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REPORTER

SEPTEMBER 8, 2006 | WWW.REPORTERMAG.COM

*I WOULD
NEVER
EAT ME.*

*YOU
ARE SO
SUBURBAN.*



REPORTER'S GUIDE TO ROCHESTER. ENJOY.

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Casey Dehlinger

ART DIRECTOR

Lauren Dellaquila

SENIOR EDITORS

Ben Foster, J. S. Ost

PHOTO EDITOR

Dave Londres

PRODUCTION MANAGER

John Carew

AD MANAGER

Alisha Gianakakis

BUSINESS MANAGER

Akira Simizu

MARKETING MANAGER

Stephanie Pieruccini

NEWS/VIEWS EDITOR

Elsie Samson

LEISURE EDITOR

Jen Loomis

FEATURES EDITOR

Adam Botzenhart

SPORTS EDITOR

Frances Cabrera

ONLINE EDITOR

Erhardt Graeff

WRITERS

Frances Cabrera, Brenna Cammeron, Casey Dehlinger, Brian Garrison, Erhardt Graeff, Alex Salsberg, Elsie Samson

STAFF DESIGNERS

Michelle Brook, Josh Gomby

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Chris Felber

ADVISOR

Rudy Pugilese

PRINTING

Printing Applications Lab

DISTRIBUTION

Jon Deiter, Pete Frandina

CONTACT INFO

MAIN: 585.475.2212

reporter@rit.edu

ADVERTISING: 585.475.2213

reporterads@mail.rit.edu

Cheating on RIT

Don't worry; I'm not going to say it.

I'm sure that by now you've been greeted and accosted by enough smiling faces that if you hear "welcome to RIT!" one more time, your head will well nigh blast right off your shoulders and rocket into a fiery oblivion like a Roman candle for President Simone to watch from his office window. This year, *Reporter* is leaving it to Orientation to tell you about the Sentinel and the Quarter Mile and RITchie and everything orange and brown and brick that the sun may ever dare throw a photon at. Instead, we're changing our format a little to make you aware of something that you probably haven't heard.

When I was accepted to RIT, I quickly learned that this place has a less-than-flattering nickname: the South Henrietta Institute of Technology. Acronyms aside, there's a little bit of geographic truth to this moniker. It's not exactly South Henrietta, but it is, indeed, Henrietta. The heart of Rochester is seven miles north of here and you're standing in a swamp. For the four or five or six years you're going to be doing your thing here at RIT, you owe it to yourself to make the trip and get to know the area.

By dumping your tuition money here you're starting a relationship with this campus, so pucker up and hope it doesn't snore too loud or hog the bed. It's a wonderful place that will give you quite a bit, but no place is perfect and if you're unwilling to explore, you will become wildly unhappy. No football team, Gracie's food, and an overwhelming architectural reliance on bricks: these things are incredibly insignificant, but they'll bore through you and gnaw on your intestines if you're foolish enough to let them get to you.

So whatever shall you do? There's a simple solution, I swear. Take Rochester as your mistress or paramour. Bask in the best of both worlds and you'll never grow tired of either. Each has strengths; each has flaws. They compliment each other quite well and neither one will call you out as an adulterer of locales, no matter how hot and heavy you get with downtown Rochester.

I trust that your Orientation Advisors told you the truth about this campus; and, if they didn't, you'll find out soon enough. However, unlike RIT, no one's going to hold your hand and help you cross the proverbial street into Rochester. I'm not going to do it, either. I'm a busy guy. But the *Reporter* staff will do the next best thing: we'll give you a map.

We've high-piled this special issue chock-full of our best recommendations for where to find the things that students seek. And, lo and behold, we've cartographically crammed it into something that might just be worth holding onto when you finally decide you're sick of eating sub-par Mexican food or the art on the walls of Java Wally's. When you want to geek it out at a museum or dance it out at a club, we've got you covered with this: the comprehensive student's guide to cheating on RIT.

It's about time someone welcomed you to *Rochester*.



Casey Dehlinger
Editor In Chief

ISSUE



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For the wino or gourmand.



