

Premier Edition

MOSAIC

Your Community, Your Culture, Our Chicago

Winter 2004



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Letter from the editor



What began as an interesting, but challenging, class project quickly became a passionate pursuit for the students in Loyola University's Feature and Opinion Writing class.

Under the guidance of Professor John Slania, a veteran journalist and writer, the students set out to learn the art and craft of feature and opinion writing by producing and publishing a magazine. The theme of the magazine - in fact every aspect of the publication - would be decided on, and implemented by the students.

The result of this class effort is the issue you are reading - MOSAIC Magazine.

Like the small pieces of stone or glass that comprise a piece of mosaic artwork, MOSAIC Magazine looks at the many facets that make up metro Chicago. In this issue you will find many insightful and intelligent stories and opinions that reflect the intellect and consciousness of the student writers.

MOSAIC offers a glimpse into the cultural and ethnic life of metropolitan Chicago and it is therefore fitting that this particular group of students should present a magazine such as MOSAIC. Our class is comprised of students from diverse cultural and ethnic origins - we are, in fact, a microcosm of the metro Chicago area about which we write.

From this perspective we proudly present, MOSAIC - Your Community, Your Culture, Our Chicago

Anthony Lentini

Editor in Chief

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Humboldt Park: Preservation and Redevelopment Clash

By: *Miriam Cintrón*



Division Street in Humboldt Park has its own unique character, and Puerto Ricans have staked their claim to it. Visitors walking down Division Street near California Avenue next to a picturesque park can see two giant Puerto Rican flags straddling the street, Puerto Rican flags hanging from apartment windows and Puerto Rican restaurants and businesses along either side of the street. But it is the signs on a café window that are bound to catch people's attention.

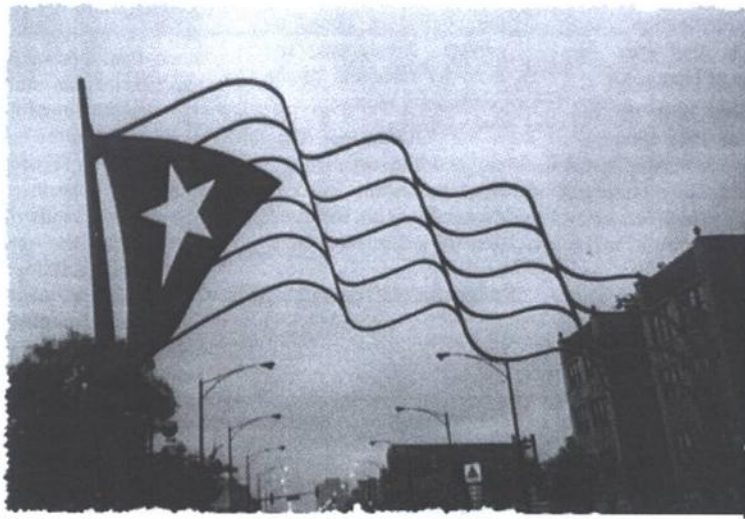
"STOP building condos. STOP Gentrification," "Boricua Si! Y.U.P.I.E. No!," "Save our mural. Stop Gentrification."

These signs on the window of the theatre café Batey Urbano summarize the feelings of the local residents fairly well.

"There's been a systematic attempt to displace the people of this community," said Jose López, executive director of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

Gentrification is a trend that has gripped the Puerto Rican community of Chicago since the 1950s when they were pushed west out of Lincoln Park and the area surrounding the University of Illinois at Chicago, said Veronica Ocasio, the community development director at the Near Northwest Neighborhood Network, an organization that works to improve the social and economic development of Humboldt Park. She is also the wife of 26th ward Alderman Billy Ocasio.

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One of the Puerto Rican flags on Division street

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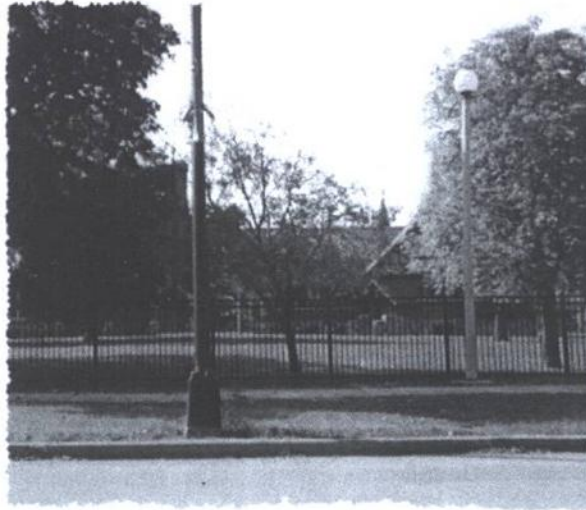
*(Humboldt Park—
Continued from page 5)*

The area of Humboldt Park was once home to many Jewish and Eastern European families until the 1950s when Puerto Ricans began to arrive, López said. "From the 1950s onward, Humboldt Park has been a Puerto Rican neighborhood," he said.

Despite the area's reputation as a crime-infested neighborhood, it is attracting many young urban professionals, often referred to as yuppies, with the building of new condominiums and town homes.

The desire to end gentrification and redevelop the area for residents of Humboldt Park gave birth to the Humboldt Park Empowerment Partnership/Near Northwest Neighborhood Network, which consists of 120 community churches, businesses and other organizations. The organization works to create affordable housing and encourages economic growth of the community with the creation of new businesses and restaurants.

The Humboldt



Actual park in Humboldt Park

Park Empowerment Partnership has worked closely with the 26th ward Alderman Billy Ocasio to do just that, while facing the challenges posed by private developers and even by residents of the community themselves.

Alderman Ocasio and the organization have had some success, especially with the creation of affordable housing.

"There's been a large push for affordable housing in this community," said Enrique Salgado, Jr., executive director of the Division Street Business Development Association, which offers technical assistance

to small businesses on Division Street.

Alderman Ocasio and local residents are gaining more control over their own neighborhood such that, before private developers can start any project, they must first sit with community groups for approval, according to Salgado. Alderman Ocasio now demands that 40 percent of the units in apartment buildings and condominiums are affordable, and that means affordable based on the area's median income, or \$28,728 per year, not the city's \$38,625, Salgado said. Ocasio is making it difficult for developers in

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the area and Salgado happily adds that developers are beginning to dislike the challenges posed by area organizations, opting instead to build in surrounding neighborhoods.

Despite this achievement, pri-

tered into negotiations with the developer; they suggested giving the developer another empty lot for the one he owned, Salgado said. The developer refused and instead wanted four empty lots for the one; a proposition Salgado says exemplifies the greed of private developers.



Café Theatre, Batey Urbano, where the area's young people go for events such as poetry reading, and music shows. Notice the signs in the window against gentrification

vate developers and speculators remain a major challenge to Humboldt Park's redevelopment.

"Many developers are more concerned with their profits than with their impact on the community," said Hector Villagrana, Alderman Ocasio's chief of staff.

Developers are trying to undermine the community in any way they can. A developer tried building a retaining wall over the oldest mural in Humboldt Park. Almost immediately, protestors gathered to stop the destruction of the mural. The community later en-

Developers also are trying to bypass local officials by going directly to the homeowners. They approach people and offer them a lot of money for their home, Veronica Ocasio said, and people often do sell so that they might return to Puerto Rico.

It's not all hopeless, however, thanks to the community effort. The work of community organizations has earned them the all-important ability to negotiate. Despite developers' best efforts to go around them, they must still go to the Humboldt Park Empowerment

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Pot of Gold

By: Jeff Martin

The sidewalks are packed with pedestrians, some women, mostly men, and some in between. There is an undeniably sexual energy in the air. The people are beautiful and trendy, sometimes clad in fashions that would make the most risqué designer blush. Queues extend down city blocks beneath large totems ringed with the colors of the rainbow. People are waiting to be granted access to the more popular clubs, and the music from within gives a booming, high-energy rhythm to the scene outside. Welcome to Saturday night on Halsted Street.

East Lakeview is home to a significant number of gay men and lesbians. "Boystown," as it is called, runs roughly from Diversey Avenue north to Grace Street, and from Lake Michigan west to Clark Street. This is the primary concentration of bars for gay men, particularly along Halsted Street.

However, in recent years a new trend has developed. Gays and lesbians are moving further north into Andersonville and Edgewater. Already there are new gay bars creeping up along Clark Street, and new restaurants and businesses are steadily emerging. The area is being renovated and, if the residents of East Lakeview continue to relocate to Ander-

sonville, it stands to become the new hub of gay residential and social life, or at least this is the popular perception in the area.

"Boystown has become what's known as a stroller community," said Barry Flynn of the Chicago Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce in Edgewater. "It seems that gay people move into a neighborhood, clean and fix it up, and

then move on. Then the young families come.

"Actually, Andersonville has been a home to a lot of lesbians for years," he said. "They tend to couple and nest, and their lifestyle is quieter than the



lifestyle of gay men."

Some people have a different view. "I don't think it's a true statement to say that gays and lesbians are the main groups of people that are moving north," said Maureen Martino, executive director of the East Lakeview Chamber of Commerce. "It's more a trend of people in general. Gays and lesbians used to feel more comfortable locating in one common area, but now they're spread out in many places."

Martino believes that the reason many people are moving north of Lake-

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(Pot of Gold—Continued from page 8)

view is because real estate and property taxes are lower in those areas. Certainly that is a driving force behind the northward move, but Flynn posits that the gay and lesbian community is, indeed, experiencing a migration to Andersonville and Edgewater.

According to Flynn, Andersonville is still a women's enclave attracting more lesbians while Edgewater is becoming more of a trendy area for gay men to live. "I know two men, a couple, who were in the marketing business and wanted to do something in the area for a while. They opened up Pause Coffee Shop last year and it was an instant gold mine," Flynn said.

Unfortunately, such things are hard to measure. There are no good demographics because such a specific measure is too costly and time-consuming, and many people are reluctant to identify themselves as gay in a public forum for fear of prejudice. But judging by information Flynn cited from a demographic study that coincided with the 2000 Census, the area of Chicago with the most registered gay voters is the 60626 zip code, which is Rogers Park, while the area with the most registered couples is the 60640 zip code, which is Andersonville.

Martino holds fast to her belief that Boystown will be Boystown for some time to come. "This is still the main area for gay life, and I don't see that changing. They're just getting ready to set up the Gay and Lesbian Community Center on Halsted Street," she said. Truly, this is a sign that even if the denizens of Boystown are moving into Edgewater and Andersonville, their playground is still primarily in East Lakeview.

So, for now at least, within the borders of Boystown, the cocktails will continue

to flow, the strobe lights will pulse and the beat will go on. People will walk from Buddies on Clark to The Closet on Broadway, from Spin to Charlie's on Halsted, at all hours of the night to let off steam and have a good time. Even if they take a cab back north before brunch. —

Businesses Catering to the Gay and Lesbian Community

In Boystown/Lakeview:

Annex 3, 3160 N. Clark St.
Berlin, 954 W. Belmont Ave.
Bobby Love's, 3729 N. Halsted St.
Buck's Saloon, 3439 N. Halsted St.
Buddies, 3301 N. Clark St.
Charlie's Chicago, 3726 N. Broadway
Circuit/Rehab, 3641 N. Halsted St.
The Closet, 3325 N. Broadway
Felt, 3341 N. Halsted St.
Flashy Trash, 3525 N. Halsted
Gay Mart, 3457 N. Halsted St.
Gentry on Halsted, 3320 N. Halsted St.
Hydrate, 3702 N. Halsted
Kit Kat Lounge and Supper Club, 3700 N. Halsted St.
Little Jim's, 3501 N. Halsted St.
Lucky Horseshoe, 3169 N. Halsted
The North End, 3733 N. Halsted St.
Roscoe's, 3354-56 N. Halsted St.
Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted St.
Universal Gear, 3153 N. Broadway

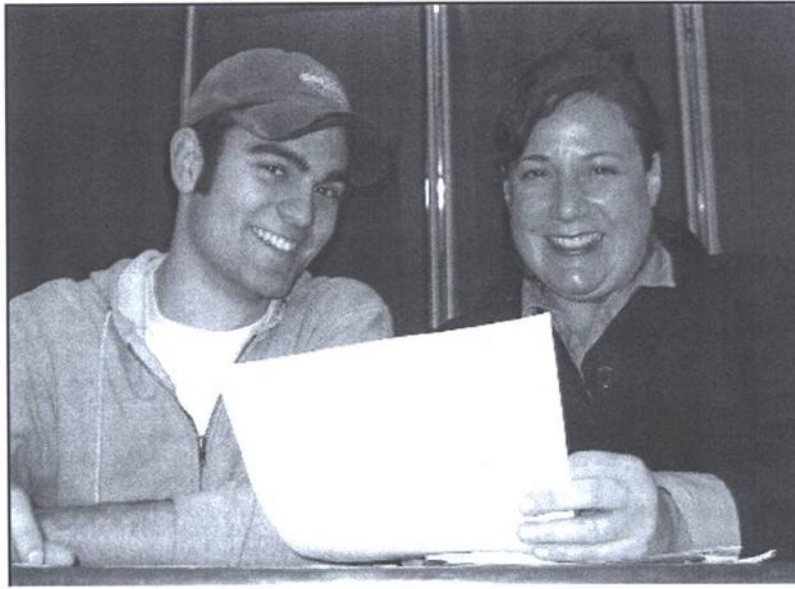
In Andersonville/Edgewater:

@mosphere, 5355 N. Clark
Big Chicks, 5024 N. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago Eagle, 5015 N. Clark St.
Clark's on Clark, 5001 N. Clark St.
Different Strokes, 4923 N. Clark St.
Madrigal's, 5316 N. Clark
Tomboy, 5402 N. Clark



A Place to Call Home For people With HIV/AIDS

By: *Emily Lange*



Tashiro with Loyola University Chicago tutor

Gloria's biggest concern for getting back into the workplace isn't a matter of commuting time, nor is it finding something she likes to do. What does make Gloria worry is how long she may have to spend in the sun, walking to and from home or waiting for the bus. Gloria is a 39-year-old single mother of seven children, living with HIV. Her medication has a side effect that causes her skin to burn and boil from sun exposure, and this past summer, while attending a job-training program, she suffered this consequence and was forced to quit in order to maintain her health.

