

## Our Town

[snip] **Land of shrinking opportunity.** Two of the world's leading cancer geneticists, Neal Copeland and Nancy Jenkins, are leaving the National Cancer Institute because of Bush administration restrictions on stem-cell research. They were set

to go to Stanford, because California voters had approved \$3 billion for such research. But now that antiabortion groups have tied up the money in court, they're going to Singapore's Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology. Irving

Weissman, head of the Stanford lab, told the San Jose *Mercury News*, "When they do their work, it will be for Singapore. They'll conduct their clinical trials in Singapore. The first place their work will be patented and used will be Singapore." —HH

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cess in attracting an audience, its following hasn't resulted in the sort of sustained paid advertising Podshow is designed to generate: the film *House of Wax*, starring Paris Hilton, is the show's lone sponsor to date. Still, Curry remains undaunted. "We're willing to subsidize our hunch that Madge will be something very big," says Curry. "This is going to be a huge community that is very tight-knit, thanks in no small part to Richard Bluestein."

"I'm ready to take on the world," Bluestein says. "Howard Stern may call himself the 'King of All Media,' but I'm about to become the Empress of All Things Tech, Politic, Media, and Yeast. Honey, everything's coming up Weinstein!" ■



LAURA PARK

### Follow the Money

## A Million Here, a Million There . . .

*The City Council's cut of the 2006 budget.*

By Mick Dumke

A sense of good cheer pervaded the last City Council meeting before the holidays, on December 14, where the aldermen finished weeks of discussing Mayor Daley's 2006 city budget by making a few amendments and signing off on it 48 to 1. Fourth Ward alderman Toni Preckwinkle was the sole no vote; the 33rd Ward's Richard Mell was absent.

Some aldermen, led by the Ninth Ward's Anthony Beale, would still like to add another nickel to the budget's 20-cent hike in cigarette taxes to cover the salaries of an additional staff member for each ward. Beale says his office receives around 100,000 constituent phone calls each year. "The job of alderman has really evolved over the years," he says. "We now have e-mail and faxes. We haven't upgraded our staff and offices to keep up with the times." In the meantime they'll just have to get by with what they've been allotted. Here's how it breaks down.

- Total 2006 City Council budget,

- including salaries, supplies, research costs, meeting costs, and ward-office expenses: \$39,677,808
- Percent increase from 2005: 7.99
- Percent increase in the national consumer price index over the past year: 3.5
- 2006 salary for an alderman: \$98,125
- 2005 salary: \$94,805
- Percent increase: 3.5
- Percent increase in the council's budget since the first city budget Richard M. Daley introduced as mayor, in 1990: 71.6
- Percent increase in the consumer price index over the same period: 51.2
- 2006 salary for council members in New York City: \$90,000
- 2006 salary for council members in Houston: \$44,400
- 1990 aldermanic salary: \$40,000
- Value of 1990 aldermanic salary in 2005 dollars: \$60,474
- Number of pay hikes aldermen have given themselves since 1990: 6
- Number of aldermen who've refused pay increases since 2002: 2
- Salary taken by the two, Margaret Laurino of the 39th Ward and Eugene Schuler of the 47th Ward: \$85,000

The past 16 budgets have included funds to cover the salaries of 50 aldermen, 3 full-time staffers for each, 10 administrators and aides to serve the council as a whole, and up to 25 staffers for the council's finance

committee, which oversees bonds, taxes, legal settlements, workers' compensation, and council spending. But each of the council's 19 committees also has a budget for "personnel services," which committee chairmen use to hire more staff. Tom Allen, alderman of the 38th Ward and chairman of the committee on transportation and the public way, says the chairmen like having a lump sum for hiring because they need "flexibility."

- Number of salaried council staff, not counting aldermen, listed in the 2005 (and the 2006) budget: 184
- Number (not counting aldermen) listed in November 2005 payroll records: 290
- Number of salaried staff listed in 2006 for president pro tem Danny Solis, the alderman who presides over the council in the mayor's absence: 4
- Number for finance committee chairman Ed Burke: 27
- Number of council staffers who earn more than aldermen: 6
- 2006 salary of the highest-paid council staffer, finance committee chief administrative officer Marla Kaiden: \$148,452
- Top 2005 salary not itemized in 2005 budget, for chief administrative officer Charles Lomanto: \$106,572

Staff titles don't always explain what the people who hold them do.