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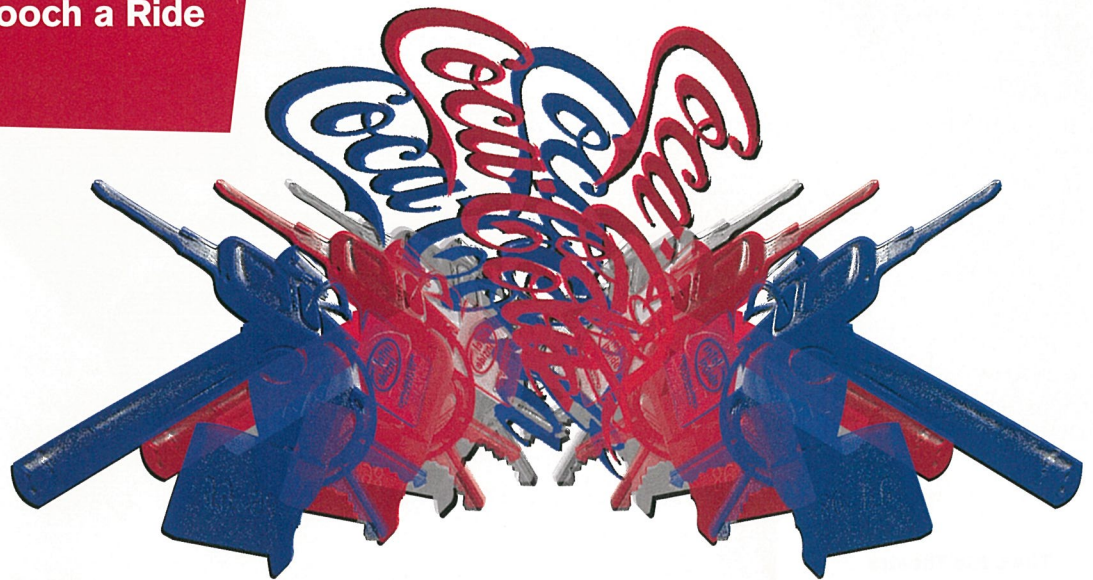
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Triple P: How to Mooch a Ride

by Alex Salsberg



Hello, freshmen! You are currently enjoying the best moments of college. You like all your neighbors (in three weeks your floor will be severely cliquy and probably on fire), and you are not yet fat. But to continue the fun, you must befriend a certain someone on your floor. We will call him "Car Guy."

Maybe you thought that RIT's quarter-mile long campus (complete with an ice cream parlor and a pretend SportsCenter set) would provide you with all the entertainment you needed for five years. But Car Guy knew better. He knew that someday he might actually want to explore the great city of Rochester, with its museums, restaurants and depressing zoo (did you know polar bears can cry?) So, when he found out that freshmen were allowed cars, he proudly parked his white Dodge Spirit in B-Lot, which is just outside of Albany.

If you learn to take advantage of Car Guy effectively, you could enjoy a (literal) free ride through RIT. Just follow these three handy tips (I call it Triple P):

Persistence: Car Guy may not want to lend you his beloved automobile right away. Some would-be borrowers might establish a lasting friendship and build trust to gain access to the car, but there's an easier way that doesn't involve going to all of his ballroom dance recitals. The very first moment you require off-campus travel (let's get beta fish!), ask him for a ride. Wanting to be a "cool" floormate (unlike that guy with the beard) he will certainly comply. But don't stop there; keep asking for rides. After the fifth trip to Wegmans (let's get Coca-cola!) he'll tire of taxi driving, toss you the keys and pretend he trusts you. It's even quicker if you're a photo

student (attractive). Let's take 24 photos downtown! But after six hours of wandering a bad neighborhood searching for a puddle that reflects sodium light, he'll give you his keys next time without a fight (so you can photograph gravestones).

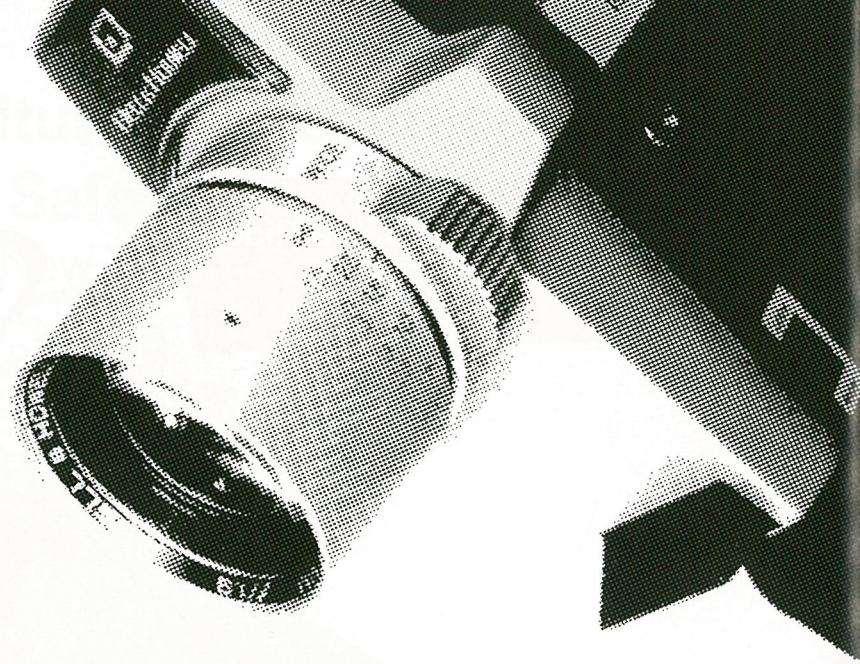
Payment: Now you've established a healthy mooching relationship with Car Guy, but soon you may look selfish. He may start to ask you to put gas in the car, but that costs upwards of \$9,000 (and 9/10 of a cent). Instead, buy him something cheap, but satisfying. When you arrive home with a Krispy Kreme doughnut (flour, corn syrup, cocaine) he'll forget all about the gas. Other suggestions include beta fish, Coca-cola, or five hilarious but ultimately useless items from Dollar Tree.

