

PROTOTYPE

CityBeat

Cincinnati

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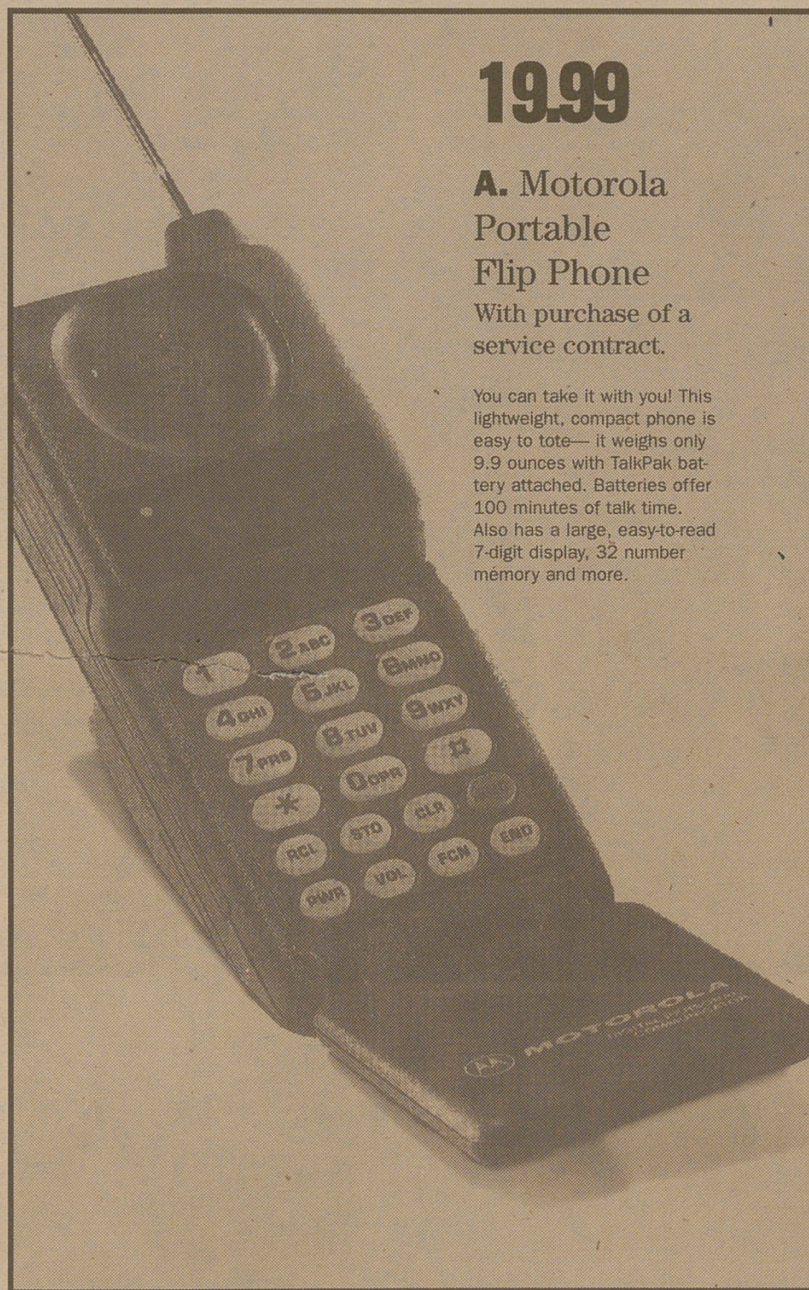
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Cincinnati CityBeat

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Seeing the idea develop: In discussing what to photograph for this week's cover, it was clear we would use glasses. After all, news reporter Nancy Firor's cover story focuses on the city's new vision for downtown. Currently, a *Downtown Cincinnati Inc.* committee is working on a plan that will take the city 20 years into the next century. Guess it'll be a 2020 vision. Using sunglasses as a symbol of Cincinnati's vision, staff photographer **Jymi Bolden** shows how "The Vision" fits on many people. Ideally, Cincinnatians will head into a bright future with a shared vision. Whether we do that will be clear then: Hindsight is, after all, 20/20.

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Redirecting the traffic: Ron Kruse, Delhi Township trustee, seeks to solve chronic airport noise and pollution problems by building a new airport. One possible site is Clinton County, where there is an abandoned airfield. Or it could be built elsewhere between Dayton and Cincinnati. Just as long as it's on the Ohio side of the river 5

Bar games: In an interview with Steve Ramos, **Eric Stoltz** explains how a round of "name that movie" led to his latest project. While hanging out in a bar, the actor and his friends made up titles for movies they'd like to see produced. *Sleep with Me* won. Stoltz both acts in and produces the MGM release 13

Eric Stoltz and Meg Tilly star in Stoltz's production *Sleep With Me*

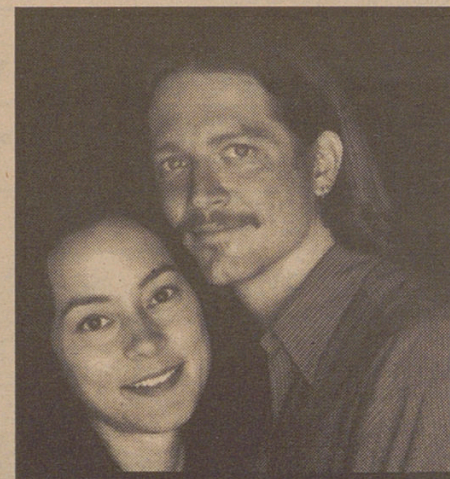


PHOTO: ROBERT ZUCKERMAN/MGM

Letters

The time has come

It's about time! This city has needed a publication such as *Cincinnati City Beat* for so long.

As a consumer of information, I find *City Beat's* mix of deep-digging news, hip lifestyle features, and coverage of cutting-edge movies, music and arts to be just what I need. Good luck!

P.S. Cool names on your lifestyle and calendar sections.

— Ali Barger,
Roselawn

Mashing in Middletown

To the editor: I'm writing to commend you on launching what has turned into a truly unique and important publication for the Greater Cincinnati area. I moved to Cincinnati (Middletown, to be exact) from Chicago four years ago, and when I arrived I was astonished at the lack of a thorough and informative weekly newspaper. In Chicago there was always (at the very least) two such papers.

I also want to tell you that I enjoy your music section very much. It is nice to read about music outside of the realm of Phil Collins and Garth Brooks.

Which brings me to my one gripe. I believe that you really need to cover the Middletown music scene. My band, the Bloody Baby Bunnies, is only a small part of our scene that's being called "the Next Hot Spot." You know, like Seattle. Assfucking, Gutless Swine and Sex Pack are all making huge waves in the Middletown area and are gaining gigantic crowds at their shows. It is only a matter of time before the rest of the world catches on, so I'm offering you guys a pretty big scoop here.

As I said, I am very appreciative of your local and regional music coverage. *City Beat* is one of the only publications that cater to the

needs of local musicians. But please consider a cover story on the Middletown scene. Enclosed is a demo we (the BBBs) recorded in our bass player's cousin's garage. The wide range of songs include our versions of Rush's "Working Man," "Smoke on the Water," and an alternative version of "Free-bird." Several major labels have expressed interest in the band. We are currently working on an original song and hope to have an album and video out by Christmas.

Thanks for your consideration,

— Jag Love (vocalist),
Bloody Baby Bunnies,
Middletown

Spending money

On the surface, it's fine to build a new stadium and renovate Riverfront Stadium, but Cincinnati should not foot the bill alone.

People all around the Tristate benefit from having two professional sports teams in Cincinnati. Those folks need to pitch in, too.

— B. Larkin,
Cincinnati

Saving money

Who says Cincinnati needs a new stadium?

After the way baseball players and owners trashed a perfectly good season and with the way the Bengals started this season, why not just hand them all their walking papers!

Then, we wouldn't need to build or fix any stadium, and that would save millions of taxpayer \$\$\$.

— Name withheld
upon request

Letters policy

CINCINNATI CITY BEAT accepts letters for publication.

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Please include the letter writer's name, address and daytime phone number. Writers may request their names be withheld from publication. Letters may be edited for length. Please type letters if possible.

The Beat of the City

A conversation among friends, not a sermon from your elders

BY JOHN FOX

There are a million or more topics I could address in the very first editorial of our very first publication. Believe me, I've started this column quite a few times and come to a halt again and again.

I finally decided to stop trying to explain the whole concept all at once. Let's instead look at your basic questions: what is *Cincinnati City Beat*, who are you people, what do you mean by "alternative" and why should I care? We'll save the rest for future columns.

The *City Beat* will be a weekly alternative newspaper covering community issues, entertainment and the arts throughout Greater Cincinnati. It'll be distributed every Thursday, free of charge, throughout the urban landscape of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

Our reporters' "beat" is the city's people and neighborhoods, faces and places the mainstream media always seem to miss. Our reviewers and critics hear the "beat" of local musicians and follow the work of local performing and visual artists. Our staff may even "beat" down a few closed doors in government or corporate offices to get to the bottom of an important — and overlooked — story.

In short, we will track the "beat" of Cincinnati, the pulse of life, the heart of the city.

We are a small, enthusiastic group of journalists, designers, photographers and sales people hoping to provide what we think is sorely needed here: a locally based, independent media voice that provokes thought and encourages action. We combine years of experience in the alternative press with some "converts" from daily newspapers and mix in quite a few young, innovative writers and editors. You may already be familiar with many of the names in our staff box. If not, I hope that you'll take time during the next few weeks to get to know us.

The alternative press has thrived in the United States since the 1960s, when important papers such as the *Village Voice*, *Chicago Reader*, *Boston Phoenix* and *San Francisco Bay Guardian*

emerged from the underground to challenge "The Establishment." Those papers, and dozens more born in the last decade, share a popular, successful concept: quality writers and critics, hip design, exhaustive calendar listings and a desirable forum in which advertisers reach educated, thoughtful readers.