Legislative aides for one alderman or committee may help research or even draft ordinances; other aides are essentially administrative or clerical assistants. (Most of them are paid under the "personnel services" line item.) One of the longest titles is assistant council committee secretary in charge of committee rooms. "They do a variety of different things for the entire City Council," says Schuler.

- Number of assistant council committee secretaries in charge of committee rooms in 2006: 2
- Salaries for assistant council committee secretaries in charge of committee rooms: \$57,036 and \$61,188
- Number of legislative aides listed in the 2005 (and the 2006) budget: 2
- Number of salaried legislative aides listed in payroll records in 2005: 87
- Top salary for legislative aides listed in payroll records in 2005: \$78,828

The responsibilities of and funding for the council's legislative committees, some of which have been consolidated, are also wide-ranging.

- Number of committees in 2006: 19
- Number in 1990: 27
- Percent increase in funding for committee staffing and expenses since 1990: 61
- 2006 budget for the finance committee, the council's biggest:

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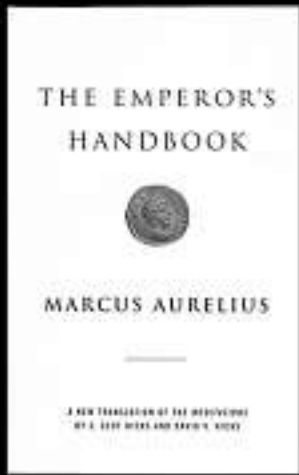
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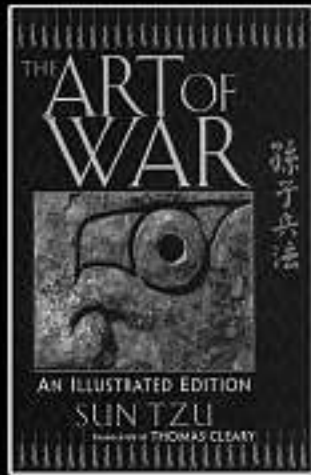
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## Our Town

[snip] **A military historian's perspective.** Hebrew University's Martin van Creveld, author of *The Transformation of War*, writes at forward.com, "For misleading the American people, and launching the most foolish war since Emperor Augustus in 9 B.C. sent his legions into Germany and lost them, Bush deserves to be impeached and, once he has been removed from office, put on trial along with the rest of the president's men." —HH

continued from page 12

- \$2,060,463
- 2005 finance committee budget: \$1,927,084
- 2006 budget for the parks and recreation committee, the council's smallest: \$81,820
- 2005 parks and recreation budget: \$74,816
- 2006 health committee budget: \$84,816
- 2005 health committee budget: \$77,614
- 1990 health committee budget: \$100,800
- 1990 budget for the committee on ports, wharves, and bridges: \$60,220
- 2006 budget: 0 ("Was it around after we settled Fort Dearborn maybe?" says Alderman Allen, whose transportation committee has taken over this committee's responsibilities. He adds, "What the hell is a wharf?")

The council budget also includes several pots of money for things such as "legal, technical, medical and professional services, appraisals, consultants, printers, court reporters, and other incidental contractual services" (a total of \$3,206,042). As president pro tem, Solis can authorize dipping into one of them; the 50th Ward's Bernard Stone, who holds the largely symbolic post of vice mayor, can authorize dipping into another and Burke, as finance committee chair, into two others.