Problem: This final tip will seal the deal. Borrow his car to go pick up your long-lost dying grandmother who is only in town for a few hours at the airport. On the way, have his car break down. Make it something that isn't your fault (lie). Now, even though you were mooching, he will feel terrible that you didn't get to see your estranged father who just got freed from a Chinese prison. Therefore, next time you ask him for the car, he'll be so flattered that you still turn to him for a favor, he won't notice your mooching. You're officially golden!

How did I grow so wise? Am I a mooching expert? Nope (don't ask my roommate). Truth is, I was Car Guy. So next time you're driving a floormate's crappy car, perhaps you can put a gallon or two in the tank, for my sake (Actually, can you just put it in my tank?). •

The Cinema Less Traveled

by Brenna Cammeron



The Little Theatre

240 East Avenue, Rochester

*Pirates of the Caribbean II. Mission Impossible III. Miami Vice...*remade. If this summer's movie selection left you wondering if there's an original film idea yet to be unearthed in Hollywood (or anywhere else, for that matter), a trip downtown to the Little Theatre is in high order. Located only blocks away from Downtown Java's and in the heart of Rochester's small but vibrant bar and restaurant district, the Little is a welcome departure from the glowing mega-sized multi-plexes that tend to pop up in suburbia. The Little caters to the independent-minded, offering a variety of films that earn critical acclaim among the more intellectual film crowd (think Sundance and Cannes) but are often overlooked by the general American public. Stay after and enjoy coffee, dessert, live jazz and a constantly changing exhibition of the work of local artists.

Student Tip: Love the Little? Look into the Student Membership: for \$35, you get 12 free movies (that works out to \$2.92 per movie, folks!), as well as the added perk of being able to reserve the private balcony in Theatre One—primo make-out space if your roommate is grossed out by you and your current squeeze canoodling on movie night.

Dryden Theatre

900 East Avenue, Rochester

If you find yourself passing up movie night with your friends to watch *Breakfast at Tiffany's* alone, you might want to check out the Dryden Theatre at the Eastman House. The Dryden Theatre is a 535-seat old-fashioned movie house dedicated to showing restored classics plucked from the annals of the Eastman Library, a collection of more than 25,000 archived films. The Dryden Theatre does not limit itself to movies from the Golden Age of Hollywood, though: it also features a variety of (perhaps

rightfully) overlooked films such as *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* and *Godzilla vs. Destroyah*. No, we're not kidding.

Student Tip: Check out the Eastman House itself. In addition to being able to walk through the home of one of Rochester's most prolific innovators, you'll get to enjoy an art gallery featuring some of the world's most acclaimed photography. If you've got an extra few bucks, you can even make faces in one of the last remaining old-fashioned photo booths in Rochester.

Vintage Drive-In

1520 West Henrietta Road, East Avon

If the weather's warm and you're feeling adventurous, you might want to check this place out. Located about 20 minutes from RIT, the drive-in is a straight shot if you turn right on West Henrietta Road from Jefferson and drive well into the country. What better way to indulge your exhibitionist streak than to fog up your windows in a field surrounded by strangers? It's cheap, too: for a mere \$7, you get to watch two new-release movies from the comfort of your gas-guzzler.

Student Tip: Car cramped? Take your drive-in experience outdoors: bring a few blankets or lawn chairs and kick back underneath the stars. •



The Art Way to Start Your Day!

by Brian Garrison

Rochester Contemporary

137 East Avenue, Rochester

Though it's probably not the only place that's displayed a work of art made with acrylic, graphite, and Voodoo dolls, Kathleen Farrell's "You Do, We Do, Voodoo" seemed fairly original. The bad news is that it's not there anymore. The good news is that they have their latest arrangement of the museum space all ready and waiting for the big opening reception on September 15.

From what Program Director Elizabeth Switzer tells me, these opening parties have, "a bar and food, live music sometimes... [and] around 200 people milling around, looking at work, and socializing." And because the art gallery "can't pay the bills just on openings," they also have performances (both musical and theater), film series, and other such goings-ons from time to time.

