'll bet Blake Lewis has a lot of issues deciding what to wear in the morning. His schizo-resembling indecisiveness shows on this debut album, with his random scatting and obvious desperation to be like Justin Timberlake. Sorry little guy, but you will never be as slammin' as JT. —J. Gallant



## D.C. ANDERSON: 'ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT'

Stage actor D.C. Anderson, known for his role in "Phantom of the Opera" for the last 14 years, sings Christmas songs with a voice that is soft and folksy, yet clearly Broadway. To a theater lover's delight, the CD includes "Three Wishes for Christmas," a song originally written by Stephen Sondheim for the musical "Gypsy." —S. Harvey



## AU REVOIR SIMONE: 'THE BIRD OF MUSIC'

Three long-haired brunette babes in frolicy dresses with synthesizers equals automatic perfection. I've never been so jealous of earthy, hippie chicks until I heard this album. Consider me a tree-hugger. —C. Mahlmeister



## RANDOM



## BURBERRY FASHION

They're the camel-colored, black, white and red plaid scarves that seem to symbolize one has taste in fashion, status and some moolah to even buy one. But since when is khaki a good color unless it's on the pants you wear on the way to Sunday school? —B. Marlow



## GRAMMY NOMINATIONS

Kanye West's eight nominations don't surprise me, but if he actually wins a Grammy, I'll die of shock. Mega-lush Amy Winehouse snagged six nominations, and she's probably celebrating with her good friend Captain Morgan. —D. Kucynda



## BEER HEIST

So apparently some guy in Ireland pulled the largest heist ever at Ireland's largest brewer, Guinness, by stealing 450 full kegs. I don't know how he did it, but Irish police are still hunting for the so-called "beer bandit," according to the Chicago Tribune. Whoever you are, I hope you put it all to good use. —Q. Milton







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# Men compete for title of Mr. Gay Mexican Cowboy

by Alison Satake

BACKSTAGE IN the dressing room, the nervous energy was high as each cowboy primped before a vanity mirror.

For some, like "Antonio Rios," the nerves came from more than a little stage fright.

"Antonio Rios is 24," said the worker from the avocado orchards of Michoacan, Mexico, who is actually 21. He assumes this fake identity when he goes to gay clubs. "I don't like using my personal name because my family and straight friends don't know I'm gay. And people might come looking for me at work, too."

Despite his coyness, there's one thing Rios is not shy about—his quest for the title of Mr. Gay Vaquero 2007.

The gay vaquero, or "Mexican cowboy" pageant, is a month-long talent and beauty contest, which began Oct. 29 and culminated with the crowning of the winner Nov. 19 at downtown Oakland, Calif. gay club, the Bench and Bar. As the only gay Mexican cowboy pageant in the San Francisco Bay area, the club's owner, Alex Loera, said of the contestants, "[It] helps them be who they want to be."

A Stetson hat, cowboy boots and an elusive, brooding attitude comprise the quintessential vaquero.

"I look good as a cowboy. I like it when people look at me," Rios said. "And many people ask me to dance."

Rios refers to banda, the energetic Mexican country-Western two-step dance, which is integral to the vaquero subculture as well as the rodeo.

"I love the rodeo," said pageant founder Roberto Munoz. "I love the energy, the

people dancing and the music."

Munoz frequents the summer rodeos held by the Oakland Coliseum and used to drive every weekend down to West Hollywood's Tempo, the original gay banda club party. He started the Mr. Gay Vaquero pageant in Oakland, seven years ago.

The pageant aims to continue the rodeo spirit through cultural traditions such as ballet folklorico and cow-roping that originate from the rural Mexican states of Jalisco and Michoacan, Munoz said. It is unique, however, because Mr. Gay Vaquero contestants are free to serenade their boyfriends and have drag queens do back-up. On the first Monday, 200 people came to watch the nine contestants strut their stuff in the first round of the competition.

Rios, who is Contestant No. 2, said, "I like cowboys. My family members are cowboys."

Most of the contestants are immigrants like Rios, who came to this country four years ago when he was 17.

"It's like what Washington is for apples," said Rios as he proudly describes his rural hometown, Tancitaro, the region that produces the most "aguacates" or Hass avocados in Mexico. He began working for a farmer when he was 12 years old who had him sleep in his avocado orchard alone with a .22 rifle to fend off poachers.

At one point, Rios said, he contemplated suicide back in Tancitaro because he knew he was gay, but had no one he could talk to about it. Now, in the States, he has gay friends and although it was strange at first to him to see two men dancing banda together, he has grown accustomed to it.

Munoz admits there is homophobia in

the heterosexual vaquero community, but said it reflects the homophobia in the larger hetero-normative society. He said he believes that in general, heterosexual vaqueros don't mind the gay vaqueros.

"When I go outreach for the pageant at straight cowboy clubs, I've had no problems so far," he said.

For Contestant No. 7, a hair designer from Newark, Calif., the pageant provides a rare opportunity for him to express masculinity as a gay male.

"I think a gay guy can do anything he wants. You can be macho," said Jaime Castro, 29, during a rehearsal break. "For me, being gay doesn't make me less than a man."

What makes the vaquero, though, is the clothes.

Two days before the preliminary pageant, Rios inspected a pair of cowboy boots at a store selling Latino items, such as popular soccer team jerseys and Latin American flags. "Botas," or cowboy boots, he said, can cost \$500 to \$600. "Texanas," or cowboy hats, sometimes cost up to \$3,000. He ordered two "trajes" (suits) with two pairs of matching blue and green cowboy boots for the competition.

The \$1,000 cash prize given to the first place winner barely covers the cost of one vaquero outfit.

Backstage in the dressing room just before the first competition begins, Rios eyes the other contestants anxiously. Out front on the dance floor of the large warehouse-like club, a vaquero croons a love ballad to the crowd.

Contestant No. 8, a Latin dance teacher from Salinas named Rolando Cabrera, is at

least a foot taller and chiseled. The 29-year-old has been working out at the gym since January for this.

It paid off. Cabrera won the title.

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'Antonio Rios,' a worker from the avocado orchards of Michoacan, Mexico, competed in the Mr. Gay Vaquero or 'Mexican cowboy' pageant at the Bench and Bar, a gay club in Oakland, Calif.

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# Premium Blend

With Kyle Mann Combo

MOVE ASIDE, Ben Folds. Chicago has a musician garnering acclaim from both critics and audiences for his catchy rhythms, colorful lyrics and wholly original sound. His name is Kyle Mann, who has headed the Kyle Mann Combo since they formed in 2005. Each member of the band, including Vince Naples, Inga Olson and Matt Nagrodski, is responsible for multiple instruments, such as piano, guitar, bass, cello, drums, percussion, pedal steel, melodica, keyboard and glockenspiel. Their debut album, *Good-bye Kites*, was released last December, which included songs with attention-grabbing names like "What is Fear?" "Neighbor, Crazy" and "Lyrical Rhapsody for the Cell Phone Abusers." The Kyle Mann Combo have embarked on multiple independent tours and even have a music video on YouTube featuring JY from Styx.

The Chronicle recently spoke with Mann about his music, his influences and his issue with cell phones.

**The Chronicle: How would you describe your music to someone who hasn't heard it before?**

Kyle Mann: I would say it is experimental pop with genres of classical, jazz, progressive and indie rock. It's eclectic instrumentation, high-ranging falsettos and harmonies and just things like that. We try to mix it up a bit for each show. Throw in new songs, songs from the CD and sometimes

we change them around a bit to make it more entertaining. Sometimes we'll throw in a different version of a popular cover, or for this upcoming concert we'll probably have a few surprises more related to holiday music.

**What artists have inspired you?**

I would say Sufjan Stevens, Dave Brubeck and The Bad Plus. Andrew Bird is definitely up there. I mean, he's a violin player, but I just really like the way he arranges and composes. His songs are simple but melodically beautiful and complex. They're short songs but they're just so well done, and the lyrics are so well thought out. He's a great inspiration of mine.

**How has the Kyle Mann Combo evolved over the last couple of years?**

Musically, a lot, I would say. I've learned a lot just from the musicians in my group and have been listening a lot to their influences as well. We have a cello player now that has been playing on pedal steel [guitar] on some of her songs now. Lyrical, I've developed a lot more too. I've been listening a lot more to folk artists whose music is spoken well. [I've worked on] my voice a little bit too, just working on some things with my voice trainer.

**Many listeners are struck by your falsetto vocals.**

I just [didn't] like staying in that one range. I felt like I needed to move out of it



Left to Right: Vince Naples, Matt Nagrodski, Kyle Mann and Inga Olson of the Kyle Mann Combo ride Segway Personal Transporters down Abbey Road in a satirical image of technological times.

Courtesy KYLE MANN COMBO

a little bit. I just liked the way it sounded. It came naturally after working with it and trying it out. It wasn't very pretty at first, but I got the hang of it after a while.

**What do you develop first—the lyrics or the music?**

It depends. A lot of times it's the music. You just sit down at the piano or the guitar and figure out things, arrange the other instruments in there. I just kind of have a melody going on in my head. Or sometimes I pick out interesting words, and I write them down. They come back to me, and I put music to [them] with interesting chords.

**Where did the song "Lyrical Rhapsody for the Cell Phone Abusers" come from?**

Technology these days is just going to the extreme. So many people are on their phones. Just the way we communicate now made me think, "Whatever happened

to just a simple conversation, or even just writing notes to each other?" I just thought it would be an interesting idea and make people think about it. When you talk on the phone, you don't even think about it anymore. It's just like a normal habit. I mean it's a great form of communication, but it's so abundant. Walking down the street, you can take out so many people on the phone. People walk by and don't even acknowledge each other [because] they are so into their conversation on the phone.

The Kyle Mann Combo will perform during a holiday show at Subterranean, 2011 W. North Ave., on Dec. 15. Tickets to the concert, which also includes Dick Prall and Calvin Marty, are \$10 at the door. The show starts at 9:30 p.m. and is for ages 21 and up.

