

# The Ampersand

Honors College Monthly FEBRUARY 2005

## Important Upcoming Dates

- February 17: Blood Drive
- February 18: Last Day to Drop a Class
- February 19: Tsunami Benefit Concert
- February 22: 40th Anniversary of UIC
- March 5: Honors College Ball

## “A Touch of Elegance”

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Honors College Ball  
March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005

by Judy Liu

The Honors College Advisory Board happily invites you to “A Touch of Elegance,” the Twelfth Annual Honors College Ball on Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

This year’s Ball will be in the elegant Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel, just east of North Michigan Avenue. As the cocktail hour begins, guests may mingle in the lobby, explore the Prince of Wales room, or bid on silent auction items in the Continental Room while enjoying the soft music of the string quartet. As the evening continues, guests will be welcomed into the palatial Crystal Ballroom. Under a gilded domed ceiling with crystal chandeliers and surrounded by mirrors, a three-course dinner will be served. After dessert, as the chandeliers dim, it will be hard to resist dancing over the glow of the illuminated dance floor.

The silent auction will feature graduate exam prep courses from both the Princeton Review and Kaplan, gift certificates to local restaurants and beauty salons, passes to several Chicago attractions, as well as other types of gifts. A portion of the proceeds will benefit an Honors College scholarship as well as Project ESTEEM, a student-run organization that helps disadvantaged students in Chicago build up self-esteem through academic success.

All guests are invited to this event, not only UIC honors college students and staff. Tickets are on sale in Burnham Hall at \$35 for students and \$50 for UIC faculty, staff, and alumni (or \$450 for a table of ten guests). Valet and self-parking will be available at the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.hc.uic.edu/>



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Weeks to go!  
HC Ball  
March 5 2005

## History of the Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel

by Jalene Lanter

Built by Chicago architects Rissman and Hirschfield early in the last century, the Millennium Knickerbocker hotel has a rich historical past. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the hotel will host the Twelfth Annual Honors College Ball and Silent Auction. As a member of the Historic Hotels of American program and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, one can be sure that it will continue to remain an important Chicago landmark well into this century.

First opened in May of 1927, the hotel was originally named the Davis Hotel after its first president and general manager. The name change to “Knickerbocker,” a Dutch word, occurred after Allan Hurst purchased the hotel in 1931. The grand Georgian style Crystal Ballroom was and still is a major attraction for guests. The 28-foot gold domed ceiling

arches over a dance floor uniquely illuminated by 760 fluorescent lamps. Covering 18 by 57 feet total, the dance floor was originally made up of glass squares.



Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel

Famous dance acts such as Veloz and Yolanda would perform for guests on the special floor. While Plexiglas has since replaced the glass, in the early days, a hotel engineer replaced cracked squares in under 60 seconds. He would then jump up and down on the new square to prove its stability. It is the only dance floor like it in Chicago and the largest in the world, according to the director of sales and marketing for the hotel.

Existing during the era of Prohibition, it is rumored that two of the smaller ballrooms located on the top floor of the Knickerbocker, were actually a speakeasy and casino. Al Capone's brother Ralph supposedly operated these illegal rooms, which could only be reached by one of the three passenger elevators. During a renovation in 1980, a secret door concealing a stairway that lead to the ground level was discovered lending some credibility to this rumor. While these rooms allegedly served illegal purposes, both have hand-painted murals detailing the Chicago skyline and trans-Atlantic ocean liners, which were popular at the hotel's conception.

The Knickerbocker also served more prestigious purposes, housing an officer's club on the mezzanine level for commissioned officers of the Armed Forces from 1942 through the Korean War. This level housed a 5,000-volume library and rooms adjacent to it were used for cards, lounging, and writing. Additionally, within the political spectrum, the hotel hosted the 1952 Republican National Convention. During this conference, Richard Nixon, only a junior senator, was quickly moved to a larger suite after he received

the nomination for vice president. Other politically significant guests staying at the hotel during the convention were, Governor Earl Warren (later Chief Justice) and Democrat John F. Kennedy who used the alias of Dave Powers.

With the advent of rock and roll musical guests such as the Rolling Stones spent time at the historical Knickerbocker hotel. Although they were not at the height of their fame, young women still waited for a glimpse of these celebrated rockers.