Apart from the cozy main gallery, there is the even cozier "Lab Space" in the back. This area is where members at the top of the roughly year-long waiting list get to do whatever they want, under the sole condition that they return the room to the plain white walls when their four weeks are up. Many seem to use this as a chance to get feedback on (and possibly sell) their work. Or, at least, a blue-ball-point rendition of their work scribbled into the little notebook. For further details and scheduling, go to www.rochestercontemporary.org.

Artisan Works

565 Blossom Road, Rochester

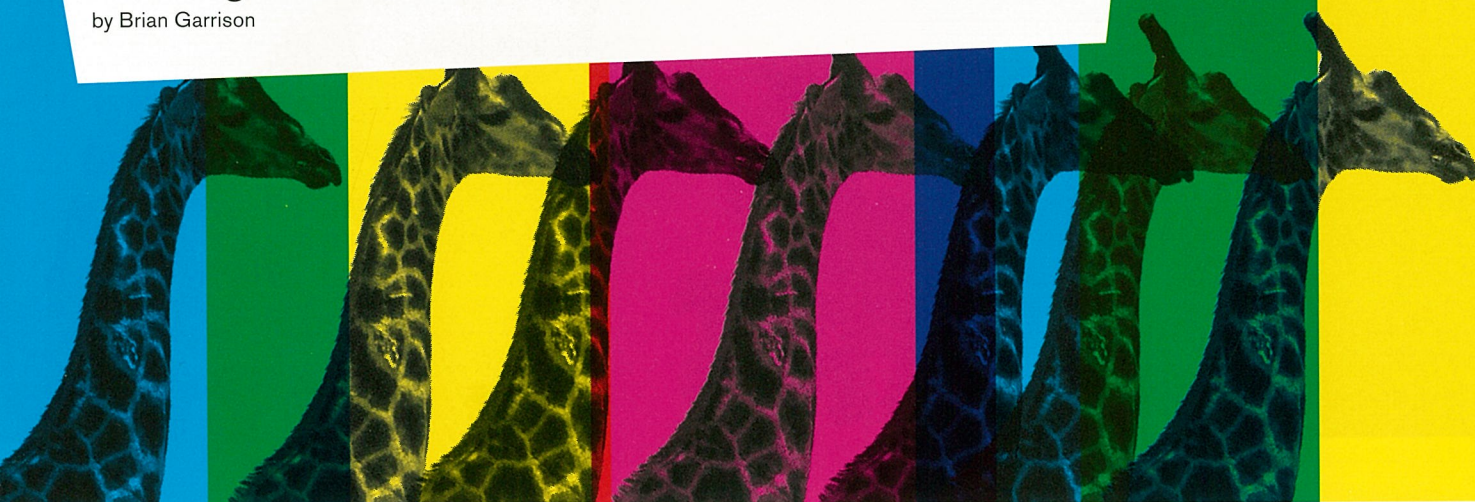
Part railroad-tracks-laid-in-the-ground-from-the-early-1900's, part boulevard-of-artist-workshops, part art-and-photo-gallery, part rooftop-garden, part 30-seat-theater, part meeting-space-for-events-of-various-

sizes, part cozy-little-kitchen-stuck-right-in, and cram-packed with a bric-a-brac of knick-knacks throughout, the somewhat scatterbrained layout of Artisan's factory building can provide a relaxing break from any structured thoughts forced upon you by things like classes and professors.

The thing is, as I start to describe it, the place has already changed. Practically everything is for sale, like the taxidermied chickens posed mid-fight, the metal palm trees, and the standing sign that says: "Please do not step on the CAT," Whether or not this stuff sitting around is ever snatched up, new creations spill out from the artist's studios. All of this winds up hanging (from the wall or ceiling), on the floor, or somewhere in one of many cluttered piles -- each one with enough visual stimulation to make your retina tear away from the back wall of your eye...but in a good way. So when the bizarre conversations you overhear on the quarter mile start sounding ordinary, go see something new. Think of it as buying flowers for your mind, maybe this way it won't break up with you. •

Learning More Than Just Your Street Smarts Downtown

by Brian Garrison



Rochester Museum and Science Center

657 East Avenue, Rochester

While parking, looking at the garden of fragrance, and using the whisper dishes outside (the excitement of which lasts at least 14 seconds) are all free, student admission (\$7.00) costs less than getting mugged and is considerably more enjoyable.