As a result, Gloria no longer qualifies for a government grant, which she could use to pay for living expenses for herself and her children. She is only receiving food stamps to cover their meals.

Six years ago, through information provided by her medical clinic, she found out about Chicago House's Family Support Program, a case management housing for people with HIV located in Uptown, on the North Side of Chicago. Gloria filled out an application describing her situation, and after a year of being on the waiting list, she and her children had a place to call home.

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People living with HIV/AIDS, like Gloria, are having an increasingly difficult time finding residency in Chicago. Due to unstable health, things like finding work, paying for rent and medical bills, and caring for family members are progressively getting harder.

According to the AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC), more than 6,400 people living with HIV/AIDS in Chicago were homeless in the year 2000.

To address this issue, from the years 1995 to 2001, the agency worked to provide organizations such as Chicago House with funding, and as a result, they witnessed a 67 percent increase in housing units available to people living with HIV/AIDS. Of the 191 permanent housing units that developed in the Chicago area over the five-year period, Chicago House and Social Service Agency is responsible for two programs that, combined, offer 36 housing opportunities for individuals or families. It also offers a 17-unit transitional housing program, available for a two-year living period. These programs are designed on a varying needs basis, offering minimal to maximum care depending on the medical, personal, and financial stability of the HIV/AIDS clientele.



Andrea Tashiro helping Children with their homework

AIDS Foundation of Chicago is one of the many organizations that distribute private grants to Chicago House. Cheryl Beck, who works at AFC in the private funding department, said, "We have several relationships with Chicago House other than just funding, and we have always had high expectations that they can provide for the needs of people with HIV in their area." Uptown has a rate of 91.8 individuals being diagnosed with HIV/AIDS per year for every 100,000 residents. Beck and other members of the department make yearly visits to the housing programs run by Chicago House, monitoring the effectiveness through audits and financial reviews to ensure it is maintaining the funding contract agreements.

The two permanent housing programs offered by Chicago House, Family Support and Individual Living, both require the resident afflicted with HIV/

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The Color of Love

By: Jamika Logan

Imagine yourself meeting someone new. While talking with them, you discover that the two of you have a lot in common. You enjoy the same types of movies; you share the same views on moral issues and values. This person is obviously an ideal match for you. But what if this he or she was of a different race?

Does that change everything?

For some, dating out of their race isn't a problem, and some have very specific reasons for doing so.

Take for instance 32-year-old Ndu Njoku. Njoku is a Nigerian-American male who believes that everyone should experience dating out of their race at least once in their life.

"Being a fitness trainer, I see a lot of women everyday," said Njoku. "I enjoy dibbling and dabbling with beautiful women of all kinds. And it's very hard for me to limit myself just to one race."



love is love, no matter what color it is

Danielle Graves, 20, a biracial female, also embraces the idea.

"I think it's okay if someone dates out of their race, especially if they really loved the person," said Graves.

But there are some people who don't share Njoku's and Grace's point of view.

Brandon Murdock, 23, is a white male who is against the whole idea of interracial dating.

"I'm not a racist," Murdock said, "but I was always taught [by family] that whites belong with whites and blacks belong with blacks. If God wanted us to mix, then we all would be one color."

According to statistics, society has become more open-minded towards interracial dating.

A 1999 survey shows that 73% of the general American population approves of interracial dating, according to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (2002). This figure went up 48% since 1987.

But what is the cause of this popular trend?

Many believe that the media has been very influential on society's views of interracial dating. Shows like *Boy Meets World*, *The Practice*, and *The West Wing* are proving that society has become more comfortable with seeing interracial couples.

Even though modern society has evolved to become more tolerant of the trend, many still oppose the idea and have expressed their opinions very clearly.

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Assisting Bosnian Refugees: The Bosnian Herzegovinian American Community Center

By: Joe Fechter

Civil war and mass genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990's drove over two million people from their homes and forced them to take refuge in countries across the globe. Chicago has been the most common destination for Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugees in the United States, and these people face incredible challenges overcoming their tragic past and adapting to life in a new country.

The Bosnian Herzegovinian American Community Center, or BHACC, was founded in 1994 to assist these refugees. The BHACC, located at 1257 W Devon Ave, provides a wide range of educational and support services geared toward refugees of all ages. In addition, the center offers a number of family-oriented cultural events to help the Bosnian-Herzegovinian community feel at home in Chicago.

"The goal of the BHACC is to assist refugees in becoming acclimated to life in the United States, as well as to establish a strong sense of community here in Chicago that allows refugees to maintain aspects of their culture," said Program Development Director John Chernega.

By 2001, over 40,000 Bosnian and Herzegovinian refugees had settled in Chicago, according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. Many of these refugees reside in and around the Devon neighborhood in Rogers Park where the BHACC is located. The task of assisting so many refugees is a challenging one, but the BHACC has had considerable success.

Through funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Office



of Refugee Resettlement, and private donations, the BHACC provides services such as youth programs, English tutoring, assistance with attaining citizenship, and counseling. Their most recent successes include publishing a newsletter titled *BFocus Magazine* and a local access call-in show aired on channel 21 that covers topics about health, family life, and citizenship.

The BHACC is very dependent on the hard work and dedication of its many volunteers, Chernega said. The volunteers tutor refugees and offer them new opportunities here. "Tutoring refugees of all ages has been a very rewarding experience for myself and the people I help," said Matt Kopp, 21, a junior at Loyola University Chicago who has been volunteering at the BHACC for over a year.

The organization relies on fundraisers such as their annual fundraiser - the Constitution Day Celebration held in November each year - as well as the hard work and dedication of their staff and volunteers, to continue to provide assistance to Chicago's Bosnian-Herzegovinian refugees. —

Every Vote Counts: Making Voting Accessible to Chicago's Ethnic Communities

By: *Anthony Lentini*



Rozen with Clinton look-alike

When Columbia native Jaime Rozen arrived in the United States in 1980, he had never voted in an election. In 1995, Rozen, became a U. S. citizen and soon after, the Skokie resident became a registered voter in the United States – albeit, not an enthusiastic one.

“There is no such thing as a free and fair election, not even here,” said Rozen, 43, referring to the United States, “I vote because my wife makes me.”

For many Americans, this cynical view of politics is not uncommon, and it exists among native-born and naturalized citizens alike. However, many believe that it is not cynicism that threatens to undermine our representative form of government; it is when not enough citizens participate in democracy that democracy is most threatened.

While most people who are registered do vote - 86% in the 2000 presidential

election according to the most recent Census data - only 60% of voting age citizens actually turn out on Election Day.

With more than one-third of eligible citizens sitting on the sidelines, many argue that ours is not truly a government of, by and for the people.

Combating voter apathy is an ongoing struggle for election officials everywhere. However, in areas like Chicago where there is a large ethnic, immigrant and African-American population, bringing these diverse groups into the electoral process is especially challenging.

“There’s still a lot of work to be done,” said Tom Leach, director of public information for the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago. According to Leach, an estimated 400,000 eligible citizens in Chicago are not registered to vote. He estimates that over 50 percent of these unregistered voters are from Chicago’s immigrant population.

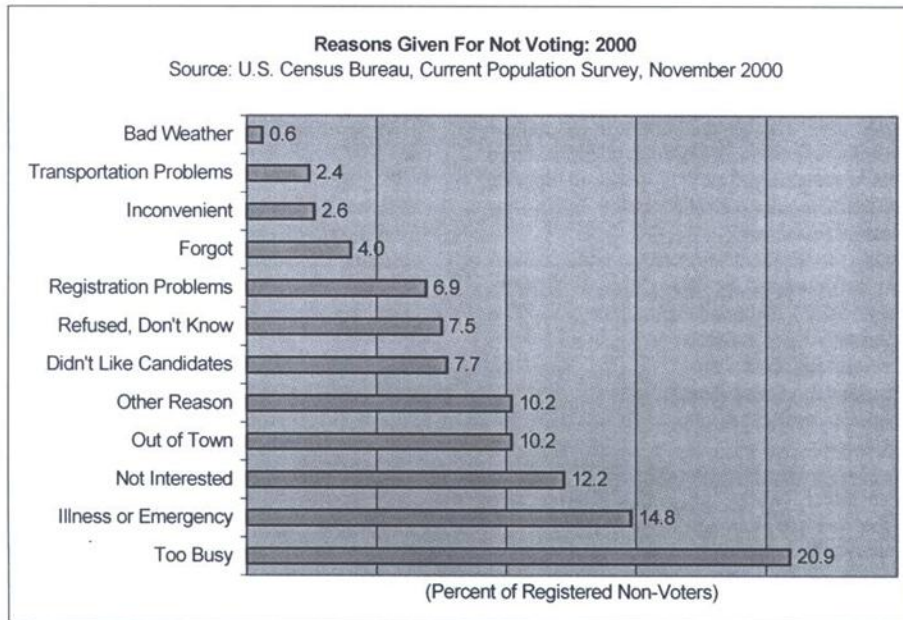
In an effort to reach this population, the board undertook an ambitious outreach project some six years ago called “We Speak Your Language.”

“Because Chicago has people from all over the world,” Leach said, “we now have voter information available in languages from 70 countries.”

However, access to voter information in their native language is just one of the hurdles new citizens must clear in order to become fully engaged in the American political system.

“It’s hard, when you don’t know the language, to know the background of the political figures,” said Aneta Sidler who arrived from Poland with her parents when she was 16-years-old. Sidler, 25, a graduate of DePaul University, who recently moved to Detroit with her husband from the largely Polish Gage Park neighborhood on Chicago’s Southwest Side, said, “when

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you are new to the country, it takes awhile to know the system.”

One organization working to help immigrants learn the system is the Coalition of African, Asian, European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois. Located in Chicago’s Ravenswood and Uptown neighborhoods, the group is a coalition of 19 agencies serving immigrants and refugees in the Chicago metropolitan area.

One of the organization’s main activities has been to teach citizenship classes to immigrants seeking to apply for citizenship.

Recognizing an opportunity to keep these immigrants engaged once they become citizens, the coalition sought to move beyond merely preparing their students for the citizenship exam, and in May 2002, opened its Citizenship and Voter Education Training School. “The school concentrates on voter registration, civic participation and community organizing, as an extension of its citizenship preparation classes,” said Alima Ramnarine, the Coalition of African, Asian, European and Latino Immigrants of Illinois Civics Action Coordinator.

One of the group’s partner agencies is the Korean American Resource and Cultural Center located on Chicago’s Far North Side. Like many organizations that represent specific ethnic groups, the Korean-American group recognizes that they must encourage more civic and political involvement by citizens from their own group in order to have a voice in society.

To increase participation among Chicago’s Korean-Americans, the group works closely with the Cook County Clerk’s Office on a number of voter registration projects.

Before each election, the clerk’s office certifies a number of the group’s volunteers as deputy registrars. This certification gives the volunteers the legal authority to register new voters; the organization can then concentrate their voter registration efforts in Chicago’s Korean

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A Diamond in the Rough

By: Jamika Logan

"This is one of the most unique dining experiences I have ever encountered in a restaurant," said 22-year-old Sparkle Ellis, a regular patron of the Ethiopian Diamond restaurant.

Named "one of the best" restaurants in 1999 by the Chicago Tribune, Ethiopian Diamond restaurant was also named best African restaurant, best vegetarian food and best ethnic restaurant in Chicago.

Once the customer walks in, the hostess immediately offers a friendly welcome. When seated, one can see that the restaurant is extremely spacious and the walls are covered

with the spectacular paintings that capture the true essence of Ethiopia. They feature colorful images of the Ethiopian country and the men and women of different tribes.

"The paintings were painted by a great artist to help give our customers a homely feel of our restaurant by displaying images of Ethiopia," said Sisay Abebe, owner and manager of Ethiopian Diamond.

Patrons of Ethiopian Diamond experience the ritual of breaking injera, the traditional Ethiopian bread that is part of every meal. Patrons also eat their food from the same huge plate, which is placed in the center of the table for everyone to share. In Ethiopian tradition, this signifies the bonds of loyalty and friendship.

"I thought it was rather interesting when me and three other people had to eat our food from the same plate," said Ellis. "

They gave us more food than we can handle."

The customers can choose from an extensive array of foods, all ranging from mild, to hot, to spicy, which gives customers an authentic taste of Ethiopia.

"I'm a meat lover," said Jerry Doss, who recently dined at Ethiopian Diamond. "They had beef, chicken, lamb, ribs and seafood galore. I was in heaven."