Alternative newsweeklies are thriving in St. Louis, Indianapolis, Detroit, Knoxville and Chicago. Three

publish every week in Columbus. Can the concept truly succeed in Cincinnati? Those of us listed in the staff box are firm believers that it can. What we really need, of course, is your support.

Which brings me to your final question: Why should I care?

The driving force behind *City Beat* is a quest to give voice to those in our community who do not — or cannot — speak for themselves. Despite what many politicians and corporate executives want us to believe, Cincinnati is not a collection of skyscrapers and department stores and baseball stadiums. Cincinnati is its people: young and old, black and white, male and female, poor and wealthy, gay and straight. If there were ever a city that needed to be reminded of this fact, it's Cincinnati.

If any of these ideas matter to you, please let us know. We're setting up several channels — letters, guest editorials, question of the week and "beat the bureaucrat,"

among other ideas — through which you can contact us and have your opinion printed. We envision *City Beat* as more of a conversation among friends than a sermon from your elders.

Just a couple of pointers before closing... This prototype was produced to demonstrate to potential readers and advertisers what *City Beat* will look like when published. All the articles are real; the letters, calendar listings and display and classified ads are not. Do not try to see the Smashing Pumpkins Monday at Hara Arena, for instance, even though the music listings suggest so.

Volume 1, Number 1 of *Cincinnati City Beat* will appear in mid-November. We'll pick up the conversation then. ©

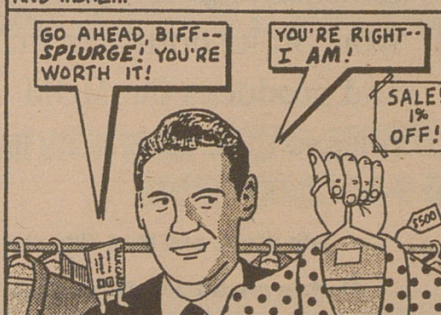
The driving force behind *City Beat* is a quest to give voice to those in our community who do not — or cannot — speak for themselves. Despite what many politicians and corporate executives want us to believe, Cincinnati is not a collection of skyscrapers and department stores and baseball stadiums.

THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW

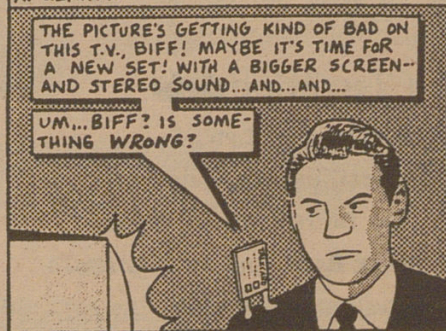
ONE DAY, BIFF'S BANK SENT HIM A NEW CREDIT CARD... THANKS TO THE WONDERS OF MICROCHIP TECHNOLOGY, IT WAS A VERY SPECIAL CARD...



BIFF AND HIS CREDIT CARD QUICKLY BECAME INSEPARABLE... AND HE BEGAN TO RELY ON HIS NEW FRIEND'S ADVICE MORE AND MORE...



IN TIME, HOWEVER, BIFF BEGAN TO WONDER IF HIS FRIEND REALLY HAD HIS BEST INTERESTS AT HEART...



SADLY, BIFF EVENTUALLY FOUND IT NECESSARY TO SEVER THE RELATIONSHIP.



BURNING QUESTIONS

BY BRAD KING

To Speak With a Doctor, Press*

Planned Parenthood Association of Cincinnati Inc. has made it easier to comply with Ohio's new Informed Consent Law, and pro-lifers are none too happy about it.

A new voice-mail system allowing women to speak to health-care professionals over the phone and set up appointments has steamed Right to Life advocates and found a loophole in State Rep. Jerome Leubbers' (D-Cincinnati) law. The Ohio law requires a woman seeking an abortion to be given information on fetal development and abortion risks and alternatives at least 24 hours before the planned procedure.

John Willke, national Right to Life co-founder, tells me waiting periods for non-abortion surgical procedures at hospitals didn't need to be legislated because face-to-face consent has "always been done. (Abortion) is the only exception."

Barbara Rinto, executive director of Planned Parenthood, says informed consent has always been a part of the clinic's philosophy. A waiting period never needed to be legislated because time constraints and insurance concerns keep women from walking in off the streets for same-day abortions.

Well then, if it's not about consent or waiting periods, what is the legislation about?

Rinto claims Willke and Leubbers are just "upset that women were making a choice at all. Consent was never the issue."

All Silence on the Senate Front

So what the hell's got Joe Slovenec mad, Mike DeWine relaxed and Joel Hyatt hanging in the wind as they race for Howard Metzenbaum's U.S. Senate seat?

Slovenec, an independent from Cleveland, came to Cincinnati on Sept. 29 to debate John Willke, whose Right to Life group supports DeWine, a Republican. Willke dropped out of the debate at the last minute; Slovenec attributes the change of heart to a meeting earlier in the week between Willke and DeWine in Columbus.

Polls indicate Slovenec may take 6 percent of the statewide vote. But say he manages to snare 15-20 percent on his home turf in the Cleveland-Akron-Toledo area — if that happens, Democrat Hyatt could defeat DeWine by doing well in Ohio's small rural districts.

Hyatt supporters should be disheartened that their candidate also wimped out of the Cincinnati debate. "Make the bastards deny it publicly" is a famous political quote. Hyatt needs Slovenec to win in the North.

So if DeWine's camp is unconcerned about Slovenec's small vote count, why would Willke not show for the debate?

"It's obvious why," Slovenec says. "John Willke is one of (DeWine's) boys. They don't want to debate real issues."

Even With the Strike On

A regional task force has been studying what to do with the Reds and Bengals to keep them in town.

Task-force members are going to make recommendations to the various city and local governments about what needs to be done.

Strangely, Marge Schott, Reds president and CEO, has formed her own group to research buying Riverfront Stadium. Schott just got a 30-day extension on her committee's recommendations. (Like the Energizer Bunny, she keeps going ... and going ...)

So what happens if the task force makes its recommendations and Schott wants to buy Riverfront or doesn't approve of the recommendations?

"Well, I don't know. We do have to do something for the Bengals," says Hamilton County Commissioner Guy Guckenberger, task force co-chair.

BURNING QUESTIONS is our weekly attempt to afflict the comfortable.

News & Views

An Alternative Look at How and Why It Happened.

Changing Flight Patterns

Citing current jet noise and pollution, Delhi Township official wants to move airport (and its money) to Ohio

BY NANCY FIROR

While the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport considers future expansions, support could be mounting for a plan to build a new airport on the Ohio side of the river.

The plan was devised by Delhi Township Trustee Ron Kruse and is backed by the environmental group he heads — Planning Around Nature And Community Environmental Areas (PANACEA).

The idea is to build a new regional international airport in Clinton County and connect it to downtown Cincinnati and Dayton with a light rail system. Kruse says Ohio officials need to consider the plan before airplane noise, traffic jams, air pollution and economic benefits the airport gives Kenton County, Ky., are out of control.

"Environmentally, the (Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky) airport is positioned wrong for expansion," Kruse says.

Dale Huber, the airport's deputy director of aviation, says expansion undertaken by the Kenton County Airport Board generally relies on federal dollars and is, therefore, subject to rigorous environmental testing before approved. He says the airport will need a new runway if traffic at the facility is up to 600,000 takeoffs and landings a year by 2011. If that number is reached, a master plan to be released by the end of the year outlines expansion designed to accommodate the growth. That would include construction of a new terminal, land purchases and industrial and commercial development.

"If it comes, we'll be ready," Huber says. "The airport is positioning itself to expand if necessary. No expansion takes place without the necessary environmental work."

"I think Ohio better stand up and start seeing what's happening," Kruse says. He has sent his plan to an array of officials in hopes of gaining support and the governor's attention. He envisions a new regional international airport probably being built at the old Clinton County Air Force Base, where, he says, it would truly serve southwestern Ohio.

Cincinnati is growing to the north, he explains, and a trip to the existing airport — hindered by traffic congestion — already is taking many area residents more than an hour to make.

"On a general scope, certainly his idea warrants looking at," says State Rep. Jerome Luebbers (D-Cincinnati).

Kruse says his plan also is needed to:

- Reduce noise problems and traffic congestion around the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport.
- Ease the area's air pollution problems by getting automobiles off the road.
- Combat lack of control over the airport by Ohio offi-



PHOTO: JYMI BOLDEN

Delhi Township Trustee Ron Kruse

cials, an on-going problem that revolves around the airport being located in Kentucky and governed by the Kenton County Airport Board.

- Spur economic development in southwestern Ohio instead of around the existing airport, where Kentucky — not Ohio — gets the benefit.

Such an economic boom in Ohio could hurt the existing airport in Kenton County, where debts from improvements still need to be paid, Huber says.

"Who would pay if this place were to go away?" he asks.

Huber points out that Ohio does have representation on the airport board. While not among the seven voting members, he says, Ohio has six advisory board members who do get to vote on the committee level, where recommendations for the board are devised.

As for noise, the airport has a \$110 million noise-abatement budget and has purchased 107 of 158 homes in the Ethan's Glen subdivision in Burlington, west of the airport, where noise complaints have been severe. In addition, the airport has purchased about 90 homes in other areas.

The airport also is extending an east-west runway, which will allow the airport to direct more of the noise away from Ohio.