After you play with a semi-defunct model system of locks, which hopefully doesn't mirror how actual locks "work," you can check out the "Be a Weather Reporter" green-screen. I suggest a green shirt if you want to see your disembodied head dance a little jig. Upstairs, there's the "How Things Work" area, where you can play with the inner-parts of things like light-switches, thermometers, and generators, and then build your own version of the K'NEX bike they have hanging from the ceiling. Or maybe it would be more exciting to just go wild with the myriad of pieces and build your own creation (just not too wild if you want to bring it home: you pay based on weight). There are a lot of other cool things that I don't have room to mention, like the (fake) woolly mammoths, with and without woollyness (only the bones). Okay, so they're actually mastodons, but I can't tell the difference.

After a while, you might wonder if their printer and laminator are out of order from making all the "Out of Order" signs, but everything that you will get to see and play with will bring back the kid in you that couldn't get enough science. Either that, or it will create in you a new kid that thinks it's kinda fun. There's also the museum stuff with a bunch of Native American artifacts, an exhibit about Frederick Douglass, and documents from an 1873 time capsule.

Oh, and bring a friend to the room with all sorts of mirrors and things. There are two stations where you can meld your faces together while sitting on opposite sides of partial mirrors. Just trust me; it's way cool.

Seneca Park Zoo

2222 St. Paul Street, Rochester

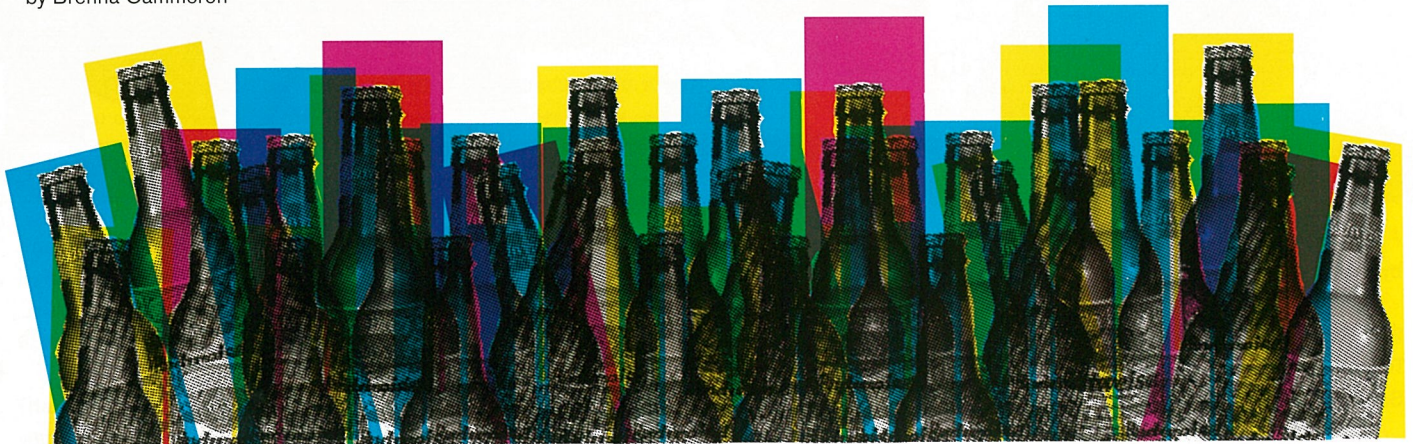
Birds, tigers, lemurs, and golden lion tamarins all making their sounds, little kids making humanized versions of the same sounds, and parents telling their children that the tiger is so strong because, "He eats his vegetables: carrots, broccoli..." It's a day at the zoo! Like a grade school field trip, only without that annoying kid who would never stop pinching everybody with his biting dinosaur-head-on-a-stick, and a bunch of other differences which make it actually worth going.

For the parents that don't know the answers, there are guides spread throughout the zoo to answer questions and facts about the animals, like how they spray various scents (perfumes and other stuff) in some of the cages for "enrichment." As long as it means I get to see them attack the various plastic toys they have in their cage, it's okay with me. Another interesting sight you might see are the window cleaners. One of them was mighty proud of the "big chicken" he sprayed on the giant window with soap suds, but to be honest it looked more like a chickadee. I give him an 8 (of 10), anyway.

I don't know about the tour, which they say takes about an hour, but I recommend strolling through at your own pace. Taking your time leaves your mind clear to hunt for the giant asphyxiated bugs in the Eco Center whose clever stick or leaf-like disguises weren't quite good enough to save them from the humans. Maybe you can take a good look at how big the piranha is, just to have an accurate estimate of the size for when you have another nightmare about Amazon boating trips gone awry. And as long as you can read, you can probably learn most of what they might tell you on a tour by going to their website: www.senecaparkzoo.org.

Escaping Colony: A Guide to Rochester Nightlife

by Brenna Cammeron



It's the sad truth that RIT's nightlife is like watching two turtles make love: you could leave for a week and not miss much. Some colleges have raucous bashes a la Animal House; others have glamorous OC-style soirees: the biggest gathering you're likely to find here on a Friday night is a bumpin' LAN party. So what's a fun-seeking non-nerd to do?