During the 1970's the Knickerbocker hotel was modernized and converted temporarily into the Playboy Towers. With the headquarters of Playboy Enterprises next door, Hufe Hefner established an apartment inside the hotel. The Playboy gift shop, bar, discotheque, and living room lounge occupied the lobby of the hotel. The company vacated and sold the hotel in 1979 and from then on it passed through multiple owners.

Now Regal Hotels International, who finally secured the hotel's purchase in 1995, operates the complex. With the original hotel costing a mere \$3 million to build, the 350-room property was renovated for \$18 million. The guest rooms were newly decorated in a European style and the lobby, ballroom, restaurant, exterior, and entrance have all been improved. It is a perfect setting for the tradition of the Twelfth Annual Honors College Ball.

Sources:

<http://historictraveler.away.com/primedia/knickerbocker.adp>

Millennium Knickerbocker Hotel  
Chicago Information Pamphlet

## Psi Chi National Honor Society

by Dariuz Barwacz

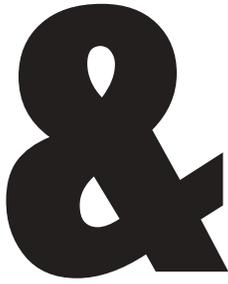
Psi Chi is the National Honor Society open to both graduate and undergraduate students that major in psychology. It was founded in 1929 and currently has over 1,000 chapters in the United States and Canada, and about 500,000 members worldwide. The UIC chapter has about 150 members. Psi Chi focuses on recognition of academic excellence, scholarship and helps students explore the field of psychology by providing a stimulating environment.

Psi Chi at UIC organizes research symposiums, career workshops, promotes student-faculty interaction, helps students apply to graduate programs, performs community services such blood drives and tutoring, awards scholarships, and cooperates with other local psychological organizations, among other activities.

The most renowned tradition of the UIC chapter is the "matchmaker" event which happens on the first Friday of each semester. During this presentation, students learn about research opportunities offered by the psychology department.

Other lectures and seminars that take place during each semester include speakers from the American Psychological Association, In Touch Hotline, and others. The "What to do with a BA in Psychology" seminar shows students the variety of opportunities available after receiving a BA degree.

Psi Chi offers free tutoring for those who are having trouble with psychology courses at UIC. If students need help, there are always available tutors. Also, if you love psychology, do well in psychology classes, and would like to share the knowledge, Psi Chi is also looking for tutors. As incentive, members of the Honors College can fulfill their Honors College activity as a Psi Chi tutor.



*Do you have any questions or comments? Do you want to submit an article? Feel free to email us at:*  
*[ampersanduic@yahoo.com](mailto:ampersanduic@yahoo.com)*

Psi Chi, continued from pg. 2

One of the main goals of Psi Chi is to help students in the process of applying to graduate schools. The newest project is student-led graduate school focus groups. They inform students what Psychology graduate schools are looking for in applications, how to write a good essay, and help prepare for the GRE exam. For more information on joining a focus group, please contact Psi Chi for more details.

On behalf of the UIC Psi Chi chapter's president, I want to encourage psychology majors to join the organization. Also, for those who are interested, the organization will be looking for new officers as many of the current board are graduating. The deadline is approaching quickly so make sure to get involved!

Psi Chi applications are available in the Psychology department, located in Room 1009 BSB. For more information you can contact Christine Dutton at [cdutto1@uic.edu](mailto:cdutto1@uic.edu). For information on psychology tutoring, write to [psichitutor@yahoo.com](mailto:psichitutor@yahoo.com)

**\* Save the Date:  
 Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>!** \*



The Honors College will host its first blood drive of the year on Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. It will be located in room 613 of the CCC. All those that are planning to donate blood are encouraged to eat beforehand. If you are planning to attend, email your name and telephone number to [hcblooddrive@yahoo.com](mailto:hcblooddrive@yahoo.com)

**Focus on a Fellow:**

**Dr. David Schneeweis**

Written by: Jyoti Shenai

Dr. David Schneeweis is one of the many fellows who devote their time to Honors College students. He obtained his undergraduate degree from Boston University in bioengineering, his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, and also received master's de-



grees in electrical engineering and computer science. Currently, as an assistant professor in bioengineering, specializing in neural engineering, he is teaching the senior design program, bioinstrumentation II lab. He is also involved in co-teaching bio-optics; neural engineering lab, and an Honors College seminar with Dr. Rouche titled "Great Rivalries in Science."