Other factors — such as what has happened in other cities where officials decided another airport was needed — also should be considered, Huber says. Those examples include:

- A regional airport at Newburgh, N.Y., that was supposed to be linked by light rail to the New York City metro area. The idea did not muster support because people could not justify traveling an hour by train when they could take a 20-minute taxi ride to one of the area's three other airports. There is an airport at Newburgh, but it serves only the immediate area.
- The Dallas/Fort Worth Airport was built when Dallas' Love Field already existed. The competition led to the passage of the Wright Amendment, which limited airplanes leaving Love Field to traveling only to contiguous states. ©

Blaming the Messenger

Arts directors take the heat when trustees can't raise the funds

BY DANIEL BROWN

A clean sweep of the directors of Greater Cincinnati's major arts institutions occurred in 1993-94: Ruth Meyer from the Taft Museum, Dennis Barrie from the Contemporary Arts Center, Millard Rogers from the Cincinnati Art Museum, Ernest Britton (and then acting director Trina Walton) from the Arts Consortium, Irv Oberschmidt from the Fine Arts Fund and Roger Williams from the Art Academy of Cincinnati. The circumstances of each director's departure varied, from the agreeable retirement of Rogers to the acrimonious "you're fired/I quit" of Meyer, Barrie and Williams.

Greater Cincinnati's arts institutions have new directors: they should direct, create, orchestrate, manage and plan together. Arts institutions, in the last analysis, are about the arts.

This pattern of changing directors parallels a national trend in the arts. The average tenure for a museum director in the United States is five to seven years. Changes have occurred recently at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and its Institute for Contemporary Arts; the Institute for Contemporary Art and School of the Art Institute in Chicago; the Kimball Museum in Fort Worth, Texas; the Museum of Modern Art in New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis; and the nearby Wexner Center and Columbus Museum of Art. The list goes on and on.

The issue in all of these situations — the grievance, if you will — is money, or the lack of it. Directors are faced with growing audiences and demands on their institutions and time and must also deal with rising fixed costs (insurance, salaries, overhead), insufficient endowment funds and decreasing national and state arts council funding. The resulting financial crisis has been exacerbated by a decline in corporate support caused by ongoing corporate downsizing and spending cutbacks.

Positions for development directors are open all over the country, but there are few takers. Directors are taking heat from their institutions' new breed of bottom-line-oriented corporate trustees.

As a result, the national trend has been toward institutions hiring directors who are primarily arts administrators with a business/development orientation. Cincinnati's new replacement directors — with the exception of the CAC's Elaine King — mirror that trend, which began in the mid-1980s with the hiring of Thomas Krens as director of the Guggenheim Museum. During his tenure, the original Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Guggenheim in New York expanded

to five satellite institutions, yet the entire group is now in near-terminal financial crisis. (All its great libraries

have been closed.) Krens became the role model of director-as-businessperson. Arts knowledge has been deemed much less important than the chase for the dollar, as if no one person could combine both skills.

Programming and exhibitions are beginning to suffer, to fray, to become marginalized. The era of the patrician private patron is over. New trustees often view their role as a reward, an addition to a resume, rather than a responsibility with historical context.

The Fine Arts Fund raises around \$8 million for our eight largest arts institutions (Symphony, Opera, Ballet, Art Museum, CAC, Taft Museum, May Festival and Playhouse in the Park). Such fund-raising is a heroic effort but a shockingly small amount, given Greater Cincinnati's population base of approximately 1.9 million people.

What, then, is the role of the trustee? As the cliché runs, a board member must "give, get or get out." If trustees are busy blaming directors for not finding dollars, then what is the purpose, the job description, the specific charge of and for an institution trustee? At the CAC, for example, annual giving figures by

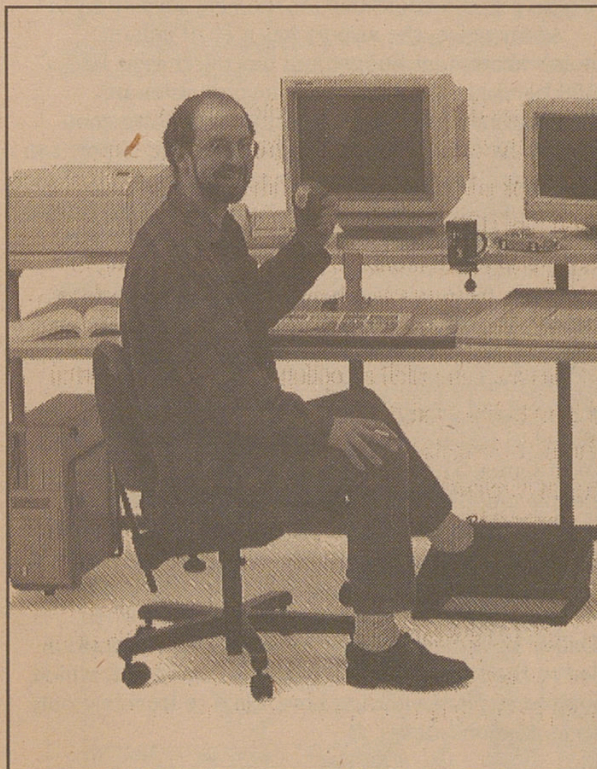
trustees have been declining. Will King be blamed? Will Toni Birkhead, director of the under-construction Aronoff Center Gallery, be pressured to raise money in competition with existing museums and galleries? Can Cincinnati afford the soon-to-open Children's Museum? Where are the corporate leaders and visionaries? Where is the overall planning?

Putting It Together

The squeeze is on. Cincinnati's FAF institutions, according to bylaws, may not fund-raise during the annual Fine Arts Fund Drive. Corporate dollars are drying up; Procter & Gamble is, by far, the region's largest corporate donor (assumptions about the Lindner empire notwithstanding). Private dollars are disappearing as well; Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, for example, has relied on the patronage of two particular local families but now seeks access to FAF support. Arts institutions must now compete with the zoo, Children's Hospital and Xavier University, among many others, in a scramble for funding that leaves directors with insufficient time to actually direct their institutions.

One solution is to hire two directors — administrative and artistic — a common practice in the performing arts. However, this idea may add more, not less, confusion and fragmentation.

Blaming directors for an overall downturn in the economy is absurd. The new wave of directors with development/business backgrounds must be able to count on a specific dollar figure from each of their trustees. A director must direct, manage, oversee all aspects of an institution. Fund-raising is an inevitable and growing part of any director's job, but an institution's financial well-being must be the primary role of its trustees. Greater Cincinnati's arts institutions have new directors: they should direct, create, orchestrate, manage and plan together. Arts institutions, in the last analysis, are about the arts. Let the trustees' primary role be giving, or getting, money with the assistance of directors and development officers. If overworked, harried directors continue to be glorified fund-raisers, another wave will depart our city. The ancient Greek myth repeats: The messenger director is killed for relaying the message to the king trustee. ©



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Technology

SILICON INJECTIONS

BY DAVID PESCOVITZ

Tools of Dialogue...

Marshall McLuhan's "global village" has been hard-wired. More than 20 million people around the world are connected by what began as a Department of Defense experiment and evolved into the anarchistic Internet. Cable TV providers, telephone companies and entertainment producers are in a mad frenzy to grab a piece of the Information Superhighway™.

Even as this is written, new technologies are being created that dramatically change how, and what, we communicate. McLuhan said that "propaganda ends where dialogue begins."

The tools of empowerment have arrived. The rest is up to us.

Listening In...

Only a month after Al Gore finally killed the Clipper chip (a proposed electronic mail-encryption standard to which law enforcement would hold a key) Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.) introduced in August the Digital Telephony Bill. The bill requires telcos' digital telephone networks to be "wiretap ready" for Federal Bureau of Investigation eavesdropping, with a warrant of course.

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), a computer users' lobbying group that participated in developing the bill, has been flamed on the 'Net for its support of the bill. The EFF's acceptance of the bill in its current fashion, members contend, lies in the bill's additional privacy provisions and its specific application — the "wiretap ready" requirements do not apply to Bulletin Board Systems or Internet-access providers.

In addition, under the bill the FBI must get a court order, as opposed to the current administrative subpoena required, before examining an individual's on-line records including electronic mail and downloaded information. The EFF, however, is concerned with who will cover the rest of the money needed for the phone companies to modify their systems if the \$500 million over four years in tax dollars earmarked by the bill runs out.

According to Jerry Berman, policy director for the EFF, the group is pushing for the House bill to hold government money accountable for all costs. A recent compromise on Capitol Hill tentatively designed in the bill that the Federal Communication Commission will be responsible for deciding who will cover additional costs of system changes.

The Digital Telephony Bill awaits a Senate vote. Its companion House measure is expected to reach the floor before Congress adjourns for the year.

The Future of Indie Record Labels...

Music enthusiasts looking for a true alternative sampling should check out the Internet Underground Music Archive (IUMA). Founded a year ago by two University of California at Santa Cruz students, the IUMA offers songs, band bios and publicity photos for browsing or downloading by anyone on the Internet.

The musical offerings range from folk to alternarock to Japanese noise. (The Duke of Uke's ukulele cover of The Ramones' "I Wanna Be Sedated" is a real gem.)

The IUMA is free to access and supported by donations from the bands that send in tunes.

To reach the IUMA, point your World Wide Web browser to: <http://www.iuma.com/index.html> For more information, send e-mail to info@iuma.com; or snail mail to 903 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060.

Former Cincinnati **David Pescovitz** (pesco@well.com) is *Wired* magazine's "Reality Check" columnist. He resides in San Francisco.

DailyBred

Issues Born of Everyday Living.

Extracting the Facts about Echinacea

Anecdotal evidence suggests Plains Indians' snakebite cure helps cleanse lymphatic system of toxins

BY CRAIG LOVELACE

A blast from the past is making a comeback and may be just what the doctor ordered (or, in this case, didn't order) to help you through winter and the cold that is sure to tag along.

Echinacea angustifolia is an herbal extract that, proponents say, will ease and eliminate the aches, pains, runny nose and general blahs a cold can deliver. Derived from the roots and leaves of the purple coneflower and sold as a dietary supplement, echinacea is a top-selling herbal product.

