

The Ampersand

UIC Honors College

March 1999

Important Dates

<i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Application Deadline</i>	<i>March 12</i>
<i>Spring Break</i>	<i>March 13 - 21</i>
<i>Phi Kappa Phi Membership Deadline</i>	<i>March 19</i>
<i>Phi Eta Sigma Membership Deadline</i>	<i>March 24</i>

Royalty in Our Midst!

On Saturday, February 6th, UIC's homecoming court was recognized at halftime of the Flames vs. Detroit men's basketball game.

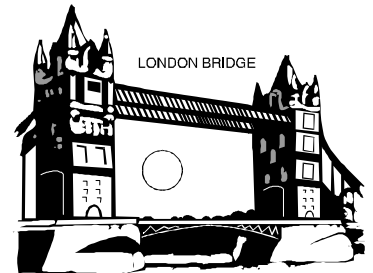
The following Honors College students are members of the 1999 Homecoming Court: Suzanne Chau, Shannon Fricilone, David Limsui, and Cherie Siu. Congratulations!



London, Here We Come!

Congratulations to the group of 20 students who have been selected to participate in the 1999 Great Cities London program. This study abroad program focuses on studying two of the great cities of the world: Chicago and London. Prior to departing for London, the students will attend 5 Saturday morning orientation sessions that will focus on setting up research projects and groups. The research the students will be involved with will focus on comparing and contrasting specific urban issues in both Chicago and London.

Following the orientation sessions and final exams of the spring term, the students will depart for London on May 8th. During their four-week stay in London, they will be living in flats in the northwest area of the city. They will continue to conduct their research while visiting specific sites in London and exploring all that this fascinating city has to offer.



Upon their return from London, the students will have an opportunity to apply for an internship through Mayor Daley's office.

The Honors College students selected for this year's program are: Adam Andersen, Shrujal Baxi, Michiko Goto, Nicholas Gowen, Rebecca Hatch, Amit Kalra, Vandana Khungar, Kimberly Lojeck, Nupoor Panchal, Nirali Shah, and Ravi Shah.

Congratulations and have a wonderful and productive trip!

Don't forget to check out the Honors College web page (<http://www.hc.uic.edu>) to see photos of the March 6th Honors College Ball. The photos will be posted the week of March 8th.

Focus on a Fellow: Dr. Robert Mrtek

by Nirali Shah

“*Primum Non Nocere.*” First do no harm. What is the meaning of this old Hippocratic dictum? Meet Dr. Robert Mrtek, my Honors College Fellow, and let him define this phrase for you.

A member of UIC’s distinguished medical college faculty, Dr. Mrtek has a lot to say about the field of medicine and life in general. “First do no harm” is a phrase that Dr. Mrtek believes medicine should stand by. The role of a physician is to take in a patient, give him or her advice, and be as certain as possible that the advice given and/or action taken will do the patient no harm. As Dr. Mrtek stated, “If you are an artist, painter or writer, you have the luxury of contemplating problems until the solution seems evident and you can test it before producing any results. You develop something and then redevelop it. You write and do rewrites. You have time to bring forth a burst of creativity and ponder it. Health professionals, like airline pilots, do not have that luxury.”

What Dr. Mrtek believes is so alluring about the field of medicine is the knowledge that while the possibility of doing the patient harm always exists, there is an infinite number of opportunities to do good. Thus, through the application of evidence-based medicine, which includes bringing the very best and most current research and evidence into consideration, one will have the best resources with which to benefit the patient. Medicine can be filled with uncertainty and unusual problems. It is the role of the physician to make decisions based on given evidence, which, above all, will do no harm.

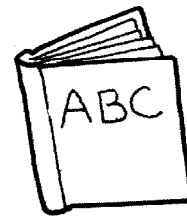
In addition to being a mentor to medical students and residents, Dr. Mrtek also devotes his time to Honors College students as a fellow to many pre-med majors. He periodically offers an Honors Seminar called “Science of Subjectivity.” His seminar deals with learning about the differences in the way people feel about things through the use of qualitative value measurements. The course addresses the idea that through diversity there can be “...several, but equally valid” ways of looking at something. Watch for this seminar in the future, as it’s sure to fill up fast!

