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Since last time

Freedom on Freedom

BY **Hairy Freedom**

Editors note: This issue of *Lumpen* is proud to debut a new news analysis column by Hairy Freedom that will update readers on the under reported news stories that have been largely ignored by the mainstream media since the last time *Lumpen* was published. So, without further ado, here is Freedom on freedom...

As a journalist, seeker of truth and general purveyor of knowledge, I am cursed with a rabid obsession for news and information. As an artist, drunk, stoner and all-in-all freewheelin' asshole with access to the pages of this publication, I am also blessed with a stylized addiction to freedom and the spread of all things human. That said, I see no reason not to use this magazine to

perpetuate the vicious cycle of my afflictions and perhaps somewhere along the way we shall, laugh, cry or maybe even learn something together while deciphering meaning from pompous media propaganda. Let me impart...

Since the last time *Lumpen* was published (last February) Illinois has had its second consecutive Governor indicted on public corruption charges, the Swine Flu pandemic has gripped the country in overzealous panic and a sixth year has passed with U.S. troops still at war killing people and being killed in far away countries with names we can't pronounce. President Obama's 'honeymoon' is over, he got a new dog and succeeded in getting a 79-year-old Republican not named Larry Craig to 'switch-hit'. For national TV news networks, it's been a pretty slow news cycle for the past couple months, but I guess it's easy for news to seem that way when you expect actual news and get no more than a couple stories about Obama or our tanking economy and some light-hearted infotainment bile about the most recent attention-whoring celebrity to sleep around or buy a child. The shit we accept for news these days would make Howard Beale start offing editors with a dirty revolver. (If you don't know who Howard Beale is, find out). It's easy to lose your appetite for news considering the smell of the shit-pie mainstream news is passing around, but there is more than one restaurant (That's what's led you to *Lumpen* after all, right?).

You might have recently heard about the bodies of Chicago Public School children that have been piling up on Chicago's city streets lately. As of the time I'm writing this in mid-May 36 CPS students have been killed by violence in this unfinished school year alone. Alarming by any rate, losing 36 school children to violence is flat out embarrassing for the City of Chicago and its police department. Granted, I am not a police officer myself and I don't know the ins-and-outs of inner-city policing, but if this is not a reason to make drastic changes to policing strategies I don't know what is. I know the police are easy to pick on, especially Chicago police, so let's keep it going. Maybe the Mayor should give them a contract.

In early April, while the number of dead school children was hovering at or around 30, instead of tirelessly working to stop that number from escalating, the Chicago Police Department and the City of Chicago were busy busting up a pillow fight in front of the Art Institute building, 111 S. Michigan Ave. What makes the story particularly appalling isn't the fact that a handful of fun-loving, pillow-swinging youths were arrested and cited for disorderly conduct on a beautiful sunny day in front of Chicago's much beloved institute honoring 'art' in all its forms, but the call to end the pillow fight most likely came from City Hall. While it's

purely speculation, the event went off without a hitch last year and was taking place during the weekend the International Olympic Committee was touring the city evaluating Chicago's 2016 Olympic bid, so it's only logical to assume City Hall would have a special interest in an event that might reflect badly on Chicago's fair name. When that event is a pillow fight, however, something is gravely ill in the upper echelons of city management. Maybe it's the water or the city council's coffee is spiked? I'd suspect acid, but not even the worst acid I've ever eaten made me paranoid of pillows and I always suspect acid.

Another example of how out of whack this city's priorities are and one that was hardly picked up on happened in early March when city officials shut down the AV Aerie, a local non-profit that hosted art events, fundraisers and shows booked by Empty Bottle Presents. While most residents are struggling through this crumbling ruin of an economy, desperation is becoming palpable and City Hall is working to place an even bigger burden on the shoulders of those who make music and host events independently in this city. The bust came around the same time as the "Event Promoters Ordinance," was once again began circulating through the Chicago City Council. The ordinance, which was first introduced last year, is supposed to be a reaction to the E-2 nightclub tragedy that in 2003 claimed the lives of 21 people because a fight broke out, pepper spray was released into the air and people were trampled when some of the facility's emergency exits were locked. Unfortunately, this ordinance will do little to prevent such disasters and would put undo pressure on local promoters to register and be fingerprinted by the city, pay a two-year licensing fee anywhere from \$500 to \$2000 and obtain \$300,000 of liability insurance. Though the matter is still in the Chicago City Council's license and consumer protection committee and there appears to be no new time table for the ordinance to be debated or voted on, you can still let your weak and meager voice be heard by contacting the committee chairman, 47th Ward Alderman Eugene (Gene) Schulter via telephone at both 773-348-8400 and 312-744-3180 or by snail mail at 4237 N. Lincoln Ave. Chicago, IL 60618. If you're feeling really engaging and confrontational, you can even visit good ol' Gene at City Hall during one of the monthly meetings or when his committee meets in June. While you're there, maybe stop by your own alderman's office and check up on some of your tax dollars, you might be surprised with what you'll find.