—M. Fagerholm

## HOROSCOPES



**ARIES** (March 21-April 19) Take the wisdom you've recently acquired and figure out a way to add it to your career behavior. Become even more effective. You can do more than you've done before, and you'll love it.



**TAURUS** (April 20-May 20) Finish up your business so you can celebrate. An outing with friends would be perfect. Go to a place you've never been. Have an experience slightly spicier than usual.



**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21) It's best to remain quiet for now. Pay close attention. There may be a quiz on this material later, with valuable prizes. At any rate, it's best not to argue. Shush.



**CANCER** (June 22-July 22) You're pushed past the breaking point, but don't worry about it. You come up with some of your best ideas when working under pressure. You won't break, by the way. You'll get stronger.



**LEO** (July 23-Aug. 22) First figure out what you and your sweetheart want to accomplish together. Yes, there will be work involved. This is how you show your love.



**VIRGO** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) There'll be time for cleaning up and a restful moment for yourself. Confer with your partner about recent proceedings. Overall, you should be quite satisfied with the results.



**LIBRA** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) The flurry of activity precedes a welcome respite. Pick up something for dinner while you're out there, so you can veg on the couch tonight.



**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) While you're on a shopping binge, also make an investment in your own education. It's totally justifiable. Acquire skills you can use soon.



**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) Trust yourself to find a way to achieve your goal in most situations. You're smart and lucky. So figure out what you want. Make a list.



**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You'll get a lot more done today than even you expected. Keep pushing while you have the energy and opportunities. Wrap up as much as possible so you won't have to do it later.



**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) It's back to work, and the pile of stuff that's stacked up while you were doing something else. Some of it's been there for quite a while. No more excuses, get busy.



**PISCES** (Feb. 19-March 20) If you're willing to try an unusual method or plan, great success can be yours. Besides, your friends will think it's awesome. Unleash your creativity.

## CHECK ME OUT



Tim Hunt THE CHRONICLE

**JACKIE TREZZO**

PHOTOGRAPHY  
JUNIOR

Bundled up in a black overcoat with a fur-trimmed hood, junior photography major Jackie Trezzo wore her aviator sunglasses inside the Wabash Campus Building, 623 S. Wabash Ave. Trezzo, who said she bought her black coat at Bloomingdales and shops at American Apparel, usually likes to wear opaque tights with a sweater dress.

Trezzo said what she wears each day depends on her morning mood.

"Sometimes I want to dress like a boy," Trezzo said. "Other days I want to dress like a thug."

—J. Galliat



# E-cards: convenient or impersonal?

by Kathleen Kernicky

THEY'RE QUICK and fast and as welcome as Scrooge at Christmas dinner.

E-mailing holiday cards at Christmas and Hanukkah may be the last taboo when it comes to electronic communications.

"You get this cold, cold Christmas card alongside 500 spam e-mails," said Johannah Haber, a Plantation, Fla., chef who plans to send handwritten holiday cards, along with a personal note and a photo of her five dogs.

"We've lost so much of the personal touch in life," he said. "The e-mail, you can do that with your eyes closed. It doesn't mean anything."

The number of electronic cards, or e-cards, is a fraction of the 6 billion paper cards sent year-round in the United States, including Christmas, which generates the most cards, according to the Greeting Card Association.

Year-round, there are 20 paper cards mailed for every e-card, and the number of e-cards is declining.

That's not likely to change soon, said the U.S. Postal Service.

"The traditional mailing of Christmas cards is still something people are attached to," said Postmaster Michael K. Fortunato in Hollywood, Fla. There, the volume of mail "doubles or triples" on peak days like the Monday before Christmas.

"I don't think we'll ever get away from that," Fortunato said. "When it comes to Christmas, people still like a personal card."

Why all the e-bah and humbug? For many people, Christmas or Hanukkah is the only

time of year they connect with distant friends or relatives. Unlike an e-mail, a paper card is usually signed by the sender. It can be held, sealed with a kiss or tucked away as a keepsake.

Scott Benarde, of Boynton Beach, Fla., keeps a drawer at home filled with old cards, some from his two children.

"Cards are like little diary entries, messages from different life cycles," Benarde said, a marketing executive who sends Hanukkah cards every year.

During the holidays, "you're wishing peace on earth and joy and happiness," Benarde said. "You need to get up off your tuckus and show the care and consideration of picking out a card that means something to you."

Harry McCall Jr., 73, a widower who lives in Pembroke Pines, Fla., likes to sit down at his table and write a note with each card.

"E-mail feels like the lazy way out," McCall said during a quick stop to the post office. "I do it the old-fashioned way. I buy a box of cards and a pretty Christmas stamp. I like to look at the cards and hold them."

With so much e-mail clutter, a handwritten or signed card "becomes a gift itself," said Lizette Lantigua, of Weston, Fla., whose Lantigua Designs makes bilingual holiday cards.

"All these modern things have made everything instant. That makes it even more important when someone takes the time to pick out a card and write it," Lantigua said.

Scott Ference, 41, of Davie, Fla., includes photos of his kids when he sends out his Christmas cards.

E-cards for the holidays are "kind of



Although e-cards are convenient, some argue they are impersonal at this time of year.

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tacky," he said. "For other things, like bosses' day or maybe a birthday, I might send an e-card. For Christmas, the way I was raised, it's better to send a hard copy. I think it's more personal."

Linda Morrison, of Cooper City, Fla., said she spends part of her day deleting junk e-mails and said her computer is the last place she wants to be when she's writing holiday cards.

"There are a lot of people you're not in touch with during the year. You're glad to hear from them at Christmas," said Morrison, who will send about 50 handwritten cards and spend Christmas in her native Jamaica.

Other people are cutting back on costs this year, or not sending cards at all.

For years, Annette Baine, of Wellington, Fla., wrote a full-page holiday letter, updating her family's news, and sent copies with her handwritten cards.

This year, she'll probably just send a card and a family photo.

"I used to do the whole big letter and the cards. I noticed we were getting less and less of those and I wondered if people aren't doing that anymore," said Baine, a nurse and mother of two. "This year, we'll probably just stick with the cards."

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# HAPPY HOLIDAYS from your staff at the Chronicle.

Check back with us next semester!

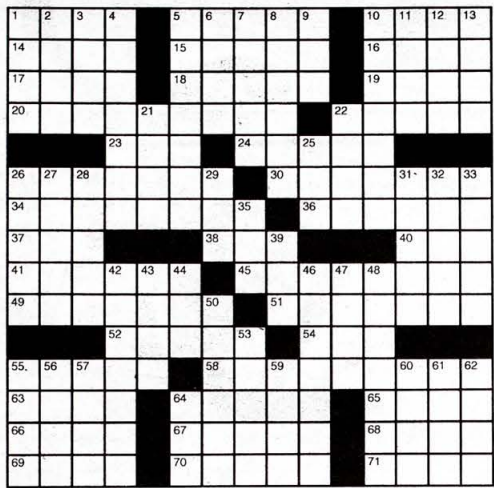
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Crossword

Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Eyeball
  - 5 Shed, as blood
  - 10 Urban renewal target
  - 14 Surface size
  - 15 Courted
  - 16 Gilpin of "Frasier"
  - 17 Afternoon parties
  - 18 Ferber and Best
  - 19 Ships' diaries
  - 20 Coherent combination of elements
  - 22 Melts together
  - 23 \_\_\_ your heart out!
  - 24 Aromatic wood
  - 26 Bright red
  - 30 Painter John Singer
  - 34 Up a tree
  - 36 Nervous vibration
  - 37 Sharer's pronoun
  - 38 Wee bit
  - 40 Pigeon murmur
  - 41 Paths
  - 45 Most foolish
  - 49 Flummoxes
  - 51 Evening receptions
  - 52 Chimes
  - 54 One in Toledo
  - 55 Headliners
  - 58 Consciousness
  - 63 Top-drawer
  - 64 Warehouse
  - 65 Soap additive
  - 66 Acquires
  - 67 Eaglet's abode
  - 68 Entryway
  - 69 Thirst quenchers
  - 70 Apprehension
  - 71 Eve's grandson
- DOWN
- 1 Diet for dobbin
  - 2 Western writer Zane
  - 3 Director David
  - 4 EST word
  - 5 More sugary
  - 6 Whale groups
  - 7 Column type
  - 8 Rents



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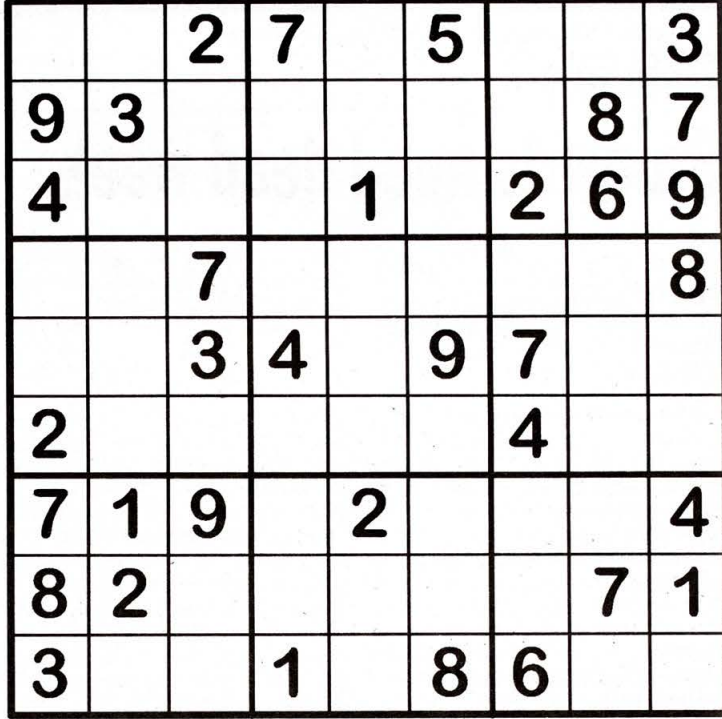
Solutions



- 9 6-pointers
- 10 Go on a shopping spree
- 11 Tolstoy and Durocher
- 12 Advocate
- 13 Fail to hit
- 21 Senior golfer Irwin
- 22 "M\*A\*S\*H" co-star Jamie
- 25 CD alternative
- 26 Dundee populace
- 27 Woo
- 28 Deck in finery
- 29 Hanoi holiday
- 31 Awards honcho
- 32 Hangman's knot
- 33 Moves at a quick pace
- 35 German article
- 39 Roman Pluto
- 42 Affect strongly
- 43 Prevarications
- 44 Sargasso
- 46 "Walk on the Wild Side" singer
- 47 Queue
- 48 Ancient period
- 50 Actor Christian
- 53 Cursed
- 55 Heroic legend
- 56 \_\_\_ the line (obeyed)
- 57 Feed the kitty
- 59 Song by Verdi
- 60 Zest
- 61 Buddhist sect
- 62 Gets the point
- 64 Blue

Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.