In his final piece of advice, Dr. Mrtek advises students to think for themselves but that they should never be reluctant to “test their proposed solutions amongst the wisdom of colleagues and teachers present.” His belief is that in order to maximize the value of education, one should develop many possibilities and use other sources “as mirrors and sounding boards.” Our advisors, elders and peers have something to say, and we can learn a great deal from those who have been there before us. “Life is not easy, but do not become overwhelmed by uncertainty and turn inwards. Turn to others.”

Tutoring at the Indo- American Center

by Naila Mohsin

“Abdul, come back here!” the tutor exclaims as she runs after the 10 year old feisty little boy. Abdul giggles as he runs off to other side of the community center, and is eventually caught by his dedicated tutor who leads him back to the tutoring room.



Farhan, with the book “The Adventures of the Yellow School Bus” open in front of him, concentrates on the three syllable words that seem to plague his life at that single moment. The tutor helps him sound out the words and he successfully completes the page. He looks up at the tutor and smiles with contentment.

Puja reads the word problem (concocted by the tutor) about “Princess Puja” who goes to the store to buy a tiara, a magic wand, and fairy dust but is unsure if she has enough money. Puja stares at the problem with big eyes, and begins to scribble down numbers in an effort to help “Princess Puja” solve her problem.

From feisty to passive, outgoing to shy, loquacious to laconic, all of these children participate in a weekly tutoring program every Sunday from noon - 2:00. The Indo-American Society hosts a tutoring/mentoring program for children ranging in ages from 6-14. Located on the city’s far north side, the program responds to the needs of families from the surrounding community, which is largely comprised of South Asian immigrants.

(cont’d. on page 4)

Welcome Back to Your Childhood

by Sagun Desai

On January 29th, for two hours of our crazy college lives, we were taken back in time. “Welcome Back to Your Childhood” was the theme of our first Honors College Social of the semester. In an attempt to ease the anxieties and anticipation that came with the start of the second semester, the members of HCAB came together to transform the lounge in Burnham Hall into an atmosphere more representative of our younger, more care-free years. Initially, some would laugh upon entering a room full of Legos, Pictionary boards, and board games. But, would you laugh at a room full of books, tutors, and stressed faces? I think not. The latter seems more typical of a college atmosphere.

It lends to a greater idea—the tensions that surround a college student. Among these are living on your own, keeping up grades, applying to graduate school or job, being in a relationship, and getting involved. Take each one of these tensions and, considering one’s future, evaluate the importance of each one. I’m willing to bet that each one would rank pretty highly in the grand scheme of things.

Now look back to that which was laughed at earlier in this article (the childhood “stuff”) and evaluate its importance. What should the answer be? EQUAL IMPORTANCE—of course!! Too often in our lives, we are too busy stressing out while taking steps to ensure our future. “All work, no play” seems to be our ideal motto and *only* motto. We need to find a balance and allow ourselves to be kids again every once in awhile. From time to time, we need to experience the carefree feelings that we enjoyed during our childhood. So, I propose this idea—for each item in the “College Life” column that applies to your crazy college life, take the time to be a kid and counter it with a “Be a Kid Again” activity.

“College Life”

- worrying about grades
- running for office
- starting a relationship
- applying to graduate school
- ending a relationship
- taking MCATs
- choosing a career
- planning a schedule
- taking on a new activity
- facing the problems of living on your own
- paying your own bills
- finding a job
- cramming for a test



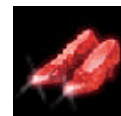
“Be a Kid Again”



- play kickball or four-square
- go to the park & swing on the swings
- play tag
- jump rope with friends (not just for exercise!)
- watch a cartoon (does not include Simpsons, South Park, or King of the Hill)
- get ice cream from the ice cream man
- run through the sprinkler/play catch with water balloons
- color in a coloring book (and feel free to go outside the lines!)
- play “Duck, Duck, Goose”
- finger paint
- go roller-skating or skateboarding
- play hopscotch
- play with Legos
- go to Kiddie Land

Red Shoes Revived Here Soon!

The literary journal formerly known as **Red Shoes Review** has indeed been **revived!** The 1999 edition will be available in the Honors College in early April, and it promises to be a collector’s item. We promise you compelling, thought provoking, amusing, insightful, heartwrenching creative works by some of UIC’s most talented undergrads. You’ll laugh, you’ll cry - you’ll get your money’s worth!



The entire campus is already abuzz with anticipation, so be sure to watch your email and read the next Ampersand for more information.

(And if you ask nice, the editors may even be willing to autograph your personal copy of Red Shoes Revived!)