However, the restaurant does not cater only to meat lovers. Vegetarians can choose from fish, vegetables and watta, a special slow-cooked stew.

"Everything here is made fresh. Nothing frozen. Nothing microwaveable. Everything is fresh, which is unique and you can't find many ethnic restaurants that do their food that way," Abebe said.

The customers can enjoy their food while listening to the soft music of Africa playing in the background. On Fridays, people can take pleasure in the live music of Kelan Phil Cohran, a veteran African music performer.

The prices at Ethiopian Diamond are moderate with entrees ranging from \$6.25 to \$11.

Ethiopian Diamond restaurant is located at 6120 North Broadway Ave. and is open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekends. For more information call (773) 338-6100. —



Ethiopian Diamond Restaurant



Chicago, Diverse But Segregated

By: Miriam Cintrón

People of various ethnic and racial backgrounds live in Chicago, but rather than city residents enjoying that diversity, Chicago is one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States. In fact, according to the 2000 Census, after Milwaukee, Chicago has had the most rapid increase in segregation since 1990. Minority populations continue to grow but are also increasingly isolated from each other, according to a study done by Harvard University.

This racial divide also reflects a class divide. Hispanics and blacks tend to live in urban ghettos, whereas whites live in more affluent areas. All we have to do to see that difference is to look at our neighborhoods. Take for instance, the Gold Coast versus Garfield Park, Lincoln Park versus Humboldt Park, Lakeview versus Uptown or countless other combinations.

This trend may even be more than just some kind of natural instinct people have to stick to their own kind, although for some people that may be true. But this level of segregation is also allowed to persist through state politics and discriminatory lending practices. It can be seen in public matters other than housing. A Chicago Tribune investigation in 1999 showed inequities in how money was spent in the city's park districts. Not only was the northern lakefront larger than the southern lakefront acreage, but it also had more marinas, food concessions, etc.

Fair housing laws need to be put into place, but that too can only take us so far. It's also up to us. It's not hard to believe that people feel more comfortable

and secure when they are surrounded by people who are like themselves; but that can be both helpful and hurtful. A person should enjoy being able to relate to people similar to themselves, but not to the exclusion of all others. In a city such as ours, people should want to experience other cultures and learn from others, especially when there is no lack of opportunity to do so. It is already the 21st century and, although it is masked by a time of political correctness, we continue to basically have the same problems with race that we had 50 years ago. It truly is distressing that formal segregation was legally ended in the United States only to be replaced by informal segregation today. —



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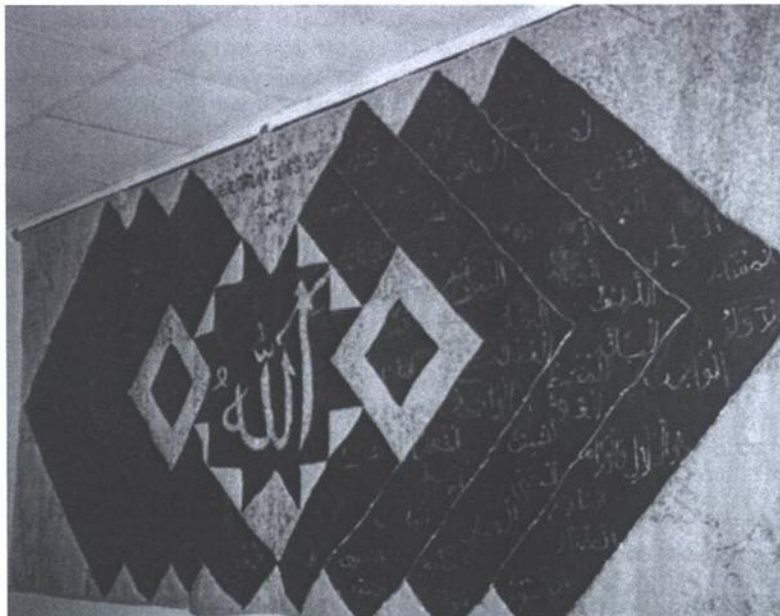
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Celebrating Ramadan, Practicing Peace

By: Puneet Khan



Islamic calligraphy that says 'Allah' in Arabic, meaning God

Each year, Muslims around the world get up before sunrise for suhoor (pre-fast meal), pray their first morning prayer and fast until sunset.

While fasting, Muslims completely abstain from any food, drink and smoking until iftar (the meal that breaks the fast), increase their acts of charity and prayers and recite the Quran (Islam's holy book) in its entirety within 30 days.

The holy month of Ramadan is observed during the ninth lunar month of the Islamic calendar. Each year the month of Ramadan comes 11-days earlier than the previous year, meaning every Muslim around the world will experience a day of fasting that lasts roughly 14 hours.

For the estimated 7 million Muslims in the United States and 1.3 billion Muslims in the world, Ramadan holds a sacred meaning.

"There are two significances in the month of Ramadan," said Abdul

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Hameed Dogar, director of Villa Park Islamic Foundation Mosque. "The month teaches you self discipline, and it celebrates the revelation of the Quran."

Dogar explained that the month is a time when Muslims around the world thank Allah (Arabic word for God). "It is a time when humans control worldly passions, and learn to keep a balance in life," he said.

For others like Zunaira Malik, 24, Ramadan is a time when people come together and share. "It brings forth a closer sense of brotherhood and sisterhood," she said. "It's a very social month, and that's the beauty of Ramadan, it brings together a

During the holy month of Ramadan, all Muslims that are mentally and physically stable, are past the age of puberty and are in a situation that won't cause any type of physical or mental harm to oneself, are required to fast.

Nicki Khan, 44, a ward secretary at V.A. Hines, explained that Islam makes the practice of fasting easy on individuals. "God is very merciful," she explained, "children don't have to fast, the elderly don't have to and if you are traveling, or are sick, you are excused." She added that if for some reason you missed one of your prescribed fasts, you have to make up the number of days you missed at the end of the



Islamic Foundation Mosque in Villa Park, IL

community."

Dogar explained that during the month of Ramadan, God multiplies one's good deeds. He explained that it is said in Islam, that God rewards those that fast with good intentions. "When you fast the prescribed period, God forgives your sins," he added.

month, or feed a certain amount of poor people.

Unlike the Ramadans in the past, this year seems to hold a bit more importance for Muslims in the U.S.

Malik explained that since Islam has been in the spotlight due to world

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Forcing Change in Wicker Park

By: Erin Kelley

John Luckey had a rude awakening a few months ago when he found that his 1998 Ford Escort was vandalized right in front of his home, on the corner of Wood Street and North Avenue in Wicker Park.

neighbor's car had the phrase, 'yuppie scum' etched on it. It think it's a protest to the neighborhood redevelopment," said Luckey, 23. The cars that had the anti-yuppie sayings on it were of high-class caliber, such

people could afford to get them fixed," Luckey said.

Luckey may be correct. It just may be a protest against neighborhood redevelopment. In recent years, major shifts have occurred in many of Chicago's historic



Wicker Park Sign

In fact, Luckey and his neighbors all arose to shattered windows and scratched up cars.

"My car had a scratch on the right side of it, but others got it much worse. My

as the Mercedes Benzes, BMWs, and Lexuses, their shiny exteriors now sporting vulgar insults.

"I think it's kind of funny, but I guess it's not my BMW that's scratched up. I guess [the vandals] figured these

neighborhoods. Old buildings are being torn down, and chain stores such as Starbucks and Borders are being put in their place.

Gentrification occurs when middle-and

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upper-income residents begin to renovate areas of the city, driving up housing prices and displacing the current low-income and working class inhabitants. This neighborhood redevelopment often changes the look and character of a neighborhood. Anyone who has seen brand new condos replacing existing affordable housing units is witnessing the affects of gentrification. This is a trend affecting every major city in the US. Rent prices are on the rise and small, private businesses are finding it difficult to stay in business due to chain stores taking over.

"This area used to be full of character and unique. Parts of the area still are, but there are hints that things are changing, and that makes me nervous. I feel bad for the ethnic businesses that are getting pushed out for bigger businesses, like restaurants," Wicker Park resident John Coleman, 25, said.

Blocks Together, a housing protection organization in Chicago, notices that it is the Latino community that is most affected by the redevelopment of Wicker Park.

"Over the last decade, the median household income has increased 50 percent in the Wicker Park and Bucktown area. This means that the gap between whites and Latinos is growing larger. Some Latino families are finding it hard to compete with the income of those around them, and therefore can't afford housing," said Sharon Jansen, volunteer and advocate from Blocks Together.

In 2003, the Illinois census on Chicago neighborhoods found the average household income for Hispanics in the Wicker Park area was \$36,500 while the average household income for whites was



Wicker Park Honore Sign

\$49,000. This is a large gap that Jansen thinks will keep on growing.

"Not only are families having to leave their homes, but also their businesses that once prospered are having to relocate or shut down altogether to make room for a new Panera or Pizza Hut," Jansen said.

Blocks Together is one of the many organizations that helps families relocate and is fighting for laws that allow people to stay in their homes, instead of having to move to other areas.

One law that Blocks Together, along with a number of other housing organizations, is trying to get passed is the Inclusionary Zoning Act. The law would reserve about 20 percent of housing units that are built in certain areas for low-income residents. Jansen is not sure if this law will pass, but thinks the future looks promising. "Hopefully people jump on the bandwagon and get involved in this," she said.

The Wicker Park Chamber of Commerce is more hopeful. "People think that the redevelopment will bring some positive traffic to the area," said Assistant Director Matthew Weiner. Some new plans for Wicker Park include tearing down the vacant fire station and putting in a Potbelly's Deli. Near the park, new upscale clothing stores

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My Cultural Awakening

By: *Jessica Mason*

I have to admit, most of my life has been very white-bread. Until recently my experiences with people of different races and ethnicities were extremely limited. All of my friends and neighbors were white as were the majority of my classmates and coworkers. I certainly never dated, or even thought about dating, someone of another race.

Then, three years ago, I moved to Chicago and everything changed. I was working and going to school with people of countless races, nationalities and ethnicities. Gradually, interacting with people with different skin colors and religious beliefs became ordinary. A little later I was surprised to find my inner circle of friends consisted of a black girl born and raised in Chicago, a white girl from Georgia and a gay couple comprised of a Latino and a British expatriate. It was like one of those educational children's programs where they always show a bunch of kids of different races hanging out together for the sake of political correctness. Only in this case it was more for the sake of a shared affinity for Mexican food and reality television.

For a long time after I first met my boyfriend at our mutual place of employment I never thought of him as anything but a friendly coworker. Though he was good-natured, attractive, athletic and smart, everything most girls look for in a guy, I never thought of him as a potential romantic interest.

Why?

He was Asian.

It was not that I had anything against Asian guys, but culturally, I had never been encouraged, as a white female, to view Asian men in any kind of sexually desirable or romantic light. If you don't believe me, try finding depictions of white female/Asian male couples in popular culture; I guarantee you will be hard-pressed to find any. The idea was just something that didn't even register as an option for me.

But then, this aforementioned "friendly coworker" lent me his favorite book, which I proceeded to read and subsequently love. I found that as I read the book I was having a bit of an epiphany. I started thinking a lot about the book's lender. I thought if we had the same taste in literature maybe we'd have other things in common too. Not much later I came to the realization that my coworker was, in fact, extremely cute and didn't seem to have a girlfriend. I decided to ask him out. And I did. It took me a month to get up the nerve but I did it and here we are, a happy couple of six months.

The other night I went out to dinner at a Chinese restaurant with my boyfriend and some of his childhood friends, all Filipino and for the first time in my life I was in the minority in a social situation. It wasn't an uncomfortable feeling, just an odd one. Suddenly, I had a new appreciation for the way my boyfriend must have felt when I took him with me to Virginia to meet all my white friends.

Chicago is touted as one of the great "melting pots." My three short years living here have shown me the true meaning of that term. Packing so many different kinds of people into a limited amount of space is bound to cause problems, but it also tends to enrich our lives in ways we may have never anticipated. —

Desperate Economy Means Less Work for Cabbies

By: *Despina Maris*



When a tourist traveling in downtown Chicago enters a cab with his luggage and says to the driver "O' Hare please," he might not realize the impact of his actions. His business trip to Chicago affects an entire subculture of business often overlooked in a shaken American economy.

Profits for Muslim owned and operated cab businesses and the auto body shops that repair those cabs have declined since the attacks on September 11th 2001 and the war in Iraq.

Portions of Chicago's Muslim population finds themselves in the same difficult financial position as many other American families who have had job troubles since 2001.

"After September 11th, people do

not travel as much. Five days of travel have now been cut down to two or three days," said Sayed Ali, a Chicago Checker cab driver.

Ali takes notice of these changes day by day for his own edification and has become somewhat of an expert on the subject.

"Chicago got hit hard as a major tourist city, before September 11th, the occupancy rate for hotels was 80 percent now it has been cut down to 20-30 percent. The break-even point is 65 percent whatever is over that is profit; [the recession] killed them," he said.

Many cab companies have cut down the number of cabs that run around the city as a result of the decline in tour-

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Literacy Center: At Your Service

By: Erin Kelley

Bonnie Essner has a Brain and Behavior exam to study for, six graduate school applications to finish and a paper to write for her English class. Instead, she is sitting and preparing a lesson plan for her student tonight. Essner, 21, is a senior honors student at Loyola University Chicago; she works part-time as a hostess, yet she still finds time to volunteer at Loyola University's non-profit Literacy Center.