Joke of the Week

Q: What nationality is Santa Claus?

A: North Polish.

Comic Relief

PAUL

BY BILLY O'KEEFE MRBILLY.COM/PAUL



DREAM NATION

by LOUIS COPPOLA





# Commentary

## Editorials

### Students need dead week

Students at Columbia, like students on most college and university campuses at this time of year, are under a lot of stress. The end of the semester means it's time to complete art projects and films, put the finishing (or beginning) touches on a 15-page research paper and start studying for final exams.

However, unlike many other undergraduates nationwide, Columbia students don't have a week off from class and school assignments before those exams to prepare and finish their most important coursework. They should.

Many college campuses schedule a week before exams called dead week. During that time, classes are either not held or serve as study halls and course overviews. Assignments are not given or due. It's a wonderful system that gives students more time to study and work.

Colleges like Stanford University and the Georgia Institute of Technology have dead weeks built into their schedules. Ivy League schools like Harvard University, Yale University and Cornell University have modified dead weeks during their exams periods, so students don't have to attend classes in addition to taking exams. Nearby Loyola University gives its students a break from class and assignments the Monday before exams begin.

This could only be a good thing for Columbia. Grades would improve and students would be healthier and happier. Instead of a hellish week where students stress them-

selves out, Columbia should have a dead week so students can have plenty of time to prepare and do well in their courses. Columbia should be able to make up the lost week of class easily, as the school starts later than most colleges and has no fall break.

The dead week exam system is especially well-suited to Columbia students, who in general are studying to become artists. Many classes, instead of (or in addition to) giving exams, require students to complete well-developed and time-consuming art projects for a major grade. Beleaguered film students struggling to find an hour here and there to shoot their final films in Production I and II would have an uninterrupted week to work. Photographers, screenwriters and artists would have time to complete their end-of-term projects. A dead week would provide a Columbia student's greatest luxury—time.

Columbia's system should be re-structured so all that students have to worry about during exam week is exams. Right now the system isn't ideal to preparing students for exams and getting them to do their best work on semester projects and films. If the administration is interested in serving its students and professors, it'll make it easier on all parties by implementing a dead week before exams and canceling classes during them. Grades and morale will go up; stress levels will go down.

It's a win-win for teachers and students, so the administration has nothing to lose.

### 218 S. Wabash a poor choice

While Columbia officials search for desperately-needed space, they must not choose convenience over quality.

Columbia signed a 10-year lease in December 2006 with landlord R. Bruce Lord for the top three floors in the mid-rise building at 218 S. Wabash Ave. despite knowledge of the property's long history of elevator problems.

Officials said they like the property's proximity to Columbia's urban campus.

But public records show the building has incurred enough serious code violations that should have deterred the college from renting.

Inspectors from the city cited Lord with a "no posted rear address" on May 9, 2007, five days after arson destroyed much of the building. This infraction, which remains unaddressed, could delay a fire truck traveling down an alley of similar brick buildings trying to quickly identify the address when responding to a call.

Earlier, in March 2006, records show the landlord was cited for not filing the yearly Exterior Wall Ordinance since 2002; the city uses that ordinance to protect pedestrians from falling exterior structures.

Columbia's own employees who used to be tenants of 218 S. Wabash Ave. describe horrible memories about lack of heat, landlord negligence and elevator dysfunction.

Why didn't the college consult them?

Columbia's Center for Book and Paper Arts rented the seventh floor between 1994

and 1999, an experience the college should have investigated.

It is commendable that Columbia is using its power as a lucrative tenant as leverage to make the construction happen, but the college shouldn't be too shocked if the elevator replacement is delayed.

Although Lord has pledged to replace the two passenger elevators he hasn't shown any signs of even choosing a bidder.

Records show the chronic elevator problems had not been addressed despite years of tenant complaints and Chicago building code violations.

Columbia should have demanded the elevators be fixed before giving Lord any money. That would be using leverage.

If elevator replacement doesn't begin soon, Columbia should make it a priority to find a legal means to break the lease.

Had college officials requested violation information from the city before leasing in December 2006, they would have known the property failed to meet too many elevator, boiler and ventilation codes in the last decade to be worth the money, hassle and danger to rent.

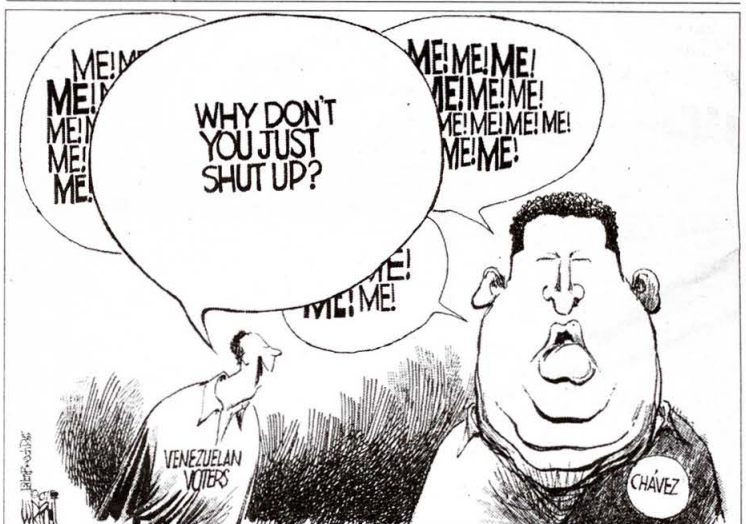
Future rental endeavors by the college should include putting in the hour of extra time to request the potential rented building's history of code violations.

It's not too much to ask.

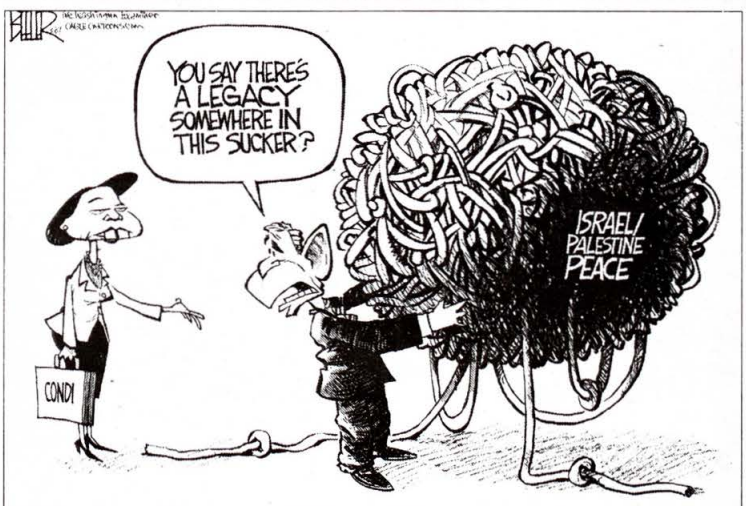
The safety and humane working conditions of the institutions' employees depend on it.



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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 2 you'll find a set of guidelines on how to do this. Let us hear from you.

—The Chronicle Editorial Board



# Yes, Virginia, there is a war on Christmas



by Sara Harvey  
Copy Editor

Season's Greetings. There, now—I didn't offend anyone, did I? After all, I'm not excluding any one group of people, religious or secular. The problem of political correctness seems to resurface each year, with Bill O'Reilly gnashing his teeth each time a store trades in its "Merry Christmas" for a "Happy Holidays." And the folks who are trying to be politically correct will be frowned upon for fighting a "liberal war."

A recent debate in Madison, Wis. centered on what Wisconsinites should call the Capitol tree, a giant balsam fir donated by the Menominee Nation this year. It had been known as a Christmas tree since 1916, until its name was changed in 1986 to a holiday tree. A proposal emerged on Dec. 1 to rename the holiday tree the "Wisconsin State Christmas Tree."

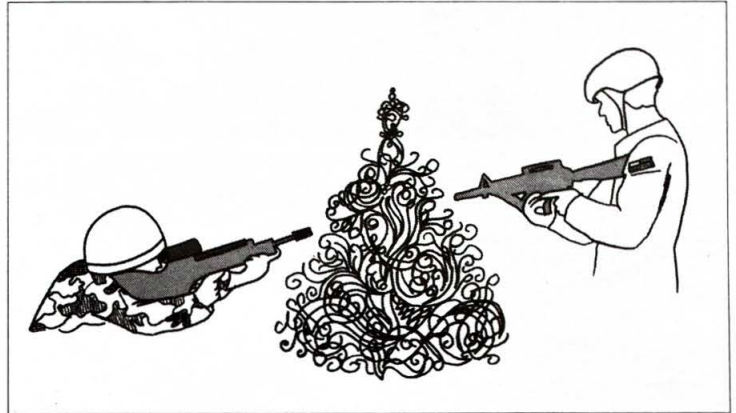
A woman from the Freedom From Religion Foundation decried the proposal, labeling it as offensive to atheist and agnostic individuals. She shook her finger at the government for "endorsing Christianity."