"They are popular," says Eric Blake, the resident herbalist at New World Foodshop in Clifton. Blake, who began using echinacea and other herbal products four years ago, says a number of his customers swear by the extract's curative properties.

Echinacea is thought to strengthen the ability of white blood cells to fight off, kill or digest toxins that enter the body. Research done in the United States and in Germany indicates echinacea also cleanses the lymphatic system, which is the network of vessels that produce and store cells that combat infection.

Blake became a believer in echinacea while working at a restaurant in 1990. "I felt myself getting sick, and a woman who worked there suggested a mixture of echinacea with another herb. It worked."

He says he now takes echinacea whenever he feels himself getting sick. Others ingest it regularly.

Echinacea, also known as Snake Root, was first used by the Plains Indians to treat snake bites and as a salve. It was introduced to the medical profession in the late 1800s and was commonly used until the introduction of antibiotics in the 1920s.

Its resurgence began about 20 years ago. Available at health-food shops in several forms — capsules (the most popular), powder, liquid extract and tea — echinacea is the second best-selling herb, behind ginseng, clerks at local stores say.

Marilyn Gorman, an assistant manager at Cincinnati Natural Foods in Madeira, attributes the extract's popularity to personal testimonies, like those

from Blake's customers, and to its lack of side effects.

"There are so many side effects with drugs," she says.

But herbs and their extracts can cause side effects, which is why the Herb Society of Greater Cincinnati frowns upon claims that herbal products can aid the healing process.

"We do not recommend medicinal use at all simply because there is so much variation ... in the strength of the herb," says Pamela Shinn, former society president. "We certainly know there is a medical basis for

Health & Fitness

The Plains Indians used an extract of the purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) to treat snakebites.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WAYSIDE GARDENS, HODGES, S.C.

many of the herbs; obviously the pioneers had to use something."

The extract, like all herbal supplements, is not regulated. So people who sell echinacea are careful in what they say about it. ("Honestly, you can get more out of books at the library than what I'm allowed to tell you," says a sales clerk at a Blue Ash nutrition center.)

Likewise, product labels are generic. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration closely watches the labels, ensuring no claims of medicinal value are attached. Should that happen, the products would need FDA approval before they could be sold commercially.

Still, the lines aren't crystal clear, says Eric E. Batchlor, an FDA compliance officer in Cincinnati. "The folks who put these products out word smith them very carefully," he says.

For example, on a label for echinacea herbal tea, there are no medical claims. But there are assurances it has been tested. "Echinacea's virtues have been recognized by medical and scientific researchers throughout the world," the label says.

Labels or not, Tara Schuh says echinacea works for her. A clerk at Cincinnati Natural Foods, Schuh says she's been taking the supplement for five years: "Mostly when I'm getting sick, though I rarely get sick." ©

**Business Leaders
tout DCI's**

**'Vision Plan'
as the first**

Can

accountable,

attainable

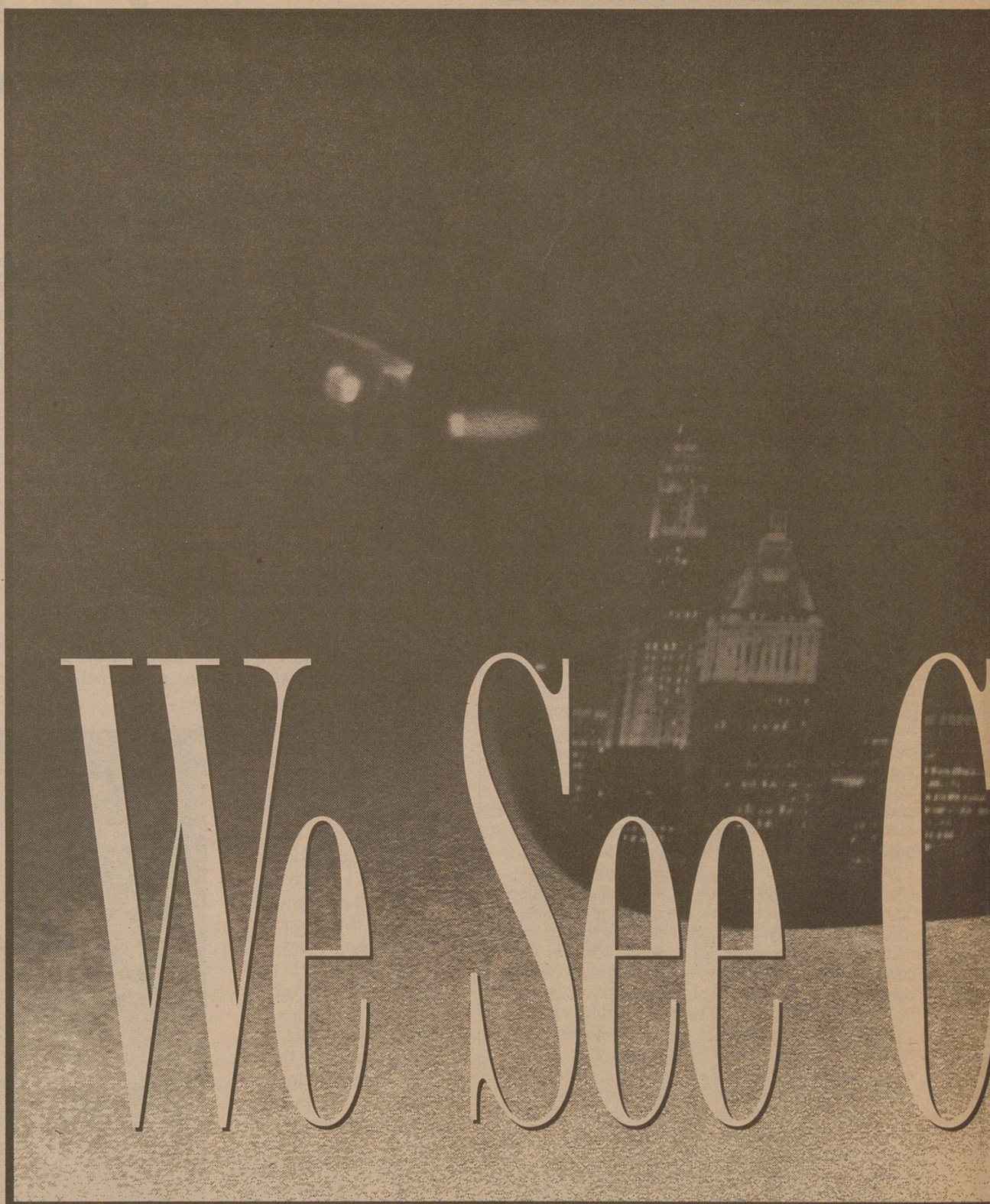
blueprint for

downtown

development.

BY NANCY FIROR

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY
JYMI BOLDEN AND PAUL NEFF



Downtown Cincinnati in the year 2020 is the "envy of cities everywhere." The bustling riverfront draws visitors and tourists by the thousands. They flock to shops, restaurants, galleries, Reds games and the Aronoff Center for the Arts.

Residents from all incomes and races live here. Housing — much of it renovated — is affordable and pleasing. The streets are safe and friendly. Cincinnati police officers are visible and bilingual.

The struggle for downtown revitalization is long forgotten in this place, which has remained "North America's Most Livable City" since 1994.

This is not a dream. It's a vision — carved out of opinions from more than 4,000 Tristate residents. And even though the question of how to breathe new life into downtown has been looming for years, the vision's creators and city officials are adamant: In some form, this vision will become reality.

"We finally are awake now," says Rick Greiwe, chief operating officer of Downtown Cincinnati Inc. (DCI), founded by a business leadership group to encourage downtown development. "Downtown is the heart of the

area, and we have to take action soon. Downtown has to be safe, it has to be clean, it has to be easy to use."

But because past efforts have not guaranteed downtown's sound economic future — coupled with an announcement last week that Lazarus could scrap its \$29 million project on Fountain Square West — some wonder whether city leaders are reinventing the wheel in an attempt to reach an impossible goal.

"Everybody needs 'the vision thing,' but a lot of it is money and competition from retailers in the suburbs," says Peter Strauss, who was a Cincinnati City Councilmember from 1981 to 1993. "The jury's still out as to whether downtowns are going to make it anymore."

To reverse the impact changing business trends and suburban sprawl have had on downtown Cincinnati, DCI stepped into action last fall and formed a 15-member Vision Committee. The committee consulted experts, solicited responses from more than 4,000 people and crafted The Vision, which was presented to City Council in May.

Since then, signs of DCI follow-through have been apparent:

early Now?

The Vision
'was a plan
that was based
on community
input. It's a
high standard
to shoot for,
but if you don't
set a high
standard to
shoot at,
you're never
going to get
there.'

— MARK MCKILLIP
city development officer

- October 10, DCI released a detailed schedule of goals — and the committee members working on them — in the areas of retail, arts and entertainment, environment, sports and hospitality, housing, office space, marketing, finance and leadership.
- Last month, DCI announced a holiday promotion plan aimed at increasing downtown retail sales 5 percent.
- DCI has established a \$9 million market-rate housing loan fund to encourage the development of residential housing.

Greive explains that the public can soon expect DCI's committees to release benchmarks setting goals for percentage increases in all target areas such as housing. That way, DCI's progress can be measured year after year.

"DCI is going to be accountable for the results," he says.

Sounds like a serious commitment. But it also sounds a little like Cincinnati history, Strauss suggests.

Looking back vs. looking ahead

In 1989, on a motion by then-Councilmember Strauss, City Council authorized the appointment of a committee to determine whether the city was on target with downtown development as outlined in the Cincinnati 2000 Plan.

That plan, "a design for a pleasing city," had been approved by council in 1982 to guide development through the year 2000. It contained specific goals for retail, housing, office buildings, parking and transportation, entertainment, hotels and convention center development.