Dr. Schneeweis is intensively involved in research. His main focus is on the visual system and he is particularly interested in the retina. As he stated, "The signals are processed at the retina and the photoreceptor cells convert the light energy through phototransduction. Neurons in the retina are able to adapt to different light levels." Dr. Schneeweis and his colleagues are currently trying to gain a basic understanding of a specific retinal disease. In this disease, the photoreceptors degenerate, especially with old age, and eventually can lead to blindness. The research group is presently concerned with how to successfully interface with the nervous system; hopefully their research will lead them to developing a visual prosthesis to improve the patient's vision.

In addition to research, he deeply enjoys the role of fellow and feels that it is both very important and enjoyable to associate with students. Regarding his Honors College seminar, he claims, "It is fun to have the opportunity to teach things outside of our normal curriculum." The Honors College allows him to connect with the best students on campus who will hopefully become interested in research. "It is important for students to have one-on-one interaction with faculty. It enhances the learning experience from both ends."

Aside from working and researching, Professor Schneeweis enjoys woodworking, biking, hiking, and other outdoor activities. His passion for astronomy has led him into an astronomy club. In addition, his two children keep him actively involved with boy scouts.

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## STUDENT IN THE SPOTLIGHT: UROUJ HASNAIN SHAH

by: Jessica Huang

Urouj was nominated by Oakton Community College to the Phi Theta Kappa All USA Academic Illinois Team 2004; where she was selected to be part of a team comprised of 80 students from a million community college students to represent Illinois in the Phi Theta Kappa All USA Today National competition. She was the highest scoring student ever in this competition and was selected as the Illinois Century Scholar 2004. Urouj was chosen to be one of the top twenty students in the First USA Academic Team 2004, and had the opportunity to meet President George W. Bush in a conference in Minneapolis last spring.

**Year:** Senior

**Major:** Biology

**Organizations:** Pakistan Students Association (PSA), Muslim Students Association (MSA)



*Dr. Schneeweis,  
continued from page 3*

When asked what advice he would give to students today, he stated, “to pursue academic choices that you are really interested in and not directions that you are supposed to go. It is important to get a well-rounded education and to pursue your own dreams. Also, to do things differently and take opportunities because before you know it, you don’t have time to take advantage of them.”

### 1. What are your plans and goals for the future?

I’ve got a great many plans and goals and I tend to add onto them as I go along, so they’re something of a work in progress. So far, going into the applied health field is something I’m pretty definite about. I’m very interested in becoming either a neurosurgeon or a pharmacist and am currently pursuing both tracks in order to allow myself greater flexibility right up to the very end, when I absolutely have to choose. Who knows? Maybe I can go down in history as the first neurosurgeon-pharmacist. Anything’s possible if you want it enough.

### 2. What is one New Year’s resolution you are going to make this year?

To drink more water! But seriously, I think keeping up with assigned reading tops my list for this year.

### 3. What are your hobbies?

I used to have quite a few but they’ve kind of dwindled to a precious few ever since I started school full time. I read quite a lot and usually not the impressive, useful stuff like Keats and Dickens that I want to be able to flaunt at cocktail parties and scholarship interviews. But more historical romances and sci-fi thrillers that equip you with interesting icebreakers like “Did you know that the electric chair was invented by a dentist?” and ensure that you’ll be at the receiving end of a good many wary stares and perplexed frowns. When I’m not reading, I’m drawing or painting. And when I have a lot of time, which is rare, I tend to indulge my penchant for writing creepy short stories.

### 4. Who is your hero? Or, who is someone you admire and why?

I would have to say my hero...or rather heroine, is my grandmother. She had a pretty hard life with not much to hold onto and no one to turn to except herself. Yet she still kept going even when the odds were stacked heavily against her and managed to imbue her children with an unflinching optimism that’s all the more remarkable in the fact that she herself had very little to be happy about in her own life. If I can face my dragons with even an ounce of the strength and confidence she possesses, I will consider myself exceedingly fortunate.

