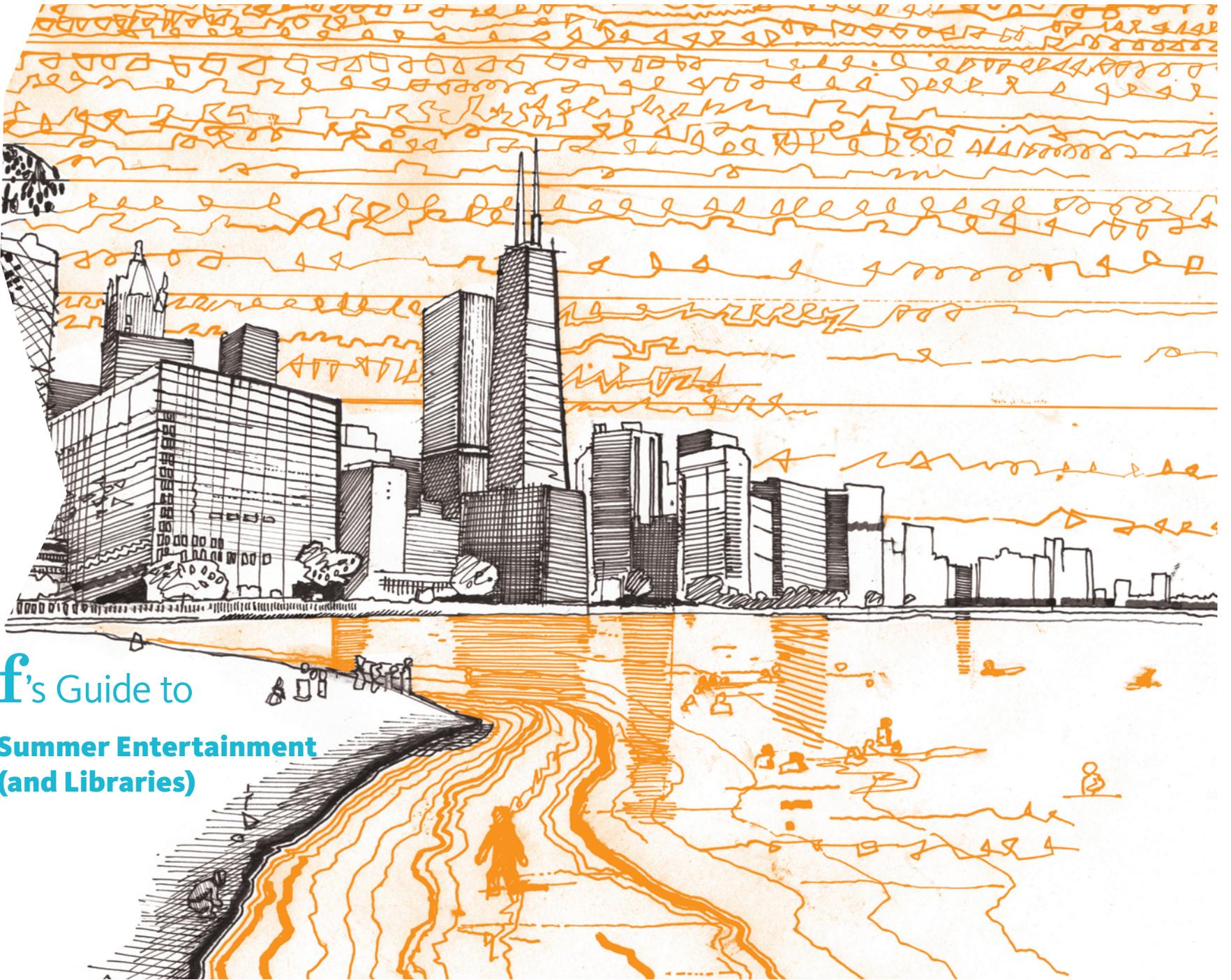


SUMMER

2011



f's Guide to
Summer Entertainment
(and Libraries)

F Newsmagazine

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the Art Institute of Chicago.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

DEAR READERS,

As the entire staff of F Newsmagazine is graduating and dispersing to exotic locations all over the world (and Iowa), we wanted to leave with you a compilation of final thoughts about some of our very favorite Chicago haunts. For many, they involve booze and foodstuffs, and for Ania ... libraries. But regardless of these proclivities, we have searched far and wide, from Rogers Park to the South Side, to curate a very passionate selection of the places that have made our experiences here in Chicago, and ones we know will delight you as well.

Whether you're new to Chicago and are desperately seeking good Thai food, or are emerging from your studio for the first time in five months with a raging need to

watch some movies, we're here to help you out. Drawing from our collective years of experience, we've done our best to forget the "hate" part of our love-hate relationship with Chicago and focused on what we love the most. In these pages, you'll find neighborhood guides to help you navigate the city year-round, and best-of lists ranging from the city's best street fests to the best video rental stores, to keep you entertained over the summer. F's Guide to Chicago will continue to expand online, so check for updates throughout the year at www.fnewsmagazine.com.

Finally, congrats to all who are graduating — don't forget your Patti Smith masks at graduation!

— Ania and Amanda

5 TOP CHICAGO MUSIC FESTIVALS

BY MIA DIMEO

Pitchfork and Lolla aren't the only places to share your musical experience with hundreds of other drunk, sweaty people. Here's F's top picks for Chicago's *other* music festivals.

NEON MARSHMALLOW FESTIVAL

June 10 – 12
Empty Bottle
1035 N. Western Ave.
www.neonmarshmallowfest.com

Last summer, Daniel Smith and Matthew Kimmel held the inaugural Marsh Fest at the Viaduct, bringing together electronic, noise, free jazz, sound artists, and other underground experimental musicians from around the world for over 100 performances in three days. Moving down Western Avenue to the Empty Bottle, this year's festival will bend your mind with a list of acts that includes Morton Subotnick (composer and innovator of early electronic music) and Los Angeles-based Lucky Dragons, a duo that combines music, video projection and collaborations with the audience in their performances. Screenings from Portland-based public access program Experimental 1/2 Hour and video artists Alice Cohen and Amy Ruhl will also take place. Tickets are \$25 per day or \$70 for three days. Watch videos of experimental performances and last year's fest at www.acid-marshmallow.com

NEW MUSIC MONDAYS

May 23 – July 25 : 6:30 p.m.
Jay Pritzker Pavilion in Millennium Park
explorechicago.org

Pack your picnic basket, chill the wine, and come early to claim your territory on the lawn. There's free music in the park all summer long — from symphony concerts to Chicago jazz to the New Music Monday series — and everyone knows it. Fighting crowds will be worth it this year with a quality lineup, opening with singer/songwriter Bonnie Prince Billy, followed a few weeks later by his softer folk comrade, Iron and Wine. Slowcore favorite Low will end June with their hypnotic harmonies, and Tuareg guitarist and songwriter Omara "Bombino" Moctar will pick up the tempo in July. The dissonant sounds of indie veterans Blonde Redhead will be the best band to watch other people in Millennium park watch. Don't miss the opening act: Chicago husband and wife duo, My Gold Mask.

GREEN MUSIC FESTIVAL

June 25 – 26
On Damen Ave. between North and Schiller
www.greenmusicfestchicago.com

This is the street festival that trumps all others, and its good cause is backed by good music. The third annual festival is supported by the Chicago Center for Green Technology. The festival itself is produced in the most eco-friendly way possible, and features biodegradable plastic cups, recycling options, and biodiesel generators. Two stages will have an impressive lineup of rotating acts, including indie giants Yo La Tengo, pop punkers The Thermals, and art rockers Les Savy Fav. There is only a \$5 donation suggested, but you can spend your money on the festival's selection of green arts and crafts, food and craft beer.

BITCHPORK FESTIVAL

July 15 – 17

"It's like the promised land. I look forward to this every year," a friend told me of this music festival that's under the radar, and wants to stay that way. Bitchpork is held in a South Side warehouse on the same weekend as the local website Pitchfork's increasingly corporate festival. There's not a clear picture of who organizes this fest, just that it's loud, fun, and tons of bands play. The list of performers for 2011 can't be found anywhere obvious online yet, but years past have shown a range of experimental, punk, psychedelic, noise, rock bands and djs, of which many are local. 2010's festival-goers were pleasantly surprised when members of Lightning Bolt performed at Bitchpork under a different name, before playing a main stage at the Pitchfork Festival the next day. One thing's for sure — this festival is guaranteed to be entertaining and wallet-friendly. Three day passes to Bitchpork run \$30, the same cost as one day at Pitchfork!

CHICAGO FOLK AND ROOTS FESTIVAL

July 9 & 10
Welles Park (Lincoln at Montrose)
www.chicagofolkandroots.org

Chicago has no shortage of established music festivals for lovers of blues, jazz, bluegrass, Latin music, and reggae, but the Chicago Folk and Root Festival reflects the focus of its presenter, Old Town School of Folk Music, on musicianship and songwriting that's broadly defined as "roots" and "folk." The main stage hosts the Midwest Fiddle Championships, the rockabilly sounds of Rosie Flores, Eastern European gypsy act the Megitza Quartet, and Balaji, a Belgian MC of Congolese descent that crosses rumba with 1960s soul. There's a dance tent where you can try clogging, polka, West African dance and mambo if you dare, and a special section of the festival dedicated to Chicago-based Latin music called Nuestra Música. Sing gospel or strum along with the Woodie Guthrie Folk Jam in the park's communal gazebo. A \$10 donation is suggested to help with the costs of the festival, and to support the not-for-profit programs at the Old Town School of Folk Music.