Reviews

by Madhuri Ventrapagada

Back in December, I was looking for a book to read over winter break. I wandered into a bookstore where a book titled *The Hidden History of the Human Race* (by Michael A. Cremo, et al) caught my eye. It turned out to be an awesome choice!

This book made me really think about science and what I believe just because of what I read. Scientific thought about modern humans says that we (*Homo sapiens*) evolved just a few hundred thousand years ago and before us there were other humans, just not as evolved as us. This book says that this thinking is not true and instead there is evidence that modern humans have lived for millions of years. The authors claim that this evidence has been covered up or discounted. This book is interesting because it presents a view of how the scientific establishment works and what happens when people go against the grain.

(cont’d. on next page)

Reviews

(cont'd. from page 3)

Since the Academy Awards are coming up, here are some thoughts on two movies that I have seen recently: *Shakespeare in Love* and *Elizabeth*. Both of these movies are nominated for Oscars, but I feel that *Shakespeare* will probably win more awards because the actors are better known and it is a comedy, but *Elizabeth* was an exceptional movie as well.

In *Shakespeare in Love*, William Shakespeare loses his gift to write, just when his sponsor desperately needs him to regain his skill and produce a play so that he can pay off his debts. There is also a love story between Shakespeare and a rich young lady (Gwyneth Paltrow) who aspires to more be than a wife and mother.

Throw into the mix a little intrigue with competition between Christopher Marlowe and Shakespeare, and last but not least, those who do not want Romeo and Juliet to succeed for their own petty reasons. This is a funny and heartfelt story, one that is refreshing and different from all the mindless thriller movies out right now.

Elizabeth is an excellent movie, a drama about England's Queen Elizabeth I who ascends to the throne after her sister Mary dies. At the heart of the movie is the battle between Catholics and Protestants and how Elizabeth eventually is able to effectively rule the country but at the cost of never being able to truly love anyone.

So when you need a break from studying, I can suggest spending your time on any of the above diversions!

Tutoring

(cont'd. from page 2)

The goals of the Indo-American Society tutoring program are to help the children with their homework, to help them develop their learning skills, and to work towards building a mentoring relationship with the children.

Farhan, Abdul, and Puja are examples of children who are extremely intelligent, but whose educational and social progress may be affected by circumstance. Many of the children for whom this program caters to have only recently immigrated to the US, or whose parents have not yet comfortably adjusted to American culture. As a result, a possible language barrier may impede the children's progress and assimilation into the system. The tutors, volunteers mainly from the surrounding neighborhood and Chicago area universities, not only help the children with their schoolwork, but also serve as role models and mentors to the children.

If you enjoy working with children, the Indo-American Society is receptive to any person who is interested in volunteering for this program. Not only is this program beneficial for the children who utilize the facility, it proffers a rewarding and enjoyable experience for the volunteer tutors. Volunteers are encouraged to tutor at least twice a month in order to build a mentoring relationship with the children, though any participation is welcome.

The program takes place each Sunday from noon until 2 p.m. at the Indo American Center. The center is located at 6328 N. California, which is at the corner of Devon and California, next to Osco. If you are interested in volunteering to be a tutor, contact Binita Choksi (choksib@baxter.com) or Vikram Sanghani (sanghani@vikora.net) for more information.



Staying in Touch

by Zishan Khan

"Living in the past is for cowards and losers," according to the former head coach of the Chicago Bears, Mike Ditka. I don't think I agree completely with "The Coach," but I concur that life can pass you by if you insist on obsessing about past events and occurrences that cannot be changed. You shouldn't dwell on the past, but rather, learn from it.

A few days ago I ran into an old high school chum. We caught up on each other's lives and talked about the good old days in high school and junior high. After this conversation, I thought of the few friends from high school I actually keep in contact with. It boggled my mind that all the friendships and experiences I shared with all those people could just seem like they never occurred. How many of your high school friends do you stay in touch with on a regular basis? You might be as shocked as I was with your answer.

This also made me question whether or not these friendships were genuine if I hardly ever talk to them anymore. Or is it that everyone goes on with his or her respective lives since that's what our culture and environment seems to dictate? Personally, I think it is a combination of the two.

Of course, as college students, we all have to study and honor many other demanding obligations. Between classes, organizations, work, and family commitments, it's easy to get caught up in our own lives and forget about others. Yet, when we need help, it's those "others" we turn to.