### 5. If you were ruler of the world for a day, what would you do?

I don’t think I could accomplish very much if I was ruler of the world for just one day. It would probably take me several days to just become acquainted with the mechanics of the global economy. But if I were the ruler for one day, the first thing I would do is withdraw American troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. I see no sense in sending our troops to fight in places where they aren’t wanted or needed by the native populations. In my opinion, Iraq and Afghanistan harbor civilizations that have been around longer than we have and are fully capable of taking care of their own politics and natural resources.

### 6. What was it like to meet the President?

It was an awesome experience! Even though I don’t agree with some of the President’s politics and am most emphatically a staunch democrat, the experience of actually meeting him and talking to him was mind-boggling. He looked exactly as he does on TV; I didn’t expect that! But more importantly, it made me realize more strongly than anything else could have done, that with the right amount of effort and determination you can end up places you never even dreamed of.

*Student Spotlight continued to page 5*

If someone had told me four years ago when I immigrated to this country that someday I'd get to shake hands with the President of the United States I probably would have rolled my eyes in disbelief and laughed in their face. But along the way I discovered that I could and eventually I did.

### **7. What do you enjoy the best about Chicago?**

I have been to quite a few cities around the rest of the country therefore I think I can state quite safely that no other city comes close to Chicago. The very air here seems to sizzle with excitement and potential.

I remember when I landed at O'Hare Airport nearly 5 years ago I just stood there with my baggage strewn around me, oblivious to the stares directed at me from within a nearby waiting room. My dad steadily grew irritated with me just standing there gawking and looking for all the world, like a simpleton from some god-forsaken remote island. "What are you staring at?" he demanded testily as he dragged our suitcases to the waiting taxi. "There aren't even any skyscrapers here. Those are downtown." "I'm not staring at anything," I explained dreamily. "It's just the air here. It smells so different." And it does. It crackles with energy and life and things I can't find words for. For me, no city in the world can quite compare with Chicago in any way.

### **8. You've accomplished a lot! What is your "formula" for success?**

I've been asked this particular question a couple of times and my answer is always "hard work." I have never subscribed to the school of thought that some people are just born smart while others are born dumb and must resign themselves to muddling through life as best they can. I am a firm believer of everyone being capable of something extraordinary. The only thing that sets an A student apart from a B or a C student, in my opinion, is sheer back breaking labor. I myself am the perfect example of this. On those few occasions when I've settled for a B or a C on a test I have been fully cognizant of the fact that the only thing that kept from getting a 100% on it was a lack of effort.

### **9. What advice do you have for freshmen students to enhance their college experience?**

My advice would be never to take your professors lightly. There is a big trend in college particularly, perhaps because there is greater latitude and not as much surveillance and regulation, to blow off professors and TAs. To poke fun at them and jeer at them from behind the anonymity of a large crowd and to treat them as if they were automatons whose sole function is to spew academic information and little else. One of the saddest things in the world, I think, is a jaded professor and we have quite a few at UIC. I think we tend to focus too much on the economics of the academic system and too less on the fact that these are actu-

ally real people with real feelings with usually perfectly functioning ears.

For myself, every *single* time I have afforded them the respect due to them and attempted to cultivate something of a relationship between a professor and myself, I have gained something valuable in return. I am not suggesting groveling, toadying or flattery. Many times, just you doing your absolute best to stand out academically and participating constructively in class is enough to make a professor realize that you're special and then go that extra mile to help you out.

### **10. Tell us something cool about yourself!**

Hmm... I have a feeling that any way I try to answer this question will come off as arrogant and pompous. There are great many cool things I've *done*, like winning essay competitions, being selected for the USA Today 1st Academic Team 2004, finally getting my drivers license (on my first go!) ...that I'm really proud of. I guess something almost as cool as all of that is the fact that I'm currently working on writing a novel in my free time. It's something of a historical work, spun around Pakistani-American culture and is a *painstakingly* slow endeavor, but one I'm definitely excited about since English literature from that particular niche of the world is so very rare. I'd like to be able to see myself as the next Bapsi Sidhwa someday in the not too distant future!