Was she asking for an "unreasonable degree of political correctness," as Rep. Joel Kleefisch (R-Oconomowoc) protested? Or is it really an exclusion to call this 35-foot balsam fir a Christmas tree? The custom of cutting down a tree is a pagan practice, so the tree must also be excluding non-pagans, right?

Holiday is a word identified by Webster's Dictionary as derived from the Old English haligdaeg, which literally means "holy day," so isn't that too an exclusive—and possibly an offensive—name to attach to the tree?

The government has been endorsing—or should I say federally mandating—this holiday since 1870 when it was passed into law by Ulysses S. Grant. So why shouldn't its symbols be recognized by the government? It's not a First Amendment issue unless the government is using the tree to promote religion. Since when does hanging colored light bulbs and ornaments constitute a religious revival? General consensus in the court system is that such Santa Claus and Christmas trees are secular symbols, not religious ones. Let the Capitol decorate its tree and call it whatever it wants.

In the same vein, department stores have been toning down their Christmas decorations and now use more holiday-neutral ones instead (for example: red and gold instead of red and green, as Macy's chose to do this year). In the past, Christians have threatened to sue these purveyors of the "Happy Holidays" mantra. But they don't have a case, because such stores are private entities, not public/government-owned entities. So department stores can say whatever they want about religion or lack



Allyson McGovern THE CHRONICLE

thereof during this time of year. But few things divide people the way religion does, and unfortunately for the holiday-neutral retailer, it happens during the biggest shopping season of the year.

It doesn't bother me that some retailers are abandoning this political correctness by renouncing the neutral decor in favor of red and green. My beef is with the idea that it's wrong to wish someone a "merry Christmas" at all. People use that phrase because they believe it's a phrase that holds goodwill, not because they think it'll alienate the person they're saying it to.

If someone who utters those two words doesn't know you're a non-Christian, it just means they're ignorant of that fact, not that they're a rude and inconsiderate person.

Is being politically correct about the holidays really part of a "liberal plot"? Probably

not. Most likely, it stems from the desire to include people who don't celebrate Christmas. In a 2005 CBS Morning Special, American commentator and writer Ben Stein, who is Jewish, brought up this concept of offending people during the holidays.

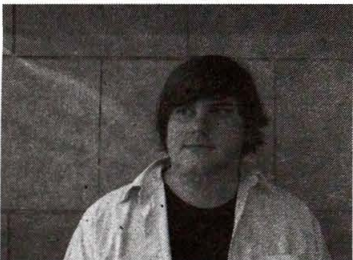
"It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, 'Merry Christmas' to me," he said. "I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto ... In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time."

Stein couldn't have said it better.

"Season's Greetings," "Happy Holidays" and "Merry Christmas" shouldn't be viewed as words meant to wound, because their very nature is the opposite. Good wishes should be accepted for what they are.

sharvey@chroniclemail.com

# Will the real liberal please stand up?



by Wes Giglio  
Commentary Editor

With the Iowa Caucuses less than a month away, three Democratic candidates have emerged as the clear front-runners for the Democratic National Convention's nomination. They are Senator Barack Obama (D-Ill.), Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) and former Senator John Edwards (D-N.C.).

The priorities of the liberal Democrats are to end the war in Iraq, to repeal the civil rights infringements of the Patriot Act and Guantanamo Bay prisons, to reverse the Bush tax cuts of 2001 and 2003 and to promote a liberal social agenda (universal health care, gay rights, the upholding of *Roe v. Wade*).

The voters who put a Democratic majority in the legislature and watched their leaders squander a historic opportunity to defy the worst and most dangerous president in generations aren't folding in disappointment—they want a true liberal in the executive office.

Here's a breakdown of the three major candidates, and what they can offer a country looking for real change.

**Hillary Clinton:** Clinton hasn't hesitated to go negative in the primary cycle, most often going after fellow Iowa front-runner Obama. However, her tactic began to backfire a month ago at one of CNN's democratic debates, when Edwards and many other

candidates bombarded her with criticism. Clinton seemed unprepared and frequently stuttered and contradicted herself in her answers. The result has been a steady and steep drop in her poll percentages, especially in key early primary states.

Clinton voted to authorize the Iraq war in 2003, and her fellow candidates have flogged her with that fact. She supports troop withdrawal but only in a phased, slow process.

Domestically, Clinton voted against the Bush tax cuts but supports his immigration plan, an alliance of ideas that vexes many democrats. She doesn't support giving undocumented workers driver's licenses. She opposes gay marriage.

Clinton also offers a health care program that falls short of the universal goals of most democrats. It requires all citizens to have health care, but doesn't provide it for free. Clinton's plan would make it impossible for insurance providers to deny a citizen health care based on preexisting condition, but that's good, but it wouldn't truly cover everyone. It would make health care like auto insurance—mandatory and usually full of holes.

**Barack Obama:** Obama sprang to nation-

al prominence after a dazzling keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. As a candidate, he has lost none of his gift for rhetoric, competing in that regard even with Edwards, long considered the master of the stump speech.

Obama is the only major candidate who was against the war from the beginning. Though his Senate term didn't begin until 2004, Obama is on record as early as 2002 denouncing Bush's foreign policy and warning against the disaster that a war in Iraq would be. He was right then, and that resonates with Democratic voters.

Domestically, Obama joins every candidate with the exception of Dennis Kucinich in rejecting gay marriage. Like Clinton, he supported the Bush immigration plan, but voted against the tax cuts in 2003. His health care plan isn't truly universal either. Under his plan no one would be turned away, but just like Clinton, you still have to pay for it. The difference between the plans is that Obama's is not mandatory, and goes to cut the cost of health insurance by \$2,500 a year for an average family.

Obama talks big, and has been right from the beginning about the biggest foreign policy mistake in United States history, but

at the root, he's still a centrist.

**John Edwards:** Edwards is a wild card for many Democrats, even though he was on John Kerry's ticket as vice president in 2004. His candidacy is based on the idea of "two Americas"—one for the wealthy and one for everybody else—an idea that resonates with class-conscious liberals. He's never led in the national polls, but his campaign is strong in Iowa.

Edwards voted to go to war in 2003, but has been more vocal in condemning his error than any other candidate who made the same mistake. He supports troop withdrawal and a worldwide goodwill campaigning to heal international allegiances.

Edwards has the best health care plan of the three major candidates. It combines the cost-cutting innovation of Obama's with the universal aspect of Clinton's. Under his plan, businesses that refused to provide coverage for their employees would be forced to pay into the alternative plans those employees were on.

He has committed to reforming the No Child Left Behind Act, which is too dependent on federal goals and test scores. He has also committed to a plan which would make college more affordable by eliminating bank subsidies for private student loans.

Edwards would totally eliminate tax cuts for oil companies and the richest one percent of Americans, going further than merely repealing the Bush tax cuts.

Edwards is the furthest to the left of any of the major candidates, and Democrats looking for true change should take notice.

This election will be a test of the electorate's mettle—will it settle for the centrist frontrunner, hopeful her cautious policies will win conservative hearts and minds? Or will it invest in a new direction?

Time will tell. But if I were Clinton, I'd watch my back.

jjgiglio@chroniclemail.com



The candidates at the Democratic presidential debate at Drexel University in Philadelphia on Oct. 30.

MCT



# We're moving...

This week the Office of Human Resources is moving to

## 218 S. Wabash, 8th floor

The 623 S. Wabash and 33 E. Congress offices will be closed on Tuesday, December 11th for our move.

Please note that the mailing address for the Human Resources team will be:

Columbia College Chicago  
Office of Human Resources  
600 S. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60605

Our extensions and fax numbers will remain the same.

We apologize for the inconvenience and look forward to serving you in our new location!

### The Human Resources Team

Stephanie Griffin  
Assistant Vice President, Human Resources  
(X7466)

Patricia Olalde  
Director of Human Resources  
(X7248)

Gabina Mora  
Benefits Manager  
(X7468)

Derrick Streater  
Administrative Assistant  
(X7592)