BEST CHICAGO STREET FESTS

BY AMANDA ALDINGER

We all know about Pride, Market Days, Taste of Chicago and Lolla, but there are dozens more. Chicago summers are a street festival free-for-all, celebrating everything from books to Africa to the world's best wine. Here's my list of ten that shouldn't be missed.



PRINTERS ROW LIT FEST — FREE

June 4 – 5
Dearborn Street between Congress Parkway and Polk Street

One of my very favorite summer festivals is the Printers Row Lit Fest — the largest literature festival in the Midwest, with over 200 vendors selling new and antique books, prints, magazines and more. The festival hosts special events that take place at the Harold Washington Library (book signings, author talks, and more), but my favorite part is the huge tents filled with endless stands of vintage prints, advertisements and magazines. Last year I had some great scores, and there are lots of cute bars and cafes in the area if you need a break from perusing so much fabulous literature. To print!

CHICAGO BLUES FESTIVAL — FREE

Millenium Park
June 10 – 12
www.explorechicago.org

Both the largest blues festival in the world, and the largest street music festival in Chicago, the Chicago Blues Festival is an incredible celebration of Chicago's rich music history — always featuring an amazing line-up of some of the world's top blues musicians. This year's schedule includes: Lonnie Brooks, Dave Specter Band, Carl Weathersby's Blues Band, and Eddie Cotton, amongst dozens of others. Admission is free, and drink and food vendors are available.

RANDOLPH STREET MARKET FEST

May – September (check website for specific dates)
Prices vary
312-666-1200
www.randolphstreetmarket.com

I can't ever get enough of the Randolph Street Market Fests. Housing what seems like the world's largest collection of vintage and antique treasures, the Randolph Street Market is a gold mine of incredible jewelry, clothing, purses, sunglasses, housewares, vinyl goods and designer duds. There are lots of global food and drink vendors, and in the summer, the festivals spill out from their usual home in Plumber's Hall to the streets. I'm an addict and will probably be living there every available weekend — and with student tickets priced at only \$3, what do you have to lose?

AFRICAN-CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LIFE

July 1 – 4
Prices vary
312-427-0266
martinsinterculture.com

Upon moving to Chicago I fell in love with the many varieties of African cuisine (from Ethiopian to West African), and that's why I'm so excited for the African-Caribbean International Festival of Life. Not only will you get the chance to sample amazing delicacies, but you can also enjoy the enticing music line-up, which features a variety of Reggae, Calypso/Soca, African, R&B, Gospel, and Jazz artists. I dig a little culture in my street fests.

BASTILLE DAY 5K RUN, WALK AND BLOCK PARTY

July 14 : 7:30 p.m. – 10 p.m.
\$30-\$37; \$5 block party only
773-868-3010
www.chicagoevents.com

Who doesn't love an opportunity to celebrate as the French do? This run/walk/beer and wine fest in Lincoln Park is perfect for all Francophiles (or just the average Chicagoan who loves an excuse to drink outside). And you don't even have to commit to the exercise. The block party is open to everyone who can pay \$5. So get your French wine on, and practice this phrase: *bonne fête!*

OLD ST. PAT'S WORLD'S LARGEST BLOCK PARTY

July 15 – 6
\$40 – \$45; \$70 for a two-night pass
312-648-1590
www.worldslargestblockparty.com

So, you've figured me out. I love boozy street fests that crudely celebrate other cultures. And who knows boozing in the street better than the Irish? In its 27th year, with over 18,000 participants annually, this is a definite must-see on the Chicago street fest circuit. Your admission fee comes with five drink trinkets, supplemented by food vendors and musical acts galore. Gather your friends, and remember that in Chicago, everyone's a little bit Irish.

STREET FOOD ARTISTRY 2011 — NEW

August 14 : 1 – 7 p.m.
312-884-1278
streetfoodartistrychicago.com

I love trying new Chicago things, because I delight in playing tourist in my own city. Thus, I'm very excited about the inaugural Street Food Artistry Festival, which will feature everything from street art, to food demonstrations, to unique food tastings — all celebrating the Chicago foodie spirit. Come and indulge what the Second City does best: really freaking good food.

RAVENSWOOD REMIX — NEW

September 3 – 4
773-868-3010
www.chicagoevents.com

I just couldn't pass up an opportunity to include a new fest happening in my own neighborhood. More than just a creative alliteration, the Ravenswood Remix will feature art that has been created by over 125 artists from reused and recycled materials. Focusing on inspired sustainability, this first-time street fest will host educational programs and art-centric workshops for people of all ages, as well as standard street fest fair: awesome foodstuffs showcasing local flavors.

WINDY CITY WINE FESTIVAL

September 9 – 10
\$27 – \$35
877-772-5425
www.windycitywinefestival.com

Well, this certainly wouldn't be a must-see festival list curated by yours truly if it didn't feature some sort of homage to wine. Over 270 different wines will be available from all over the world, featured in various tastings and demonstrations presented by renowned wineries and vinophiles — including some from Chicago's best loved chefs and restaurants. For those less interested in wine, the festival hasn't forgotten you: all DD tickets include two non-alcoholic drinks, a souvenir cup, and seminar admission.

WELLS STREET FALL FEST

September 10 - 11
\$5 donation
www.chicagoevents.com

For the final entry in this roundup, I've chosen an oldie, but a goodie: the Wells Street Fall Fest. Bidding adieu to summer, the Wells Street Fall Fest is a gem for art and culture lovers alike, offering everything from local food and wine tastings to a juried art contest featuring over 60 local artists. A good old classic street fest, in a neighborhood iconic for its culture, the Wells Street Fall Fest is the perfect way to close Chicago's favorite season.

TOP 5 INDEPENDENT CINEMAS

BY ANIA SZREMSKI

It's summer time, and that means: free time! And what better way to spend that free time than watching movies. Forget Netflix and Amazon; assembled here are editor's picks for the best independent cinemas and video rental shops in Chicago — ones that you can actually visit in the flesh.

The following two pages of reviews were first published in the March 2009 print edition of F News magazine. Here at F, we believe in recycling.

DOC FILMS

Ida Noyes Hall
1212 E. 59th Street
www.docfilms.uchicago.edu

Dating back to 1932, the University of Chicago's Doc Films claims to be the oldest student-run film society in the country. Doc prides itself on avant-garde programming and an illustrious history of film critics and filmmakers who got their start here. Ticket prices are an unbeatable five bucks (or even cheaper if you buy a membership). At least one night of the week's programming is dedicated to a particular theme, and the public is encouraged to propose topics and film ideas; the only stipulation is that none of the proposed movies have been screened at Doc in the past four years.

BLOCK CINEMA

40 Arts Circle Drive
847-491-4000
www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu

For northerners who are loath to travel all the way to Hyde Park, Block Cinema at Northwestern University in Evanston is well-equipped to serve your independent film needs. In the summer, films are occasionally screened on the lawn (for those who like their viewing experience to be punctuated by sounds of overhead planes and attacks from hungry mosquitoes). In addition to publishing a student-authored film criticism magazine, Block also sponsors the Reeltime Film Series, which presents films that incite discussion about current social issues and innovation in alternative media.

MUSIC BOX

3733 N. Southport Ave.
773-871-6604
www.musicboxtheatre.com

The Music Box may not have spotlessly clean (let's face it: even semi-clean) floors, and its patrons may include the occasional belligerent drunk, but over the past 20 years it has become a staple in Chicago's alternative cinema scene. Dating back to 1929, this is one of the few historic movie theatres in the country that hasn't been torn down or converted into something else. After an infamous stint as a seedy porn theatre in the 1970s, a slightly less ribald repertoire was reinstated in the mid '80s, when the decision was made to show more foreign and art-house type films. A second screening room was opened in the early '90s. Today, some patrons grumble that the main screening room is too often dedicated to moneymaking mainstream films while the art-house crowd gets stuffed into the small theatre, but the Music Box is still one of the only theatres where you can go and hear live organ on a Sunday morning.

FACETS MULTIMEDIA

1517 W. Fullerton Ave.
773-281-9075
www.facets.org

For hard-core cinephiles, Facets is a cinematic paradise. Famous throughout Chicagoland for the regular blow-out sales in its Vidiothèque (a video rental shop), the less cine-savvy amongst us may be surprised to learn that this North Side institution has much more to offer than cheap and obscure videos and DVDs. In fact, this is the closest thing Chicago has to the famed Forum des Images in Paris. Founded in 1975, the two-screen Cinémathèque boasts varied programs of independent, experimental, foreign and art films that are accompanied by a range of events, like director talks and the Cinechat film discussion series. Facets stresses education with its popular Film School, where die-hard film lovers can enroll to view a series of films grouped around a particular topic (like "The Czech New Wave," or "Transitory Identities in Cinema") then discuss them under the guidance of a local expert.

THE NIGHTINGALE

1084 N. Milwaukee Ave.
nightingaletheatre.org

The Nightingale is a microcinema founded in 2008 by Christy Lemaster, who has programmed for Chicago Cinema Forum and Onion City, along with her roommate Josh Mabe. The Nightingale screens a range of film, video and new media works. The films and videos are brought in from U.S and international distributors and local filmmakers, and there is a strong emphasis on supporting local curators and programmers, such as White Light Cinema, an independent curatorial project of longtime Chicago Filmmakers programmer Patrick Friel. The programming itself is audience centric — more Amos Vogel (Cinema 16) than Jonas Mekas (Anthology Film Archives). As a result, The Nightingale shows an eclectic mixture of current and vintage works of challenging and more accessible experimental film, video and new media alongside documentaries and independent features.