## **Study Abroad Myths Debunked**

*by Kathy Stachowicz*

Studying abroad is often viewed as an opportunity that requires the prior knowledge of a language. Studying abroad is also mistaken to be an extracurricular activity that does not count towards a degree. Both of those claims are absolutely false. In fact, 35% of students choose to study in countries where they do not know the language at all. Their coursework, however, is certainly in English. You do not necessarily have to be majoring in a language in order to take advantage of this great opportunity. In fact, students in any major can study abroad.

The most popular destinations for students studying abroad are Spain and England, with Australia sneaking up. There is a huge number of countries and options to select from. In terms of fitting in Study Abroad into your undergraduate curriculum, Erica Haas, Senior Academic Advisor in the Study Abroad office, mentioned that the timing for Study Abroad does not necessarily have to take place during your junior year of college.

Students receive UIC credit that counts towards their degrees. Study Abroad is not a “bonus” item or “extracurricular,” rather, it is part of your undergraduate studies.

Another misconception is that going overseas to study is too expensive. Studying abroad is affordable. There are many scholarships out there. For example, there are discounts anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,500 for students that are available from a variety of program providers. Honors College students, in particular, can apply for Flaherty Scholarships that range in value from \$500 to \$1,000. “Money should be the last thing students think about,” said Chris Deegan, the director of UIC’s Study Abroad Office.

Here are some tips. Do not be afraid to apply for scholarships. You don’t have to have a 4.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Often, the key to getting that scholarship is a well thought out essay and certainly the Office of Special Scholarships, located in room 105 of Grant Hall, can help out with any questions or concerns. Also, the Study Abroad Office has a packet full of scholarship information that is only awarded to Study Abroad students. Irina Krymova, the assistant director of the Study Abroad Office, stated, “UIC students *get* the scholarships.” For example, if you were interested in Studying Abroad in Asia and you received the Freeman scholarship, then finance issues would virtually be erased.

Another important and quite relevant issue is safety. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, the number of students participating in Study Abroad programs has actually increased. There is certainly more focus and attention on safety, which actually makes students feel safer.

Without a doubt, studying abroad sculpts you into a “global graduate.” The world is getting smaller and smaller, but your chances of getting a job in the market will only increase as a result of studying overseas. A study abroad experience looks great on an application. For example, a UIC graduate was applying for a competitive business position. The entire interview ended up revolving around the UIC graduate’s experience while studying abroad. The applicant was convinced that he got the position because of his overseas semester. Irina Krymova said, “It shows that you’re capable of dealing with challenges and overcoming them.”

Studying in another country is a culturally enriching experience. Americans can be stereotyped as uniformed individuals. Imagine, if you’re studying in a foreign country, you ultimately serve as an ambassador for America. The ambassador role can work both ways – the people in that country get to know an American, while you get to know the people of that country. In the process, stereotypes can be dispelled. Agnes Herget, an Academic Advisor from the Study Abroad Office, said, “You’re forced to evaluate and look at your own culture and values.”

Before life really takes over, and things like mortgages and family are in the picture, consider going abroad. This may be the only time to do so. A study abroad experience is a structured opportunity that can “stretch minds.” Going abroad will give you an important set of skills which include dealing with ambiguity, being patient, and really thinking things through. It’s an opportunity to learn about yourself because you are out of your comfort “zone” or perhaps in a completely different time zone.

Confucius once said, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Kenya? Iceland? Korea? Venezuela? France? You decide.

The first step to take for this lifetime experience is advising from the Study Abroad Office.

Check out UIC’s Study Abroad Office in 502 University Hall

312-413-7662  
sao@uic.edu

<http://studyabroad.uic.edu>

MARCH 8, 2005 is the deadline for Summer/Fall and Academic Year programs!



www.odt.org

*A Study Abroad experience can change the way you view the world.*

## A Helping Hand to Students

By: Emiranda Carcani

The Office of Special Scholarship Programs (OSSP) assists all UIC students who apply for a wide variety of scholarships, awards, internships and many other programs. The office provides information to students about available scholarships and awards. The office also gives advice on application procedures and assists individuals during this process.

OSSP works primarily with external scholarship sponsors and focuses mainly on nationally competitive scholarships. However, it also provides information on a variety of other scholarships and fellowships. These include ethnic based scholarships, essay/writing contests, UIC scholarships, internships, scholarships based according to discipline/field of interest, summer programs, study abroad, scholarships for international students, volunteering and other service opportunities, among others.