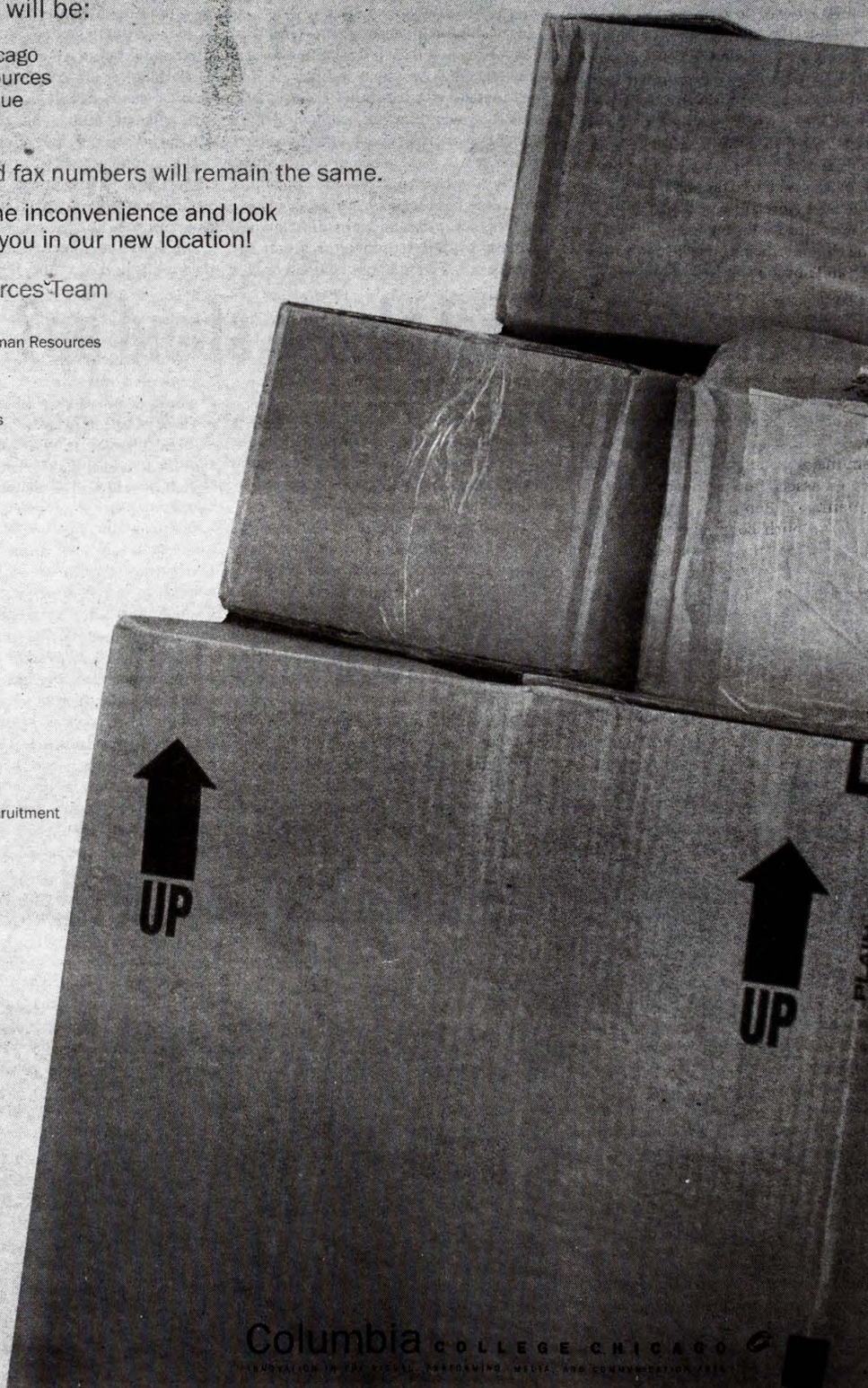
Anthony Martinez  
Human Resources Assistant  
(X7276)

Michelle Jones Foster  
Director of Recruitment  
(X8216)

Gerlyn Jackson  
Administrative Assistant, Recruitment  
(X8215)

Carmen Caldwell  
Recruitment Assistant  
(X8822)

create...  
change





# City Beat

## Keeping up with campaign promises



Months after election, constituents pleased with new alderman

by Becky Schlikerman  
Assistant City Beat Editor

LAST YEAR'S aldermanic elections resulted in some new faces taking over for incumbent aldermen who were voted out by their constituents.

In the 2nd Ward, that is precisely what happened when Robert Fioretti won the run-off election in April 2007.

Since beginning his four-year aldermanic term in late May 2007, he has been working to fulfill his campaign promises, some of which include communication with residents and sensible and environmentally-friendly development. Residents and officials in the South Loop said he has been doing a good job so far.

One of Fioretti's main campaign issues was communication and accessibility to the alderman, a promise he has been keeping and now one of the reasons he is being praised by constituents.

"I think the fact that I've seen him walking the streets of the South Loop and I've seen him throughout the city just talking to people and making his presence known ... that's more than I saw from Madeline Haithcock when she was alderman of this ward," said Brian Matos, a senior journalism major at Columbia and Student Government Association president.

Dennis J. Beninato, president of the Greater South Loop Association, agrees. He said Fioretti can be seen throughout the ward on a regular basis at community meetings, local businesses or just walking



Since his inception in May, 2nd Ward Alderman Robert Fioretti has been working to fulfill his campaign promises of accessibility, sensible development and communication with residents.

Tim Hunt THE CHRONICLE

around.

Fioretti said communication is key for a community to be successful and solve its issues. To do that, he is holding community meetings to keep the residents of the 2nd Ward informed about issues such as the city budget.

"I think people ought to know how the money is being spent," Fioretti said. "I think they'll be appalled when they find out millions of dollars are just fettered away without any discretion ... and so many activities are not productive for the City of Chicago and its residents and tax payers."

Although constituents such as Matos and

Beninato are pleased with their alderman's work so far, there are still issues facing the South Loop, they said.

One of the major issues facing Columbia students and residents of the South Loop is parking, Matos said, which Fioretti doesn't have a solution for yet.

One idea Fioretti has for the problem is to require new developments to have one parking spot per resident unit, which developers have to comply with, he said.

Nevertheless, more and more students are commuting from the suburbs and need

»SEE FIORETTI, PG. 36

## Calendar

### Monday, Dec. 10

Visit the Cook County building, 118 N. Clark St., room 112, and view more than 80 holiday trees on display that have been decorated by different ethnic community groups. The exhibition runs through Jan. 7 and is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information call (312) 603-6268.

### Wednesday, Dec. 12

Learn or practice knitting at the Blackstone Branch Library, 4904 S. Lake Park Ave., at 7 p.m. Join the knitting circle and meet people who share your passion. Bring your knitting materials and look through or check out knitting books during the session.

For more information and to register, call (312) 747-0511.

### Friday, Dec. 14

Ride the holiday CTA train on the Orange and Brown Line trains between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. The trains are adorned with lights, garland and bows. Santa Claus and elves will pass out candy canes to the passengers.

For a complete schedule, visit [TransitChicago.com](http://TransitChicago.com).

### Saturday, Dec. 15

Sign your dog up for a free yoga class at the Lakeshore Athletic Club at Illinois Center, 211 N. Stetson Ave. Instructors will teach 45 minutes of stretching and flexibility exercises for dogs and their owners at noon. Space is limited.

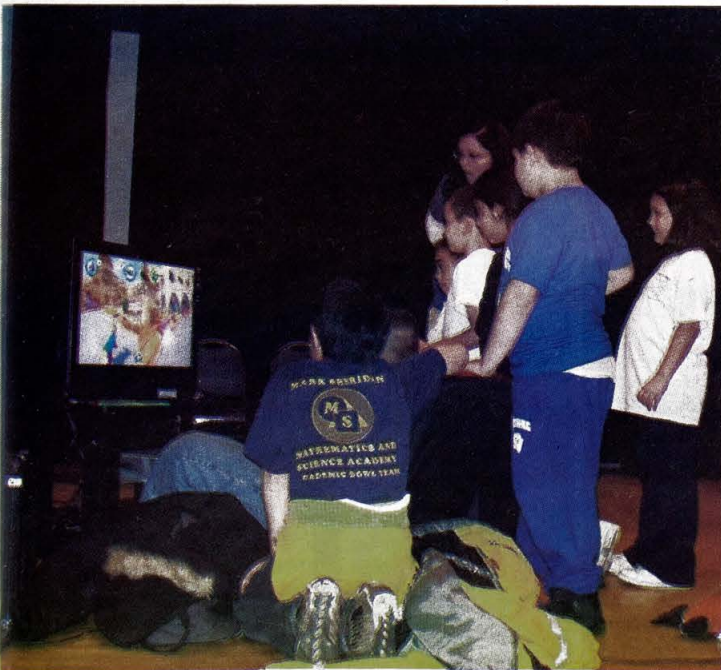
To register for the Paws and Flow yoga class, call (312) 616-9000 x280.

### Sunday, Dec. 16

Visit Lincoln Park Zoo, 2001 N. Clark St., for the ZooLights show. Every evening from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. until Jan. 1, the trees, shops and seasonal images are decorated with holiday lights throughout the zoo. Watch artists carve animals out of ice and visit Santa's Safari. Free holiday 3-D glasses are given to the first 1,000 visitors. Admission is free.

For more information, visit [LPZoo.org](http://LPZoo.org) or call (312) 742-2000.

## Microsoft adds more parental controls to video games



Children gather around to play video games like 'Guitar Hero 3' and 'Dance Dance Revolution' at the Louis L. Valentine Club and Child Care, 3400 S. Emerald Ave., on Dec. 4 during an informational session about game ratings and parental control settings.

Courtesy ALISON ARMSTEAD



Legislators say violent video games are negatively affecting children

by Dana Nelson  
City Beat Editor

ON THE Christmas lists of many excited children are video and computer games. But without knowing what kind of games are out there, many parents aren't aware of the violence, nudity and sex in some of the more maturely-rated games.

In an effort to raise awareness, the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago hosted an event on Dec. 4 at the Louis L. Valentine Club and Child Care, 3400 S. Emerald Ave., to teach parents about parental control settings and the game ratings. Microsoft and Best Buy employees took part by setting up Xbox 360 consoles for the kids to play and auctioning off a few game systems and games.

Parents and kids of all ages filled the auditorium, many eager to play the games and possibly win them, others excited over the free pop and pizza offered.

Alderman James Balcer (11th Ward), State Representative Esther Golar (D-Ill.) of the 6th District and Chicago Police Department Commander of the 9th District Eugene Roy

»SEE GAMES, PG. 37



# Alleys become environmentally friendly



**Sustainable design makes Chicago a role model for other cities**

by John Lendman  
Staff Writer

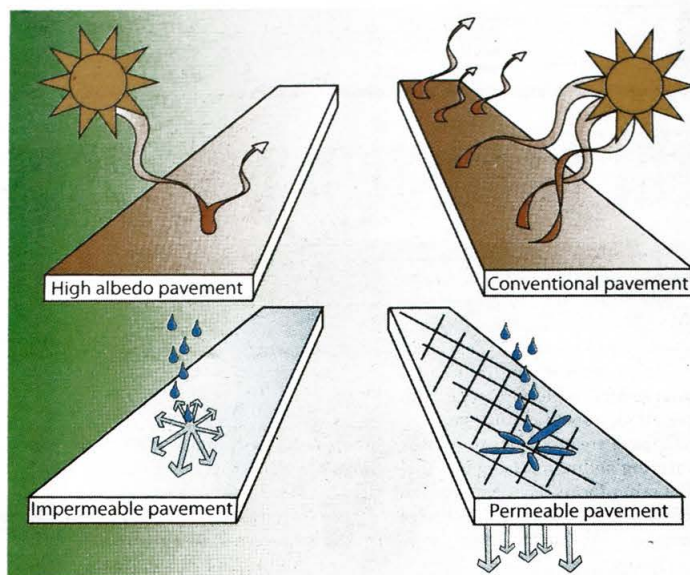
IN AN effort to become more environmentally stable, city officials have spearheaded the redesign of Chicago's more than 1,900 miles of alleys.

