

On the town

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Musicians, actors join for Traffic Jam

Jazzman Kurt Elling; bluesman Buddy Guy; poet Nikki Giovanni; Chicago authors Stuart Dybek, Billy Lombardo and Alex Kotlowitz; and cabaret duo Kiki & Herb are among the performers telling tales during Steppenwolf Theatre's Traffic Jam beginning Thursday.

The multidisciplinary

minifest brings together musicians, actors and writers who team up for performances that expound upon the American experience.



Barbara Vitello
Night life

Traffic Jam continues through Dec. 18 at the theater at 1650 N. Halsted St., Chicago.

Tickets range from \$15 to \$55. They're available online at www.steppenwolf.org or by phone at (312) 335-1650.

"Drop in" comedy at Streets of Woodfield: Holiday shoppers can pick up a few free laughs today at the Chicago Comedy Company, a recent addition to the suburban comedy scene.

The company hosts an improv open house, with ensemble members performing 10- to 15-minute shows hourly from noon to 6 p.m. at its Streets of Woodfield home, 601 N. Martingale Road, Suite 171, Schaumburg.

"We want to give shoppers a place to rest, relax, recharge and most of all, laugh," founder Steve Matuszak said.

For information on C3, see www.chicagocomedyco.com or call (847) 240-0380.

Holiday brews: Dirty Nellie's Pub showcases holiday and winter beers during December as part of its Twelve Beers of Christmas event.

Featured beers include: Bells Winter White, Delirium Noel, Goose Island Christmas, Great Lakes Christmas Ale, Sam Adams Winter Lager and Sierra Nevada Celebration among others. Dirty Nellie's is located at 180 N. Smith St., Palatine. (847) 358-9150.



PHOTOS BY MARK WELSH/DAILY HERALD

Photography hangs on the walls at Innjoy where, from left, Michelle Post, Amanda Weiss, Katey Flynn, Kristina Schiro, Morgan Cruil and Jillian Gorski, all of Chicago, soak up the atmosphere.

Part of the mix

BY JUAN CARLOS HERNANDEZ
Medill News Service

Take funk. Serve up some high-end bar food. Welcome anyone 21 to 71. Mix in some photography, obscure videos, and then blend them all in a dark bar with a crowd that's a mishmash of cool, trendy, yuppie and artsy, and you get the Innjoy.

The mix could be a bad formula, but at this Wicker Park bar it creates a kaleidoscope that combines styles and bends genres to produce a mix that's exactly what owner and manager Rich Kewitz wanted.

His goal was to reflect the North Side neighborhood's eclectic makeup.

"We've got young professionals, artists,



Hilary Smith and Bill Lesniak, both of Chicago, enjoy Innjoy.

some old residents, different races, different tastes, just a lot of different people," Kewitz said. "We wanted to reflect that and attract them all."

The bar on West Division Street, like many neighborhood businesses, calls an old storefront home. It was a hardware store before Kewitz acquired it and transformed it four years ago. He kept the clear glass windows that allow passers-by to peek inside. And now the deep beats of dance music are drawing them in. Kewitz smiles and sips a Peroni beer, pleased at the bar's successful formula.

In his quest to be every bar for everybody, he has lined up a combination that will probably please anyone who walks in. That means change is a constant at the Innjoy.

To achieve that, he's painted the walls a more subdued color. They are now an earthy yellow instead of a key-lime green. He has also changed the chairs and booths to accommodate different crowds. A series of

Innjoy finds success with blend of ages, music and atmosphere

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Contact Barbara Vitello at (847) 427-4532, fax (847) 427-1301 or e-mail bvitello@dailyherald.com.

Calling all chocolate lovers

BY JUAN CARLOS HERNANDEZ

Medill News Service

Wind, rain and darker days. That cool whisper in the air is telling you that winter is near. And there's no way to beat it unless you move South or to the tropics or you hibernate.

But there is one sure way to warm your heart and belly without leaving or sleeping. Spell out and savor this solution in the same manner that it melts in your mouth. C-H-O-C-O-L-A-T-E. Yes! There are plenty of great places to relish this sensuous treat, so sharpen that sweet tooth and indulge.

You can even cross off some names on your Christmas list while you're at it.

Start your day with a sugar rush: Ethel's Chocolate Lounge has three locations to satisfy any urge. Check out the truffles and warm up with some hot cocoa and other concoctions at the Magnificent Mile location at Westfield North Bridge, 520 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Hours are 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Saturday and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. (312) 464-9330.

The Lincoln Park location, at 819 W. Armitage Ave., Chicago, resembles a doll house. The ambience is hip but homey. Grab a seat and relax an hour or two away. Hours are 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday to Thursday; 11 a.m. to midnight Friday and Saturday. (773) 281-0029.

The Evanston location is located at 527 Davis St. Hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Thursday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday and noon to 8 p.m. Sunday. (847) 424-0790.

Midday indulgence: If your sugar rush wanes around lunch time, fuel up with some food at the Unique So Chique Tea & Chocolate Room at 4600 N. Magnolia St., Suite C, Chicago.

It's the perfect place to rest before you continue your chocolate adventure. This room is a boutique, gift shop and cafe all in one. The menu is light and tasty. Get soup, a salad or a sandwich or choose from omelets and pizzas. Hours are 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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