If you're over 21, you might want to check out Rochester's club district, located at the intersection of Alexander Street and East Avenue. The average Friday or Saturday night here is a gyrating melting pot of hot bodies intent on dancing and drinking off the stresses of the work week. Clubs here cater to the trendy college crowd: jeans and a low-cut shirt is the outfit de rigueur for women, while the men attire themselves in shirts so tight that they look ready to burst right out of them, Superman style.

Soho East

336 East Avenue, Rochester

For a \$1-2 cover, you step into a crowd fueled by alcohol and a pumping bass. Soho's biggest draw is certainly its huge rooftop deck, complete with an outdoor bar: it's a nice way to take a break from the stifling heat of the dance floor without leaving the club. Drinks here are reasonable but not a deal: expect to pay five or six bucks for mixed drinks and around three for a beer. On the ground floor of the same building is Daisy Dukes, a country-western themed bar best known for its mechanical bull. Bull rides are only five dollars, but pay \$10 and you have the chance to win a \$50 bar tab if you can stay on longer than 10 seconds--a task that isn't half as easy as it sounds (take it from someone who knows).

Lux Lounge

666 South Avenue, Rochester

If the usual bump n' grind scene doesn't appeal to you, Lux is a bit of an oddity on the Rochester bar scene: everything, from the clientele

and atmosphere to the nightly specials, ranges from "slightly quirky" to "downright weird." If you can get past (or embrace) the subtly Satanic bar theme, you'll find cheap drink specials and some of the best people-watching in town. Where else can you find a potent blend of heavily pierced and tattooed artsy types, fresh-faced college students, and tired-looking forty-somethings? Lux isn't just for the weekends, either: Monday is "Arts and Crafts" night, Tuesdays feature free peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and Wednesday night brings the "B-Movie Backyard Bonanza," showing (you guessed it) B-movies starting at 10:30 p.m.

Tilt

444 Central Avenue, Rochester

Whether you're straight or gay, it's pretty safe to say that no one has ever had a boring time at Tilt, which is widely considered the swankiest gay bar in Rochester. Walking inside, it's not difficult to see why: Tilt has an urban feel that wouldn't be out of place in a much bigger city. Although Tilt is a popular meeting place for the GLBT community, you might also find your straight friends here: after all, who doesn't love a 6'2" man dressed in eerily convincing drag? ♦

POTABLES AND VITTLES

(THAT MEANS FOOD AND DRINK)

photography by Chris Felber and Dave Londres



Public Market

by Frances Cabrera

280 North Union Street, Rochester
Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Saturdays and Sundays 5:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Deep in the heart of downtown, a little piece of rural goodness can be found at the local farmer's market known as the Public Market, a nearly 200 year-old Rochester tradition. Here you can find fresh fruits, vegetables, plants and flowers delivered and sold directly by the farmers who grew them. Always a mess, always crowded, always smelling of ripe produce, the Public Market is simply a concrete slab lined with merchants' tables all under a roof with no walls. But this no-frills atmosphere is where you'll find the freshest produce at the cheapest prices. For a dollar, you are pretty much guaranteed to buy yourself a large serving of your favorites like apples, grapes, snap peas, squash, tomatoes, etc.

On Sundays, the flea market tables come out. If you're really interested in getting to know Rochester's unique character, you must stop by the Public Market on a Sunday. Linger at the tables cluttered with lamps, silverware, matchbooks, appliances, and stuff you

can't even recognize and talk to the elderly Rochester natives selling odd relics from their childhoods. Since Rochester—thanks to Kodak—has been a photo town, the flea market sellers always have old 1950s photo equipment and Brownie cameras.

And that's not all. Pastry shops, another Java's Café, a meat market, polish sausage and empanada stands, and more all line the marketplace. My recommendations for a Saturday early afternoon outing: stop at Java's for a coffee, go to the Rich Port Bakery next door for a Puerto Rican pastry, then enter the hall of fruit and vegetable tables. After ambling along and spending a little money, have lunch at the Empanada Stop on the other end of the market. Be sure to try the green sauce.

Dinosaur Bar-B-Que

by Casey Dehlinger


99 Court Street, Rochester

This biker-laden haven of all things that stick between the teeth of carnivores is an appreciated twist on the meat-obsessed calorie-stuffing "American" restaurant icon. Throw in some blues and eccentric wall dressings, such as ratty boar heads (Fake? Real?) and you've got Dinosaur Bar-B-Que.