- 2006 contingency funds to be spent at the discretion of the president pro tem: \$4,000
  - 2006 contingency funds to be spent at the discretion of the vice mayor: \$104,970
  - 2006 contingency funds to be spent at the discretion of the finance committee chair: \$1,433,077
  - Total council funds directly controlled by Burke in 2006, including the finance committee budget and contingency funds: \$3,493,535
- There's also a pot of money to cover honorary ceremonies held at the beginning of council meetings.
- 2006 budget for "Expense in connection with recognition and awards to citizens of Chicago for acts of heroism": \$1,000



Alice Danhoffer recites the rosary at Rose Calvero's house; an ambassador wraps the Pilgrim Virgin for her next trip.



JOE DAVIS

### Active Cultures

## Driving Miss Mary

*Keeping up a little-known Catholic tradition is getting harder.*

By Jeffrey Felshman

For the past week the Pilgrim Virgin has stood on a table in the basement of the Cannones' bungalow on the western edge of the city, framed by an arc of tiny white

lights and flanked by candles and vases full of flowers. Now it's someone else's turn to have the statue for a week, and an honor guard from the Ambassadors of Mary has come to take it away.

The five women and one man who make up the honor guard are sitting around two tables with the Cannones and their friends. The Cannones, who've hosted the statue three times, seem to know the removal rite as well as the honor guard does: five decades of the rosary, followed by the Ritual of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Act of Consecration of the Family to the Sacred Heart. Their voices hum. "Gratefully we adore you. . . . Stay

with us, for the night is coming on. . . . Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation." They pray together for half an hour, then the Cannones add their own wrinkle to the ceremony, leading the group in singing "Viva Maria" and "E l'Ora Che Pia" in Italian.

Frank Cannone, who moved to the U.S. from Italy 42 years ago, says most of the people who've come each evening during the past week to say prayers and have cake and coffee are also older people from the old country. His children haven't come. "They're Catholic, but they go to work, they're busy," he says. "They have to drive an hour, an hour and a half to get here. Maybe next time." His wife has signed up to get the



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[snip] **Do you speak Microsoft?** According to Russell Mokhiber and Robert Weissman's "Focus on the Corporation" column, "Of the world's 100 largest economies, 47 are nations, and 53 are corporations." —HH

The founder  
"thought it would  
say something to  
see men coming  
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where it's always  
women. You can  
get women to  
do just about  
anything when it  
comes to church.  
When it comes to  
men it's difficult."

statue again the same time next year.

Anthony Ross, a 72-year-old wearing a blue blazer and a tie, is the official custodian of this Pilgrim Virgin, one of 28 circulating in the Chicago area and northern Indiana. He's responsible for picking the statue up and dropping it off in his territory, which is bounded by Austin, Grand, Mannheim, and Lawrence. He rarely leaves town and has transported the statue practically every Saturday since 1990.

He and other custodians, all volunteers, report to the president of the Ambassadors of Mary, Pat Hackett, at the group's storefront headquarters on Diversey near Austin. Hackett says the custodians are always men, because the statues are three feet tall and weigh 25 pounds and because the founder of the organization "thought it would say something to see men coming into homes and doing devotions, where it's always women. You can get women to do just about anything when it comes to church. When it comes to men it's difficult."

Father James Mary Keane, a Chicago priest, founded the Ambassadors of Mary in 1946 to promote devotion to Mary. After Pope Pius XII declared 1954 a "Marian year," he set up the Pilgrim Virgin program with a replica of a statue in Fatima, Portugal, where an apparition of Mary allegedly spoke to three children in 1917. The organization's Web site explains that "most people are unable to make a

pilgrimage to Fatima. Our Lady, with characteristic humility and love, overcomes this difficulty by reversing the process. She becomes the Pilgrim." It wasn't an original idea—replicas of the Fatima statue have been blessed and sent out into the world since 1947. But the Ambassadors of Mary happily sent statues to parishes that requested them, and Hackett says that today more than 300 are being moved from home to home throughout the world every Saturday. "Through her 'Pilgrim Statues,'" states the Web site, Mary "is hurrying around the world collecting prayers and sacrifices in reparation for the sins committed against her Divine Son."