"It is hard to tutor when I still have homework to do, but I put a lot of effort into everything I do. This is a big responsibility and I want to do something important."

Right now she is working with a 25-year-old Polish man named Pawel. He really enjoys speaking English with native speakers and improving his conversation skill. Essner said that at first Pawel was shy to use English words in case they were wrong, but now they have great conversations.

The Loyola Literacy Center was started because Loyola students and faculty "need to see the relationship between their use of words and language and the place of language and society more broadly. It's a



Sharing skills and reading together



Students also learn necessary skills for living in America

question of taking responsibility for our high levels of skill and expertise in these areas and sharing the skills," said Loyola English professor, Allen Frantzen who started the program 12 years ago.

The Literacy Center is a free service available to both native and foreign-born residents in the Chicago area who wants to improve his or her English speaking and writing skills. During a typical semester, the center works with about 20 different ethnic groups.

"I think I've seen every culture there is. There is a large Eastern European group, but also Mexican, Middle Eastern, Egyptian, Asians. I like learning about different cultures and backgrounds. You really do develop a relationship with them," Essner said.

The Literacy Center is part of Loyola's Service Learning project that allows students to tutor for credit hours. Some Loyola faculty tutor as well, along with neighbors from the Rogers Park community.

Not only do the students learn the English language at the Literacy Center, but they also learn practical skills necessary for living in America.

According to Essner, "One of the

(Continued on page 50)

Pregnancy: Not a Teen's Dead-End

By: Malynda Stewart



When Ma'kehyle Washington, an African-American from South Holland, found out that she was pregnant at 15, she kept it a secret for four months. "I couldn't even admit to myself that I was pregnant," she said. "I just didn't feel as though I could talk to anybody about it."

Washington's experience is not unlike other pregnant African-American teenage girls living in the Chicago area. According to teenpregnancy.org, a Website dedicated to teenage pregnancy prevention, African-Americans have the highest rate of teenage mothers in Illinois, making up 38 percent of the total number. They also have the highest rate of repeat births, making up 31 percent. Unfortunately, most of these teens end up feeling alone and have little or no direction for what to do next.

"I used to just stare at my stomach in the mirror and convince myself that I was not pregnant," Washington said. "I would tell myself, 'My stomach doesn't look that big. I'm not pregnant. That [pregnancy] test was wrong.' I prayed everyday that I wasn't [pregnant]."

Eventually, Washington realized that she needed help and built up enough courage to tell her mother about her preg-

nancy. After a long discussion, they decided that the first step would be to get prenatal care. Following that, a friend of her mother suggested that she find a support group for pregnant teens.

"I never really had any friends, so I didn't know anyone that would want to talk to me about my pregnancy," Washington said.

Washington, now 17, and a single mother of a 1-year old baby girl, ended up attending meetings after school once a week with a Teen Reach counselor along with other teenage girls, many of who were also pregnant or already had children. The Teen Reach program is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Human Services, which offers programs for youth between the ages of 6 and 17 during after school hours. The purpose of this program is to provide youth a safe place where they can do homework, meet with a mentor to discuss private issues, explore career opportunities, and learn about the dangers of drugs.

"It's a wonderful program to be in," said Brenda MacKenzie, 47, a volunteer mentor for Teen Reach. "Many of these children have no one to talk to, especially the young girls who are pregnant. Those are the ones that need the most guidance. Parenting is a lot to take on for a young girl."

MacKenzie said that the majority of the youth that benefit from the program are African-Americans, especially the pregnant teens.

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Are Arranged Marriages Better?

By: Puneet Khan



Mr. and Mrs. Tahami and Ambereen Siddiqui

When Hiba Yasin, 20, a senior at Loyola University Chicago, isn't out with her friends, or studying, she usually can be found in the gym playing basketball with an intramural team she put together, or cooking a box of spaghetti for dinner.

While Yasin fully participates in the cultural reforms of America, she holds fast to one ancient tradition. For this Middle Eastern American, who was born and raised in the U.S, she believes arranged marriages help retain cultural ties, and eliminates societal pressure to date, and find her own spouse.

"Arranged marriages are more exciting, it gives you a purpose," said Yasin. "I would want one, I believe they work better, both culturally and religiously," she said, "besides, I would prefer it over dating."

The popularity of movies such as, "Monsoon Wedding" and "Bend it Like Beckham," reveal the recent interest with Indian culture and arranged marriages. The belief that you marry first and then learn to love later has become a custom more widely practiced by young people from ethnic backgrounds.

Although traditionally 90% of marriages in India are arranged, the practice of arranged marriages still seems to be a popular choice in America for many from Indian, Pakistani, and Middle Eastern backgrounds.

For Ambereen Siddiqui, 26, a housewife from Forest Park, her concept of arranged marriages came from her family background that stressed retaining cultural identity. "I am for arranged mar-

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riages,” Siddiqui said as she scooped out whip cream from her mocha. As her 8-month old son tried reaching for the straw she added, “my views were formed from looking at my parent’s generation.”

Siddiqui, born and raised in the U.S., agreed to an arranged marriage at the age of 23. She explained that she saw both positive and negative aspects to arranged marriages. “It’s good because it helps retain your values, but I think in the past they weren’t arranged for good reason,” she said.

“People would just look at social class, how much money a family made, although important, these things don’t determine compatibility,” said Siddiqui.

She explained that for her it was important to find someone with a matching personality, someone she could connect with, and someone that would help her retain her cultural identity.

She explained that she met her husband, Tahami, through an older cousin of his, who also lived in San Francisco. “She told him about me, and he emailed me,” she explained. “We corresponded for about two-months, and then he came to meet me,” she added. “We were engaged for seven-months before we got married.”

For others, the concept of meet-

ing their spouse prior to the wedding day is unfamiliar. “We met for the first time after marriage,” said 79-year old Ghulam Hussain, a retired businessman and native of Pakistan. “We did not even see a photo of each other before our marriage,” he said, grinning at Mariam, his wife of 51-years.

Arranged marriages are helping keep India’s divorce rate at a steady 8% compared to the American divorce rate of 50%. Although the law on Indian divorce

rate overlooks the fact that many marriages in India are dissolved unofficially to avoid public scrutiny.

Tracy Pintchman, associate professor of South Asian Studies at Loyola University Chicago explained that just because arranged marriages carried a low divorce rate, it doesn’t

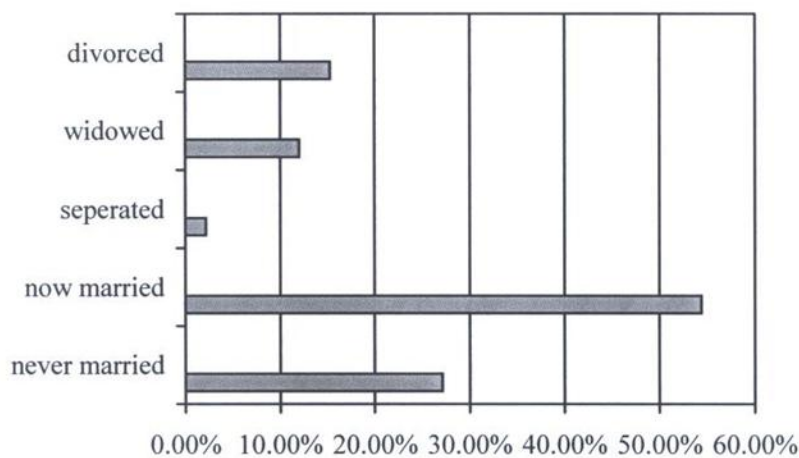
mean couples from arranged marriages have a content marriage. “The fact that they don’t divorce doesn’t mean they are happy,” she said.

Swaleha Junaid, 29, a computer technician from Villa Park, always believed that matches were truly made in heaven. Despite her belief, something just didn’t go right in her marriage. “I don’t really think it had to do with my marriage being arranged,” she explained “It wasn’t like my marriage was forced.”



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American Love Marriage
Source: U.S. Census Report 2000



Marriage in the U.S.

(Arranged Marriages—Continued from page 27)

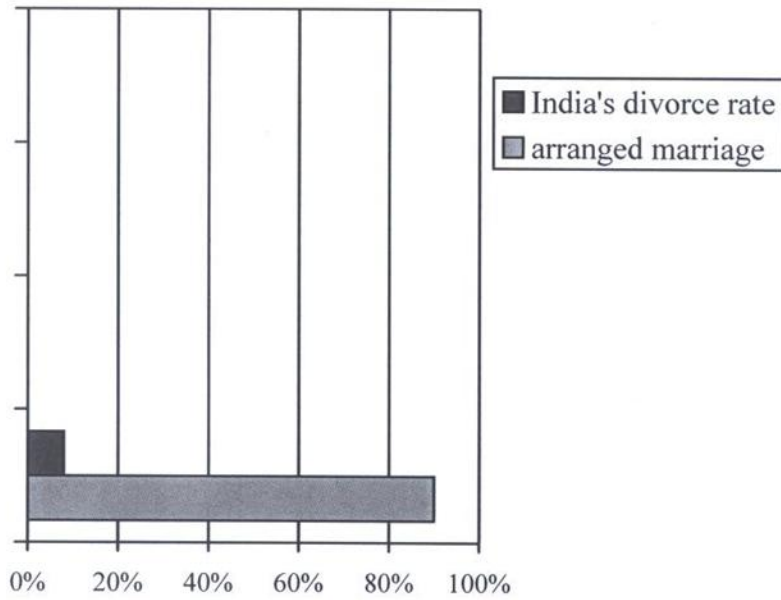
Junaid explained that although her marriage ended in divorce, it wasn't because it was an arranged marriage. "It was just bad," she said. Junaid added, that regardless of what type of marriage one had, sometimes things just aren't meant to be.

"In today's generation the divorce rate is higher," explained Marcia Hermansen, an Islamic Studies professor at Loyola University Chicago. "I think it's due to how assertive women are." Hermansen explained that more women in arranged marriages aren't afraid to speak their minds any longer, with an increase in women getting higher education, and becoming financially independent, it has left them with the option to escape the marriage.

The concept of arranged marriages has traveled a long way. "In the early 1900s people didn't have much of an input over who they would marry," explained Hermansen. "But nowadays, most young people expect to meet each other, and get to know each other before the wedding."

Although some may find the traditions of arranged marriages strange, for others it is simply a way of life. As Hermansen pointed out, "there is a proverb in a video we show in class, 'we don't marry the women we love, we love the women we marry.'" —

India's Marriage Statistics
Source: India's Census Bureau



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No Child Left Behind:

Problems facing Chicago Public Schools

By: Kristin Spence



Teresa Barnes loves the first day of school. As a second grade teacher at The Hayt School, on Chicago's North Side, she looks forward every year to the smiling faces of new students in her classroom.

This year, Barnes, as well as other teachers, will have her hands full with students. 387,495 students showed up for the first day at a Chicago Public School this August, which is an increase of almost 55,000 students since 2000.

"It is great to see so many students excited to learn but there is just not enough room for all of them. We do not have enough materials and parents are just not involved enough for teachers to see a real difference," Barnes said. Last year her classroom consisted of 20 students, this year there are 24.

Overcrowding is not the only problem, Barnes points out. Close to 15 percent of students have low English language proficiency, making it extremely difficult to teach or learn.

"Administrators are going to need to require teachers to be proficient in a second language in order to get through to some of these students," says Barnes.

In 2002, President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act, which dramatically raised the bar for public education in the United States. The Act, the most proactive educa-

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tion plan to come out of the White House since 1965, challenges educators and administrators to ensure that every child can meet the high learning standards set down by their state. The goals of the Act span the course of twelve years (through 2014). The goals of the program are to ensure:

- All students will reach high standards, at a minimum, attaining proficiency or better in reading and math by 2013-2014.
- By 2013-2014, all students will be proficient in reading by the end of the third grade.
- All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English.
- By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
- All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free and conducive to learning.
- All students will graduate from high school.

The plan however is not sitting well with all administrators. Chicago Public School's CEO Arne Duncan feels that the program is "an enormous and impractical burden for a large district like [Chicago's]."

Unfortunately, Duncan may be right. At almost 23 students per teacher in elementary school, Chicago schools are already overcrowded. Perpetuating this overcrowding is the Act's clause stating any school that does not meet federal im-

provement standards must give parents the option to move their child to a better performing school.

Chicago Public School parent Rose Watkins, whose children attend Alexander Graham Bell Elementary, a "choice" school, feels that this is option is unfair on many levels. "By giving parents that option it overcrowds the better schools and neglects the struggling schools. We need to focus on bettering all public schools, not just the high performing ones," Watkins said.

Three hundred-sixty five out of the six hundred Chicago Schools failed to meet the standards even though there had been significant improvement from last year's assessment. According to the Act, a passing school is entitled to government funds for materials, curriculum, etc., whereas a failing school must fend for itself, while losing students.

"It is important to do the right thing educationally. We will not overburden schools or further exacerbate overcrowding," Duncan said.

Because nearly 83 percent of students in CPS are from low income families movement to another school can be difficult, and since better performing schools receive more money, those families who cannot afford to transfer their children end up in poorly funded, understaffed schools. And with 87 percent of students coming from black or Latino families, two groups who have the lowest literacy rates in the country, definite problems can arise.