The review committee found that the city had made "remarkable progress" on elements of the plan but concluded in its report that "the balance of the plan is substantially behind target and well behind its potential achievement." Among examples cited were retail space losses. While the plan called for an increase of about 400,000 square feet in retail space, the committee found that 230,000 square feet had been developed while 870,000 had been lost, leaving a net loss of 640,000 square feet.

In its recommendations, the committee called for the selection of a board of trustees — to consist of 15 members with strong business or personal interest in the success of downtown — for a "proactive Cincinnati Downtown Progress Committee."

That committee set about the task of investigating revitalization efforts in other downtowns and developing long-term strategies for downtown as well as the attainment of 2000 Plan goals, recalls Strauss, who was on the progress committee. But, he says, consensus among business and government leaders was difficult to find, partly because times were changing.

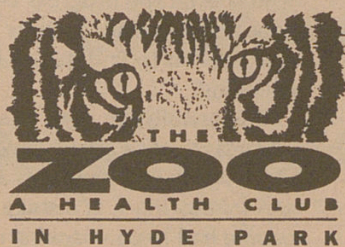
Historically, he says, businessmen had taken their ideas and needs about downtown to the city manager. Now, council members and mayors were wanting, and taking, more of a stake in decisions. Business people had begun backing council members of their choice.

Also becoming apparent were the needs of diversifying businesses and the need for the city to

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10

*Loch — Ness**Elliot — Ness**Fit — Ness*

**AEROBICS
FREE WEIGHTS
CARDIOVASCULAR EQUIPMENT
TRAINERS**



compete with the suburbs as well as other cities. The complexity of downtown's needs had surpassed challenges of days gone by and, possibly, the progress committee's resources, he says.

"To be perfectly candid, (the committee's efforts) didn't work very well," Strauss says.

Volunteer vs. paid staff

Greiwe says this progress committee was not set up for success because it was a volunteer group, it was not accountable for results and it did not have a results-oriented, paid staff such as the one DCI is building. He says that business and city leaders finally got the message that such a concerted effort was needed when threats, such as the Bengals leaving town and Lazarus moving its headquarters, captured their attention.

"All these institutions were saying: 'Hey, downtown isn't happening for me anymore,'" he says. "I think it woke up the business community and City Council."

Still, the end of the Cincinnati Downtown Progress Committee and the beginning of DCI and The Vision are not evidence that the city has found itself playing try-and-try-again, says Mark McKillip, supervising development officer in the city's Department of Economic Development. In fact, he says, downtown development and the progress committee made great strides under the 2000 Plan and others that came before it. Those plans all were designed to be implemented during specific time periods, and all were designed to be revised as the time period was approaching its end and as economic or business trends inevitably changed.

Likewise, McKillip says, such plans, which detail specific development goals, should not be confused with The Vision. While it contains some specifics such as locations for retail and entertainment districts, The Vision was meant to be a general picture that will guide specific goals.

"(The Vision) was a plan that was based on community input," McKillip says. "It's a high standard to shoot for, but if you don't set a high standard to shoot at, you're never going to get there."

So, as DCI and city officials try to get there, DCI will be re-evaluating the 2000 Plan, recommending changes that are needed to guide downtown into the next generation. That does not mean DCI will be reinventing the wheel, Greiwe says — DCI and The Vision are simply new people and new leadership carrying out a new charge.

To answer that charge, DCI has a

board of directors — 57 business and government leaders — who have a vested interest in downtown's success. It has a budget for three years: \$400,000 a year from the city and \$600,000 a year in private donations; attempts are being made to raise another \$750,000 annually. Greiwe emphasizes that DCI also has a paid staff that will do nothing but work on downtown.

But, like any long-term project, DCI's efforts to make The Vision reality will have to endure intermittent controversy — whether over development indecision in Over-the-Rhine or a lawsuit filed last month by non-union contractors against the city.

"All of us need to understand the ingredients needed for a successful downtown," Greiwe says. "Not to have people on the same team will certainly make the progress slower."

Some controversies will certainly change The Vision — such as with Cincinnati Councilmember Charlie Winburn's change of heart and vote that killed plans for a conservatory on Fountain Square West. That change did little to threaten The Vision, however, says Dwight Hibbard, chairman of the board at Cincinnati Bell who served as chairman of the Vision Committee.

"I don't think that the conservatory by itself is a fundamental building block in the vision," Hibbard says. "The fact of the matter is, though, that vision anticipates that it takes more than retail to bring people downtown. We didn't specifically say it must be a conservatory. But what we said in The Vision is you're making a big mistake if you just stick with retail. Retail alone won't compete with the suburbs."

While a suitable replacement might be found for the conservatory, no one denies that The Vision will have to clear some taller hurdles, one of which might be the lawsuit filed last month by non-union contractors. They are claiming that City Council's ordinance that imposes union rules on the \$29 million Lazarus/Fountain Square West project unfairly restricts competitive bidding. Last week, Lazarus announced it would scrap the project if council did not repeal the ordinance. Council was to reconvene Oct. 10 in an effort to resolve the problem.

"It's worrisome that we have an ordinance now that forces the city into court at a time that's critical for Fountain Square West," Hibbard says. "City Council passed this ordinance, and I can only react. They've created a barrier now that is going to make it difficult for the time schedule to be met." The store is supposed to open in the fall of 1996.

And by the year 2020, it's supposed to be the cornerstone of a bustling retail district along Race Street. ©

For more information on Downtown Cincinnati Inc.'s plans, contact DCI at 511 Walnut St. (23rd Floor), downtown, or call 744-4444. To contact Cincinnati City Council members, call City Hall, 352-3000.

UtterKiosk

Not Just an Entertainment Calendar... A State of Mind.

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Review Ratings

A	Excellent
B	Very Good
C	Average
D	Poor
F	Utter Failure

Recommendations

★ *City Beat* staff's stamp of approval

This Week's Theme: Make-Believe

Make-believe is everywhere this week. ... For starters, *Cincinnati City Beat* staffers **CONJURED UP** these listings for this prototype issue to represent the types of listings we will include each week. ... One thing we'll always clue you in on is what's going on at the bookstores. When **Anne Rice** — whose second series fetched, yet fetching tale comes to **Joseph-Beth Booksellers**, say, to autograph *Taltos*, we'll tell you listings. ... And to find for Cincinnati Playhouse in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Puck works his mischievous are still available, check our ... Care for a less meddling bell's the one for you. She's Ballet's world-premiere of We'll listings. ... you can when you view mock-terminal Arts Center. ... If you'd to the sounds of two Dayton bands whose **WISHES** for national recognition have almost come true. (Read about *Real Lulu* and *Cage* in Music listings.) ... Or, join Women Writing for Change and Cincinnati Writers Project if you **FANCY** yourself a writer. Both groups are accepting members. (Literary listings.)

Erik Kegler will dance the role of the boy who never grew up in the Cincinnati Ballet's world-premiere of *Peter Pan*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ALAN BROWN, PHOTONICS
COURTESY OF CINCINNATI BALLET



Concerts

★ **THE MIGHTY, MIGHTY BOSSTONES WITH SKANKHOE**
The highly energetic Bosstones are probably the best live band in the world; their punk-influenced ska has

paved the way for the resurging ska craze. 8 p.m. Thursday; Bogart's, 2621 Vine St. \$8.75. 281-0000.

ELTON JOHN AND BILLY JOEL
7 p.m. Thursday; Nutter Center, 14213 First St., Dayton. \$20-\$45. 873-0000.

BASIA WITH SPYRO GYRA
7:30 p.m. Saturday; Music Hall, 1243 Elm St. \$24. 721-0000.

★ **DRUMS FOR PEACE WITH THE OVER-THE-RHINE STEEL DRUM BAND** Exotic rhythms will take over Eden Park with a little help from two of the finest World Beat percussion ensembles around. 3 p.m. Sunday; Seasongood

Pavilion, Eden Park. Free. 861-0000.

DISCO REVIVAL SHOW WITH VILLAGE PEOPLE, LIPPS INC. AND MORE 6:30 p.m. Monday; Riverfront Coliseum, 6900 Pete Rose Way. \$19.50. 241-0000.

★ **SMASHING PUMPKINS WITH FEEDER** Fresh off the Lollapalooza tour, the Pumpkins bring their psychedelic sound and light show back to Hara for the only scheduled Ohio stop on this tour. 8:30 p.m. Monday; Hara Arena, 1001 Shiloh Springs Road, Dayton. \$22.50. 278-0000.

Clubs

THURSDAY

BLUE WISP BIG BAND Big-band jazz. Blue Wisp. \$5.

DOCK ELLIS WITH STITCH Heavy, alternative rock. Sudsy Malone's. \$3.

THE GOSHORN BROTHERS Classic rock. Tommy's on Main. \$3.

★ **EUGENE GOSS & VOLITION** One of the best local jazz ensembles (featuring Goss on vibraphone) kicks off this year's Live at the Hyatt Series. Hyatt Sungarden Lounge. Free.

H-BOMB FERGUSON Blues. Blue Note Cafe. \$4.

★ **REAL LULU WITH CAGE** Two quirky Dayton punk bands on the verge of national recognition; Real Lulu recently won the Canal St. Tavern's band competition. The Palace Club. \$3.

SILVER ARM Celtic. Arnold's. \$3.

TARNISH WITH FILAMENT AND COBRA JUDY Underground/alternative. Top Cats. \$3.

FRIDAY

★ **BABE THE BLUE OX WITH DITCHWEED** Brooklyn's finest bring their FIREHOSE-

inspired lunacy to Cincy in support of their new disc, *Je M'appelle Babe*. Sudsy Malone's. \$5.

BLUE LOU & THE ACCUSATIONS Blues. Mansion Hill Tavern. \$4.