The wait to get in on a weekend can tax your nerves, but on a night like Thursday you'll only find yourself tapping your feet and drumming your fingers for forty minutes or so. Bring your favorite non-vegan conversational friend and time'll fly like a Pterodactyl.

If you've ever eaten ribs at a place that boasted the "world's greatest ribs" you've tasted every restaurant's "world's greatest ribs." They come on a plate you can barely wrap your arms around and the rack is so mammoth you feel like you could surf it through a tidal wave of barbeque sauce.

Dinosaur Bar-B-Que, fortunately, offers a vast variety of sauces to customize your behemoth of a meal. If Satan has a cameo on the label, you know what to expect. However, the eccentric sauce that goes by the name of Wango Tango is worth a try. Don't let its mention of habanero peppers scare you off. Yes, habanero usually refers to the peppers that can melt the tar off your driveway—or a Canadian band—but the Wango Tango sauce is actually quite sweet, with an easily extinguishable spice. I'd go so far as to call it the boysenberry sauce of barbeque.



The Dino should probably be considered more of an attraction than a haunt. Sure, you can pick up a sandwich for barely less than ten bucks, but get something serious and you could be dishing out twenty dollars. But at a rough estimate of a calorie per penny, you'll leave full.

Jine's

by Casey Dehlinger

658 Park Avenue, Rochester

Throw a dart (or jart, for the more outdoorsy) along Park Avenue and if you don't puncture or impale a pedestrian, it will probably land on a pretty decent oh-I'm-so-hip dining establishment cramped with small booths and a dozen or so outdoor tables under the majesty of the famed Rochester clouds. I may be awful at darts, but I stumbled across a little place called Jine's that may just be worth the parking space scavenger hunt.

The food is great, but the place looks modest enough not to make you feel like the snob you may very well be if you enjoy fine dining. It's a sort of ritzy chicken-and-pasta-and-wine sort of place, so I ordered the Jine's chicken and pasta. It's a boneless chicken breast sautéed with sun-dried tomatoes, mushrooms, artichoke hearts—and all sorts of other fancy culinary things—served over pasta with a white wine pesto sauce. \$11.95 for a heap. To my ears and stomach, that sounds like 'buy one dinner, get tomorrow's lunch free.' I fought hard to put a dent in my plate and just found my eyes rolling back into my head, fearful that I had loaded myself up to the trachea with the flavorful chicken and ziti noodles of this classy entrée.

But if Jine's is too crowded or on fire or incapacitated in any way, the wickedly cheap Sinbad's is within dart-throwing distance. The great thing about Park Avenue is that if Jine's doesn't sound like your cup of tea, you can find over a dozen variations of delicacy and décor within a couple blocks.



Aladdin's Natural Eatery

by Frances Cabrera

641 Monroe Avenue, Rochester
8 Schoen Place, Pittsford

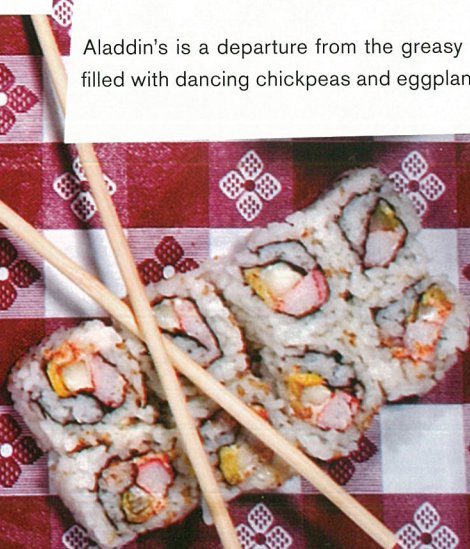
Simply known as Aladdin's, this restaurant specializing in Mediterranean cuisine is known for its super fresh ingredients and reasonable prices. While the city location is closer to campus, I'd recommend venturing to Pittsford on a sunny day and eating on the restaurant's outside deck along the Erie Canal. Fresh food and fresh air are what every dorm-ridden, Gracie's eating college kid needs from time to time.

As for what to order, the pitas are delicious, and they are all under four dollars! My favorite is the gyro pita. The gyro meat is always tender and softly-spiced, and there's always a lot of it. Other pitas that are offered are chicken, meat kebab, dolmades (grape leaves) and eggplant.

If you're more in the mood for a dinner entrée, Aladdin's serves traditional plates for \$7.25. The moussaka is a great choice, and so is the spanikopita.

Aladdin's menu also caters to vegetarians. It serves a variety of salads topped with ingredients such as marinated eggplant, goat cheese and falafel patties and dressed with tahini-yogurt or pine nut dressings. The soups are also worth mentioning, ranging from the classic vegetable soups to the exotic cold soups like tzatziki (yogurt, garlic, cucumbers, and mint) and gazpacho (tomatoes, cilantro, cucumbers, and green peppers). And before you order anything, be sure to order a plate of humos (hummus) served with warm pita pieces for the table.

