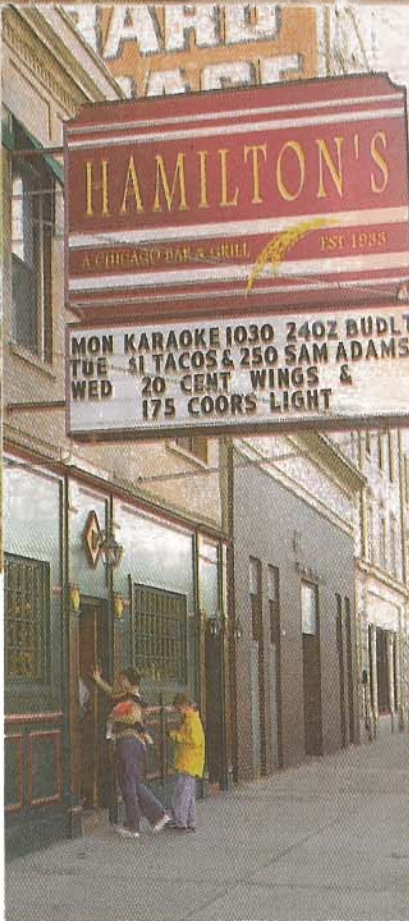
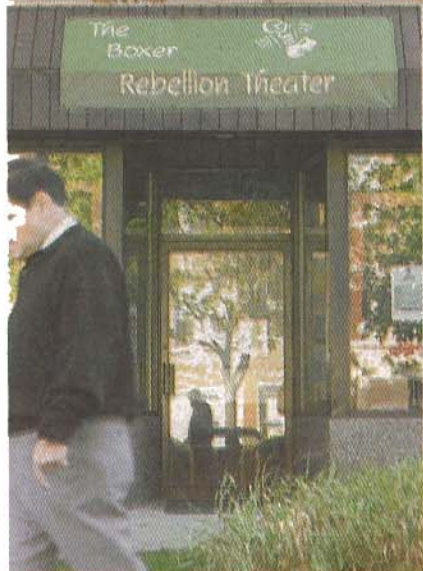
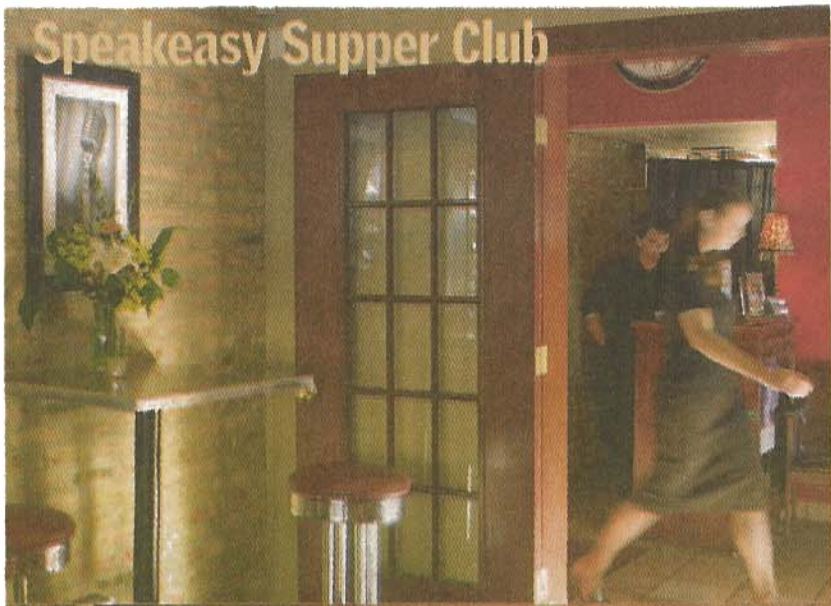


**VIRTUAL L**

# Next stop: Loyola



Photos by John J. Kim/Red Streak

BY KAY DALY  
CENTERSTAGECHICAGO.COM

**W**ith Loyola University looming in its midst, you might be tempted to dismiss this area as just another college community. Do so, and you'll miss out on the real charm of this neighborhood. Loyola is old-school Chicago, from its residential streets lined with century-old two-flats to the mix of ethnicities living and working at this intersection of Devon, Broadway and Sheridan. Nigerian and Ethiopian restaurants stand side-by-side with the corner Irish pub and the Middle Eastern grocery store. And while the local college students cycle in and out each year, the neighborhood remains home to deep-rooted, long-term residents who celebrate their community with yearly block parties and picnics at the nearby lakefront.