Not only is the OSSP a fountain of scholarship information for students; it also provides step-by-step guidance for those who desire to apply for any program. Advisors individually guide students through the application process, from choosing an appropriate scholarship, to deciding whom to contact for a recommendation letter. Taking a look at the OSSP website should be a first step for all those who are interested. The website contains application advice for those of us who are not sure where exactly to begin. Director Beth Powers has two words of advice: “*Start early!*” It takes time and preparation to apply for many scholarships. Working closely with advisors will assist you in developing yourself as a better scholarship candidate, but time is a factor. OSSP’s website is a wealth of information. It contains a list of the most recent awarded scholarships, applications advice, answers to most frequently asked questions, as well as access to the *UIC Scholar*, the OSSP newsletter for students, faculty, and staff.

The website is a great source of information to get acquainted with the many services provided by the OSSP. For more information, call the office and set up an appointment with an advisor. They are there to offer a helping hand, so take advantage of their vast knowledge and services.

Office of Special Scholarships  
104 Grant Hall  
703 S. Morgan St. (MC 115)  
Chicago, IL 60607-7025  
(312) 355 – 2477  
Director: Beth Powers

<http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/spp/>

## My Stay at Saddam’s Palace: Personal Reflections

Northeastern Illinois Accounting professor Dr. Yass Alkafaji will be here at UIC to share his experiences of spending six months in Iraq last year. The Iraqi-American served the Coalition Provisional Authority as the director of finance for the Ministry of Higher Education. Come and see pictures of his temporary home at Saddam’s Presidential Palace in the Green Zone and the surroundings in Baghdad. In addition, get the opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about the current situation in Iraq.

**When:** Monday, February 21, 2005  
at 4:00 pm

**Where:** Room 605, CCC

**What:** Slide Presentation along with detailed explanation,  
**Question-Answer Forum, and food!**



Yass Alkafaji, left, with Coalition Provisional  
Authority Administrator Paul Bremer

## UDALL SCHOLARSHIP: OSSP Office

Are you environmentally conscious? Perhaps your future plans include creating an innovative, cost-efficient means of recycling waste, or maybe you would like to work as a scientist or advocate for a plan for energy conservation for a major corporation or city? Maybe you dream of setting environmental policy as a lawmaker or lobbyist. If you are an environmentally concerned individual, you may be eligible for the Udall scholarship which will assist you in funding towards your ecological endeavors. Each year, the Udall Foundation awards undergraduate scholarships of up to \$5,000 to American sophomores and juniors (includes 4<sup>th</sup> year students planning on a fifth year) planning on careers in fields related to the environment, and to Native American and Alaska Natives in fields related to health care or tribal policy.

Please be aware that students must be nominated for a Udall scholarship by their college's Udall faculty representative, Beth Powers, from the Office of Special Scholarship Programs. Direct applications are not accepted by the foundation. Regarding eligibility, applicants must be sophomores or juniors in the academic year in which they are applying and must be studying the environment or related fields. Native American and Alaskan Native students may also be studying health care or tribal public policy. Applicants must have a GPA of 3.0/4.0 or higher and be a U.S. citizen.

The UIC deadline is February 18, 2005. The national deadline for the Udall scholarship is March 3, 2005. Contact the Office of Special Scholarship Programs for more information on applying at 312-355-2477 or at [ssp@uic.edu](mailto:ssp@uic.edu).

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*Have you started working out yet?*

**“A Touch of Elegance”**

**The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Honors College Ball  
March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

**3 Weeks to go!**

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## Highlights of the Chicago Auto Show

by: Victor Sapozhnikov

Ever since its beginnings, the Chicago Auto Show has been at the forefront of introducing the public to the vehicles of the future with their traditional ritual of product unveilings, elaborate displays, and attention-grabbing attractions. The 97<sup>th</sup> annual Chicago Auto Show will be open to the public between February 11<sup>th</sup> to February 20<sup>th</sup> at the spacious Lake Shore McCormick Place Complex. The event will allow individuals a glimpse into more than 1,000 new productions, concepts, and exotic vehicles at their elaborate displays. Every major manufacturer will be represented at the largest auto show in the nation. Last year the event drew more than 1.2 million people during its 10 day period, and this year the show has expanded to an unprecedented 1.2 million square foot show floor, equivalent to more than a dozen football fields, to encompass more vehicles and attractions than ever before.