— Special contribution by Beth Capper

BEST VIDEO RENTALS

BY BETH CAPPER

ODD OBSESSION

1822 N. Milwaukee Ave.
773-276-0894
www.oddobsession.com

Any time you ever wanna know more than you could ever possibly want to about a given film, genre of film, era of film, director, etc., etc., stop by Odd Obsession. They have a Godard fanatic, an expert in classic and rare porn, and many other employees with both particular and extensive knowledge about rare, independent, foreign, art-house, cult, experimental, avant-garde and obscure cinema (divided by genre and country of origin). If there's a film you can't find elsewhere, you'll likely be able to excavate it here.

NORTH COAST VIDEO

2011 W. Division Street
773-227-0664

A visit to North Coast is always an experience. To begin with, there's the video store shelf stacker, always ready to offer nuggets of wisdom as to what you should rent (his comments on titles are encapsulated by either the words "beautiful" or "great" in a fairly difficult to distinguish accent). Then, there's the awesome music always playing — an eclectic mixture of Slayer, ambient noise, death metal, Albert Ayler, Iraqi pop and M.I.A. — depending on which of the idiosyncratic employees is working. North Coast offers a broad range of art-house and Hollywood, offbeat and mainstream TV, documentaries, classics, and foreign films, arranged "by letter of the alphabet but not alphabetically." If you can't find the film you went there for, you'll find something else you didn't even know you wanted to see, and at \$3.25 a rental, it's a bargain!

BRAINSTORM

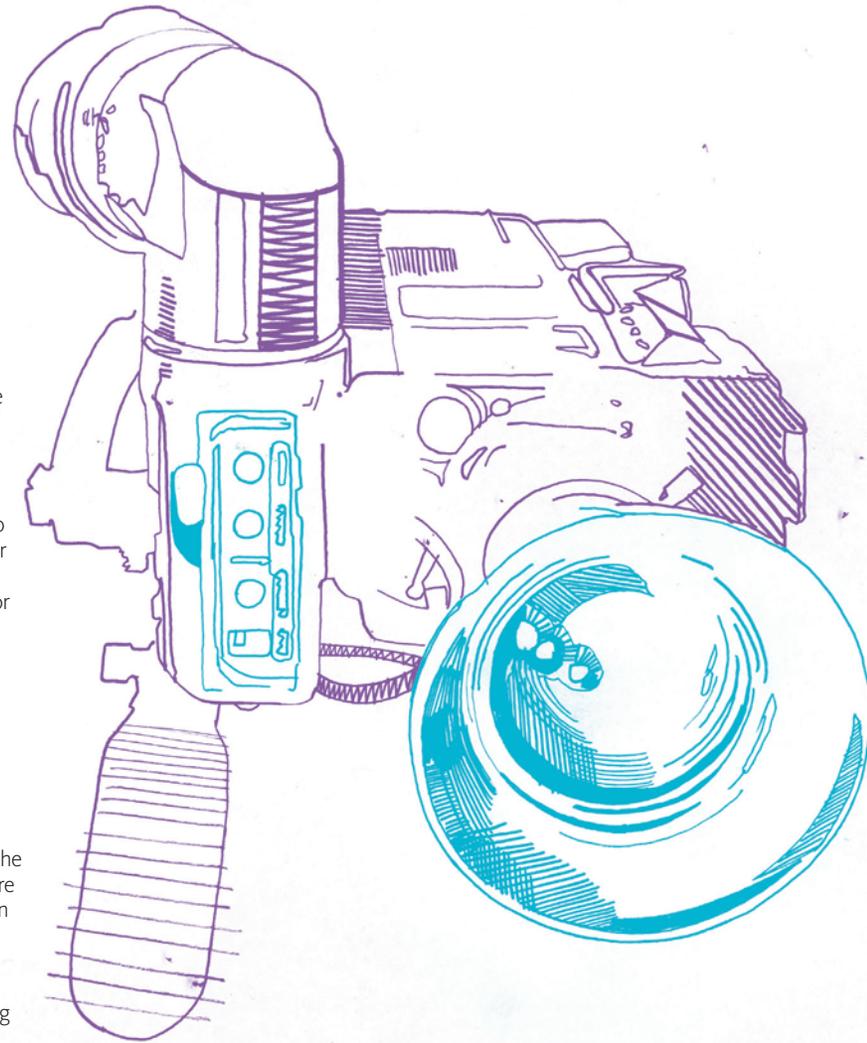
1648 W. North Ave.
773-384-8721
www.myspace.com/brainstormmcg

Brainstorm is a video, comic and gaming store for your inner-geek — or perhaps, your outer geek, as the store's Myspace says: "If you're a comic geek and you want to debate the long term effects of the DC Crisis or the Marvel Civil War or the Wildstorm relaunch of WildCATS and Gen13 ... great! If you're a film buff and you want to talk about the best of the '60s horror exploitation films, classic foreign films, the best zombie flick or which is better, Doctor Who or Battlestar Galactica ... awesome! If you're a gamer and you get off on digging through boxes of loose HeroClix or flipping through MagicCards looking for that one card that will make your deck unstoppable ... welcome!"

VIDEO DATA BANK

112 S. Michigan Ave.
312-345-3550
www.vdb.org

If you don't know about the rare gems available at the Video Data Bank then you need to start paying more attention. Located on the third floor of the MacLean Building, the Video Data Bank has an extensive archive of experimental videotapes ranging from the '60s to present. They also interview, document and archive artists visiting Chicago, featuring (among many others) Vito Acconci, Adrian Piper and Joseph Beuys. The archives feature works by Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Peggy Ahwesh, Yvonne Rainer and Sadie Benning, and many more.



CHICAGO'S BEST VINTAGE SHOPPING

BY AMANDA ALDINGER

Chicago is a mecca for awesome thrifting opportunities, with a vast array of shops dedicated to everything from designer vintage to good old consignment pieces. Located all over our fair city, here are my picks for the best vintage shops in Chicago.

DOVETAIL CHICAGO

1452 W. Chicago Ave.
312-243-3100
www.dovetailchicago.com

Noted as a top new vintage store by T, the New York Times style magazine, this Noble Square vintage spot is a noteworthy addition to the Chicago vintage scene. Building from a modern take on vintage, Dovetail's selection of women and menswear, jewelry and home goods is beautifully merchandised in its quaint boutique setting. A great place to score rare vintage designer wear.

THE ROO VINTAGE

online only
www.theroovintage.com

The Roo Vintage is an awesome (and extremely well-priced) online vintage shop owned by sisters Lisa and Michelle Stuchly, who hail from the Chicago suburbs. Rooting through vintage stores all the city, they've culled an amazing selection of women's wear that they photograph and style themselves. I've snagged all sorts of great finds from them (including a navy Burberry blazer for only \$30!), and with their constantly rotating stock, there's always new and fabulous items to pick from.

KOKOROKOKO

1112 N. Ashland Ave.
773-252-6996
koko-rokoko.blogspot.com

The ever-adjusting time frame for vintage consideration has thrown our birth decade into the mix, and Kokorokoko's collection of 1980s and '90s "vintage" will take you back to your childhood. Featured in everything from Lucky Magazine to Playboy, Kokorokoko has garnered widespread attention for their well-styled kitsch and exuberant wares. Fitting in nicely with the contemporary hipster generation, Kokorokoko hearkens back to the brightly-hued/quasi-grunge aesthetic of our childhood — minus the bullshit of high school.

LENNY AND ME

1459 N. Milwaukee Ave.
773-489-5576
www.etsy.com/shop/lennyandmevintage

Having both a massive store in Wicker Park, as well as an Etsy store online, Lenny and Me is a noted Chicago staple for fabulous vintage wares. This shop's a treat because they have so many fun pieces from the '60s — an excellent decade for outrageous colors and fun shapes — with lots of exciting designer finds thrown in as well. Amazing styling options abound on their website, so you'll be prepared when walking into their treasure trove of a boutique.

SILVER MOON

1721 W. North Ave.
773-235-5797
www.silvermoonvintage.com

Silver Moon's boutique epitomizes the true vintage experience: an enormous collection of fine vintage and designer clothing from the 1890s — 1980s. Their selection includes everything from Victorian jewelry to couture millinery, from menswear to an extensive collection of vintage bridal wear — and, you can shop online! A high spot for Chicago vintage.



TOP 5 LIBRARIES FOR BELEAGUERED MA STUDENTS

BY ANIA SZREMSKI

The librarians at Flaxman and the Ryerson are fantastic, helpful people. But when it comes to space and opening hours, SAIC libraries are sorely lacking. At the end of the day, when a girl is working a 9 to 5 and taking art history classes at night, is she seriously expected to cram all her library time in between 9 and 9:30 pm? Forget the fact that MA students don't get study carrels, like at pretty much any liberal arts university library; and forget the fact that MA students aren't even permitted to enter the lottery for studio space, like writing students are. Fine, I will schlep 40 pounds of books, notebooks and my laptop across the city from home to school. All I'm asking for is a full hour of library access on a weekday.