**In-the-know spot**

**THE ARMADILLO'S PILLOW**  
6753 N. SHERIDAN  
(773) 761-2558  
ABEBOOKS.COM/HOME/ARMPILL/

Why Armadillo's Pillow? "No good reason," the owner admits. "The 'armadillo' part is inspired by John Irving's 'A Prayer for Owen Meany' and 'pillow' just sounds funny." Here you'll find used, rare and out-of-print books by the ton, helpfully organized by category and neatly labeled. If you need to recharge your batteries, you can grab a cup of joe from "Stubb's Coffee Counter," located in a corner of one of the shop's three rooms. But as a sign above the counter warns, "This isn't a coffee shop." Plan to serve yourself and leave a donation. They also peddle great gifts, including incense, handmade jewelry, retro postcards and Tarot cards.

**Where to chill**

**KAFFECCINO**  
6441 N. SHERIDAN  
(773) 508-1888

Colleges and coffeehouses: They go together like pizza and beer. That's why Kaffeccino is such a natural — though surprisingly recent — addition to the neighborhood. A standard-issue cafe, Kaffeccino offers all the usual coffee drinks plus a surprisingly extensive menu of salads, sandwiches, ice cream concoctions and smoothies. When the weather turns chilly, they add a nice selection of winter warmers to the menu, including Aztec Hot Chocolate, Turtle Mocha and other delectable blends of coffee, milk and syrup. Lounge on the couches in the front window to feel like a real, live college slacker.

**Best of the nighttime spots**

**HAMILTON'S**  
6341 N. BROADWAY  
(773) 764-8133  
HAMILTONSBARANDGRILL.COM

Ever since Evanston's dry days, students from NU have joined forces with local Loyola students to fill this three-room bar every weekend. Recently renovated, Hamilton's still boasts enough daily deals to make it a favorite frat stop, including tacos for a buck on Tuesday and 20-cent wings on Wednesdays. You can do just as well on the regular menu: The pulled pork sandwich is an amazingly delicious deal for \$5. Bust a move on weekends when DJ Rob does his thing, or if you've got the lungs for it, croon a tune on karaoke night (every Monday).

**Dinner date destination**

**SPEAKEASY SUPPER CLUB**  
1401 W. DEVON

**SAFETY RATING:** There's a lot of foot traffic along Sheridan by the El stop, so it's generally pretty safe, but it still pays to be smart about when you go walking alone at night.  
**PANHANDLER RATING:** You may be hit up by the El stop; otherwise, panhandlers are rare.

(773) 338-0600  
SPEAKEASYSUPPERCLUB.COM

Locals cheered when the owner of Edgewater's The Room opened this sleek, artsy dining hot spot. The menu focuses on smaller portions, offering tastes of Asian, French, and American cuisine in starters, half-entrees, and full-size portions. Don't expect the typical here, unless you call scallop and foie gras napoleons and ostrich Wellington everyday eats. Desserts are a dream (don't miss the chocolate-chili creme brulee), and with its regular schedule of live music, the Speakeasy provides a treat for the ear as well. If you like a little wine with your song, you'll have to plan ahead: The Speakeasy is BYOB, but Hahn's Liquors across the street has the cure for what ails you.

**Cheap eats**

**CARMEN'S**  
6568 N. SHERIDAN  
(773) 465-1700

Everyone in the neighborhood knows that Carmen's means deep-dish pizza—double crusted and swimming in tangy sauce and oozy, melted cheese. And at \$5 for a baby-sized pie, you can fill up for next to nothing. If that's not enough grub to stop your pie hole, indulge at the lunch buffet, offered daily from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for a mere \$5.95 (\$7.50 with beverage). The buffet includes pastas, pizzas, soups, salads, and even "dessert pies"—sweet versions of the specialty of the house.

**No wallet needed joint**

**CUNNEEN'S**  
1424 W. DEVON  
(773) 274-9317

Does Cunneen's have karaoke? "God, no!" growls Bill the bartender. Forget your yuppie martini bars or your frat-boy sports pubs. This is an old-school Chicago tavern at its finest and most authentic. Locals congregate here to argue politics and listen to the owner's extensive collection of LPs, spun on one of those turntables your Dad owned when you were a kid. The interior probably hasn't seen a renovation since the mid-'60s, as attested by the grubby wood paneling and old-style cigar-store Indian in the corner. Shoot pool, talk shop with the neighbors, or just watch the traffic on Devon whiz by from your cozy seat at the bench in the front window.

**For the artiste**

**BOXER REBELLION THEATRE**  
1257 W. LOYOLA  
(773) 465-7325  
BOXERREBELLION.ORG

Blink and you may miss this tiny storefront theater. Taking as their mission "to declare war on the typical, the ordinary and the expected," Boxer Rebellion produces effective, in-your-face productions of new and familiar works. Past productions of "Pippin," "Working" and "Hair" have won the company critical acclaim and garnered the troupe a number of Jeff Award citations. Most recently, the theater gained attention by hosting a musical version of the cult horror-movie classic, "Evil Dead." The performance space is black-box small and brings new meaning to the word "intimate": The theater's only bathroom is at the back of the stage.