JIM CONWAY Acoustic standards. Blind Lemon. \$3.

HEAVY WEATHER WITH GUESTS Alternative funk. Ripleys. \$4.

★ **HIGH ST. RHYTHM ROCKERS** Local blues doesn't get any better; expect sultry, good-time, rock-influenced blues. Tommy's on Main. \$4.

LOVERBOY Classic rock. Coyote's. \$6. →

Music

MODULATORS Party rock. Mount Adams Pavilion. \$3.

NAKED TRUTH W/GRIMACE Heavy metal/thrash. Never On Sundays. \$4

Clubs Directory

ARNOLD'S
210 E. Eighth St., downtown. 421-6234.

BLUE NOTE CAFE
4520 W. Eighth St., Western Hills. 921-8898.

BLUE WISP
19 Garfield Place, downtown. 721-9801.

COYOTE'S
400 Buttermilk Pike, Fort Mitchell. 341-5150.

GREENWICH TAVERN
2440 Gilbert Ave., Walnut Hills. 221-6764.

HYATT REGENCY/SUNGARDEN LOUNGE
151 W. Fifth St., downtown. 579-1234.

IVORY'S JAZZ CABARET
2469 W. McMicken, Clifton. 684-0300.

MANSION HILL TAVERN
502 Washington St., Newport. 431-3538.

PALACE CLUB
2346 Grange Hall Road, Dayton. 426-9305.

RIPLEYS
2507 W. Clifton Ave., Clifton. 861-6506.

SALAMONE'S
5800 Colerain Ave., Mount Airy. 385-8662.

SHADY O'GRADY'S
9443 Loveland-Madeira Road, Loveland. 791-2753.

SUDSY MALONE'S
2630 Vine St., Clifton. 751-2300.

TOMMY'S ON MAIN
1427 Main St., downtown. 352-0502.

TOP CATS
2822 Vine St., Clifton. 281-2005.

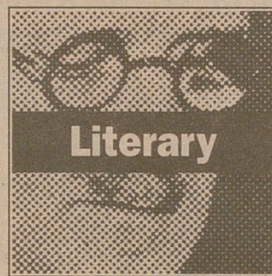
★ **PSYCHODOTS** After a well-received national tour with Adrian Belew, it should be interesting to see how these long-standing Cincy faves have strengthened. Shady O'Grady's. \$4.

TONY REILY Jazz vocalist. Ivory's. \$4.

SHELTER WITH FLOWERFIST College alternative. First Run. \$3.

UNDER THE SUN WITH MILHAUS '80s-style pop/alternative. Salamone's. \$4.

KATHY WADE AND FRIENDS Jazz vocalist. Greenwich Tavern. \$5.



Signings & Events

★ **ANNE RICE**, whose *Vampire* and *Witch* series have developed cult followings, autographs copies of her newest novel, *Lasher*. 7:30 p.m. Friday. Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Rookwood Pavilion, Edwards and Madison roads, Norwood. 396-8960.

DOUGLAS COUPLAND, who breaks new ground in Generation X: Tales fro and Accelerated Culture, appears 7-9 p.m. Sunday. Borders Books & Music, 11711 Princeton Pike, Tricounty. 671-5852.

Readings

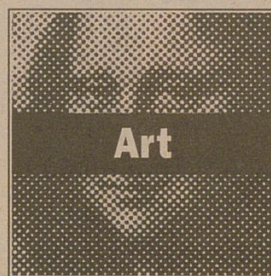
CAFE VIENNA Poetry and fiction readings. 8 p.m. the last Tuesday of each month. Cafe Vienna, 1141 St. Gregory St., Mount Adams. 621-6655.

KALDI'S Poetry. 7 p.m. every Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday. To read, sign up in advance, or attend the open readings on Sundays. Kaldi's Coffeehouse & Bookstore, 1204 Main St., Over-the-Rhine. 241-3070.

Groups

CINCINNATI WRITERS PROJECT The non-profit CWP supports Greater Cincinnati writers and literary projects. \$25 annual membership includes the monthly "Rough Draft" newsletter; a subscription to Cincinnati Poetry Review; admission to members-only seminars; and discounts on events. Write P.O. Box 29920, Cincinnati, OH 45229; or call 485-0000.

WOMEN WRITING FOR CHANGE Group offers support for female writers and constructive criticism of their work. Meets 7-9:45 p.m. the first Wednesday of each month. Crazy Ladies Bookstore and Center, 4041 Hamilton Ave., Northside. 541-4198.



Openings

MACHINE SHOP GALLERY Twelve Greater Cincinnati artists — Barbara Ahlbrand, Jeff Castro, Halena Cline, Melissa May Dobbins, Mary Anne Donovan, Ana England, Gary Gaffney, Carol Grape, Jack Hennen, Karne Heyl, Cal Kowal and Patrice Trauth — grapple with the essence of being in *Rebinding: Psyche, Spirit, Soul*. Through Dec. 2. 11 a.m. -2 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. Machine Shop Gallery, Central Parkway and Walnut

Street, downtown. Opening reception, 6-10 p.m. Wednesday. 556-3210.

OLMES GALLERY After taking two years off from painting to raise her children, painter Nancy Suddeth-Corbett returns with *The Dana Series*. Through Oct. 29. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Thursday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday. Olmes Gallery, 3515 Roundbottom Road, Newtown. Opening reception, 7-10 p.m. Friday. 271-4004.

Galleries & Exhibits

CAROL'S CORNER CAFE Silver prints by John Gebhardt, prints by Gilbert Young, photography by Robert Giesler, oil painting by Andy Brown and pencil drawings by Mark Brawley. Through Oct. 20. 11 a.m.-2:30 a.m. Monday-Friday, 4 p.m.-2:30 a.m. Saturday, 11 a.m.-midnight Sunday. Carol's Corner Cafe, 825 Main St., downtown. 651-2667.

CARNEGIE ARTS CENTER A dozen regional artists create holes that form a miniature golf course. Through October. 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday, noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Downstairs gallery, Carnegie Arts Center, 1028 Scott Blvd., Covington. Play is \$5 adults, \$3 students. 491-2030.

FABULOUS FRAMES AND ART Second annual Cincinnati Scenes, an exhibit of original paintings. Through Oct. 20. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday. Fabulous Frames and Art, 10817 Montgomery Road, Symmes Township. 489-8862.



Opening

CIAO, PROFESSORE! Seemingly, America has forgotten about filmmaker Lina Wertmuller. The American film industry, which loves to talk about the growing importance of women, has no room for the films of one of the world's more important female directors. Finally, Wertmuller's latest movie *Ciao, Professore!* arrives on American screens. Sadly, the movie disappoints.

Marco Sperelli, a primary school teacher from Northern Italy (Paolo Villaggio) is sent on assignment to the village of Corzano deep within Southern Italy. What he finds tests his patience. His school reeks of disrepair. The administrators offer no support. The children work instead of attending classes. Sperelli tosses aside his restraint and tackles this Southern town head on. He fights crude, scheming con artists at their own level. His task of educating the village's children may be accomplished yet.

Ciao, Professore! was inspired by a collection of short stories written by young Neapolitan children. Wertmuller adds the class conflicts of Italy's North and South. What the film sorely misses are some of her trademark sexual fireworks. *Ciao, Professore!* is soft and cuddly. With Wertmuller, one expects hot and spicy. Her filmmaking skills have not ebbed. *Ciao, Professore!* has the look, feel and tempo of a quality work. Technically, the movie shines. Its story of a bunch of ragamuffins who teach a proper gentleman some

street smarts is dull. Beginning with this film, apparently Miramax signed a long-term agreement to release future Wertmuller films in the United States. Her talent shows that to be good news. File *Ciao, Professore!* away as an unfortunate fluke. (Rated R; at the Esquire Theater.)

City Beat grade: D.

MI VIDA LOCA Director Allison Anders would not be offended at being described the queen of movie melodrama. With this her second feature, she continues to modernize a film genre prevalent to the fifties. Anders' melodramas keep the heart bleeding sensationalism intact.

In the Los Angeles neighborhood of Echo Park, a group of Latinas struggle to stay together and fulfill their dreams. Their men do not make it easy. Two friends, Sad Girl (Angel Aviles) and Mousie (Seidy Lopez), are loved by the same man, a drug dealer named Ernesto (Jacob Vargas). Before he is taken away from them, Ernesto fathers each a child. The women of Echo Park have only each other for support. The men in their lives are often dead, disabled or imprisoned. These women of Echo Park overcome personal tragedies and press on. Their stories are entertaining, fresh, funky and perhaps a bit inspirational.

Anders continues to pump fresh blood into Hollywood. Few other American filmmakers would tell a story about an ensemble of Latina women. Her talent as a director infuses *Mi Vida Loca* with wit and intelligence. Anders never forgets the true tenets of melodrama. These women's crazy lives possess all the camp and tear jerkiness which are true to the genre. Set in the gang territory of Los Angeles, guns and drugs take a backseat to the women's hearts. (Rated R; at Real Movies.)

City Beat grade: B.

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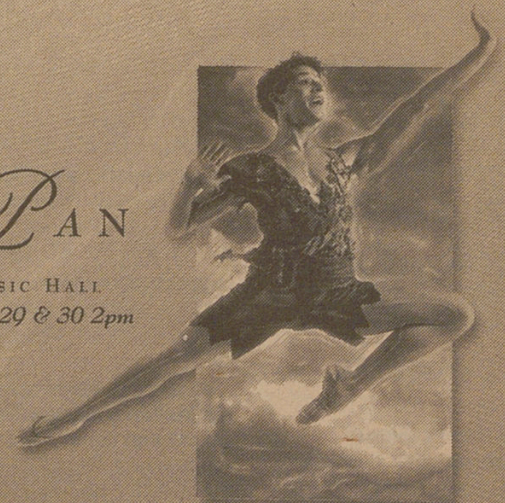
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CINCINNATI
Ballet



Continuing

***THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT** Do not believe for a second that this wonderfully wacky musical is too cool for you. *Priscilla's* fun is infectious. This musical-comedy wears an old-fashioned heart on its gold-sequined sleeve. Surprisingly, the film promotes gentle themes of family and romance. But in true nineties fashion, these protagonists dress in drag. (Rated R; at Showcase Cincinnati.)

***CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER** Some critics refer to Harrison Ford as the thinking man's Arnold Schwarzenegger. Ford deserves better kudos than that. *Clear and Present Danger* brings some unexpected substance to a normally flimsy genre. Canadian actor Henry Czerny excels in his role as Jack Ryan's nemesis. This movie is for those who like a little brain with their brawn. (Rated PG-13; at Showcase Theaters.)

***EAT DRINK MAN WOMAN** Director Ang Lee finishes his "father trilogy" on a dramatic tour de force. Master Chef Chu faces respectful employees at work and rebellious daughters at home. With a knowing skill for melodrama, Lee extracts a series of rich subplots and brings them together in a grand finale. All the promise that Lee has shown in *Pushing Hands* and *The Wedding Banquet* comes to fruition here. (Rated PG-13; at the Esquire Theater.)

THE FLINTSTONES Yabba dabba duh! Hollywood lets all the air out of a moronically funny cartoon and ends up with just plain moronic. This horrendous script leaves no prisoners. Only the film's funky sets warrant any attention. (Rated PG; at Norwood, Turfway, Forest Fair, Eastgate and Carousel.)

***FORREST GUMP** Most of America can be wrong. However, this time the masses are correct in singing the

praises of *Forrest Gump*. Hanks combines the right amount of syrupy pathos with humor. Those people who complain about the movie's glorification of the retarded are forcing politics where it does not belong. (Rated PG-13; at Loews/Sony Theaters.)

***FRESH** This movie appears to be a typical black gangster film. Its looks deceive. Beneath the violent veneer lies a refreshing tale of hope and justice. Sean Nelson shines as the 11-year-old drug dealer Fresh who wants out of these violent streets. On the basis of this great first effort, director Boaz Yakin becomes an up and comer. (Rated R; at Loews/Sony Theaters.)

***THE MASK** In this special-effects-laden comedy, Jim Carrey's performance resembles a Tex Avery cartoon. Still, his manic contortions remain true to the spirit of the film. Of all the summer fluff, *The Mask* possesses any originality. Carrey has become Hollywood's latest million-dollar baby. Pundits question whether his lunacy will strike gold again. (Rated PG-13; at Showcase Cinemas.)

***NATURAL BORN KILLERS** Director Oliver Stone pushes his cinematic skills to new heights. As a result, *NBK* may be the most daring studio release of this year. Stone's script is based on an original story by Hollywood hot man Quentin Tarantino. What the film lacks in substance, it makes up with hypnotic visuals. (Rated R; at Showcase Theaters.)

TIMECOP JeanClaude Van Damme desperately wants to be another Sylvester Stallone. To his frustration, goals once considered easy quickly turn difficult. *Timecop* pales in comparison to Sly's earlier take on sci-fi *Demolition Man*. Looks like the Muscles of Brussels may be doomed for being an action genre second banana forever. (Rated R; at Showcase Theaters.)

Just Among Friends

With *Sleep with Me*, Eric Stoltz and his buds set out to explore falling in love and the well-intentioned but bad advice that follows

INTERVIEW BY STEVE RAMOS

Half a world away in Scotland, Eric Stoltz is talking on the phone about a small project among his friends which has grown into a major studio release. Stoltz has developed a reputation of the nice-boy-next-door variety. He turns 33 this month. His relationship with girlfriend Bridget Fonda has reached four years. Now, he and his friends talk about weddings. Such chit chat led to the film *Sleep with Me*.

"I wanted to work with friends that I enjoy being around," says Stoltz. With his friends Mike Steinberg, Rory Kelly and Roger Hedding, Stoltz was hanging out a bar. Their talk focused on relationships. They began playing a game thinking up titles of movies they would like to see made. "Sleep with Me" won.

Hedding and a group of friends would each script a scene involving the same characters. Subsequent writers would continue each scene. Kelly suggested making a movie. Inside his fridge were stolen cans of 16mm film.

"We were going to make a film in black and white for about \$10,000," says Stoltz. "It was a goof. We wanted to make a film about falling in love and the bad advice your friends can give you and how funny it all is."

Somehow actress Meg Tilly agreed to do the film. Financing people made an offer: Make the movie on color stock and 35mm film, then they will finance the movie. Soon after, MGM bought the film's rights.

"I have been making films for 14 years, and it has never happened in this chaotic way," Stoltz says.

Chaotic describes Stoltz's experience as an actor-producer on *Sleep with Me*. The actor now faced more responsibility as a producer. "You have 15-hour days. You squeeze in a few phone calls and fall asleep. It taught me a lot, but it also gave me a great deal of tension."

Sleep with Me could serve as an analogy for his career. Stoltz does not have any plans. Stoltz has no idea what he will be doing in the next few months.

Stoltz met Steinberg and Neal Jimenez on *The Waterdance*. He worked with Steinberg again on *Bodies, Rest and Motion*, where he also met Hedden and Joe Castleberg. All joined to make *Sleep with Me*. "With *Sleep with Me*, all of us were in charge. We could make up a scene without having to send out memos."

Stoltz enjoys the opportunity of working with first-time directors, evident in recent films *The Waterdance*; *Bodies, Rest and Motion*; *Naked in New York*; *Killing Zoe* and now *Sleep with Me*. For Stoltz, the results are both exhilarating and exhausting.

"It is energizing because first-time directors are so passionate. They are excited to be there on the set with their actors, their script and their camera. That energy is fun to be around. On the other hand, it is exhausting because they have so much energy. They have worked their whole lives to get to this point so that they tend to overwork you."

Movies are not Stoltz's first love. He earned a Tony

nomination for his portrayal of George Gibbs in the Broadway revival of *Our Town*. "If we got the financial rewards for theater that we did for film, no one would be making films," Stoltz says. "(Theater) is more dangerous. That creates a palpable energy between the audience and the actors which is really quite exciting."

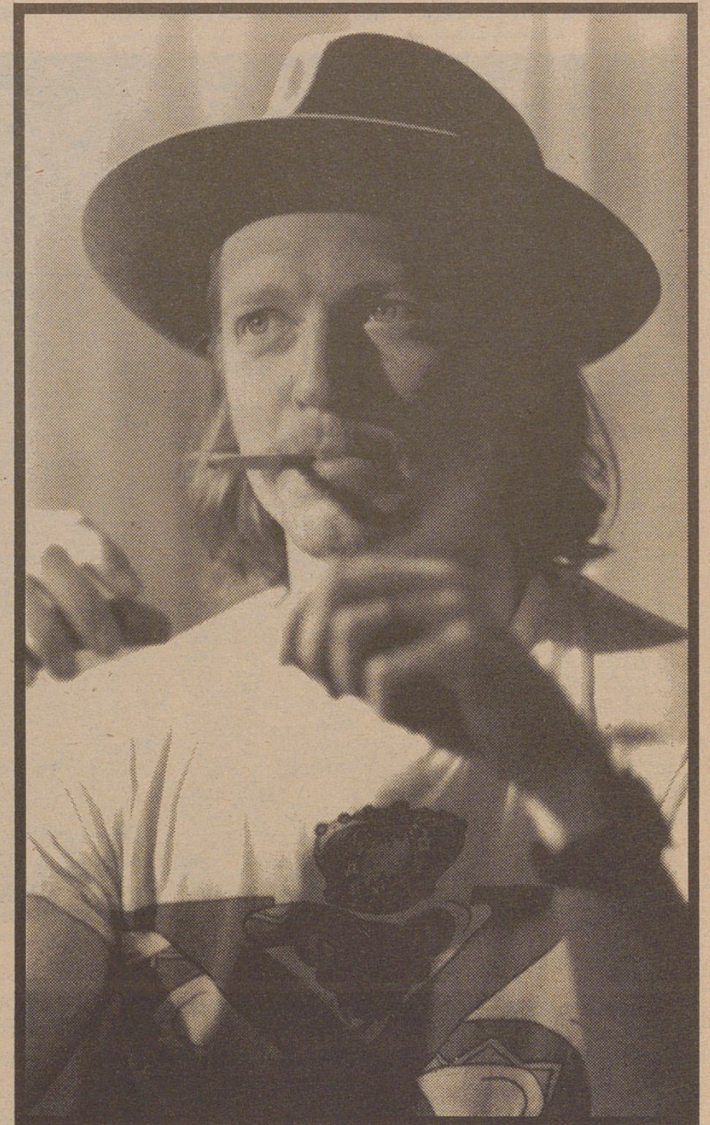


PHOTO: ROBERT ZUCKERMAN/MGM

For the romantic comedy *Sleep With Me*, Eric Stoltz was both actor and producer.

Still, Stoltz has spent the past year consistently in front of cameras. Some of his roles may shatter any public persona that Stoltz only plays nice guys. He gets nasty in both *Killing Zoe* and Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*. He also gets to dress up in historical garb for Gillian Armstrong's production of *Little Women*.