The Department of Transportation's Green Alleys Program utilizes environmental engineering in several sustainable methods, improving the pavement's efficiency with storm-water management, heat reduction and material recycling. Street lamps are also designed to conserve energy. In a city that has more miles of alleys than any other city in the world, 46 alleys will have been redesigned by the end of 2007, according to city officials.

The program's primary focus is in producing "permeable" pavements and asphalts that absorb rainwater and runoff while reducing stress on the sewer system. Project Director Janet Attarian said the city hopes to reintroduce filtered ground-water into the water supply while keeping the manufacturing and maintenance of Green Alleys less costly than conventional alleys.

"Mayor [Richard M.] Daley is very interested in sustainable design," Attarian said. "We are constantly educating [ourselves on green design] and also learning with other cities; we are starting to be a role model in this area."

The project was partly a response to the localized flooding problems many alleys



Allyson McGovern THE CHRONICLE

in the city foster. Attarian said Chicago has more flooding in its alleys than any other city in the country because they were never built in coordination with the sewer system. The Green Alleys Program helps lessen basement and street flooding by offering a more sustainable alternative to installing expensive sewer connections, according to city officials.

For this project, city engineers invented a porous, permeable asphalt that uses ground-up tire rubber to combine with regular asphalt mixes. The pavement, which consists of 25 percent air, absorbs rainwater and filters it back into the ground. As a response

to climate change, the recycled tire product improves the durability of asphalt under higher temperatures as well, officials said.

Sarah Dunn, University of Illinois in Chicago professor of architecture and architect at UrbanLabs, an urban design firm, said it makes perfect sense that Chicago would back a project that is as sustainable as it is affordable.

"Often, people are hesitant to implement sustainable technologies because there is typically an added up-front cost," Dunn said. "It's great that you don't have to fight that battle; you can improve on the environmental side and on the cost side."

Jason Varone, a reporter for StreetsBlog, a blog about reforming New York City streets and transportation, said Chicago has a lot of great environmentally-conscious ideas and a mayor who is consistently behind sustainable design. He said the Green Alleys initiative is beneficial to the progressiveness of Chicago's political climate.

"The fact that Chicago went ahead and put together this [initiative] is handy for us to redirect toward institutes [in New York City]," Varone said. "The best thing is that it's a model for other cities."

The Green Alley Project also proposes more energy-efficient street lights that produce white light as opposed to conventional yellow light. The "dark sky compliant" fixtures will illuminate the alleys and help people distinguish color at night.

Another highlight of the program is the "high albedo" pavement material that reflects sunlight away from the alley surfaces to radiate less heat. The city lauds the technology for reducing cooling costs and improving air quality, according to "The Chicago Green Alley Handbook" released by the Department of Transportation.

The success of the project will lead to more environmentally sustainable city-planning projects across the city, Attarian said, such as the new recycling program that will be introduced next year.

"We really opened a door that just broke open a dam," Attarian said, referring to the increased involvement of various city departments in becoming more environmentally conscious. "I can say pretty confidently that this has been successful."

chronicle@colum.edu

# Higher earnings found for college graduates



**Report shows Illinois economy changing, lower wages, diverse workforce**

by Becky Schlikerman  
Assistant City Beat Editor

THE LONG days of class, all-nighters writing papers and studying will pay off in the future.

According to "The State of Working Illinois," a report released on Dec. 6, education is associated with upward mobility and higher earnings. The report also found that wages in Illinois have declined and the job market is changing while the workforce is growing and diversifying.

"The time in America where you just graduated high school and get a good job with a car in the garage ... is over," said Ralph Martire, the executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability at a symposium unveiling the report at the Union League Club of Chicago, 65 W. Jackson Blvd.

In Illinois, 66.4 percent of workers with a bachelor's degree earned \$75,000 a year or more while 37.6 percent with only high school diplomas earned less than \$50,000 a year, according to the report. One-third of the workforce has a college education, Martire said.

Similarly, employment is directly correlated to education. People in Illinois with less than a high school diploma are three times more likely to be unemployed than someone with a bachelor's degree.

"The greater the educational attainment ... the lower the unemployment rate," Martire said. "Education is one of the keys to getting into the workforce nowadays."

But educational attainment, income and

unemployment is different based on race and ethnicity, according to the report.

Blacks and Latinos had lower education rates and therefore had lower income rates. More than half of the Illinois black population and Latino population earned less than \$50,000. And while 42.9 percent of whites and 51 percent of Asians earn more than \$75,000, only 26 percent of blacks and 22 percent of Latinos do, according to the report.

In the same vein, seven out of 10 Latinos have a high school degree or lower and they are the fastest-growing part of the Illinois workforce, Martire said.

The report analyzed various aspects of the Illinois economy besides the value of education. Some of the findings include a decline in real wages, which have been adjusted for inflation; growth and diversity in the Illinois labor force and an influx of job opportunities. In addition, the Illinois economy based on gross domestic product was behind the national rate of 3.4 percent. The Illinois GDP was at 3 percent.

And job types have changed in the past 17 years. The manufacturing sector has declined, while the service sectors have increased.

According to the report, as manufacturing jobs decline, lower-wage jobs in different sectors, such as professional and business services, education and health services are replacing them. On average, the weekly wages of new jobs are lower than manufacturing wages.

For example, the state added 1.4 million high paying service jobs and 1.5 million low paying service jobs from 2001 to 2007 for a growth rate of 9.6 percent, said Paul Kleppner, the lead researcher on the report and director of the Office of Social Policy

Research at Northern Illinois University.

"As a result, by the middle of 2007, the number of low-wage service jobs ... exceeded the number of high wage service jobs by 12.4 percent," Kleppner said.

At the same time, the cost of essentials such as food, housing, health care, gas and utilities has been increasing, according to the report.

On top of these shifts in the Illinois economy, the number of people working in Illinois has changed as well.

The Illinois workforce has grown in the last 17 years, adding 807,875 workers since 1990, according to the report. And the work-

force has diversified as whites dropped to 70 percent, from 80 percent, of the total workforce as the population changes.

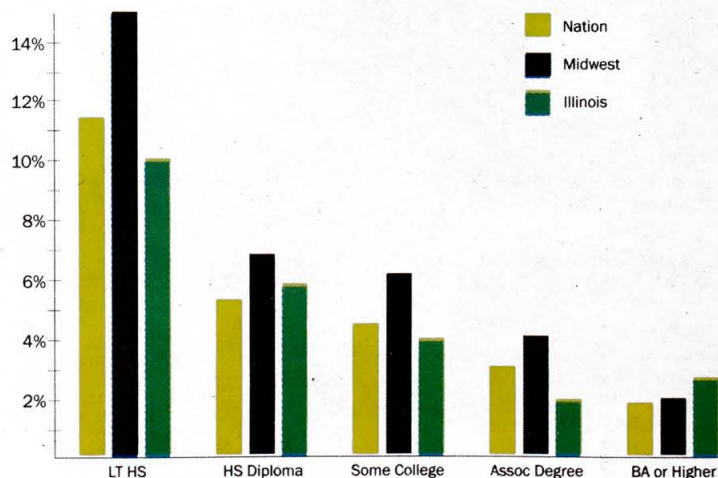
Most college students know the reality of these numbers.

It's encouraging to have data that reflects the common perception that higher education is important, said Justin Carter, a freshman marketing communication major at Columbia.

"Everyone's always said you have a better chance to [get] a good job with a college degree," he said.

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## UNEMPLOYMENT percentage based on education



Emilia Kiimiuk THE CHRONICLE



# Global action against polluters



Environmental advocates urge residents to respond against power plants

by Silvana Tabares  
Assistant City Beat Editor

POLLUTION FROM two power plants in Chicago pose health risks and environmental concerns for the Pilsen and Little Village communities, and if residents do not call action upon legislators, experts say these neighborhoods will continue to face health threats from toxins in the air.

State global warming experts and local religious and community leaders held a town hall meeting at Rudy Lozano Library, 1805 S. Loomis St., on Dec. 4 to inform Pilsen and Little Village residents of the health problems caused by the factories emitting toxins in the air and contributing to global warming.

The Crawford Generating Station, 3501 S. Pulaski Road in Little Village and Fisk Generating Station, 1111 W. Cermak Road in Pilsen, are coal-burning power plants producing toxins and polluting the air people breathe, causing health risks, environmental experts say.

Pollution from these two coal power plants causes more than 1,000 asthma attacks a year in the communities, said Samuel Villasenor, a clean power community organizer at the Little Village Environ-

mental Justice Organization.

"It's unfair that the people in Pilsen and Little Village have to deal with the pollution," Villasenor said.

Ron Burke, associate director of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, said electric power plants are the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Illinois.

He said the EPA is working to create a program to nationally regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power plants.

The Crawford and Fisk power plants emit particle emissions that trigger asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes, premature deaths, increased respiratory hospitalizations and emergency room visits, said Brian Urbaszewski, director of environmental health programs for the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago.

However, there are strategies to combat global warming pollution. Using less fuel and taking other forms of transportation such as public transit and biking decreases global warming pollution and health risks, Urbaszewski said.