For the first 30 years the statues were made at Del Prado Statuary on Grand Avenue, and after it went out of business they were made in Northlake. For the past seven years they've been made in Annandale, Virginia. This new model weighs only 15 pounds. The Pilgrim Virgin in the Cannones' basement is a 25-pounder made in Northlake in 1991. One of the Cannones' friends drapes the statue in a cloth and carries it outside, settling it in the lap of Bridget Griffin, who's sitting in the front seat of a blue Mercury. She fastens the seat belt around both herself and the statue, and the three-car caravan heads off to the house of the woman who gets it next.

Rose Calvero, an 84-year-old widow who lives in Schiller Park, has already had the Pilgrim Virgin three times this year. When Ross became custodian there was a two-year waiting list to get the statue. Now he often has to call "repeaters" such as Calvero and ask them to take it.

Ross pulls into Calvero's driveway behind the Mercury, takes the Pilgrim Virgin from Griffin, and carries it into the front room of the tidy bungalow. He places it on a platform below a rose-festooned arch, next to two large rose-filled vases and two small ones holding single roses.

Once everyone's seated Ross asks Calvero if she would like the group to say a special prayer. She says she has a 17-year-old grandson with cancer, adding, "He starts chemo again this week." They all pray for him, then start the rosary.

Afterward everyone heads into Calvero's kitchen for cake and coffee. Audrey Restivo, who's been part of the honor guard for 16 years, says her niece had the statue when her daughter was diagnosed with lupus and the girl is fine now. Alice

## What Are You Wearing?



Aay Preston-Myint

## Amassments

**A**y Preston-Myint is a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He cofounded the Chicago Tapes Project, subject of an earlier *Reader* story, and teaches art to little kids.

*Did you make the shirt you're wearing?*

Yeah—over time I just start amassing fabric scraps I find. It's a collage. There's no real professional process. I just stick it all together and sew until it doesn't move anymore.

*I know you've done a lot of screen printing and painting.*

Well, there was the live-action screen printing, where I'd print T-shirts for people at galleries and parties. That was the bridge over into fabric- and fiber-oriented work.

*What are you working on now?*

I'm doing an all-purpose project about nuclear technology. Right now I'm making models of a plastic dining set where the table is a mushroom cloud and the chairs—like little stools—are nuclear reactors.... Also some soft-sculpture nuclear missiles.

*Soft nuclear missiles?*

There are 44 countries in the world that either can make a nuclear bomb or already have. I wanted to make a little plush toy bomb for each one of those. My friend and I came up with the idea last year.

*How many have you made so far?*

Only six: Argentina, Belgium, United States, South Africa, India, and Sweden. It's kind of tongue-in-cheek, like *Dr. Strangelove*, learning how to live with and love our failures. —Liz Armstrong

Danhoffer, who's been accompanying the statue for as long as Restivo, says most people don't request it for any special purpose. But, she says, "sometimes it seems that the statue goes to homes where it's most needed. I had it at my house one time where lightning struck my attic—it actually tarnished a vase of flowers while we were saying our prayers. Do you remember that, Carol?"

"Yeah, I do," says Carol Heidorn, nodding.

"Nothing happened," Danhoffer says. "It was like a miracle because she was there. It seems like when people have her they'll say, 'Oh, we really need her,' because this one is sick or that."

"This happened just in time, they'll say," says Ross.

"It does, it happens," says Restivo. "It's like she gives you strength before something may happen in your life."

Griffin says it's hard to give up the

statue. "You get it for a week, and when it leaves you feel sad."

"Oh yes! You feel so sad," say a couple people in unison.

"It's a special peace or something," says Danhoffer.

Calvero's 85th birthday is coming up in a few days, and Ross and the women sing "Happy Birthday."

Josephine Hargus, who's been an honor guard for ten years, has been sitting quietly during the discussion. Suddenly she says, "We all have a real devotion to the Blessed Mother."

"Oh yes," says Restivo. "She's a mother, and whenever you need something where do you go? You go to your mother. And that's it."

"They say he can't refuse his mother," Griffin says.

Restivo notes that Hargus recently lost her 49-year-old son to a heart attack. "She's getting solace from doing this," she says. "That's her strength."

Hargus smiles wanly. ☐

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