

Artistic beauty thrills beholders

Chicago civic program offers creative freedom to urban youth

On State Street in Chicago, the fine art showroom in Marshall Fields sells works by such popular modern artists as Alvar, Vasserely and King. The oils, watercolors and even limited-edition lithographs sell for thousands of dollars. A knowledgeable sales staff specializes in helping shoppers select the perfect piece to display over a mantel or in the foyer. Eight floors below, directly across the street, hundreds of artists work in one of the city's largest studios, Gallery 37. They paint, sculpt and weave under tents set up for summer.

MELISSA
MEGLIOLA
Columnist



Although the work created outside will never hang in the exclusive upstairs showroom, Gallery 37 is gaining notice as a haven for some of the most promising talent in the city. Diligent and focused, but still available to talk with curious onlookers, the artists are remarkable not only for their youth. Most are under 18.

Administered by the city's Department of Cultural Affairs, Gallery 37 is Chicago's attempt to mix art with cultural and civic education. Since its creation four years ago, the project has employed over 2,700 urban high school students. The artists are employed by the city, which in return keeps their work for exhibit or sale. Before being hired, the students must interview for the position, submit a portfolio of their work and pass an initial test of artistic talent. Soon after, artists from around the world help them perfect their crafts.

I stumbled onto Gallery 37 this summer while shopping on State Street. The walled-in gallery takes up the same city block that in the winter houses an ice skating rink.

Inside, the wall serves as an easel for students painting abstract visions of the city, colorful landscapes and varied cultural views of urban life. Large tents cover the various studios that make up the Gallery. Under one tent, artists work to give new lives to well worn furniture and drab park benches. Another tent houses mosaic tile sculptors, and yet another belongs to jewelry-makers. The rhythmic sounds from 15 bongo drummers isolate the Gallery from the normal sounds of the Loop. Off in a corner, a jazz band rehearses.

Everyone is consumed with the work at hand - I seem to be the only one who considers the gallery's location in the heart of

Chicago's financial and shopping districts unusual. Resident artists work on their current projects, some while listening to radios, others while

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talking among themselves. A young black woman creates a shadow box titled "The World According to Woman," depicting her African-American heritage. Her heavily cultural style is marked with maturity and depth beyond that of the stereotypical teenager.

Meanwhile, another painter works on a vivid skyline scene commissioned to hang in one of Chicago's many skyscrapers. One of the original student artists, he now studies art at a college in Columbus, Ohio.

Despite feeling overwhelmed and slightly intimidated by all the activity around me, I venture into the outreach tent sponsored by Art Resources in Teaching (ART). ART was founded to provide art education for students attending under-resourced schools. At a picnic table, two young boys learn to make ink blocks. A young teacher promises to help me as soon as she finishes instructing them. Although I had not intended to participate, I soon sit at the next table, reaching for my own piece of paper. Satisfied with his work, one of the boys rushes over to show me his masterpiece, pointing with pride to his carefully-drawn lightening bolt. He soon runs off to show it to his mother, who appears to be about 20 years old.

After finishing my block, I inspect the Chicago Wish Line, a public sculpture intended "to connect the wishes and dreams of Chicagoans and visitors to the city." Visitors to the Gallery are invited to draw a wish on plain white paper using colorful markers. Pictures of wishes hang like clothes on a line, placed there by artists of all ages. One sketch is of a million dollars, another of a small green pup tent, a third of an easel with the words "work should be art".

The City of Chicago boasts that Gallery 37 provides an artistic outlet inside the Loop and a cultural haven for Chicagoans. It has won numerous local, national and even international awards for its innovation and execution. But, for the artists of the Gallery and the children it exposes to art, the summer tents are more than the symbol of a successful civic project. Gallery 37 proves that when you give someone a chance, they really can succeed.

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EDITORIAL

TAKE A STAND IN HAITI

Crisis warrants decision to send in military

The Clinton administration's decision to send troops to settle the political turmoil in Haiti ends months of inexcusable waffling on the issue. The dangerous instability of the Haitian government and the intractability of dictator Gen. Raoul Cedras demands military action on the part of the United States and other countries of the hemisphere.

This intervention should take on the goal of establishing democracy, stability and peace in Haiti. The country's proximity to the United States creates a potential threat American security, and the risk of a hostile government endangering U.S. interests justifies concern and action.

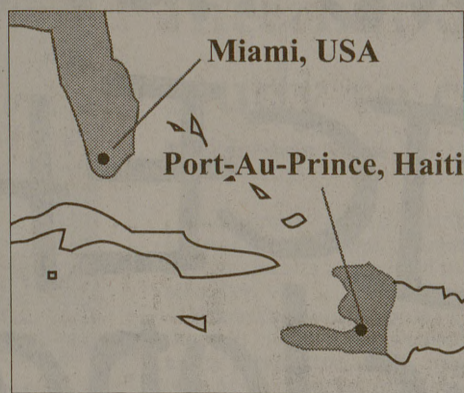
The long-held U.S. policy that opposed the military junta governing Haiti, while refusing to admit Haitian refugees into the United States, could not provide a means of solving the crisis. After months of economic embargo, failed diplomatic negotiations and fluctuating immigration policies for immigration into the United States from Haiti, the American government has made no progress toward restoring the democratically elected president Jean-

Bertrand Aristide.

The United States is not prepared to open its borders and resettle the political and economic refugees who are fleeing Haiti by the thousands. The options have been reduced to a choice between military action and complete inaction. Finally, the president has made a choice.

Military intervention in Haiti cannot succeed if the United States continues its past hesitance to act. The effort needs the full support of the president, Congress and people. Regardless of controversy, this move appears to be the only means available to rectify the security and human rights problems caused by Cedras and his supporters.