Despite conflicts with the federal government regarding funding and policy for No Child Left Behind educators and administrators are trying to keep a positive attitude.

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How Are Racial Stereotypes and "Chitlins" Alike?

By: Jamika Logan

All white people can't dance, and they smell like wet dogs and potato chips when they get wet.

All black people are lazy, welfare gang-bangers that love eating chicken and watermelons.

All Hispanic people are illegal aliens that can only work in landscaping and fast food restaurants.

All Asian people know karate and enjoy eating white rice.

All Middle Eastern people are terrorists and can only work at convenient stores and gas stations.

These insinuations are racial stereotypes that ignorantly generalize a whole race. The term "racial stereotype" is understood to be a negative or pejorative depiction about an individual or group. But even stereotypes that appear to be positive - such as the belief that people in one group are better at sports than others, are, in actuality, negative and unfair. In my opinion, stereotyping dehumanizes individuals and creates a society where this is not only acceptable, but also encouraged.

What we don't realize is that stereotypes have a huge influence on how people interact and perceive one another. I remember my experience in middle school where I was constantly teased about the way I talked. People would come to me and ask, "Why do you talk like that?" I didn't understand why they would ask me that question because I always assumed I spoke normally. You know what they would say? They would tell me to stop talking the way I talked because I sounded "very white."

I was extremely offended. What in the world does it mean to speak "white?" I wasn't aware that only white people spoke

properly and articulately. Does this mean that I, as a black person, have to speak in Ebonics or "ghetto?"

The worst part about the whole ordeal was that it wasn't only my white peers saying this to me, but mostly my black peers.

But why would they say this? Where did these people get these ideas?

I can tell you where: the media. The media is often responsible for exposing people to prejudiced viewpoints. With television shows such as *King of the Hill* and "pimped out" gangster rap videos, people are depicted in ways that are very offensive. It's no wonder everyone has something negative to say about one another.

But the media shouldn't be entirely accountable for racial stereotypes. If you think about it, racist images and ideas only exist in the media because racism already exists in society itself. We, as individuals, should also take the blame for what's going on, because the majority of us, at one time, have judged a person based on some type of racial stereotype.

It angers me when people say that all members of a certain race are "lazy," "stinky," "terrorists," or any other name that is outright disrespectful. All groups have lazy people. All groups have criminals. All groups have stinky people. I'm black and I am not a big fan of chicken and I hate watermelon. I have a friend who is Middle Eastern is not a terrorist and is, in fact, one of the nicest people I've ever known. I have a white friend who has good hygiene, even after it rains.

So, I've come to the conclusion that people who label an entire group based on the actions of some are, in my opinion, blatantly ignorant and stupid. If you don't know the answer to how racial stereotypes and "chitlins" are alike. I'll tell you: They both stink! —

Hellenic Student Association: Creating and Promoting Awareness

By: Despina Maris



"We were an outlet they had, representing the bridge connecting the young between the old," said Evan Diamantakos, 22, alumni advisor of the Hellenic Student Association.

Diamantakos' thoughts about the community service project assisting elderly Greeks at the Hollywood House on Hollywood Avenue and Sheridan Road on Chicago's North Side, helps create an understanding of how young Greek Americans in the organization feel about the importance of their involvement in such social awareness activities.

"Not a lot of their family members come and visit them; it's not just that we're close by. This is our way of thanking them for being the ones that watched over us, and showing our appreciation for what they've done for the Greek community in Chicago," Diamantakos said.

Through its approximately 30 active members, the Hellenic Student Association, based at Loyola University Chicago's lake shore campus, involves itself in the community issues of Greek Americans in Chicago and helps to raise the historical awareness about Greek culture.

Kassandra Tsitsopoulos, 19, a sophomore history major at Loyola, helps to plan many of the organization's events.

"We are there to bring the Hellenic people together at Loyola and to propagate our culture to the community," Tsitsopoulos said.

From assisting the elderly to participating in liturgical Lenten services on campus during Orthodox Christian Lent, young Greek Americans in the organization have shown the importance of heritage and friendship in bringing together a community to teach one another about important historical, religious and social issues.

"Our culture did not just end at Socrates and Archimedes, it continues with us. Our members do not only include Greek kids, so that shows that diversity is our strength in helping to get our message out," Tsitsopoulos said.

On a cultural awareness evening held at Loyola University in October of 2003, students performed traditional dances to celebrate "OXI" day, the second largest national holiday in Greece. The students came together weeks beforehand to practice together.

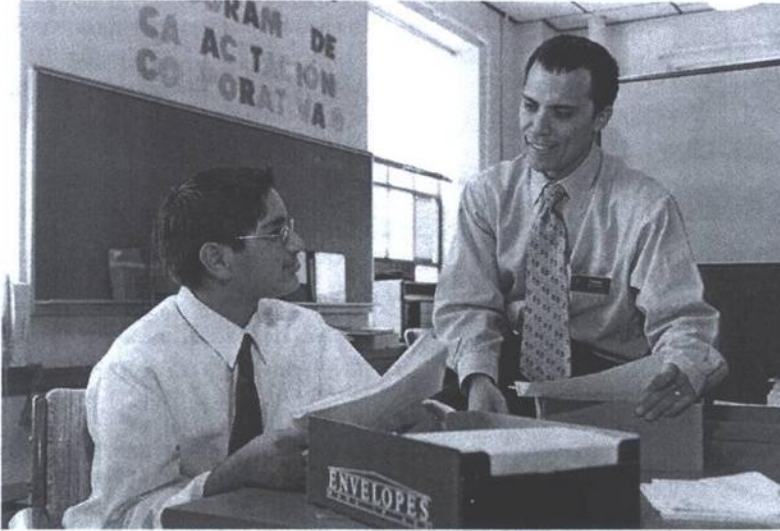
Traditional Greek food was served, but most important to many of the members was the speech given by Vasilios Damiras on the historical significance of the holiday.

Sophomore nursing student and active member in the association, Jacqueline Bertucci, 20, said, "I'm not Greek at all, but I danced in the dances at the "OXI" day celebration, and I learned a lot

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Cristo Rey: Creating Opportunities

By: Anthony Lentini



De La Rosa consults with Cristo Rey student.

When Cristo Rey Jesuit High School opened its doors at the corner of Cermak Avenue and Wolcott Street in 1996, its goal was to provide a quality, college preparatory education for the mostly Latino students from the hard-working, but low-income families in the Pilsen and Little Village neighborhoods.

Though most area residents cannot afford a private school education for their children, Cristo Rey made private education possible through an innovative program that helps students finance the cost of their education while providing valuable workplace experience.

The Corporate Internship Program (CIP) is a work-study program that combines the concepts of job sharing and employee leasing.

Students work five days a month in entry-level jobs at downtown Chicago firms; through their work, students earn 74 percent of the cost of their education. Families are responsible for just \$2,200 of the \$8,450 annual tuition.

Sponsor companies pay Cristo Rey \$25,000 for a team of four students for the 10 ½ month school year. The school transports the students to and from work each day;

(Continued from page 34)

they dress in professional attire and work a full 8-hour day. The students are employees of CIP, which handles all payroll and employment related issues.

There are currently 92 sponsors, providing 116 jobs. "... Sponsors are even referring us to other companies," said Carlos De La Rosa, director of the Corporate Internship Program at Cristo Rey, "It's a real testament to the students' performance."

Indeed, according to De La Rosa, sponsors rated 92 percent of the students "very good" or "outstanding" on their performance reviews.

One such student is Elena Piloni, a 2003 Cristo Rey graduate. The soft-spoken 18-year-old is now a full-time student at Loyola University Chicago.

Piloni credits Cristo Rey and CIP for helping her transition into college. "It helped me in college because it got me to be more outgoing, it taught me to be more organized and professional," Piloni said.

The program also helps students by exposing them to professionals who serve as role models and mentors.

Piloni's senior year internship at Barbara J. Pope PC, a financial services company, is where she met Office Manager, Sunny Hadley. "Sunny helped me a lot," said Piloni. "She taught me never to give up, always get what you want, always follow-up until you get what you are looking for."

Sponsors also find the experience



2003 Cristo Rey Graduate Elena Piloni

rewarding. "It is truly gratifying knowing you are helping these kids with real-world experience that will help them in the future," Hadley said.

Cristo Rey's success can be measured in many ways: Their dropout rate is just 1 percent - compared to 65 percent for area public schools; two-thirds of Cristo Rey graduates have gone on to college - while only 31 percent in the area finish high school.

But, perhaps the most telling statistic is that the Cristo Rey model is being replicated across the country. Five schools have opened in recent years, with six more set to open in the fall of 2004. Cristo Rey began hoping to change the lives of students in an underprivileged Chicago neighborhood; they just may have succeeded in changing the face of education for inner city America. —



Love is What Matters, Not Who One Loves

By: *Jeff Martin*

Homosexuality is a hotly debated topic in America today. It has slowly gained acceptance, and open dialogue is now possible where before there was silence. However, there are still a significant numbers of people who stand vehemently opposed to a lifestyle that many people lead.

Gay people are often persecuted in the name of religion. The Catholic Church, as well as other denominations of Christianity, have special meetings to formalize their stances on the issue. Religious leaders speak at length on the subject and most of the time gays are portrayed in a negative light.

Who cares? Why is it such a big deal who someone is sexually, emotionally and romantically attracted to? What business is it of anybody's? Why is so much emphasis placed on such a thing? Certainly it is a lifestyle of a minority of people, but a whole culture goes along with it. In fact, many more people are probably gay than current statistics cite. The most often used statistic is that 10 percent of people are homosexual. This is based on the Kinsey Report from the 1940s. Now that people are more open about their sexuality, that number is probably significantly higher.

The main argument posed by anti-gay rhetoric is that it is a lifestyle choice. This is an arrogant viewpoint, because it assumes that just because people are different from the majority in such a fundamental part of themselves they must have made up their mind to be so. It doesn't take that much objective thinking to see through this fallacy. Where in our lives do we get to that fork in the road that forces us to decide whether we'll be attracted to people of the same sex or the opposite sex? There is no choice; people simply are what they are. The only choice involved in homosexuality is whether to be honest about one's true feelings or deny them and try to assimilate to a different life, going against the grain of something inherent.

Unfortunately, too many people simply accept with blind faith what they are taught by others about gay people. They never stop to think about how it must feel to live in a world where everything is geared toward something that they are not. Books, magazines, movies, and TV shows all feature the ideal heterosexual existence. Going against this ideal takes great courage and a conviction to be true to oneself, often against tremendous opposition.

It seems that the energy spent on this topic could be put to much better use elsewhere. People should let others be who they are, as long as they're not hurting anyone else. If it is a religious issue, people should think long and hard about what kind of God they're professing to believe in. Most religions teach that their God is one of compassion, mercy and love. Why, then, would such a God create people that are considered such an abomination? A couple of passages from the Bible are the basis of the belief that gays are so inherently sinful. When it comes down to it, I don't think God cares one way or another who we love, who we're attracted to, or who we sleep with. I think it should just be enough that we love. —

Preemies and Their Struggle

By: Tonya Robinson



Pregnancies are known to last anywhere from 37 to 42 weeks. A premature infant is one who is born before the 37 weeks are completed.

In the last 15 years, the United States has seen a rise in premature births. Close to 12 percent of all births in the United States are preterm. The cause for preterm births is unknown, but there are several identifiable risk factors.

African American women have the highest rate of premature births in the United States. Compared to Caucasians at 8.8 percent, African American women make up 18.9 percent of all premature births in the United States.

There are many risk factors that contribute to premature births ranging from mother's age, education level, nutritional status, alcohol/cigarette abuse and even a stressful lifestyle.

In April 2002, a little girl was born at Evanston Northwestern Hospital at 27 weeks gestation. Her mother, Christian Nwankwo, had life-threatening preeclampsia, which became actual eclampsia and an emergency cesarean section was performed.

Signs of preeclampsia are high

blood pressure, swelling that doesn't go away and large amounts of protein in the urine. Eclampsia comes after the baby has been delivered and the mother develops seizures.

At 27 weeks, an infant's lungs are not developed enough to breathe on his or her own, so a ventilator has to be used. The infant, Chizolum Nwankwo, was on the ventilator for three months.

Another problem facing premature infants is nutrition. "Infants born before 32 weeks do not have the coordination to suck, swallow and breathe at the same time," according to Registered Nurse, Mary O'Connor. These babies are fed through a nasogastric tube until they develop this coordination.

One of Chizolum's primary nurses was Helen Butler. "Chizolum had additional trouble with eating because she had cysts inside her esophagus making it as narrow as a pencil eraser. She had to have the cysts removed so she could eat better," Butler said.

"The nurses played an important role along with prayer and love is how we made it through," said mother Christian Nwankwo, who is also a registered nurse.

Caring for a premature infant is different than caring for a full term infant. One would not hold a preemie to feed and burp him or her in the same manner that one would hold a full term baby. A preemie also has a lot more follow up doctor visits as well as additional health care issues.

They receive cranial ultra sounds to check for bleeding in the brain. They

(Continued on page 54)



Same-Sex Marriage: Right or Wrong?

By: *Kristin Spence*

Chicago's homosexual community is one of the most prominent and active in the United States. As a group, they have cleaned-up many neighborhoods on Chicago's North Side, refurbishing old buildings and setting up commerce in formerly vacant areas. During the summer, there are countless community parades and fairs celebrating the gay community in Chicago.