As you ponder these points, I'd like to make a suggestion. Please cherish the friends you have and try to make the most of your experiences with them, for these bonds can last for a lifetime. And, please utilize the past (and present) as an invaluable resource you can learn from. Cherish the moments spent with the ones you care about and love. The demands of college life can make these vital experiences seem insignificant when in reality, they are critical to your future.

Happy (Chinese) New Year!

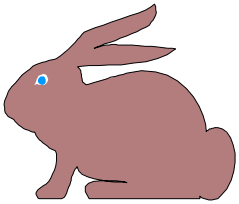
by Becky Chan

While most people in the United States finished celebrating the new year at the beginning of January, the Chinese and many others of the Far East (Koreans, Thai, and Vietnamese) have just started to party.

For the Chinese, the celebration began on Feb. 16 (according to the lunar calendar) and usually lasts for about 2 weeks. During this time, many Chinese families spend time together enjoying traditional food, playing games, exchanging lucky money, and honoring their ancestors.

This year's celebration in Chicago's Chinatown was on Sunday, February 21st. My friends and I met early

for some *dim sum*, which literally means, "to touch the heart" with small servings of Chinese delicacies. Most restaurants in Chinatown offer dim sum from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on weekends.



This year's parade started promptly at 1 p.m. Participants included members of Chicago's Chinese community (some wearing bunny ears to highlight the year of the rabbit), marching bands, and various interest groups from the Chicagoland area. And, being a few days before the mayoral election, the timing was perfect for Chicago politicking! A large float encouraged parade watchers to vote for Mayor Daley. As an example of how multicultural Chicago is, parade-watchers were given fortune cookies with messages inside advocating the Irish-American Mayor Daley's re-election! (By the way, Chinese-Americans invented fortune cookies in San Francisco; few in China know of them.)

After the parade there were some political and community speeches, as well as an opportunity for some to head to the various shops and gift stores in Chinatown. Merchants say that the day of the celebration in Chinatown is their busiest day every year, as many people from the suburbs come to the city to celebrate, eat and shop.

My favorite part of the celebration was the lion dancing and the lighting of the firecrackers. According to legend, in ancient China, a terrible monster named *Nian* (Year) brought great misfortune to the farming villages. The Chinese later discovered the monster's

weaknesses: the color red and loud noises. Thereafter, every "year", they painted their villages red to ward off the monster and lit firecrackers to scare away the evil spirits. This is why red is a dominant color, and considered lucky in Chinese culture.

The traditional Chinese lion dance is performed by those who do kung fu (as it requires strength, and agility) and symbolizes good fortune and luck. In the New Year celebration, firecrackers often accompany it. The lion dances are also done for Chinese restaurant and business openings and sometimes marriages. Two people perform the lion dance, one standing in the front controlling the lion's head from under the costume and a second person, who controls the lion's tail. The lion dance is done when two people move the lion according to the music (of drum, gong, and cymbals). They must make the lion look as if it is greeting others, walking, climbing, and eating (auspicious foods such as oranges, tangerines, and lettuce during the New Year celebration). This requires great coordination to make the dance successful.

I'd like to dispel a common misconception that the lion dance and the dragon dances are the same. They are not. The dragon dance requires a group of performers holding the dragon (which is much longer than the lion) with sticks and all moving in the same steps, so that the dragon dancers are never hidden underneath a costume.

Chinatown was very crowded for this New Year celebration. I enjoyed being part of the excitement as I watched the lion dancers go from business to business down Wentworth Avenue. The lion "ate" the food given to it by the shopkeepers and restaurateurs and other business owners who lined the streets. It also lit the long red strings of exploding firecrackers, and the ensuing noise prompted one onlooker to proclaim that their earwax was all cleared!



If you have never experienced a Chinese New Year celebration in Chinatown, I strongly encourage you to attend next year's festivities. For information on next year's celebration, call the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce at (312) 326-5320.

A Gearhead's Dream: the 91st Annual Chicago Auto Show

by Rajeev Garg

On February 19, I made my yearly pilgrimage to the Chicago Auto Show at McCormick Place. I had heard many great reviews about the show when it made its debut earlier this year in Detroit. Over the past month, I have been meticulously tracking their reviews over the Internet. I couldn't wait to critique these cars up close and in person. Besides that, I needed a break from midterms. The cars at the show were awesome! I have been going to the Auto Show for the past several years and it is amazing to see how cars change so dramatically. Cars today are safer, faster, and just more fun to drive. I would love to talk about all the cars that I had the opportunity to see, but this article would probably turn into a book. Instead I will focus on a few of the exhibits that really caught the crowd's (and my) attention.