1 CUDAHY LIBRARY Loyola University, Rogers Park Campus

1032 W. Sheridan Road
libraries.luc.edu

Facilities: A+

The 3-story library is adjacent to an enormous Information Commons with floor to ceiling windows that overlook an azure Lake Michigan. And stuffed armchairs in front of those windows. And plugs for your laptop in front of each of those chairs. It's like a dream come true! The library has a very decent collection and has a wide variety of study spaces, from the deathly silent study nook to the more boisterous group study rooms and informal seating areas. And the *pièce de résistance*: the library also houses a café that is open until midnight.

Ease of Access: B

There are "community hours" during weekdays, but if you're a working stiff, what you really want are those prime night and evening hours. Luckily, if you pay the library \$50 to become a member, you get a special guest pass that grants you total access. All it takes is a phone call or visit.

Location: B-

Since most SAIC students don't live further north than Lakeview, it's a bit of a hike to get the rest of the way to Loyola.

Hours: A+

Open till 2 a.m. almost every night, and 24 hours a day during finals.

SAIC has more than met my expectations in terms of classes, professors, and interesting peers. But in terms of meeting my needs as a researcher? I'm not sure I can give the school a passing grade. So I've had to take my library business elsewhere. If you, too, find yourself longing for a better research space, then check out this handy guide to my top five favorite libraries in Chicago.





2 JOHN T. RICHARDSON LIBRARY DePaul University

2350 N. Kenmore Ave.
www.lib.depaul.edu

Facilities: A-

I rarely go to the DePaul library, but friends of mine who live in the Lincoln Park area find it a useful place to study (if only because you can't get onto the wifi network if you're not a DePaul student, so you have no choice but to hit the books). Capacious, bright, and with a decent location, the DePaul library houses study nooks, group study rooms, computer labs and other such amenities. DePaul also has library locations in the Loop and suburbs.

Ease of Access: A

DePaul libraries are open to the public!!

Location: A

Both the Lincoln Park and downtown locations are easily accessible for most SAIC students.

Hours: B+

The library is open until midnight most days of the week during the regular semester.

3 PAUL V. GABIN LIBRARY Illinois Institute of Technology

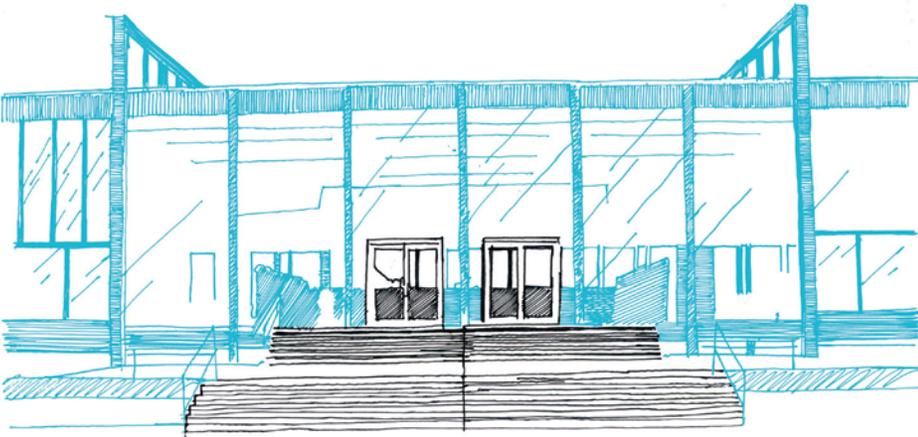
35 W. 33rd Street
www.gl.iit.edu

Facilities: A+

Don't come here for the collection, which will only help you out if you're researching Mies or the history of technology or something (which, admittedly, are likely topics of interest for most SAIC students). Come for the amazing amenities, including sofas, bean bag chairs and sleeping bags to maximize comfy-ness while studying!

Ease of Access: B

I don't know of any fundraising program that lets you buy a library pass here at IIT, but during the semester you can walk in without an ID before 6 pm. If you want to take advantage of night owl hours, try getting a letter of introduction from the Flaxman to take with you.



Location: C-

If you don't live there, taking the train all the way to Bronzeville can be truly onerous. As awesome as the IIT library is, it's best suited for those who live in the vicinity or have a specific need.

Hours: B

The library is open till midnight Sunday – Thursday during the regular semester, and closes at 5 on Friday and Saturday. Open 24 hours during finals. Not quite the quality of, say, Loyola, but still better than Flaxman.

4 NEWBERRY LIBRARY

60 W. Walton Street
www.newberry.org

Facilities: A++++

I love it here. The architecture of the building is gorgeous and the archives are dizzyingly rich. This is a formal research library, so it's not a place curl up in a sleeping bag with a cup of coffee while you work on your thesis until 2 a.m.; rather, you come here to access rare documents. Do some digging in their online catalogue so that you know exactly what you need when you arrive, to facilitate the task.

Ease of Access: A

You have to apply for a reader's card, but to do so you just need to be over 16 and have an ID (your school ID will do) and a proof of address, like your driver's license, a check or utility bill. They process the card for you in a matter of seconds.

Location: A

Located in the Gold Coast, the Newberry's easily accessible for most SAIC students.

Hours: C

The library is geared towards people for whom researching is their job, so facilities are only open Tuesday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. The window during which you can actually request items is even narrower. You have to clear your schedule and make a special trip to come here.

5 HAROLD WASHINGTON LIBRARY

400 S. State Street
www.chipublib.org

Facilities: A-

The Harold Washington Library is enveloped in nostalgic memories for me, so not everyone might be as fond of the bizarre pseudo Beaux Arts/Mannerist/neo-Gothic façade as I am. But you can't deny the power of nine whole floors of books, movies and music. Quiet, secluded reading desks with yellow lamps line the edges of the reading rooms on each floor. The CPL collection is surprisingly good, so check here first before you order a book on Inter Library Loan — why wait a week when you can run across the street and get it right away? The only downside is spotty wireless, and a heightened need for vigilance regarding your personal belongings.

Ease of Access: A

Anyone can walk in, but to check books out, all it takes is an ID and proof of a Chicago address to get a card.

Location: A+

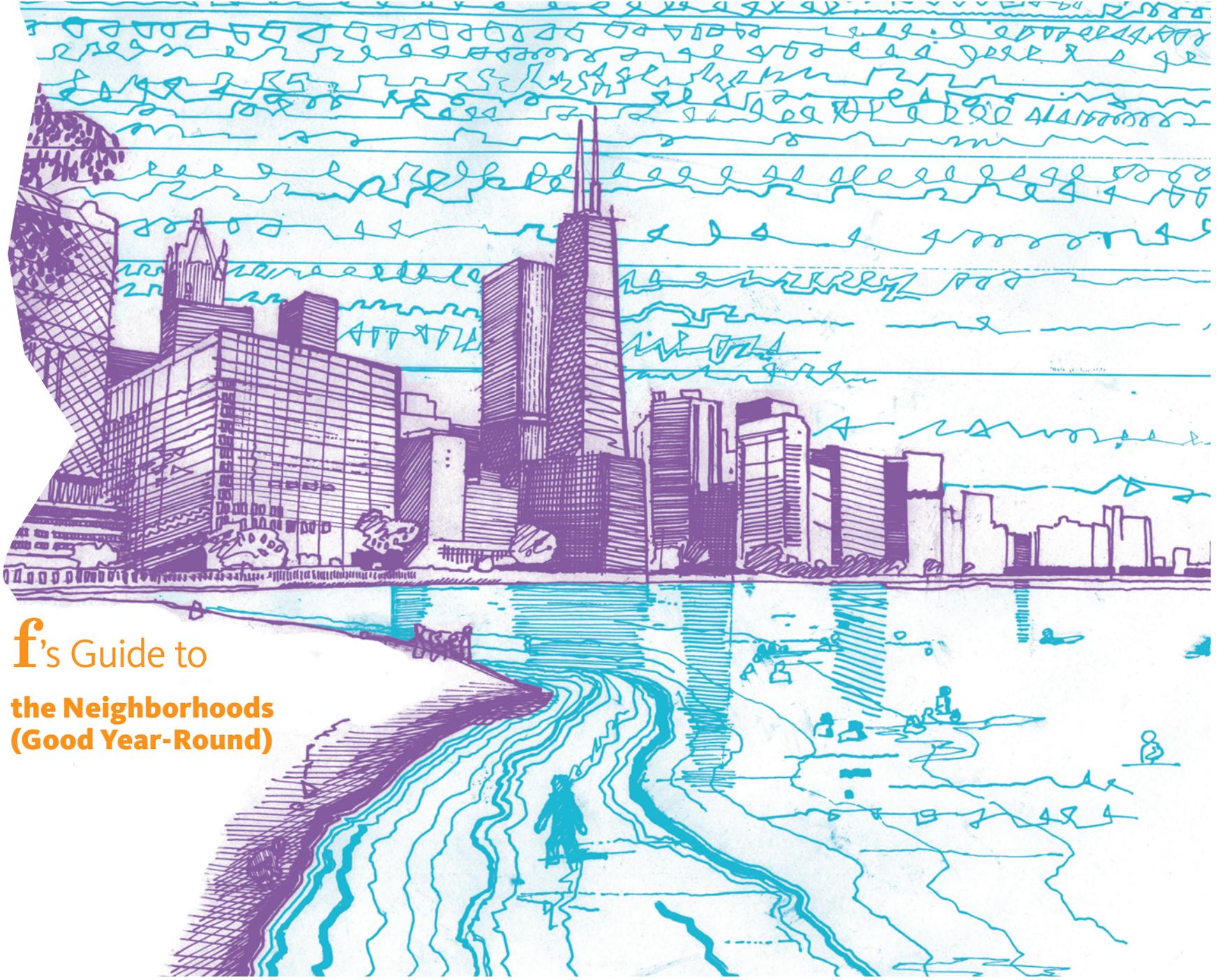
Just a few blocks down from SAIC.