With all of the positive changes homosexuals have brought to Chicago, it is ironic that they still endure oppression and discrimination on a daily basis.

Currently, the State of Illinois does not legally recognize same sex marriage. This is a huge blow to homosexual residents of the state.

If marriage were simply a metaphorical ceremony with no legal implications, there might not be such a controversy about same sex marriages. Unfortunately, because marriage is a legally binding contract and affects everything from insurance to tax laws to adoption, gays and lesbians in Illinois, and all over the country, face serious injustices.

Our society's view on the meaning of family and our views on what a family should consist of have progressed through the decades just as the face of the American family has changed. Family is about unconditional love, respect and appreciation for the people with whom one shares one's life. Gay men and women are just as capable of the kind of love needed for a healthy family as straight men and women. Yet, many Americans still see homosexual unions as perversions not fit for the same kind of respect and benefits as a heterosexual union.

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich, fiercely condemns discrimination and hate crimes against gays proclaiming, "I think we can do a lot better in Illinois."

Governor Blagojevich also opposes same sex-marriage, which, in itself, is a form of discrimination. This type of contradiction is what has put the Illinois gay community in an uproar in recent months.

Denying gays the right to marry legally means they pay more as "single" filing taxpayers. It puts their potential adoption rights in jeopardy and it denies essential insurance benefits for partners who may not receive them otherwise. With such important factors at stake, Illinois must reconsider its conservative standing on same sex marriage.

The recent Defense of Marriage Act is yet another slap in the face to the gay community. It declares that states have the right to refuse recognition of same sex marriage of their own accord. This means that if a gay couple were to be married in Vermont, where same sex unions are legal, their marriage would not be considered valid in any other state but Vermont. However, a heterosexual couple could be married by an Elvis impersonator in Las Vegas and the marriage would be considered legal throughout the entire country. Where is the constitutionality in such a contradiction?

The absurdity of denying the gay community the right to celebrate marriage as a legal and binding agreement is shameful. As more and more homosexuals begin to embrace their sexuality, it is our government's duty to support them as U.S. citizens. Rather than shunning them, it is time for Illinois to start giving back to these people who have contributed so much to our cities.

Blagojevich is right; we can do a lot better in Illinois. —



Granting Wishes When it Matters Most

By: Jeff Martin

The office is a tiny, cramped space of about six rooms in Lincoln Park Hospital. The reception area, *sans* receptionist, is jammed with computers, boxes, toys and posters from fundraising events. Even the small kitchen area is littered with items that have no place else to go. This is the headquarters of Fairygodmother Foundation.

The foundation is the brainchild of Bonnie Tunick, who gave up practicing law in order to establish a charity in her father's memory after his death from colon cancer. Since she knew the sense of helplessness people feel when faced with the death of a loved one, she wanted to help others in that situation. The Fairygodmother Foundation grants last wishes to poor people with terminal illnesses.

Since the foundation is nonprofit, its area of greatest difficulty is its financial situation.

"Our primary focus is fundraising," said Leah Fox, director of development.

Amanda Dixon, director of volunteer services and special events, concurs. "The biggest push with us is to raise money. We stress that in our publicity campaigns. Rather than say, 'We can help you,' we say, 'Please help us,' because without money we can't grant wishes," Dixon said.

But such undertakings often produce a paradoxical effect. "Many times, after we've done a campaign to get our name out there and raise awareness of our need for funding, we get a slew of calls asking for help with wishes because they

heard of us during our fundraising push," Dixon said.

The foundation is one of two in the country that grants end-of-life wishes to adults, and it is the only one without an age cap; anyone over 18 qualifies. Its average wish recipient is a 40-year-old mother of two battling breast cancer, bankrupted by her illness, who wishes to take her young children to Disney World before she dies. Other common wishes are for computers, or for airline tickets to see family members or attend a family reunion before death. Eighty percent of wishes involve children about to lose a parent. The organization's aim is to provide a bit of happiness to a family on the brink of tragedy.

"We just celebrated our five-year anniversary in September," Dixon said. "That's still pretty young for a charity, but it's grown enough that we now have offices and a small staff."

But the need for volunteers and donations never ends. In five years, the Fairygodmother Foundation has fulfilled more than 300 wishes, but it is a constant struggle to keep funds flowing.

"We're always trying to get donations," Dixon said. "More than anything else, we do that. We're always writing grant proposals and trying to raise awareness of the need for money to help us keep going. Money and airline miles, because we sometimes need to fly people to their wish destination."

For information, or to make a donation, call (773) 388-1160 or e-mail the foundation at info@fairygodmother.org. —



Time to Move on, Time to Move Forward

By: *Puneet Khan*

It has been two years since the September 11 terrorist attacks. Two years since terrorists hijacked the lives of innocent Americans. And two years since the terrorists hijacked a religion that stands for peace.

President Bush can be heard repeatedly saying that the people of Islam are not our enemies, rather are our friends, and peaceful people. But at times it becomes difficult to hold steadfast to his words. Especially when our men and women are losing their lives everyday to fight the faceless enemy, Iraqi children are dying, and innocent people are being held without justification in Guantanamo Bay.

How do you learn to trust and move on with your life when you hear religious leaders such as Franklin Graham call Islam "a demon-led religion."

Regardless, I, along with many other Muslims, have learned to ignore the stares of curiosity, anger, hatred, and pity. We have learned to refrain from turning to our sides when stuck at a traffic light, afraid, that someone will say something, make a face, or just stare.

You learn to ignore the whispers in the checkout counter when a wife discreetly says to her husband, "look, it's one of them." You learn to laugh when a kid sees you in a supermarket and says, "Wow, you eat spaghetti." You just smile, since it's only a kid. You don't pay attention to the astonished faces of people, when they hear you speak without an accent.

I don't understand why people don't view me as an American. Why people don't see that I too, was born and raised here; that an American flag waves outside my house. Why don't people see that I love going to baseball games in the summer, watching fire works on the Fourth of July with my family, and listening to U2?

We've been taught all our lives in school that the American constitution guarantees freedom, justice, and equality for all. But I find these words at times to be a mockery, especially when a room full of people stare because my head is covered with a piece of fabric.

Islamic scholars tell Muslims that we should take this opportunity to educate people about Islam, and who we are. We are told that we can't blame people for their ignorance, and that it is up to us to correct the image that has become soured.

But personally, I'm exhausted at trying to get people to understand. It seems whenever we make progress, something else seems to go wrong.

I don't know about anyone else, but I am tired of my 15 minutes of fame. I just want to continue my life the way it was, as a Muslim, an American Muslim, that is. —

Gay Latinos Struggle To Come Out

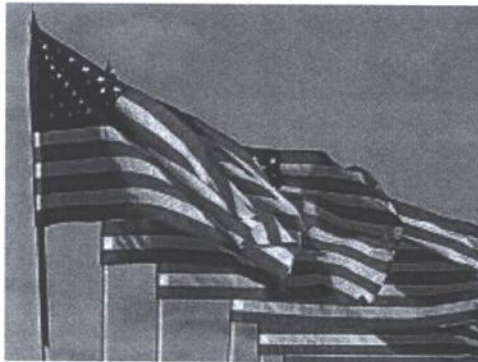
By: Joe Fetcher

Chicago's large Hispanic population is often characterized by their cohesive families and adherence to cultural traditions and beliefs that have been passed down for centuries. However, there is growing concern that some of these long-held beliefs are outdated and repressive to some individuals in the Hispanic community.



In particular, homosexuals are often ostracized in the Hispanic community because of its strong family values, conservative faith, and the element of machismo in the culture.

For a variety of reasons, homosexuality among local Hispanics is not receiving nearly the same level of tolerance as in the culture at large. Even in Chicago, a generally liberal-minded city that is home to a large homosexual population, it seems that for Hispanic males, loyalty to the family unit takes much higher precedence than assimilation into the majority's acceptance of gays. For Hispanic males who are gay, or are confused about their sexual orientation, this condemnation of their behavior can have devastating consequences.



Perhaps the biggest reason that homosexual behavior is forbidden in the Hispanic community is their strict Catholic beliefs. There have been several documented incidents of Hispanic clergy condemning homosexuality in their sermons, and this view is often heavily reinforced within Hispanic families. In 1993 the Chicago Reporter

(Continued on page 56)

Safe Haven at Family Matters

By: Kristin Spence

The North of Howard neighborhood, located in East Rogers Park, is a turbulent, restless area on Chicago's North side. The racial mix along with low employment rates and lack of affordable housing has created a tense environment for the residents of the neighborhood.

A beacon of light in this seemingly dark and desperate scene is the community-based organization, Family Matters. Since opening its doors in 1987, Family Matters has helped strengthen the North of Howard community through after-school programs that involve kids and their families.

"At Family Matters, we work with young people and their families, encouraging the intellectual and emotional growth that fosters leadership in a supportive affirming environment," said Kim DeLong, executive director of Family Matters.

program at Family Matters was the Connections program. As only programs in accredited National School Alliance, Connections seeks to connect families and encourage them to be ac-



positive change. The goal of Family Connections is to aid learning opportunities for kids aged 5-12 that will build leadership skills and support them in enhancing their opportunities.

Rob Fournie, a student teacher at Family Matters in 2002, found his experience with the organization inspiring and rewarding. "The kids at Family Matters grow up in a tough neighborhood with negative influences everywhere. Family Matters serves as a safe haven where they can learn and play in an enriching and stimulating environment," Fournie said.

Family Matters looks to serve the predominately Latino and African-American neighborhood through its core values of leadership, active community participation, acceptance and peaceful conflict resolution.

The first initiated Matters Family Connections program of eight pro-Illinois initiated by National Age Care Family Connections connect in the city and age them tivists for

(Continued on page 57)



“Destroying Evil” or Creating Fear?

By: *Erin Kelley*

I am still afraid to fly because of September 11th. The tragedy that occurred two years ago will always be imprinted in my mind. I may always feel sick to my stomach every time I board a plane. Fear was instilled in many Americans after the two towers fell and terrorism became a well-worn word in our vocabularies.

However, instead of Americans embracing each other during a time of crisis, the opposite happened. People were afraid and turned their fear against their fellow Americans. People began attacking innocent Arab-Americans, just like al-Qaeda attacked us.

According to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, within five months of the September attacks, 600 related hate crimes were reported. In the year following the attacks, Arab-Americans saw a dramatic increase in crime ranging from verbal abuse to murder. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported that hate groups rose by a startling 12 percent in 2001.

How can this surprise us? It is proven that the media plays an influential role in people’s decision making; it is one reason advertising is so successful. From images of American soldiers bombing the city of Baghdad to President Bush telling Americans he will “destroy the Evil,” how are citizens supposed to act? With violent acts against Iraqis being displayed daily across every medium, there is no question this imagery has influence. If hate against the Iraqis is justified by the president, some people living in the U.S. may feel as though it is justified here as well.

William Butler Yeats wrote that history is like a “gyre,” a spiral that will ultimately repeat itself. The genocide of millions of Native Americans in America’s early days would be considered terrorism today. The dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima during World War II was a crime against humanity. The U.S. has sponsored many coups and dictatorships in Latin and South American countries, including the 1973 coup against the government of Chile, which led to mass tortures, rapes, and executions of thousands of people. And today, images of children burned beyond recognition, women shot on the street, and family homes bombed, with family memories scattering the streets of Baghdad, is justified as a conventional aspect of war. This, as well, is terrorism. However, political leaders justify this terrorism. And, it is justified because people are afraid.

With violence so prevalent in the media and political leaders using extreme violence to end regimes and conflicts, it is a natural response for Americans to do the same in the U.S. People learn from example, and watching the news can give a negative image of Arab-Americans. Fear will drive people to do crazy things. However the violence will not end unless the political leaders also end brutality against Middle Eastern countries as well as other nations around the world. People are afraid, but they need a positive image to reassure them, not images of war. —

(Humboldt Park—Continued from page 7)

Partnership's Housing Action Team and present their plans.

"An R4 zoning...allows a builder to erect a three-story building, typical condo construction," Villagrana said, but "by changing the zoning to an R3, the builder is limited to what amounts to a single-family home."

If the community sees that it complies with the area's single-family homes zoning the organization approves it and the plans go to the alderman for further review.

The Humboldt Park Empowerment Partnership's success also can be seen in the area's landscape. New Puerto Rican-owned businesses and restaurants are opening up; Galeria Tinta Roja, a Puerto Rican museum, has already held its first exhibit and there's now a Paseo Boricua Walk of Fame, honoring prominent Puerto Rican musicians.

Despite such accomplishments and the fact that the efforts of Alderman Ocasio and community organizations have slowed down the process of gentrification in Humboldt Park, many residents remain skeptical.

Norma Salazar and Iran Rivera had lived in Humboldt Park since arriving from Puerto Rico many years ago, but as the rent went up from \$150 to \$400 to \$900 they finally decided to move.

"The yuppies are coming," Rivera said, "white people lived here a long time ago but moved when we got here, now they want it back."

"You see how they're fixing the park," said Salazar, vigorously pointing to the direction of the park, "they're doing it for white people."

The residents of Humboldt Park see the improvements going on but don't believe they're being done for them. They see the changes as signs of further gentrification, and this greatly frustrates Salgado who does so much to dispel such thinking.