For Eric Stoltz, the here and now takes priority. "I don't really look back at what I have done," he says. "I try not to make any future plans at all. I am fairly consumed with what is going on in my life today. I feel like I am juggling so many balls in the air that to turn around would make me drop what I am doing. I am trying to just keep them all in the air." ©

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Eye to the Future

Degas' sculptures explore process, how an image is created

REVIEWED BY PERIN MAHLER

The publicity machine of French Impressionism reigns in the marketplace where art, commerce and celebrity converge. Witness huge attendance of retrospectives and sales of countless coffeetable paraphernalia reproducing images of that most popular of modern movements. Although associated with the three original Impressionists painting in the late 1800s — Monet, Pissaro and Sisley — Edgar Degas' work moves beyond the blurred and broken color associated with their visual effects. Since Impressionism's renditions

dimensional work: female figures in balletic poses along with a few busts and horses at rest and in motion. At 10 to 18 inches, the scale is small; Degas absorbed movement at a single glance. With failing eyesight at the end of his life, he could only handle sculptures (much as Matisse worked with his late-in-life "cut-outs").

Degas did not perceive his sculptures as independent works — only the large bronze "Dancer at Fourteen Years" was exhibited in his lifetime — but were instead "exercises to get me started" and inform his other work. Degas spent as much time sculpting as painting and drawing, but his cavalier attitude toward their construction lost many for posterity. The contemporary eye, however, sees their emphasis on process and his sculptures' mixed media materials as Degas' most avant-garde contribution to modern art.

These sculptures bear the marks of the artist's hands. The wax is built up roughly in mounds; furrows where it was removed reveal the contour of fingertips. "Seated Woman Wiping Her Left Side" emerges from her chair as if given birth by it, trailed by the skein of her towel. The piled-up wax, the smears and fingerprints interrupt our experience of the sculptures as finished pieces, but the undiluted process allows us to participate in the act of creation.

Degas portrays his subjects profoundly sympathetically; their privacy is respected, dignified. Degas empathizes with the dancer who raises her leg to the barre for the 100th time, the troupe herded in front of the

instructor, the ballerina exhausted in front of a coal stove. He captures intimate, private moments behind the glamorous performance — as does contemporary photographer Annie Liebovitz.

Degas' faceless models are as absorbed in their tasks as he is in the process of capturing their movements, abstracting them into pure sculptural form. We do not sense, as in Renoir, that these women are posing for male delectation; no half-lidded stares or post-orgasmic smiles are depicted. Degas is more interested in the route traveled to achieve a spectacle than in the spectacle itself. His depiction of theater is anything but theatrical.

The paintings and works on paper at Dayton illustrate the relationship between Degas' two- and three-dimensional output. This exhibition, however, is definitely about Degas' sculptures, an aspect of his career historically maginalized. It reveals him as the chronicler of the unseen worlds behind the masks of theater and glamour.

Unlike Renoir, who abdicated to the stock image of woman as mindless sex object, or Monet, whose project was confined to the effects of light and perception, Degas' work reveals the mechanisms of the creation of (an) image. ©

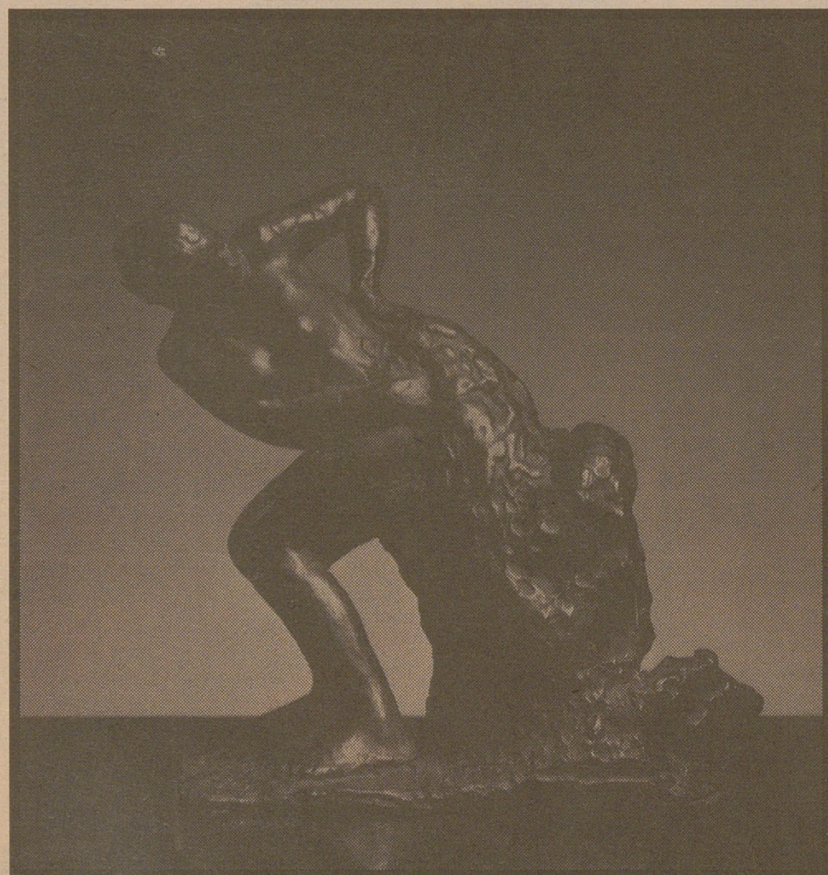


Photo courtesy of Dayton Art Institute

Edgar Degas viewed sculpture, such as his "Seated Woman Wiping Her Left Side" (circa 1900), as a way to improve his painting.

of bourgeois Parisians at leisure are its most prominent characteristics, Degas is generally associated with his popular paintings of ballet dancers and cabaret singers. No edition of Impressionist dinner plates or matchbook covers would be complete without a pastel *danseuse* in the glare of footlights.

Yet a world of difference exists between Monet, Renior and Degas.

During his five-decade career, Degas ceaselessly pursued the definitions of form and movement as well as the effects of color and light. Sculpture — the least known branch of his *oeuvre* — proves this: The Dayton Art Institute's *Edgar Degas: The Many Dimensions of a Master French Impressionist* (through Oct. 9) includes all his sculptures cast in bronze from his original waxes (as well as selected paintings, prints, drawings and pastels) and revises the common perception of Degas as an interchangeable prettifier of 19th-century Paris.

Sculpture subjects directly parallel Degas' two-

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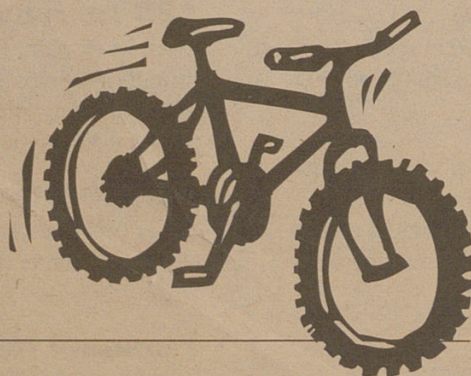
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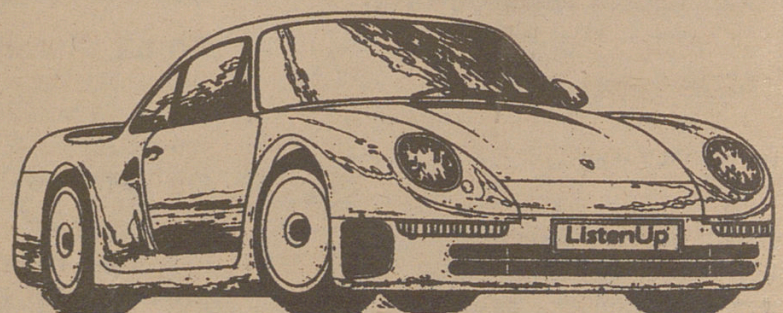
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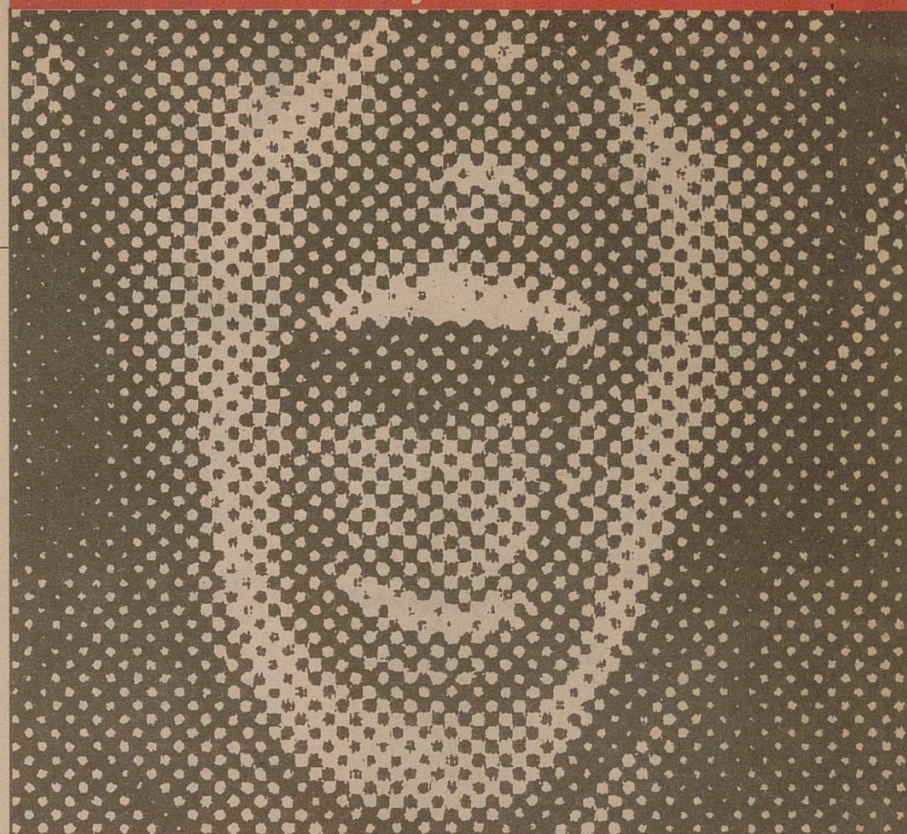
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