Aladdin's is a departure from the greasy food world and instead is a world filled with dancing chickpeas and eggplants. Opa!



California Rollin'

by Frances Cabrera

274 N. Goodman Street at The Village Gate
1000 N. River Street at The Ferry Terminal

Definitely the best place for sushi in Rochester, probably one of the best places for sushi on the East Coast, California Rollin' is just that good. With a large selection of nigiri, maki, and tempura rolls, no fish is left out of the mix. And its eel is just divine melt-in-your-mouth goodness. In addition, the roll sizes here are larger than most of the rolls at other sushi joints in the area.

The restaurant offers special weekly rolls. These rolls are the extravagant rolls one would expect to find in a high-end sushi restaurant of a large city. They usually contain an exotic fish or shellfish and untraditional ingredients like raspberry sauce.

California Rollin' also offers daily specials ranging from dollar nigiri rolls on Monday to sake night on Thursday. However, the special that really brings the crowds in is the All-You-Can-Eat-Sushi night on Wednesday. For \$20, you can get round after round of a variety of sushi, chef's choice. The catch is that you must finish one round before going on to the next.

While two locations are available, the location most popular with the RIT crowd is the Village Gate location in the city. The feel is trendy with dim lights, distressed blue booths, and a large freshwater tank in the middle of the room filled with bright, ugly fish

peering at you as you eat their brethren. If you sit at the bar, though, you don't have to look at them. No reason to fill guilty over something so delicious.

Java's Café

by Frances Cabrera

14 Gibbs Street, Rochester

It's larger—more booths, more art, more magazines, and more people—but with the same feel as our own Java Wally's. Nevertheless, Java's in the city does have some unique qualities meriting a trip downtown.

Java's is right next to the Eastman School of Music and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. So whenever you have the urge to act like an adult, you can go with your friends to a classical concert and treat yourselves to coffee afterwards—a pleasant evening, guaranteed. If coffee's not your thing, try out the tea room. Java's carries over 75 teas from around the world ranging from black teas, green teas, oolong teas, and white teas to herbal tisanes that you can buy by the ounce. And, surprisingly, it has a billiards room. Yeah, it has a billiards room downstairs. That's right, Java's in the city has a downstairs. It took me a couple visits to realize that one; the stairs are all the way in the back.

The final perk of visiting the city Java's: you are way more likely to see more weird artsy folks. I swear that every time I visit the place, I see somebody in a beret. And you usually can find a *New York Times* lying around—a refreshing break from the trivial *USA Today* RIT gives away.

So when you get tired of staring at that large painting of colorful squiggles at Java Wally's, take a trip downtown and stare at a new painting—maybe the huge one of the colorful grinning guy or try to find all the jungle animal masks hung on the walls. The gorilla is my favorite.

Mex


by Erhardt Graeff

295 Alexander Street, Rochester

I approached the Alexander Street restaurant and bar and passed by a couple of twenty-somethings sipping margaritas outside and the un-Mexican bouncer not checking IDs of patrons headed upstairs. Inside, a twenty-something un-Mexican waitress seated me in the small dining area.



Aladdin's
natural
eatery



I sat at a table with a skeleton-boasting a Dia de la Muerte painting above it and Catholic saint beads strung up behind me. On my table was one of those tall, exceptionally tacky glass-enclosed Jesus candles, which stood next to a bottle of El Yucateco Chile Habanero Sauce. I wasn't staring at the décor long, though; the service was swift. I wasn't even able to finish scraping the thirst-inducing salt crystals off the complimentary tri-colored corn chips before I received my entree.

I chose all three available items for my Platos combo: Tostados (w/ avocado pico de gallo), Enchiladas (veggie-filled), and Torta. For thirteen dollars I received an obscene amount and variety of Tex-Mex food. First, the tostados were delicious and oddly refreshing on the palate thanks to the chopped avocado. The veggie enchilada, I'm fairly convinced, contained veggies, but they were diced beyond recognition—I couldn't distinguish flavors, just colors—but I believe I had probably burnt a few taste buds earlier with the habanero sauce. The torta was the most wonderful dish of the spread, featuring very flavorful stuffed bread in a novel presentation.

In the end, I was satisfied with Mex—the quick service and filling entrees for a reasonable price were worth my braving the non-Mexican wait staff. But do beware of dry rice, out-of-the-can beans, and hip twenty-somethings browsing about East Ave. •



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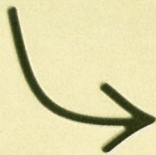
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PEAN RADICAL SEES IT 129

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a nation. If the Chinese Government would only enter into

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