"There's a negative stigma about the community instilled in its residents," said Salgado, there's "a lot of positives happening here but the people don't believe it." But he knows their skepticism is understandable since it is rooted in history.

"The community rallied around [the redevelopment plan] ten years ago," Salgado said, but interest was lost as different political groups since the 1970s have tried to gain favor among Humboldt Park residents by making promises and never keeping them, Veronica Ocasio said.

Speculators love that the people are so skeptical, said Veronica Ocasio, they want the current residents to leave because they know what the area is worth.

People like Ocasio and Salgado are now working to regain the people's trust and keep them in the neighborhood. They now plan to go door-to-door getting their message out and do whatever else they can. To make the people feel secure in their own neighborhood, Veronica Ocasio said, "[we have to] debunk past trends of letting our people down." —



(A Place To Call Home—Continued from page 11)

AIDS to be involved with a case manager, who monitors the medical, personal, and financial needs and progress of the client. Individual Living is designed for people on a minimal needs basis; people who are capable of taking their medication regularly, and partaking in daily activities with little to no immediate assistance. The Family Support Program, which requires the head of the household to have HIV/AIDS, also mandates this resident to create a 'Plan for Progress,' which focuses the HIV client to assess his or her strengths, and make goals for the future. Chicago House and Social Service Agency members then work closely with the client to help him or her reach the set goals.

Two and a half years ago, the Family Support Program initiated a tutoring plan for the children living in the building. Andrea Tashiro, the program director specializing in tutoring, hopes that the children will learn other tools besides those related to studying. "We want the children to learn how to speak their frustrations, rather than hide," Tashiro said, "We are hoping they can improve some of the skills they may have missed, when they weren't in a stable living environment."

While it is beneficial to know the outcomes of this tutoring program, success is difficult to measure when it involves such a multi-faceted approach. Tashiro believes that in order to prove the effectiveness of the tutoring program, the social workers have to name the improvements.

"You can't put a percentage on interpersonal relationships that are developing between the children and their tutors, which is something we didn't consider as a possibility, but are seeing many benefits of," Tashiro said.

Andrew, one of Gloria's three children participating in the tutoring program, has made measurable progress. His grades

have been improving consistently, and he has been student of the month at his school. This year, he is participating in two school orchestrated sports, football and basketball, as well as becoming the student council vice president of his fifth grade class. As an 11-year-old, the benefits of living in the Family Support Program are great. He has a place to study with supervised help, a basketball court and playground right in his backyard, and participates in planned events including trips to the Field Museum, water parks, and other activities.

While watching TV with his mom in their apartment, Andrew said, "I'm glad we moved here. Its much more comfortable, and I have my own bed. And there is no shooting on the block, so I feel safer."

Gloria has witnessed all three of her boys participating in the tutoring program improve. Though education has always been important to her, and her boys have always been well behaved, Gloria said, "[Tutoring] has been helpful. They all have made a decent improvement."

As for herself, Gloria intends to go back to school to get her GED. While she must always put her health first so she can care for her children, continuing her education is a major aspect of her plan for progress. Having the comfort of residential security, as well as the opportunity to work with a case manager, are two benefits Gloria has come to appreciate from her stay at Chicago House. —



(Vote—Continued from page 15)

communities.

The clerk's office also assists the Korean-American group with its direct-mail campaigns. The group provides the clerk's office with a list of Korean surnames, and in-turn, the clerk's office supplies the organization with the addresses of Korean households. This allows the group to do targeted mailings printed in both Korean and English.



Voters at the polls on election day

But perhaps the most ambitious voter registration campaign undertaken by a single constituency group is the one conducted by the Rainbow/Push Coalition.

Theirs is a year-round campaign with a goal of 100,000 newly registered African-American voters in Illinois by October 2004. Like the Korean American Resource and Cultural Center, the group, founded by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, utilizes volunteer deputy registrars to register new voters and concentrates their efforts on high-volume areas such as transit stops, grocery and retail stores and African-American Churches with large congregations.

But registering voters is only half the battle according to Alice Tregay, Voter Registration and Education Coordinator for Rainbow/Push. "We do whatever it takes to make sure people get to the polls on Election Day," said Tregay, "we call everyone we register to remind them to get out and vote."

Rainbow/Push's Get-Out-the-Vote campaign also includes driving those people with no other means of transportation to polling places, and calling parents whose kids are away at college to remind them to have their children mail-in their absentee ballots.

The voter outreach efforts undertaken by government agencies and community based organizations have certainly brought more citizens into the electoral process and have helped to give voice to those who may have been overlooked in the past.

However, something that cannot be measured as easily as the number of voters is the value some individuals place on their right to vote.

Carmen Sadovi, 64, a Rogers Park resident, arrived from Mexico in 1957. Because her status was that of "permanent resident," Sadovi never voted in an election until after she became a citizen in 1998.

When she finally achieved the right to vote after living in the United States for 41 years, Sadovi said, "I was thrilled, it gave me a sense of belonging, a sense of equality...to know that I have the same rights as everyone else, it's a good, good feeling." —

(Ramadan—Continued from page 19)

events, it has made Muslims more aware of their surroundings, and has encouraged many to share the month with non-Muslims.

"I think we have become more aware of our surroundings, we have a stronger display, and a sense of standard," she explained. "We want to show that although we have been through a lot we are still strong, and we want to share this feeling and practice with everyone."

For some non-Muslims, like Blanca Macias, 22, business owner, Ramadan used to be just another holiday you heard about. "I never quite realized how important it was to Muslims," she said. "I believe it is quite similar to our Lent, it brings Muslims closer to religion, and shifts the focus away from material goods."

Dogar explained that although there are some Muslims that are still apprehensive to practice the celebrations of

Ramadan openly, many have become stronger in their practices. He explained that the local non-Muslim community has been supportive of the mosque, which lies between a residential area and a public high school.

"Lots of people come, and when they see us, they are surprised to learn that Muslims are peaceful people," he said.

The month of Ramadan continues to hold a sacred meaning for Muslims. Even within the U.S. today, it remains to be a month where all material pleasure is put aside, and complete devotion is given to Allah (God).

As Muslims around the country break their fast, the excitement can be heard in the air throughout the month of Ramadan. Children and teenagers are thrilled to use the moment to socialize, and adults share their stories, all before the nightly taraweeh prayer (prayer after the last of the five daily prayers), when they all congregate, face Mecca and pray to Allah. —

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(Color of Love—Continued from page 12)

Jerome Edwards is a 21-year-old African-American male that was tormented and teased for his dating preferences.

"I was called Oreo, wannabe, ghostbuster, and wigger because I dated mostly white women," said Edwards, "The sad part about it is that these cruel words came from, not only white people, but also my black peers. To them, I wasn't black because I dated someone out of my race."

Marlene Armandariz is a 25-year-old Hispanic female who is very annoyed with opposition toward interracial dating.

"I think it's natural," said Armandariz. "Everyone shouldn't be against interracial dating because we all can learn great things about other cultures by dating in this manner. We as society should be more open minded."

"Whatever the cause, people are cheating themselves out of great relationships with great people because of their views against interracial dating," said Armandariz, "love is love, no matter what color it is." —

(Forcing Change—Continued from page 21)
and businesses are going in.

"I do hate to see the old businesses suffer because of the redeveloping of Wicker Park, but right now the new businesses are coexisting with the old businesses. Nothing is replacing anything, the Potbelly's is going into a vacant area. I guess it is just a question if the old businesses can survive." Weiner said.

The Hispanic Housing Development Corporation is an organization designed to help the Latino community with the current redevelopment in the Wicker Park area. According to Development Assistant Maria Lopez, "We're just trying to help all the families that are relocated from their houses. Many people are moving into West Town because it's the new 'hip' area to live. Unfortunately, families are forced to move out." The Hispanic Housing Development Corporation is just one of many organizations belonging to Chicago Rehab Network, a group that fights to build more affordable housing.

"There are about 40 organizations, and we're present in over 60 neighborhoods

of Chicago. As the population in Chicago is rising, the affordable and rental housing is decreasing. We are specifically aimed at helping out the Hispanic community in Chicago," Lopez said.

Wicker Park has been known for being a large community of artists who want to preserve the community. Weiner remembers when people were protesting MTV's *The Real World*, which was being filmed in the heart of Wicker Park, on the corner of Milwaukee, Damen and North Avenues. "People were throwing paint on their doors and protesting in front of their house," Weiner said. Just a half a year later, upscale shopping went in one mile from the *Real World* house; the shopping strip includes Express, Banana Republic, Gap, and Victoria's Secret.

One organization responsible for the relocation of the Latino community in Wicker Park is the Chicago Housing Authority, whose plan is to transform current neighborhoods by incorporating mixed-income housing. Under this plan, all 25,000 leaseholders of low-income housing

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will be asked to relocate to new areas of the city, and often, residents do not get to choose the area to which they are relocated. The CHA is tearing down low-income high-rises in order to put up new housing. Weiner noted that Wicker Park is putting up a lot of new condos, which most low-income families cannot afford.

"It's sad to see a lot of these businesses go under," Luckey said. "I know my rent goes up every year and soon I will have to move to a different area. Fortunately, I don't have the same problems relocating as the Hispanic community does." —

Wicker Park

The Chicago Housing Authority is responsible for some of the drastic changes within Chicago's neighborhoods. The CHA's mission is to end the segregating of improvised citizens by eliminating public housing and integrating all classes and races into one neighborhood. The agency tries to recognize Chicago's diversity and ethnicity and wants to mix all races and incomes together. Currently it is rehabilitating approximately 25,000 apartments for families and senior citizens.

Under the direction of Mayor Richard Daley and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the CHA's goal for transformation is to renew the physical appearance and structure of public housing, encourage independence of public housing residents, reform the administration of the CHA. The transformation takes place on the same ground. One-third of the land goes back to public housing, one-third goes to affordable housing and the rest is for more expensive housing. This ensures that there is a mixture of income and race in a neighborhood. The previous residents are relocated to another area to make room for the middle and upper income housing.

Cabrini Green, a public housing developed located on the city's near west side, has recently gone through such changes. According to the CHA, 650 units will be constructed on the Cabrini Green site. Only 195 of those units are going to be constructed for public housing. Some 325 units will go to market rate homes, homes that cost as much as a half a million dollars. The left-over Cabrini Green residents are forced to move to another area.

For more information on Chicago Housing Authority, visit www.thecha.org. —

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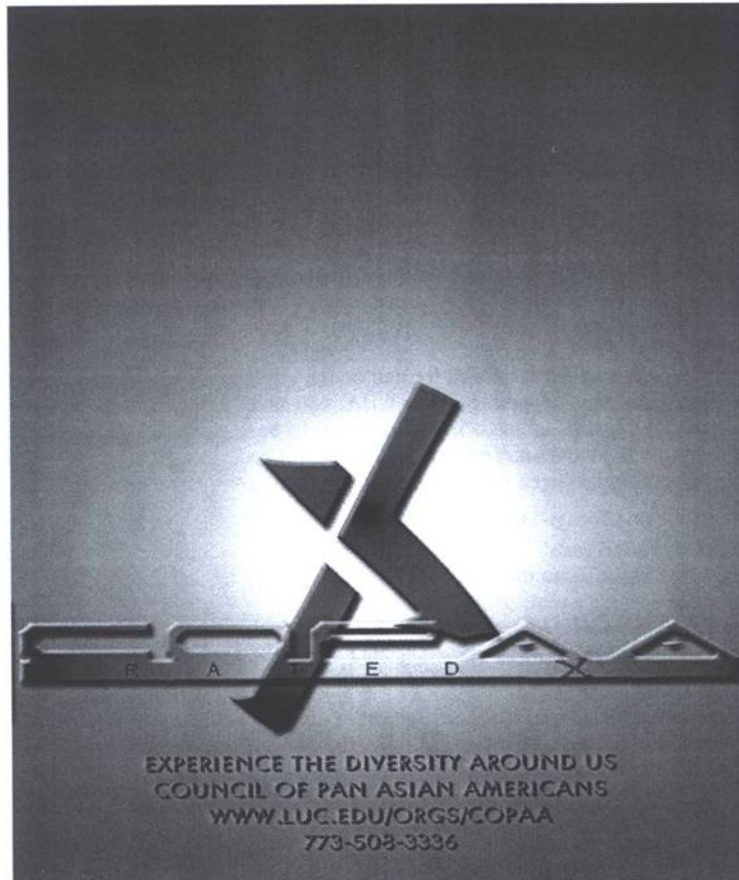
(Literacy Center—Continued from page 24)

first things we teach them is how to write their address and how to tell people where they live. We have English as a Second Language books that teach people how to go to the grocery store, how to use the bus, how to compare prices, all really important skills.”

Many of the students at the center are also professionals that are using the center to help prepare them for the TOEFL, the English as a Foreign Language test given to international residents living in the United States or Canada. Essner said that in the time she has tutored there, she has seen doctors, maids, electricians and other professionals, as well as parents trying to teach their young children how to speak English.

“It’s scary to come live in a country where you don’t speak the language. I think it’s important for us to volunteer there to give them a good impression of Americans, because we want to help them speak the language,” Essner said.

The Loyola Chicago Literacy Center is located at 6576 N. Sheridan Rd. For more information please call (773) 508-2330 or visit the Web site at www.luc.edu/literacy/. —



Mosaic 50

(Pregnancy—Continued from page 25)

“Most of the girls that I mentor on a daily basis are black, and unfortunately most of them come from homes that are not stable enough to support a pregnant teen. That’s why I feel it is so important for me to be a part of this. I want to be able to help them as much as possible,” she said.