Hours: B-/C+

Even worse than Flaxman, alas. Weekdays 9 am to 9 pm, Fridays and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

2011

ENDLESSES



f's Guide to
the Neighborhoods
(Good Year-Round)

F Newsmagazine

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the Art Institute of Chicago.
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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

DEAR READERS,

Some of us on the F staff have been here in Chicago for the past two years, some for the past four, and still others grew up in the area. Collectively, we're pretty much experts in the city. But we all remember what it was like to start SAIC and realize we didn't know where to get the best Thai, or which movie theaters had a full bar, or the best place to get tacos at 3 a.m. Oh, the anxiety that these mysteries caused!

As a graduation gift from us to you, we leave you with a compilation of some of our very favorite Chicago haunts -- the places that have kept us going over our grueling years of study. From the South Side to Rogers Park, in these pages you'll find a passionately curated "best of" guide to some of our favorite neighborhoods. Whether you're new to the city, or have spent the past five months in your studio and are ready to re-discover the outside world, we hope this guide will help you find some new favorite spots of your own.

Our guide to the neighborhoods is always growing online, so make sure to check out www.fnewsmagazine.com to see our latest picks!

— *Ania and Amanda*

LOOP

BY ANIA SZREMSKI

The Loop may be home to some of the city's most gorgeous examples of architecture and storied cultural institutions, but it feels pretty soulless – crowded with tourists, yuppie businesspeople, and chain restaurants. Like it or not, SAIC students have to spend a lot of time down here, so we just have to make the best of it. Some of these spots help to make life a little more bearable.

Best Health Food KRAMER'S

230 S. Wabash Ave.
312-922-0077

The only place in the loop where you can get fresh, healthy, vegetarian-vegan convenience food! Kramer's has a stock of vitamins, supplements, and other mysterious substances. But best of all are the shelves of ready-to-go sandwiches, salads and lunches down stairs, and the organic café upstairs, which has excellent lunch specials. Just be warned: they yell at you for paying with a credit card, and the guys who work in the café are notorious for hitting on the customers.

Best Student Pub EXCHEQUER

226 S. Wabash Ave.
312-939-5655
www.exchequerpub.com

A sports bar famous for its deep-dish pizza and ribs, Exchequer is the official SAIC student pub. At least, it is for MA Art History students. I've noticed that some MFAs prefer the nearby Miller's Pub – yet another sign of the seemingly irreconcilable divide between us. The wait staff at Exchequer's leaves something to be desired (they're notorious for questioning the legitimacy of your ID, and once a waiter made fun of my hair). But it will always have a fond spot in my heart as the place where me and my fellow classmates would camp out after an exhausting three hour seminar where we all discussed Deleuze and Guattari without understanding a single word we were saying, and would decompress with a couple of pitchers and the infamous Onion Ring Tower. Don't forget to show your SAIC student ID for ten percent off food.

Best Coffee INTELLIGENTSIA

53 E. Randolph Street
312-920-9332

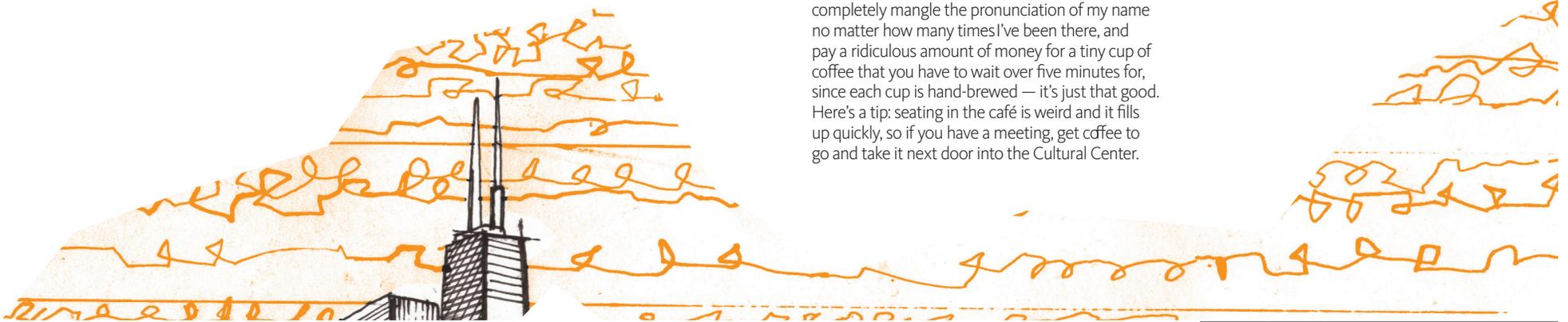
Like so many other things in the Loop, Intelligentsia is overpriced, snooty, and uncomfortable. But I dare you to find a better cup of coffee anywhere in the city. I dare you! This is the only place I'm willing to go to have the barista be rude to me, completely mangle the pronunciation of my name no matter how many times I've been there, and pay a ridiculous amount of money for a tiny cup of coffee that you have to wait over five minutes for, since each cup is hand-brewed – it's just that good. Here's a tip: seating in the café is weird and it fills up quickly, so if you have a meeting, get coffee to go and take it next door into the Cultural Center.

Best Karaoke BRANDO'S

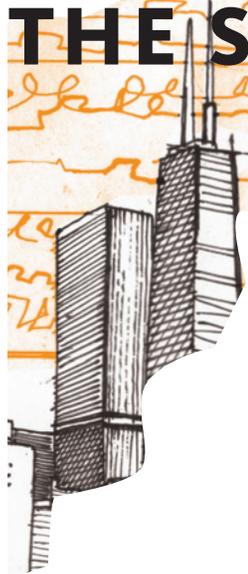
343 S. Dearborn Street
773-216-3213
www.brandoschicago.com

Whether you want to sing your heart out, or watch those that do, Brando's is the spot for those looking to not be seen. Reminiscent of a speakeasy with an art nouveau touch, this karaoke bar harbors a motley crew of folks looking to unwind after a long day. Come for the song and stay for the specials – Brando's is proof that the Loop does not die at five. It's still alive after dark, and armed with a set of pipes! The entrance is just steps from the JacksonBlue Line stop.

—Special guest contribution from Stephanie Plenner. This short review first appeared online in the "Travel Buddies" section of www.fnewsmagazine.com



THE SOUTH SIDE



BY ANIA SZREMSKI

Before I moved back to Chicago and installed myself north of Devon Avenue, I was a South Sider. I don't often revisit the old stomping grounds ('m loathe to ride the entire length of the Red Line to get to to Hyde Park), but here are some gems that I would be willing to undertake just about any hardship to visit.

Hyde Park

Best Labyrinthine Bookstore SEMINARY CO-OP BOOKSTORE

5757 S. University Ave.
773-752-4381
www.semcoop.com

Oh, the Seminary Co-op! It's like Chicago's version of the Strand. Secreted away in the basement of the Chicago Theological Seminary, this is one of the best academic bookstores in the world, and I am not exaggerating. I have been in other countries and watched intellectual types order stuff for their theses, not from Amazon, but from the Seminary Co-op – that's how famous it is. I could stay down there in the twisting, never-ending stacks forever, even if I fear the silent (or sometimes not-so-silent) judgment of the notoriously arrogant U of C student workers. This "member-owned and independent" bookstore turns 50 in October, 2011. But alas, it will soon be moving a block east so that the University of Chicago can turn the seminary building into some kind of gruesome monument to Milton Friedman (what hasn't that man ruined?). Co-op members claim the new store will be better than ever, with windows and a/c and the like, but to be frank, the lack of some of those amenities was what lent the co-op its mystery.

Best South Side Thai THE SNAIL

1649 E. 55th Street
773-667-5423
www.snailthai.com

"The restaurant, like the golden snail in the fable, is small and known for the greatness enclosed." This is what the Snail says about itself on its own website, and I heartily endorse it as true – and adorable! Before I became a North Sider and fell in love with Thai Spice (see my review in the Rogers Park section of this issue), the Snail was my favorite Thai restaurant of all time. And it still is my favorite Thai restaurant south of Devon. It's the perfect place to grab an early supper after a busy day of book shopping and art looking. Be warned that it is very popular with the U of C crowd, so you might want to call ahead. And, try the Fred's Gluten. Much more delicious than it sounds.

Best Dollar Milkshakes REYNOLDS CLUB

5706 S. University Ave.

If you happen to be in Hyde Park on a Wednesday, pretend to be a U of C student and crash the Reynolds Club (you don't need an ID to get in). On the first floor, the C-Shop café serves Wednesday \$1 milkshakes with all the toppings your heart desires. Then hole up somewhere in this somewhat creepy, Harry Potter-esque Gothic building and observe the poor children trapped in the place where fun comes to die.

Best Places to See Art HYDE PARK ART CENTER

5020 S. Cornell Ave.
773-324-5520
www.hydeparkart.org

RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

5811 S. Ellis Ave.
773-702-8670
www.renaissancesociety.org

SMART MUSEUM

5550 S. Greenwood Ave.
773-702-0200
smartmuseum.uchicago.edu

OK, so I cheated. But how could I choose just one! Thanks in part to the presence of U of C, Hyde Park is a culturally rich destination. Go to the Hyde Park Art Center to see emerging Chicago artists and thoughtfully curated group shows; go to the Ren to see superstar international artists; and the Smart for some historical dimension and depth. And then go get a milkshake and some Thai Food.