Using compact fluorescent light bulbs and Energy Star appliances or electronics saves energy and less coal is being burned, he added.

Aside from implementing strategies to reduce global warming pollution, Rebecca Stanfield, state director for Environment Illinois, said residents need to demonstrate support and call upon their local legislators



Brian Urbaszewski, director of environmental health programs of the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago, spoke about the health risks as a result of global warming pollution at Rudy Lozano Library, 1805 S. Loomis St., on Dec. 4.

Tim Hunt THE CHRONICLE

to adopt environmental policies to clean up the power plants that foist potential health risks in their communities.

Cesar Ruvalcaba, a Little Village resident, said he is concerned about his community.

"We're killing each other and this is the future of our children," Ruvalcaba said.

Senator Martin A. Sandoval (D-Ill.) for the 12th district, which encompasses the Crawford plant, has introduced legislation on taxing pollution.

He said there is minor enforcement against the level of emissions in the area.

"These coal plants emit high levels of toxins into the air," Sandoval said. "If they

would be taxed based on their level of toxicity, they would immediately take remedial action to remedy that. I think when we hit these corporations in their pockets, they will be motivated to do the right thing for our communities."

Sandoval, who attended the town hall meeting, said it's an opportunity to push legislators to create regulation against pollution.

"We need to work at the state level and local government to implement stronger environmental laws," Sandoval said.

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# Experts debate ways to sink high property taxes



Suggestions include raising sales taxes or goods bought over the Internet

by David Lister  
Staff Writer

POSSIBLE REFORM of the property tax will have a wide-ranging impact on many Illinois citizens, including students, if proposed changes, such as an increase in sales taxes to decrease property taxes, occur.

Senator Chris Lauzen (R-Ill.), Ralph Martire, executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, and several university professors from Illinois and Michigan held a workshop called "Property Taxation in Illinois: How and Why It is Broken and What Can Be Done to Fix It," at the Union League Club of Chicago, 65 W. Jackson Blvd., on Nov. 30.

The experts discussed possible alternatives to property taxes, while highlighting the existing problems it has on taxpayers.

"Over the last 20 years, income has remained flat while property tax is going up," Martire said. "Yes, it is a stable tax, but it is a stable tax that many taxpayers cannot keep up with."

Nathan B. Anderson, assistant professor of Economics and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago, said property taxes in Illinois have risen steadily since about 1986. From 1992 through 2005, property taxes increased 26 percent.

Each area is taxed differently, depending

on the amount of money needed by various institutions, such as schools, parks and city departments.

Most property in Illinois is assessed at 33.3 percent of its market value, but Cook County has a classification system. Residential properties are assessed at up to 16 percent, while commercial properties are assessed at up to 38 percent, according to the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

Lauzen said most complaints he receives from his senate district office are about property taxes. He argued Illinois is too reliant on property taxes to provide public school funding.

Lauzen championed two bills he sponsored to the Illinois State Senate to help reduce Illinois' reliance on property taxes and regulate school spending. Senate Bill 2696 would tax goods purchased over the Internet, with

80 percent of that going to a common school fund. Senate Bill 2793 would require school districts to spend at least 65 percent of its total operating expenditures on actual classroom expenses. Neither bill has received enough support to be voted on yet.

Martire focused on eliminating Illinois' reliance on property taxes by increasing other taxes that would be felt by working students and consumers as a whole.

Martire is a proponent of House Bill 750, a proposal that would raise \$8.78 billion in revenue despite reducing property tax by 25 percent. The bill calls for a 2 percent increase of the state income tax, as well as an expansion of the sales tax base to include

all consumer services. Gov. Rod Blagojevich has threatened to veto the bill because it is a tax increase.

"My perspective is that we would have passed [House Bill 750] this year but for the governor," Martire said. "In the next couple of years, the state's fiscal system needs to be discussed. Illinois has to be able to pay its bills, and we are unable to do that now."

In 2003, Illinois collected slightly less than \$19 million in property taxes, with more than \$9 million of that coming from Cook County. Almost 62 percent of that money was used by school districts to fund local K-12 schools, according to the Illinois Department of Revenue.

Between 2004 and 2005, 63.3 percent of school revenue from the state's local governments came from property taxes, the second highest percentage in the nation, according to the National Education Association and the United States Census Bureau.

Two other panelists, J. Fred Giertz and Therese J. McGuire, agreed there are changes that need to be made to the current property tax system.

"We need to make property tax more workable, not necessarily lower it," said Giertz, head of the Department of Economics and professor in the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Giertz also supported an expansion of the sales tax base, which would affect everyone, not just property owners.

McGuire, director of the Guthrie Center for Real Estate Research and the Real Estate Management program at Northwestern University, responded to an audience question wondering if the problem is not with property taxes, but how they are spent.

"Let's set up a rational, reasonable structure and if we're worried about the govern-



Nathan Anderson speaks with audience members after giving a lecture on property taxation in Illinois at the Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Russell Augustine THE CHRONICLE

ment setting up unreasonable spending levels, then let's change the spending levels instead of the property tax rates," she said.

University of Michigan Dean of Libraries Paul Courant said the only option Illinois cannot consider is eliminating property taxes all together.

"It's absolutely inconceivable that property tax won't be here 5 or 10 years from now. It raises too much money," Courant said. "Our problem is to figure out what the best future is for property tax, not to try and imagine a future without it."

chronicle@colum.edu

## » FIORETTI

Continued from PG. 33

### Creating a campus community in the South Loop is one of Fioretti's plans for the future

parking in the South Loop, Matos said.

"Our parking lots are full, students [have] to park farther away," he said.

Similarly, Beninato said quality of life issues such as congestion, development, traffic and education are matters facing the busy South Loop neighborhood.

As the number of students in the South Loop grows, Fioretti plans to create a more cohesive

university community.

He said he wants to designate the areas encompassing all the colleges and universities in the South Loop, by creating a boundary line and delineate it as a campus area, to create a unified community among area institutes such as Columbia, DePaul University, John Marshall Law School, Robert Morris College and the Spertus Institute. There would also be public art sprinkled throughout the designated area like other college campuses.

"[The community] ought to reflect that we have more than one university," Fioretti said, adding that this concept is still in planning.

In addition, new housing for Columbia students is being developed. The apart-

ments would be rented as suites in a dorm-like fashion, with shared common living areas like the kitchen and living room.

Fioretti said this concept was proposed to create affordable housing for students, but it is just in the planning stages at the moment.

Although development was a large part of Fioretti's campaign, other main issues were taxes and environmental sustainability.

Although the City Council voted to increase taxes for the 2008 budget, Fioretti voted against the increase, keeping his pledge against raising taxes.

To deal with the new taxes that city residents will face, Fioretti said frivolous government spending needs to be cut.

He said the city of Chicago pays ridiculous amounts of money for things that shouldn't cost that much. An example he cited was a recent city appraisal for a 40-foot alley estimated to cost about \$20,000.

"That's absolute nonsense," Fioretti said. A good appraisal would cost about \$1,500, he said. Fioretti's law firm, Fioretti, Lower and Carbonara LLP, practices zoning law.

Another top issue during Fioretti's campaign was environmentalism.

Making the 2nd Ward the "greenest" in the city was a priority for Fioretti, and his vision for environmentally-friendly and

efficient construction seems to be panning out. Fioretti promised to have a green building specialist meet with developers in order to assure sustainability and he has an expert who sits on the citizen's advisory board, although

Fioretti would not reveal his identity.

In addition, he said new developments will have to be LEED certified, which is an independent rating system for green construction.

When Fioretti meets with developers for plans for new South Loop buildings, he expects them to go for some level of LEED certification in the devel-

opment, said Gail Merritt, cofounder of the Alliance for a Greener South Loop.

Although it's too early to tell what kind of permanent effect Fioretti will have on the South Loop, so far he seems to be doing a good job, Matos said.

"The reason that Alderman Fioretti was elected was really to be a better representation of the new kind of South Loop with so many more students and young people living here,"

Matos said. "I think he's representing that pretty well, but like any politician, you wait; you give them a couple of years and we'll see down the road if he's able to fulfill his promises."



Alderman Robert Fioretti (2nd Ward) said new, affordable student housing for Columbia students is being planned.

Tim Hunt THE CHRONICLE

bschlikerman@chroniclemail.com



## »GAMES:

Continued from PG. 33

**Legislator considers new law to prevent children from buying games too mature for them**

also came to the event to talk to parents about the importance of knowing the games being played and the possible dangers they present.

"We should know what our children are buying and what we're buying for our children," Balcer said. "It can have a ripple effect."

On Dec. 4, Microsoft released a "Family Timer" for the Xbox 360 that parents can set for an allotted time per day or week. The Family Timer will then automatically shut off the game after a certain amount of time. The Xbox 360 already has settings the parent can adjust, such as preventing games above a certain rating from being played.

Balcer said these settings and the education of parents are important because there are consequences when kids play violent games, such as the reenactment of those games while on the street.

Roy said parents overlook the responsibility to stay involved and that often ends up affecting their children's lives in reality.

"In games, you can commit several acts of violence and at the end of it you just hit the escape button and it all goes away," Roy said. "In my world, it doesn't go away when someone commits an act of violence. Someone is hurt, injured, possibly even dead. There's a family that's in an emergency room, in a jail or a funeral home. When we allow our children to just sit and play violent games, it conditions them. It teaches them that violence resolves everything."

Balcer also mentioned the rise of obesity



A Best Buy employee makes sure the children play the video games properly on Dec. 4 at the Louis L. Valentine Club and Child Care, 3400 S. Emerald Ave. Courtesy ALISON ARMSTEAD

as a result of playing video games.

"It is not healthy to sit in front of a game system for eight hours a day," Balcer said. "I think these games help the mind, but when your child sits in front of a game hour after hour ... watching these games, watching this violence, it does no good for our children."