Another beneficiary of the Teen Reach program is Ta’Necia Robertson, 16 year-old African-American mother. She believes that this program is the reason she is still in school.

“After I had my baby, I wanted to drop out of school,” she said. “But talking to a lot of people during our group talks, I realized the importance of getting an education. I know that it will be hard, but I want to do the best thing for me and my son.”

Although teen pregnancy in the African-American community is declining, going down an estimated 42 percent between 1991 and 2002 according to teenpregnancy.org, it is still a major issue in the community that needs to be addressed.

“I feel that most people get too excited when they hear that teen pregnancy in our community is declining,” said Joyce Harrison, a case worker and youth project coordinator for the Howard Area Community Center. “People hear all the time about how it’s declining, but for me, every day, I see more and more pregnant teens struggling about what to do next.”

Lisa, another African-American teen mother, said she struggled with thoughts of abortion and suicide when she learned that she was pregnant.

“I was very afraid,” said Lisa, who asked that her identity be protected. “I was afraid about what people would think, about what my mother would say, and about where

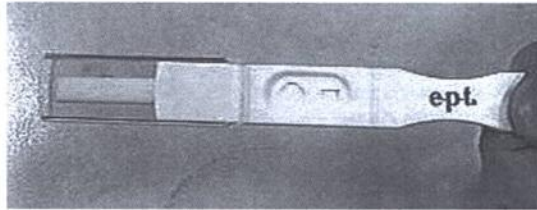
I would live. I didn’t have any money and my family didn’t either.”

Lisa finally found support with the Howard Area Community Center.

“I was able to talk to someone anytime I wanted and they helped me decide that I wanted to keep my baby. And when I am going through a tough time trying to raise my baby, they help me too.”

Teen mothers living in African-American communities need a lot of assistance to help them through such a difficult time and it’s programs like Teen Reach and the youth services offered through the Howard Area Community Center that make life a little easier for these girls. These programs give them a voice and let them know that someone cares.

“Regardless of statistics, teen preg-



nancy to me is still a major problem in the black community,” said Harrison. “If one year we had 100 pregnant teens, and the next we went down to 50, that would be great. But we still have to worry about those 50 that are pregnant. The prevention of teen pregnancy is in great progress, but we still have a long way to go.” —



(No Child Left Behind—Continued from page 31)

“When the federal and state governments start to provide additional and appropriate funding for the No Child Left Behind mandate then I think we will see some changes,” said Carmen Sanchez, principal of Irving Park Middle School. Duncan, too, feels that it is not the goals of the Act that are the problem but the limited resources the government is offering to implement the

goals.

Meanwhile, Barnes will begin her class speaking in both Spanish and English, while her students follow along in the book they share with their neighbor. “Frustration can sometimes be overwhelming but it is important to not let these kids see that. Educators must stay positive so their students remain excited about learning, if the students aren’t excited then we are all lost.” —

Recent Statistics for Chicago Public Schools

Student Racial Breakdown (Sept 2002)

Total Students: 387,495

- 50.9% African- American students
- 36.4% Latino students
- 9.2% White students
- 3.3% Asian/Pacific Islander students
- 0.2% Native American students

Economic and Ethnic Breakdown

- 85.3% of students come from low income families
- 14.3% students are limited English-proficient

Attendance Rates

- 93.1% attendance in elementary schools
- 86.5% attendance in high schools
- 92.1% city wide attendance

Student Teacher Ratio

- 22.6 students: 1 teacher in elementary schools
- 20.0 students: 1 teacher in high schools

Schools

Elementary Schools

- 421 traditional elementary schools
- 35 magnet schools
- 14 special schools
- 23 middle schools

Secondary Schools

- 70 general/technical/academic preparatory
- 13 special schools
- 5 magnet schools
- 7 vocational schools

Source: Chicago Public Schools Website

(Cabbies—Continued from page 23)

ism. North Side auto body shop owner, Osman (prefers not to have last name mentioned) estimates this figure to be at or above 1,500 cabs.

Because airline, hotel and restaurant businesses are slow, Osman believes that the problem has trickled down to the cab drivers and auto body shops that repair the cabs. Nasir Khan, owner of King Auto on 1025 W. Monroe, agrees with this theory.

"The cab drivers don't have the money to spend to repair the cabs as much as they used to, so now they only come when it's for something major. Before they took more preventative measures," Khan said.

A lack of work for cab drivers has left Khan with the difficulty of keeping mechanics employed at King Auto. Two years ago he had 11 employees, he is currently down to seven. "Just like the other shops, I had to let some people go," he said.

Andreas Maris, an auto parts technician, deals with shops such as King Auto. He has also observed the lack of business for Muslim shop owners.

"Many of the Muslims who worked in the cab business were being deported after September 11th because they did not have Green Cards and were illegal [immigrants]," Maris said.

Deportation based on the country of origin of certain ethnic groups brings into play another issue Muslim cab drivers face: racial profiling.

Racial bigotry and discrimination is also on the rise. Loyola University Chicago student Dimitrios Koromvokis witnessed one such occurrence first hand. "Me and two of my friends were getting in a cab after a party, and this drunk guy came up to the window and called our driver 'Bin Laden' lover," Koromvokis said.

"It was pretty bad. The worst part was that the man was not an Arab or Pakistani, but Indian. People misjudge without

even knowing what they're making fun of," he said.

Ali, having never

experienced such discrimination, said, "It has happened, I am sure. Many times racial profiling happens because the cab drivers can't understand the exact meaning of what the person is telling them."

Often there is confusion in the translation or between customs and traditions.

"Humor has changed also [since September 11th and the war in Iraq], if you don't understand the humor, you're going to have a problem," Ali said.

More disconcerting to Muslim-owned auto businesses are the effects of the lagging economy.

Nadim (prefers to not have last name mentioned), a mechanic on the North Side of Chicago, supports his family on the income earned from repairing both cabs and other automobiles.

Nadim's finances were enough to pay for his family's needs before September 11th, he even had some extra money to put away for savings. Now, with the change in the number of cabs entering the shop, saving has become almost impossible.

Ali believes that after the 2004 election, travel will increase because "scare tactics" used by George W. Bush will no longer be used.

Ali said, "If Bush wins, he will no longer need to use obnoxious threats to keep the people [dependant on him]. He will have a guaranteed four years in office. If the Democrats come into office, they will try to make travel more stable for the benefit of the economy, things will normalize pretty fast." —



(Premies—Continued from page 37)

have frequent eye exams to check for vision problems. Some vision problems are the result of being born prematurely and others are caused by the amount of oxygen required to sustain life.

Premature infants also receive visits from physical therapists and occupational therapists to monitor development of muscle tone and motor skills. "In my experience, African American preemies tend to be tenser than Caucasian preemies," said Ingrid Masterton, a physical therapist.

A big part in reducing the number of premature births, especially in the African American population, is to increase awareness. To increase the population's knowledge about the warning signs of premature labor will likely decrease the chance of having a premature infant. A significant amount of African American women do not receive prenatal care and therefore are not aware of the warning signs for having a preterm infant.

"We were not expecting her so

soon. We thought we had two more months and had not even finished her room yet," said Theresa Smith (she asked that her real name not be used), who gave birth to a baby at 32 weeks.

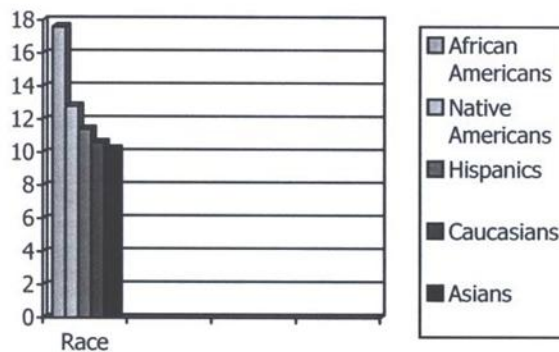
The March of Dimes recently launched a campaign on the awareness of premature labor and infants. Every year it hosts WalkAmerica to raise money to help save babies. The money raised goes to education to help women have healthy babies, research to try and find the cause of prematurity, to help health care providers identify women at risk and help for pregnant women with questions and concerns.

Premature birth is a bigger problem than most people think; it is the leading cause of newborn deaths in the United States. This is why it is important for women to be aware of the problem.

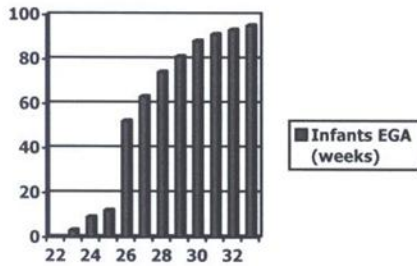
If women are familiar with the risk factors for having a preemie and know the warning signs of premature labor, they can seek medical attention before the baby is

(Continued on page 55)

Cultural Differences In Prematurity



Survival By Gestational Age



Premature Birth: The Tragic Toll



(Continued from page 54)

born prematurely.

A hospital stay for a full-term newborn costs about \$465 a day, but the stay for a premature infant costs \$2,000 a day just for a bed on the unit. A premature infant will end up in the neonatal intensive care unit for some time and will have several follow up visits that drive costs even higher.

The rate of preterm births has not changed in over 40 years. The March of Dimes campaign hopes to accomplish a lower rate of premature births soon. "The March of Dimes has been working to save infants for years, but this campaign is going to help save thousands more," said Registered Nurse, Xiomara Ortiz. —



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(Gay Latinos Struggle—Continued from page 41)

did a study on the opinions of Hispanic clergy on the matter. Of 60 churches surveyed, 10 said they do not even welcome homosexuals in their worship.

"Some Hispanics are very close-minded about sexuality. Some say sex is only meant for reproduction," said the Rev. Juan A. Gutierrez, pastor of Iglesia Bautista Misionera at 6715 S. Hamlin Ave.

Strict religious beliefs are strongly reinforced in tight-knit Hispanic households. "Being openly gay in a Hispanic home means being ostracized by your family and friends, because men are expected to be the financial and emotional rock of the family," said Julian Holquin, 18, a Loyola University Chicago student who grew up in a Mexican American family.

Another reason for the intense opposition to homosexuality in the Hispanic community is the element of machismo in the culture. Loyola freshman Guillermo Vallejo, 18, a first generation Cuban immigrant, is quick to point this out. "Hispanic boys are taught three things: you don't cry, you don't complain, and you can't be gay," Vallejo said. "The issue of machismo makes straight Hispanic men hate those who are gay, and makes gay Hispanic men keep their mouths shut."

These attitudes can have disastrous implications for homosexual Hispanic males. When faced with the choice of hiding their sexuality or being disowned by their families, many gay Hispanics choose

the former and decide to marry.

Carlos, a local Mexican immigrant who asked not to have his name and other information revealed, works as a host at a downtown Chicago restaurant. His family and friends are not aware that he is gay, and he is very frightened about what they would do if they found out. At the restaurant where Carlos works, he points out that about half of the male wait staff is openly gay. Even so, Carlos remains secretive about his sexual orientation.

"There are about ten other Mexican workers at the restaurant," said Carlos, "And they don't talk to me much because I

am not as macho as them."

The repression of homosexuality in the culture has very serious consequences. The incidence of AIDS cases is significantly higher among Hispanics than among whites, and Hispanic men do not test themselves for the disease as much, furthering its spread.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Hispanics are four times more likely than whites to contract AIDS. Also, the negative attitude toward homosexuality can lead to psychological problems for gay Hispanic men.

Their decision to be open about their sexuality or hide it is a double-edged sword. They must either live a life as an outcast or live a lie. Despite the tireless work of activists trying to educate the Hispanic community, much more progress needs to be made to ease this problem. —



(Safe Haven—Continued from page 42)

“So many of our kids are surrounded by pressures of gangs, drugs, violence. We want to make sure they know they have other, much more productive and positive options in front of them,” DeLong said.

Family Matters works closely with the students of Gale Academy, facilitating tutoring programs and connecting with parents. “Family Matters is an invaluable part of our neighborhood. I know my kids have a future because of it,” said parent Denise James.

After fifteen successful years of partnership with the North of Howard community, it is quite clear that Family Matters is providing hope and opportunity to kids and teens that find little in their day-to-day lives.

“At Family Matters we do our best to instill good values on not only the kids but also the parents. We want to make sure that the progress they make here does not stop when they leave our center,” said DeLong. “Family is the most important tie we have and therefore should be the most positive and uplifting.” —

(Hellenic Student Association—Continued from page 33)

from the speaker. It’s nice to see that people like me are learning about the culture, and how important it is now, not only in the past, in helping to make a difference.”

Referring to the speech, Diamantakos said, “It’s really beneficial for us to preserve our culture, and the only way to do that is to preserve our past. There would be nothing left to hold on to or Greeks in the present would lose their identity, which is why it is important for us to be educated about our past.”

Celebrating the past through action in the present is a common theme in the Hellenic Student Association. “Our visits to Hollywood House provide us with a lot of inspiration, where we came from, where we’re going to go as people,” Tsistopoulos said. “They may not be our grandparents, but they are someone else’s.”

“Bringing that to Loyola and getting together with the other Hellenic clubs at other universities in the Chicagoland area is very powerful, you can get a lot accomplished,” Tsistopoulos said. —



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