Before troops land in Haiti, Washington must resolve to use whatever force and resources that are necessary to remove the military junta running the country and help install a new, working government. If the United States is not prepared to make such a major commitment, then it should remove itself from the negotiations and recognize the current dictators as Haiti's rulers.



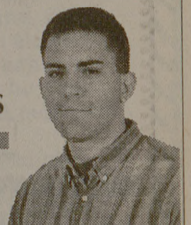
Health care plan loses political war

America needs medical reform despite lack of public interest

Whether through basic sanitation or advanced laser surgery, daily life depends on some form of health care; it's a need shared by every human. I voted for Bill Clinton because he promised to sponsor legislation that would ensure access to health care for every citizen. Now, political selfishness and public ignorance have perverted that health care plan into a typical mess of red tape that won't accomplish a damn thing.

JAY
ROBBINS

Opinion
editor



The Congress' various denizens, more interested in their reelection than in accomplishing goals or preserving ideals, have come up with a long list of "alternative" plans that appeal to opinion polls rather than logic. Every interest group from anti-abortion rights activists to labor unions and small businesses to the elderly beneficiaries of Medicare has made some kind of statement, demand or advertisement on the issue. We're all so afraid of potential dangers in a health care plan that we have forgotten why anyone ever proposed it.

Why would anyone create such a monster? Because we need it.

The exponential advancements in medicine during the last 50 years carry a very high price. Almost no one in this country can afford the expense of a serious accident or critical illness. Even medical insurance policies have become so expensive that 40 million men, women and children don't have coverage. Does that mean that they should go die when they get sick? Or bankrupt themselves and their families?

Who can help the teenage girl and her boyfriend when their baby is born 6 weeks premature?

What about providing the expensive vaccinations that keep dozens of diseases from wreaking the same horror as AIDS?

Government exists to do for the people what they can't do for themselves. Eons ago, groups of people worked together to hunt and store food, to build complicated structures, to defend themselves from nature and other humans and to share the difficulties of survival. Government is the tool for organizing that cooperation.

Today, our collective lives are far more complex than just managing grain stores and mending rope bridges. The U.S. government negotiates everything from international boundaries to freedom of speech to interest rates. Nor did it swindle or usurp any of its powers - we gave our government every one of its obligations and responsibilities.

"Government" is a collective effort to solve group problems that are too vast for individuals to handle. The need to reform the process of getting medical treatment definitely falls under this heading.

Adequate health care is beyond the reach of millions. It's not enough to say free clinics and public hospitals provide care for those who can't afford it. Preventive medicine and early treatment, which catch many health problems while they're still minor, is not available in an overcrowded emergency room where a single mother takes her son after he cries from a stomachache for the fourth day in a row. The year between trips of the free mobile mammogram unit is more than enough time for a woman in a rural town to develop breast cancer and die. The school nurse might not notice that the little fat boy displays other symptoms of diabetes.

Yet, at least according to public outcry, more people are concerned over their access to "assault weapons" than are worried about the availability of medical treatment.

Until the American public clearly states that it wants health care reformed, the government will continue its ineffective meddling. It doesn't matter which health-care plan is chosen, or who gets the credit for writing it.

What does matter are the people in this country who suffer from lack of medical care. And ending that tragedy.

Jay Robbins is a senior English and political science major

MAIL CALL

Clinton disgraces office; Republicans' criticisms valid

Contrary to Matt Murphy's Aug. 31 opinion, I believe that the president has brought disgrace to the office and the country and warrants everything the College Republicans have to throw at him. Secondly, to say that the College Republicans dishonor those who sacrificed their lives for this country, when they are criticizing a draft dodger is absurd. Third, considering that the Corps has produced more Commissioned Officers, outside of service academies, than any other institution, no institution with that kind of record can EVER be considered unpatriotic. Fourth, perhaps Mr. Murphy would like everyone to stop printing shirts and derogatory material about t.u., after all, we wouldn't want Texas A&M to be portrayed as disrespectful towards another Texas institution, now would we?

Hwa Ho
Class of '95

Public drunkenness laws designed to protect others

In response to Michael Landauer's opinion piece in the August 31 edition of The Battalion: Yes, we are big kids now. Many college students are just big, overgrown adolescents. I don't believe that alcohol should be banned. But if a person can't drink responsibly, he shouldn't drink. Public drunkenness is not responsible behavior.

Public drunkenness and nuisance laws were designed to protect innocent bystanders as well as intoxicated people.

I don't know about Landauer, but if I'm out on a date, I don't want to have to step over a drunk individual lying in a parking lot. Nor do I want to worry about getting into a fist fight with some drunk "party animal" who is out sowing his wild oats.

I am not a goody-two-shoes or a bible thumper. I have certainly done my share of partying, and I was lucky to have survived! In retrospect I realize what a waste of time it was. Life is just too short.

I hope everyone's parents taught them that there are boundaries within which each of us must live.

This is a free country.

People should be allowed to purchase alcohol and get plastered if they want to, but only in the privacy of their own home. When you

come out drunk in public, you are infringing upon my rights as a citizen!

Landauer was very lucky at the U2 concert. I'm sure that bouncing down five rows of seats caused quite a disturbance for the people around him!

I can assure you that a night in jail would have been much worse than going to school the next day with a hangover. It might also have taught him a valuable lesson which, as evidenced by his column, he didn't learn.

Most college students are away from home for the first time. They tend to go a little crazy at first. That's part of growing up, but only a small part.

College is a place to progress, not regress. It's time to prepare for the real world. Study, make friends, have a little fun, and most importantly, enjoy and respect the rich traditions that make this university great.

Steven C. Dowell
Class of '96

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor and will print as many as space allows. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy.

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