Bronzeville

Best Place to See Art SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY ART CENTER

3831 S. Michigan Ave.
773-373-1026
www.southsidecommunityartcenter.com

The SSCAC was the first black art museum in the U.S., founded in 1940 with WPA money. It has gone through many ups and downs since then, but today curator/executive director Faheem Majeed is invigorating the place with new energy and exciting ideas. SAIC is often partnering with the center on one project or another, so it behooves any current student to take the train ride down to check it out.

WICKER PARK

*Tangled up in Blue: live music and late night
tacos off the blue line*

BY BRANDON KOSTERS

I'm a Blue Line man, myself. It runs 24 hours. You can indulge your sweet tooth and dance yourself

into oblivion and still catch a train home.

If I were you, these are the places I would take myself.

Best Ice Cream MARGIE'S CANDIES

1960 N. Western Ave.
773-384-1035
Train Stop: Western

They bring you a spoon, but what they ought to bring you is a snorkel and a pair of swim trunks. You could doggy paddle in this trough of ice cream you just purchased for chump change.

Margie's was the very first ice cream parlor to open in Chicago. Al Capone was a frequent guest, as were the fab four (there are actually a number of autographed Beatles photographs on display). Get yourself and 1 - 3 friends a banana split.

Best Place To Dance That Isn't Danny's LATE BAR

3534 W. Belmont Ave.
773-267-5283
Train Stop: Belmont

Vintage goth/new wave/garage. Men in lipstick. In other words: perfect. Founded by local DJ Dave Roberts who used to spin at NEO in Lincoln Park, the Late Bar will project racing films behind you while you dance with the friendliest bunch of freaks you could ever meet.

Saturday night, or "Planet Earth" as they call it, is the night to go, when Roberts spins from 10 p.m. - 5 a.m.

Best Place To Dance That Is Danny's DANNY'S TAVERN

1951 W. Dickens Ave.
773-489-6457
Train Stop: Western

It's candle-lit, for one. And they host fantastic live DJ sets throughout the week. I'd say go Thursday, unless you want to assimilate yourself into the giant human meat grinder that is the dance floor on a Saturday. Never wear open-toed shoes here.

Best Video Rental Shop ODD OBSESSION

1822 N. Milwaukee Ave.
773-276-0894
Train Stop: Western

Be it Sexploitation, Blaxploitation, Christploitation, Hixploitation (my personal favorite), good old fashioned exploitation, or Amelie, Odd Obsession is there to pander to your every whim, however bizarre. And for those with taste, they offer an extensive collection of Melies and other early 20th Century French filmmakers. Maybe you're jonesing for a little Powell and Pressburger? They have that too, friend. You're spending a buck or two more there than you would at Blockbuster, but they've got a lot of stuff you'll have a difficult time finding anywhere else.

Best Concert Venue EMPTY BOTTLE

1035 N. Western Ave.
773-276-3600

Great mix of local and touring acts, plus good drink specials. Good place to go if you're into garage or psychedelic rock.

Best Place to Attend A Film Marathon THE PORTAGE THEATER

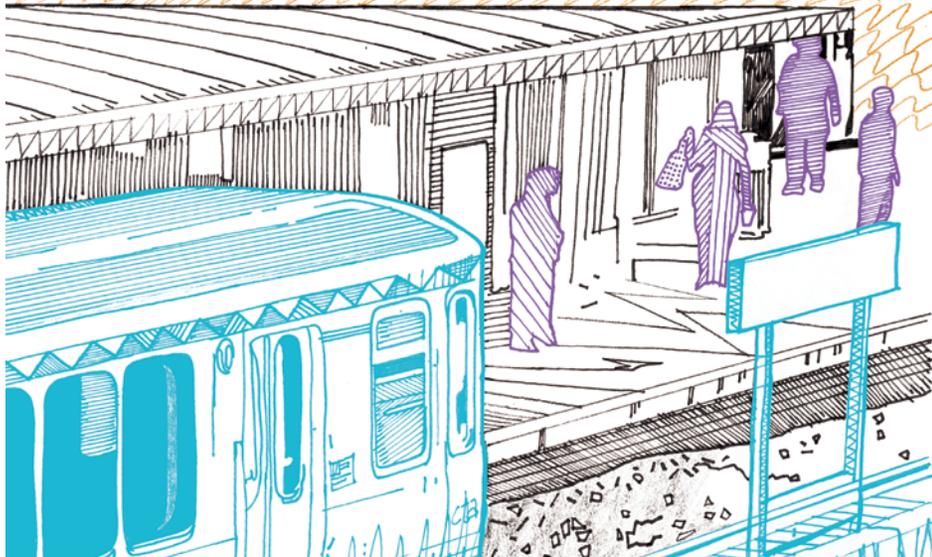
4050 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, IL
773-736-4050
Train Stop: Montrose

The Portage shares its "best of" title along with the Music Box, another magnificent Chicago theater that was constructed in the 1920s. Good place to go for screenings of silent films with live accompaniment, and vintage sci-fi/horror marathons.

Best 24 Hour Mexican Food ARTURO'S

2001 N. Western Ave.
773-772-4944
Train Stop: Western

One of the best lengua tortas your money can buy, and one of the most generously sized margaritas in Bucktown. Great when you're in that part of town late at night. I once heard a story about an epic brawl that broke out there. Burritos flew as the mariachi band played on. Good horchata, too.





BOYSTOWN

This spring, Anne Calcagno's travel writing class took a group field trip to Chicago's storied Boystown neighborhood. The following are their thoughts and impressions ... which they have kindly (and eloquently) shared with F Newsmagazine. Thanks, guys!

Best Sex Shop TULIP TOY GALLERY

3459 N. Halsted
1-877-70-TULIP

Looking for conscientious sexcessories? Slip into Tulip, whose three Chicago locations offer guests a No Shame Zone in which they can explore their pleasures. Tulip prides itself on being a queer establishment that really has something for everyone. "That's the idea of sex, right? You get what you want," noted the friendly and informative employee who was working one Sunday afternoon when we stopped by to check out the Boystown store. There, whips and condoms mingle with dildos and a wide book selection, for those who relish their research. Lacy clothing, feathers, vibrators: Tulip takes its selection seriously, and has a variety of toys as diverse as the needs of its clientele.

But beyond the basics, Tulip also desires to educate and create an open dialogue with its customers. They hold free workshops for the community, and are also dedicated to stocking only the items that they themselves would feel comfortable using. Whether you're a regular adult toy shopper or just browsing for the first time, Tulip is a place where you can feel comfortable and informed, while looking for that perfect something to satisfy your cravings.

— *Alexis Buryk*

Best Place to Buy Used Stuff THE BROWN ELEPHANT

3651 N. Halsted Street
773-549-5943
www.howardbrown.org

Chicago is home to scores of amazing thrift stores, but not all benefit a good cause, like the Brown Elephant. This resale shop, occupying a large warehouse space in Boystown, is filled with an endless cache of secondhand treasures. And all of the Brown Elephant's proceeds are funneled into the Howard Brown Center, an LGBTQ healthcare organization which helps fund treatments for the under-insured. One of many located in the Chicagoland area, the Brown Elephant is iconic for its one-of-a-kind finds and devoted staff. Shopping for wellness? Count us in.

— *Amanda Aldinger*

Best Wine Shop KAFKA

3325 N. Halsted Street
773-975-9463

Kafka, a wine store run by co-owners Michael and Joe, is highly recommended for wine lovers who are looking to try different varieties at affordable prices. The store itself is bright and cozy, lacking pretension. Kafka simply focuses on good wines under \$15, arranged by flavors from "buttery Chardonnay" to "bone-dry Riesling." Each bottle is hand-picked by the owners, who only sell wines they truly love. Bottles call out to store visitors with signs like, "Take me home!" "Oyster! Shrimp! Mussels!" "Let's stay in and order Pizza!" Whether you're a seasoned vinophile, or just someone looking pair a new wine with dinner, tell the staff what you're looking for, and they'll be sure to provide you with the perfect wine.

— *Jing Xu*

Best Place to Take In a Drag Show
KIT KAT LOUNGE & SUPPER CLUB

3700 N. Halsted Street
 773-525-1111

Named for the seedy nightclub in the musical "Cabaret," the Kit Kat Lounge has an extensive martini list and an entertaining rotation of theme nights (Lady Gagarama, Britney Brunch) and drag queen divas (Madam X, SunnyDee-Lite). On my Sunday afternoon visit, I found the glammed-out black and white space sadly diva-less, but Kit Kat's half-priced martini special and the classic-Hollywood cinema playing on giant LCD screens around the bar more than compensated.

— Mia Dimeo

Best Place to Please a Vegan
CHICAGO DINER

3411 N. Halsted Street
www.veggiediner.com

There's some doubt as to whether the Chicago Diner belongs to Boystown or Lakeview (where, exactly, does Boystown begin and end, anyway?). Let's just say it's in Boystown. At any rate, the Chicago Diner is one of Chicago's oldest vegetarian-vegan restaurant cafes and is renowned as such across the Midwest. Vegans come here all the way from Minnesota! Back when I, too, was vegan, this was *the* spot to get birthday cakes and other sumptuous desserts, which more often than not please the animal-product consumers amongst us, as well. They also do fantastic vegetarian-vegan Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. And smoothies.