2005 Bentley Arnage Drophead Coupe

The show will feature vehicles that will make their first debut, and will essentially be geared toward the U.S. market. With most display models, people will be able to kick the tires, look under

the hood, and climb into their interiors. It will strictly be hands-off with the exotic and concept cars. Chicago will feature its share of star-vehicles, with some of the prominent being the 2006 Chevy Corvette Z06, 2006 Hummer H3, and the gorgeous Bentley Arnage Drophead Coupe. Yet, the auto show of today bears many striking resemblances to the first auto show, and benefits the surrounding community on many levels.

The first Chicago Auto Show was held in 1901 at the Coliseum, located at 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Wabash Ave. During that time, dozens of startling inventions had come to light, and the auto show serviced to familiarize the public with the invention of the automobile. Visitors had the opportunity to sit and ride in some of the vehicles at the in door track that was set up to allow patrons to experience the new invention. A flower parade was set up during its course as an extra form of entertainment. A crowd of 4,000 attended the event. In order to accommodate larger crowds and an increased volume of vehicles, the auto show was moved to the International Amphitheatre in 1935, located on the corner of Halsted St. and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. During the time period 1941 to 1950, due to the presence of World War II on the horizons, the auto show had shut down. It had quickly reclaimed its popularity afterward, and by 1953 it was on the fast

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track of becoming the largest automobile expo in the world. Fast forwarding to 2005, the McCormick Place is just a mile south-east of the old Coliseum, which has been home to the auto show since 1961.

Even though in 1901, the vehicles were the only stars at the show, today's autoshow is expected to welcome stars from Hollywood, talk show personalities, politicians, and athletes that will attract crowds to the show. In previous years, auto manufacturers have dazzled their share of floor space with cartoon characters. Athletes are most likely to show up during the times that the show is open to the public, occasionally introducing a new model to the media. During their appearances, celebrities and athletes will attract more attention than the cars. When Michael Jordan made his appearance in the mid 1990s, the crowd flocked toward his presence in an attempt to obtain his autograph. Before her widely acclaimed television career, in the mid 1980s Oprah Winfrey was spotted next to one of the car lines promoting their next model. This year, just as in the previous years, a prominent figure will draw the attention of hundreds, if not thousands of individuals during one of the days of the show.

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the day before the show opened to the public, a gala was held on the premises of the show that raised and estimated \$2 million for Chicago-area charities. A host of celebrities attended the gala. The event is one of the biggest annual charity-fundraising events in the city. The event, which has been termed as the

"First Look for Charity" will benefit 19 charities that support children-related causes in the city. The supporters attending had the chance to experience the show on a different level, and were treated



2006 Chevy Corvette

to special entertainment presented by the car makers. Attendees had the chance to win a 2005 Chevy Corvette convertible at the gala as well.

Car buffs that are planning to visit McCormick Place during the period of the auto show will also have the opportunity to experience Chrysler, Jeep, and Dodge models behind the wheel. The Chrysler Group has reserved a section of the McCormick Place that will hold a half-mile test drive track. Individuals that qualify for test-driving the vehicles will have the opportunity to drive them around the perimeter of an exhibit that spans the length of four football fields. The exhibit has been designed to allow thirty vehicles to operate within its ranges simultaneously. A section of the exhibit has been reserved for allowing off-road enthusiasts to experience the capabilities offered by the Jeep models and Dodge trucks. The intent is to allow the con-

sumers a chance to experience the changes that have been introduced in those vehicles. Some of the other attractions that have been planned by the Chrysler Group during the auto show include live musical performances, giveaways, in addition to a variety of other activities. All in all, the auto show is expected to offer something for everyone.

The Chicago Auto Show will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. McCormick Place is located on the corners of 23<sup>rd</sup> Street and King Drive, and can be easily accessed by public transportation. On the last day, the doors will close at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the door and online at [chicagoautoshow.com](http://chicagoautoshow.com)



*Do you have any questions or comments? Do you want to submit an article? Feel free to email us at:*

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