I have always loved European engineering, so I was anxious to see their new innovations and designs. I also looked at what the competition (the American and Japanese automakers) had to offer. My first stop was BMW's new All-Activity Vehicle (AAV), the X5. BMW claims that their decision to build this truck was in response to the growing sport-utility market. I also feel that they needed to recapture the sales they were losing to rivals Mercedes-Benz with their M-Class, and Lexus with the RX300. With that in mind, the X5 was designed to be better than both of these. BMW wanted the X5 to be a vehicle with the luxury and comfort of a sports sedan, but the off-road handling of a sport-utilities truck. At first glance, you immediately notice this SUV's sleek appearance. Just by its look you can tell that this is a BMW, a company who has had a long heritage of building performance cars.

Next on my route was a stop at Cadillac. I got a chance to check out one of the new innovations they will be offering in their 1999 models. This new technology is called Night Vision. Basically, what it does is use infrared light to measure the heat given off by different objects in front of the car and project this thermo-image into a little corner of the driver's windshield. Cadillac claims that a driver will be better able to see what is in front of them at night and thus avoid their chances of an accident. Cadillac says the idea stemmed from the military's use of infrared light to detect movement at a distance.

Next on my agenda was the SAAB, the Swedish carmaker. Their basic philosophy is to build performance cars that do not compromise driver safety. SAAB has a long history as an aeronautical company that has built everything from jet fighters (the SAAB Viggen) to the Learjet and this heritage is reflected in the design of their cars. Everything from the cockpit-like feel of the dashboard, to the turbocharged engine, to the aerodynamic body screams aeronautics.

Additionally, SAAB was recently named the safest car in Europe by NCAP, an independent European company. To illustrate their commitment to safety, part of their display featured one of its new 9-5 sports wagons that was involved in a 75 mph head-on collision. The entire car was crushed in the front. The passenger compartment, however, was completely unharmed. A representative even showed how all the doors of the car could still open and close in such a severe accident. It was an amazing and impressive display.

Up next was Sweden's other automaker, Volvo. Like SAAB, Volvo has also been a company that has been big on safety. New for 1999 is the S80, which Volvo claims to be the safest car in the world. Besides offering the standard front and side airbags, the S80 is one of the first production cars to offer an inflatable curtain airbag. In the event of a side-impact or rollover, a large curtain will inflate from the side pillar of the roof and protect the occupants from glass and caving in metal. A cut away of the structure of the car showed how it was designed to absorb the energy of different types of impacts.



The new Beetle

Volkswagen was my next stop. Hoping to capitalize on baby boomers' sentimental recollections of the "Bugs" of their youth, last year they released the "new" Beetle and received a huge market response. They

followed up with this year's completely redesigned Jetta. The Jetta has everything a college student could want in a car: space, comfort, performance, and safety.

To show that that their company is environmentally conscious, Volkswagen gave out molded Beetles that were made out of ground plastic car parts. They also had a racecar rally that children could compete in and receive prizes. They wouldn't, however, let me compete. It was only for children under 11. I'm writing a letter to Volkswagen about this!

My last stop was to Mercedes-Benz. It was here that I saw the most amazing car I had ever seen: the new S-Class. This is pretty much "driving for (well-to-do) dummies." The first thing you notice on the inside is a large screen called the COMAND Center. Using this screen, you operate all of the necessary functions of the car. Included are the four-zone climate control (each passenger decides his or her ideal temperature), voice activated telephone (of course, it recognizes your voice), a programmable 10 speaker Bose sound system, and your own Global Position Satellite Navigation System. (GPS for short). Drivers are also pampered with fans, air cushions, and self-adjusting spring-less shock absorbers (for that "driving on air" feeling).

The car is also linked via satellite to a central computer. If you are ever involved in an accident or your car is stolen, the central computer at Mercedes-Benz will track down your car and take the necessary measures. As you probably suspected, all these bells and whistles don't come cheap; the base price is \$69,700! Just sitting in this vehicle for several minutes and pretending to own it was an awesome experience!

I encourage all of you car aficionados to take a trip to the Chicago Auto Show when it rolls around next February. It's a great place to have fun and look for the car of your dreams. I wonder if the car of the future will fly?