— Ania Szremski

Best Place to Furnish Your Dollhouse
THINK SMALL BY ROSEBUD

3209 N. Clark Street
 773-477-1920

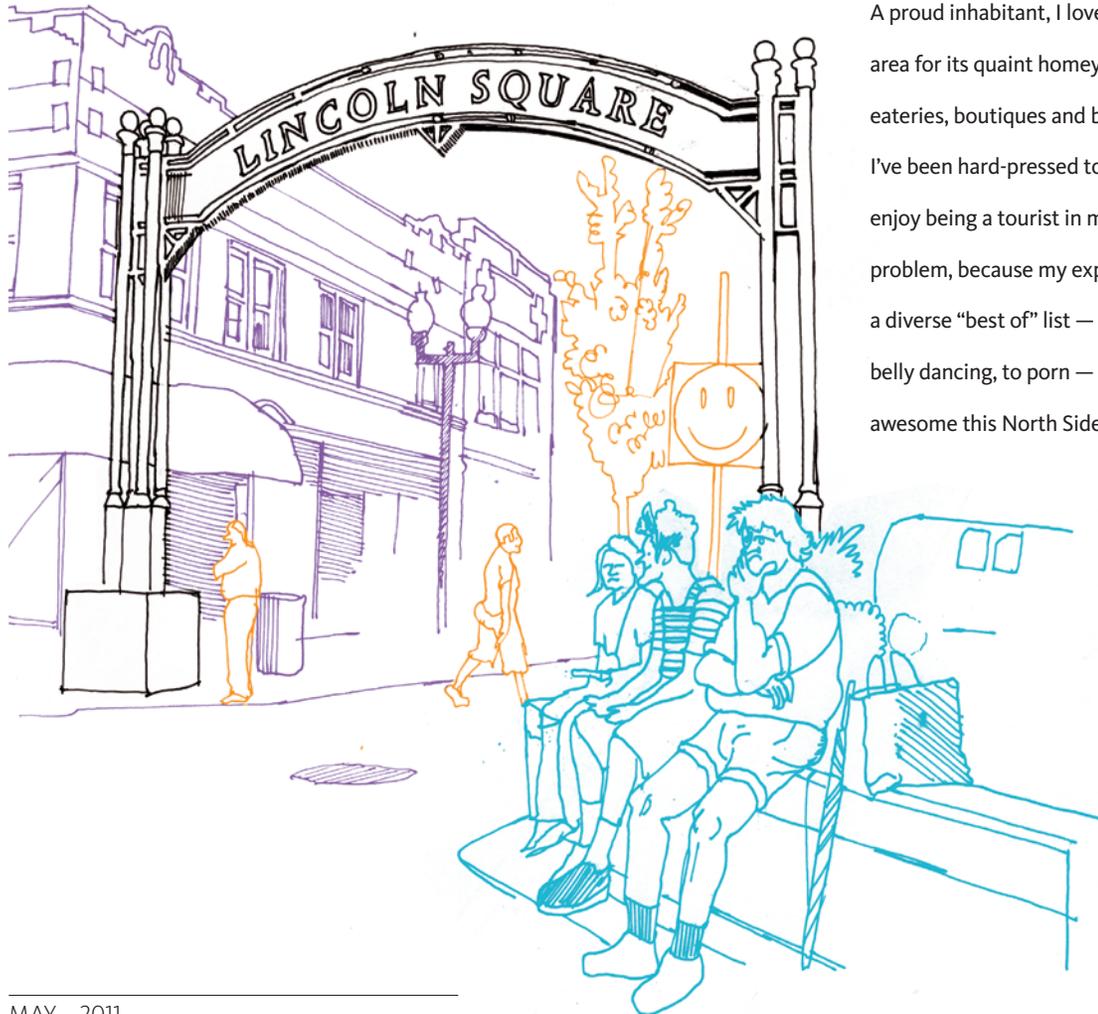
Closing Soon!

A plain, simple pink shop, Think Small by Rosebud is a haven for both dollhouse enthusiasts and those simply fascinated with miniatures. On the entrance floor, glass cases contain handcrafted fireplaces, dining room sets, magazines, Dior perfume, toilet paper, running boards, couches, cabinets — and, if you can't find what you want, they can help you create it. In their basement is a workshop where castles, fairy tale cottages, dream homes, and replicas of childhood stories sit among jars of glue, laminate, wood cutting tools, and many editions of Architect Digest. Until the day it closes, Think Small's basement will hold hobbyists of various ages, from a girl of 11 working on her first house, to a man who's been designing his for 12 years.

— Aimee Norris



RAVENSWOOD / LINCOLN SQUARE



BY AMANDA ALDINGER

A proud inhabitant, I love the Ravenswood/Lincoln Square area for its quaint homey-ness, and eclectic offering of eateries, boutiques and bars. I've found that since arriving, I've been hard-pressed to socialize elsewhere, I so thoroughly enjoy being a tourist in my own hood. But that's not a problem, because my expertise has allowed me to curate a diverse "best of" list — from good wine, to Grecian belly dancing, to porn — that thoroughly proves just how awesome this North Side neighborhood is.

**Best Movie Theatre With
An Awesome Marquee
THE DAVIS THEATER**

4614 N. Lincoln Ave.
773-769-3999
davis theater.com

I love the Davis for its vintage feel and cheap prices (matinees are \$5.50 before 6 p.m!). A great neighborhood theater showing a rotating selection of first-run movies, this classic establishment is an ideal spot for a date night, or for catching an afternoon film on your own (my personal fave).

**Best German Bar Your
Grandparents Would Love
CHICAGO BRAUHAUS**

4732 N. Lincoln Ave.
773-784-4444
www.chicagobrauhaus.com

With Lincoln Square being a notoriously German neighborhood, the Chicago Brauhaus is a noted staple. Serving up authentic German cuisine all day long (you must try their Bavarian pretzels) they also have a massive bar with a huge selection of German beer and wine. All of this is amazing, but my very favorite part is the German polka band on hand for live music and dancing every night. They even have their own theme song, "Welcome to the Brauhaus in Chicago." What more could you possibly ask for?

Best BYOB Italian CARO MIO

1827 W. Wilson Ave.
773-275-5000
www.caromiochicago.com

Caro Mio hasn't been voted Best Italian BYOB numerous times (*and* one of Chicago's most romantic Italian restaurants) for nothing. Boasting an incredible menu with a diverse array of sumptuous pastas, my recent introduction to Caro Mio was one of the best meals I've ever had in Chicago. With its BYOB/no corkage fee status, you can splurge on the good stuff, guilt free. My recommendation? The caprese salad and linguini frutta di mare: seafood so good, it was like being back in Monaco.

Best Spicy Scallop Roll ROONG PETCH

1828 W. Montrose Ave.
773-989-0818
www.roongpetch.com

I love sushi — like, Jeremy Piven-style, where it might put me at risk for mercury poison — so I'm constantly on the lookout for new sushi joints. When I had my first spicy scallop roll at Roong Petch, I knew I had struck gold and would be hard-pressed to get my sushi fix anywhere else. I've since man-handled everyone I know into going with me, and without question, the general consensus is that it's life-changing. Don't skip the seaweed salad or the Dragon Roll either. You'll thank me later.

Best Boutique HAZEL

1902 W. Montrose Ave.
773-769-2227
store.hazelchicago.com

Not only is Hazel my pick for best Ravenswood boutique, but it's one of my personal happy places: a mecca of amazing jewelry finds, fresh flowers, and kitschy gifts. I can't say enough about their well-merchandised collection of trinkets and accessories from artists and designers all over the world. It's right next door to my local Starbucks, so I've had many a latte trip that turned into a \$65 affair after just "stopping in at Hazel" to see what's new on my way home (why won't I learn?!). Just go there; it's probably the best place in Chicago, ever. And it's right next to Roong Petch ... enough said.

Best Vintage Treasures RAVENSWOOD ANTIQUE MART

4727 N. Damen
773-271-3700
www.ravenswoodantiquemart.com

With what has been called "the most comprehensive selection of modern design available in Chicago," the Ravenswood Antique Mart is a veritable goldmine for vintage and antique treasures. Having everything from jewelry to handbags, art to metal sculptures, and pottery to glassware, this is one of the best antique collections in the city. A must for any second-hand fiend.

Best Opportunity to Get Down and Dirty with the Greeks BARBA YIANNI GRECIAN TAVERNA

4761 N. Lincoln Ave.
773-878-6400
www.barba-yianni.com

I love Greek food so much, and my first experience at Barba Yianni was fabulous. The interior of this huge restaurant is inspired by traditional Greek decor, and the menu is just as large as the space. I'm a big fan of the spanakotiropita (spinach pie), as well as their kota gemisti (stuffed chicken breast with spinach and cheese) and they have a really excellent selection of Greek wines, as well. But the very best part? On Saturday evenings, they open their dance floor up for a traditional Greek band and belly dancing. If this doesn't sound like heaven to you, I'm pretty sure you're lying.