He said it was important to balance school, home and video games in appropriate amounts, something which the Family Timer may help accomplish.

Golar, who is working on what she calls the "Healthy Children's Campaign," spoke about the possibility of creating legislature requiring store owners to check IDs before video games are bought. Though she has no definite plan right now, she said she would consult with experts and poll her constitu-

ents on what should be done to help inform parents on what games are appropriate for their children.

"Children are influenced by what they see and hear," Golar said. "In this world that we live in today, everything is filtering in."

She also spoke about the lack of family togetherness due to children playing video games or going online rather than eating at the table with their family.

Jenny Fawcett, a representative from Microsoft, said the company understands the challenge parents have in the digital age.

"It's important to reach the parents with this message so they know they have the tools at their disposal to really set the right media and ratings for their household," Fawcett said.

Some of the parents who attended the event said they would be more proactive in their children's video game choices now.

"Before I came I never knew about the game rating," said Paulette Damico, who has an 11-year-old daughter. "All the games she has aren't very violent, but now I'm more likely to look at game ratings before buying."

Damico said she is going to tell her husband to make sure he knows about the ratings too, and she'd support a law requiring store clerks to ID children trying to buy video games.

"As it stands now, a child could go and buy a violent game," Damico said.

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# Scoop in the Loop: Say goodbye to analog television



by **Silvana Tabares**  
Assistant City Beat Editor

You have less than a year and a half to buy a digital TV or you won't be able to watch your favorite television programs, get news updates or emergency messages.

On Feb. 18, 2009, all TV stations will go digital, which means you need to either buy a digital TV, a converter for an existing analog television or subscribe to cable or satellite services to watch the news, sitcoms, cartoons or reality shows.

The U.S. Congress passed the Deficit

Reduction Act of 2005, which requires broadcast television stations to switch off their analog channels Feb. 17, 2009 and begin transmitting digitally Feb. 18. President George W. Bush signed the legislation in February 2006.

On Jan. 1 people can apply for \$40 coupons to purchase converter boxes, according to an article in the Chicago Tribune. The price of a converter box is expected to cost between \$50 to \$70 and will be available for purchase early next year, according to the National Association of Broadcasters.

The switch to digital is apparently more convenient. Instead of transmitting one programming channel and causing static and less clear pictures during analog programming, digital TV provides interactive video and broadcasts to multiple channels, according to the National Association of Broadcasters.

Digital TV might be more advanced and efficient, offering a clearer picture and better sound, but the public needs to be informed and have the option to choose on whether or not they want the upgrade.

Right now we have the choice to purchase

a digital television and cable services, but if we want to continue to watch public television channels in February 2009, we would have to order these services.

People should not have to pay for public television and order cable services to watch networks such as ABC, NBC, CBS, WTTW and PBS, which we currently get for free.

Television programming should remain free with a digital broadcast signal, especially during emergency situations.

This new legislation is not meant to scare people who rely on television for news and entertainment, but it concerns me.

Low-income households that cannot afford to buy a new television or cable services would not be informed of an emergency alert, snow advisories and breaking news.

Television is the main source of entertainment for many people, with 801,940 Illinois households relying on free analog television signals, according to an article in the Chicago Tribune on Dec. 3.

I know there is more than one year remaining for this process to take place, but I have not seen any public service

announcements on television educating the public about this national transition.

There needs to be a plan of action before some of us replace that bulky television with the antenna for a digital one.

Informational forums on digital TV need to be held in the community to reach out to people who do not know about this change and guide them toward assistance.

More outreach programs are needed so that no one is left behind, especially for people whose primary language is not English. They also need to have a better understanding of this new policy, be provided with clarity as to why this is happening and be informed on what is the best option.

We trust our lawmakers to create good choices and we need their leadership to engage with the communities about this process. The public needs to be more aware about this nationwide transition.

For more information, visit [DTVAnswers.com](http://DTVAnswers.com).

[stabares@chroniclemail.com](mailto:stabares@chroniclemail.com)

## In Other News

### Pit bulls attack boy

Two pit bulls attacked an 8-year-old boy, who suffered major injuries, on Dec. 5, the Chicago Tribune reported. The Chicago Fire Department reported to State Street in the Roseland neighborhood on the far South Side and found the boy in critical condition, said Eve Rodriguez, assistant director of media affairs for the Chicago Fire Department. The dogs knocked the child down and bit him. As of press time, the boy remained in critical condition at the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital. Both dogs will be euthanized, according to city officials.

### Train crash lawsuit

A family is suing Amtrak and Norfolk Southern Corporation following the train collision in which a passenger train hit a freight train on the South Side on Nov. 30, according to The Associated Press. John and Marcia Hamstra, their daughter-in-law and grandchildren, from Grandville, Mich., filed a lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court on Dec. 3. John Hamstra fractured his shoulder and had a concussion following the accident. The condition of the other family members was not reported. "The element of damage has yet to be determined," the family's attorney said. The Hamstras say the railroads were "negligent" during the accident. The lawsuit amount was not reported and spokesperson for the railroads declined to comment on Dec. 3.

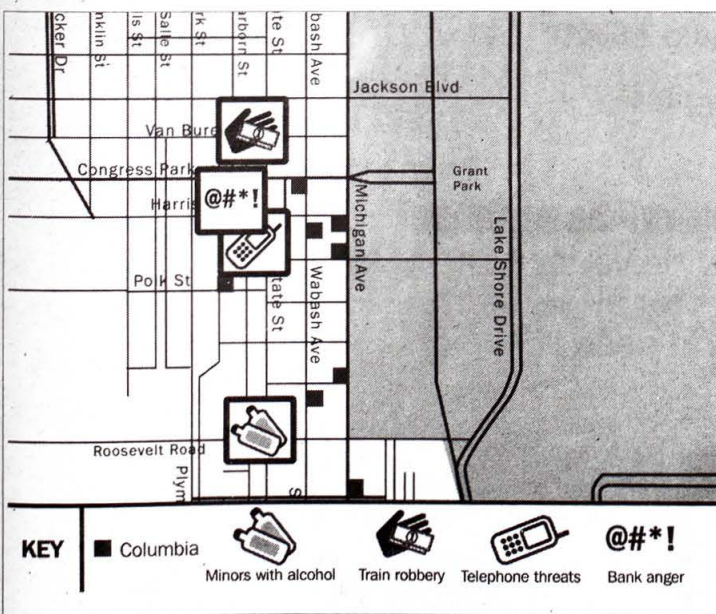
### Cemetery upheaval stands

A federal appeals court will not reconsider its decision to allow the city of Chicago to relocate a cemetery for the O'Hare International Airport expansion plan, according to The Associated Press. The city plans to move more than 1,600 graves from St. Johannes Cemetery in Bensenville for a new runway. Opponents now have one more chance for appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in September that the cemetery is not protected by the state's religious freedom law. The O'Hare expansion plan includes reconfiguring runways to reduce delays and a new terminal on the airport's west side.

### Celebrity lawsuit

Dennis Quaid and his wife, Kimberly, filed a lawsuit against Baxter Healthcare Corp., a pharmaceutical company based in Deerfield, for its labeling of a blood thinner the couple said harmed their newborn twins last month, according to the Chicago Sun-Times on Dec. 5. The Quaid twins were given the wrong dose of Heparin, and the similarity of the label is what may have caused the confusion, the Quaid's lawyer said. The Quaid's children were given the higher dose of Heparin at 10,000 units-per-milliliter instead of Hep-Lock at 10 units-per-milliliter. Both vials are about the same size and have blue labels, one darker than the other. The twins were in critical condition and both survived. Three children died last month in Indiana in a similar situation from an overdose of the same medicine.

## OFF THE BLOTTER



### Train robbery

A 60-year-old male was robbed while getting off the Orange Line at 26 W. Van Buren St. on Nov. 21. The male reported to police that he was exiting when a male in his 30s started falling onto the platform. The victim caught the male and then realized his wallet was missing. The offender got back on the train with another offender in his 30s and the victim followed the two to confront them. The offenders ran from the station with \$250, credit cards and IDs from the victim.

### Bank anger

A 41-year-old male got fed up with an employee at Chase Bank, 550 S. Dearborn St., on Dec. 1 and threatened the 25-year-old bank representative. The male tried to withdraw money from his account but the representative said there was a discrepancy with his account and he could not withdraw until Dec. 4. The irate offender told the representative, "This is going to get you killed. I'm going to come back up here on Tuesday and get every penny out of this motherf---er." The offender was taken into custody.

### Minors with alcohol

Police officers caught two minors, both 19-year-old males, possessing alcohol at the Roosevelt Red Line platform, 1151 S. State St., on Nov. 20. Both offenders held a bottle of 750 mL. Hennessy cognac. Police officers took the offenders into custody and to the station for processing.

### Telephone threats

A 22-year-old female reported to police on Nov. 28 that her ex-boyfriend was calling and leaving her threatening messages at her apartment, 731 S. Plymouth Court. The female said the 23-year-old offender called approximately 15 times and said she should watch her back and if he can't have her no one can. According to the report, he said if he saw her with someone else he'd shoot and if she got in the way he'd pay for the funeral. He said he doesn't care if he goes to jail. The report did not say if the offender was taken into custody.



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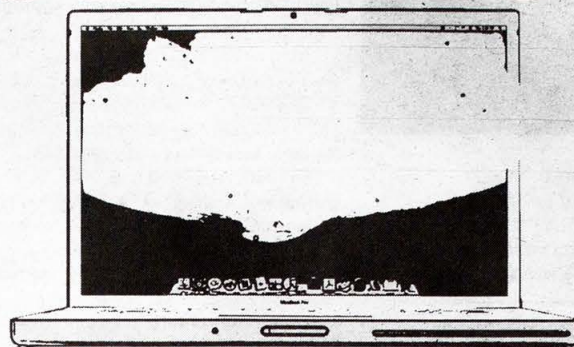
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