Best Neighborhood Video Rental Store Housing a Massive Selection of Porn in the Back TOM VIDEO

1830 W. Wilson Ave. # 2
773-275-2333

The first time I ever walked into Tom Video and found out the majority of their rentals were only \$1, I asked the man behind the counter, "How do you guys stay in business?" In response, he pointed to the curtained-off doorway and its "18 and older" sign and said, "That." So, Tom Video stays in business because they have a massive selection of porn. But this does not take away from the fact that their movies are insanely cheap to rent, and that they laminate a membership card for you when you become an official renter, old school style. Or, that often times you'll walk in on an employee smoking pot when you enter the store. I love Tom Video.

Best Street Festival With the Best German Everything GERMAN-AMERICAN FESTIVAL

Lincoln Square
www.germanday.com

German Fest is, hands down, my favorite street festival in Chicago. Held in the middle of Lincoln Square, it has a great selection of beer *and* German wine (love street fests where the wine is cheaper than the beer), all underscored by kick-ass German polka bands. Those awesome things aside, who doesn't love eating sauerkraut and pretzels while bartering for cheap jewelry amongst a slew of carnival games? Plus, its ideal location makes for great German bar-hopping opportunities post-fest (see: Chicago Brauhaus). It's in September and right off the Western Brown Line stop — don't miss it.

Best Beer and Wine Flights (And Garlic French Fries) FORK

4600 N. Lincoln Ave.
773-751-1500
forkchicago.net

So, by now I'm sure you've noticed a theme. I like food, and I really like wine. And while I love a good deal, I also like to up the ante once in a while, which is why I love Fork. This gastropub has a fabulous menu, featuring everything from a duck club, to a large selection of cheese and charcuterie to their famous garlic cilantro french fries. Pair your meal with a cocktail from their impressive, and very international, wine and beer menu (I'm a big fan of their Malbecs). Just feel like drinking? Saddle up to the bar and check out some of their excellent flight options. Happy summer, indeed.

ROGERS PARK / EDGEWATER

BY ANIA SZREMSKI

Rogers Park is a great respite from school and work life. On the very northern boundaries of the city, it's quieter, greener, and has a large rabbit population. It's also one of the most culturally diverse spots in the city, and I feel comforted knowing that on any given night, I won't have any problem finding my favorite Polish vodka, satisfying my craving for fried yucca, or shopping for saris, should the need arise. And when I'm done with all that, I can go relax on the beach, which is literally a five minute walk from my house. Here are just a few of my favorite spots.

Best Work Cafe STELLA'S ESPRESSO

1259 W. Devon Ave.
773-338-2005
stellaespresso.com

Stella's Espresso has almost single-handedly kept me alive during the past three years at SAIC. This cozy, homey-feeling café has couches, study desks, tables and bars that house studious Loyola students, telecommuters, writers and those lucky people whose profession is mysterious, but apparently have little else to do but sit around and read newspapers. Stella's serves delicious Intelligentsia coffee and scrumptious cookies and cupcakes delivered fresh daily from a local baker. My favorite: the chocolate chip pretzel cookie! It's also the only coffee shop in the neighborhood open till 10 p.m.

Best Ethiopian Food ETHIOPIAN DIAMOND RESTAURANT

6120 N. Broadway Street
773-338-6100
ethiopiandiamondcuisine.com

If you're vegetarian, you should make it your mission to seek out great Ethiopian restaurants; Ethiopian cooking is some of the best in the world, and their meatless dishes are wonderful. Ethiopian Diamond on Broadway is great (they also have another location on Clark, but I can't vouch for it). The dining room is weirdly dark and box-like, but the cocktails are strong, the coffee thick (which is a good thing, in my book), and the dishes (mainly featuring chick peas, lentils, cabbage, carrots, potatoes and other veggies) delicious. I may never get used to that spongy bread, but that's just me.

Best Beach LOYOLA/NORTH SHORE BEACH

Fie on those who mock Chicago beaches! Up on the North side, the North Shore Beach (and it's continuation further north as the Loyola Beach) is a true, proper stretch of sand on which you can play volleyball, sunbathe, and build sand castles to your heart's content. Is the water cold? Sure, but it's refreshing in the muggy summer time heat. Behind the beach is a park that's perfect for barbecuing, and just north up the coast is Berger Park, which has a summer time open air café/bar with live music in the evenings.

Best Place to Drink Pisco Sours and Sing Along to Cumbia Music TASTE OF PERU

6545 N. Clark Street
773-381-4540
www.tasteofperu.com

Here's the thing about Taste of Peru: I'm not actually crazy about their food. This is probably because I'm vegetarian. The veggie dishes (like vegetarian fried rice or vegetarian omelette) taste a little bit like freezer burn. The appetizers, however, are awesome. You have to try the potatoes in *huancaína* sauce and the fried yucca root. My boyfriend also loves their seafood dishes, especially the *choros a la chalaca*. But it's less about the food than the ambiance. Crowd into the tiny, cramped dining room with a bottle of pisco (you can grab one from the liquor store on the corner). Have the server whip you up a frothy, refreshing pitcher of pisco sours, pour a glass for the owner, and get ready to drunkenly sing along to the live cumbia music, and be challenged to various tests of manual dexterity by said owner with the promise of winning a free dinner (I've never actually seen anyone win, but it's still fun).

Best Cinema for Getting Drunk THE NEW 400 THEATERS

6746 N. Sheridan Road
773-856-5980
www.thenew400.com

The saga of this movie theater has been quite a tumultuous roller coaster for the neighborhood. It was a big selling point when the super showed me my apartment, which is nearby: it has the cheapest movie tickets in Chicago, he promised. Great, I responded. And the month after I moved in, the theater closed. But hark, it has since reopened, and still offers cheap (if not the cheapest) tickets, cheap popcorn, and, yes, a full bar. Why ever leave the neighborhood again??

**Best Place to Take
Bleeding Heart Liberals to Dinner**
HEARTLAND CAFÉ

7000 N. Glenwood Ave.
773-465-2803
www.heartlandcafe.com

The Heartland Café is a piece of Chicago history, so you really can't live here without dropping by at least once, no matter how far south on the Red Line you are. It's where Obama held a landmark rally for his presidential campaign back in 2006 — when everyone still loved him and his hair still had color. The Heartland is one of those places where almost everything can be made vegan. I hate to admit that I'm not super crazy about their tex-mex food (just a little too healthy, I guess. I like my veggie burgers greasy, so sue me), but I do like the chili and cornbread. Also has a great selection of beer and other types of booze, which you'll probably need since there's often some earnest young person in a black leotard reciting poetry on the restaurant's stage. But there could also be some great music playing, so you might as well try your luck. The restaurant attaches to a small store that sells organic coffee and fair trade knick-knacks that tend to appeal to yuppies with a conscience.

**Best Place to Buy Dodgy Wine
from Behind the Iron Curtain**
DEVON MARKET

1440 W Devon Ave
773-338-2572

As of the 2000 Census, Rogers Park was America's most ethnically diverse neighborhood, with representatives of more than 100 nationalities living within its borders. At least a little bit of this diversity is reflected in Devon Market, which offers a puzzling, but pleasing mix of Eastern European and Latin American goods. It's the perfect place to pick up Polish cookies, frozen guava paste, and Romanian wine in one fell swoop. There's also an on-site bakery that will bake things to order for you at no extra charge, if you just ask them! And finally, the produce is pretty decent, and is often on sale at ridiculously cheap prices — like a pound of bananas for 29 cents! I bought two pounds, and I don't even like bananas. And once, in the dead of winter, for about three days they had the most deliciously sweet and ripe black cherries for only 99 cents a pound. I don't know how they do it, and I don't think I want to.

Best Place to Debate Marxism
MESS HALL

6932 N. Glenwood Ave.
messhall.org

Mess Hall is one of the more storied of Chicago's experimental art spaces. Well, it's less of an art space, really, than an occasional meeting ground for artists and intellectuals. Run by a rotating cast of eight artists who act as "key holders," Mess Hall doesn't have regular hours, but is home to a rather erratic schedule of programs, ranging from temporary exhibitions, to sewing circles, to "skill sharing" workshops, to potluck dinners where attendees discuss Das Kapital. Check out their calendar of events to learn when something curious is happening.

**Best Place to Torture Yourself
With Eyebrow Threading**
DEEBA'S BEAUTY SALON

2752 W. Devon Ave.
773-465-9685

Moving back to Chicago, I was excited to discover that stretching west on Devon, threading salons abound. This section of the avenue is famed for its Indian and Pakistani community (with some Arab and Russian establishments thrown in for good measure). Every once in a while, I find myself over there to deposit checks at my bank, and suddenly realize I may have been (ahem) neglecting my personal upkeep. So I'll take five of my hard-earned dollars across the street to Deeba's, the best salon of the lot. The operation is quick and painful: the owner of the place thrusts me into a chair, drops her instruments on to my belly for convenience, grabs my face and starts threading (yes, it hurts. A lot). But a only few minutes later, I fork over five dollars and go down to the corner to snack on delicious samosas. If only every bothersome operation ended so pleasantly!

Best BYOB Thai
THAI SPICE

1320 W. Devon Ave.
773-973-0504

Devon Avenue is a smorgasbord of cheap and tasty Indian cuisine — but it's home to just one outstanding Thai restaurant. In fact, I would argue that it's not only the best Thai place in Roger's Park/Edgewater, but the whole city! Thai Spice is owned and operated by the Austrian Anthony and his Thai wife, who lend this BYOB its welcoming character. Don't be put off by the Spartan ambiance; come for the moderately priced, heaping portions of sweet and savory delicacies, including the ultimate homemade rice noodles. My favorite: the Pad Kee Mao. Frequent customers are rewarded with the occasional free drink or desert.

