



Soulian. The location moved a couple of times before settling in at 2116 West 95th Street in 1984 and is currently run by second and third generations of the Soulian clan.

Top Notch features wood-paneled walls, formica tables, chrome-rimmed napkin dispensers, old-school light-house-shaped glass salt and pepper shakers, tulip-style counter seating and a handful of Thomas Kinkadeesque oil paintings of waterfalls and random pastorals (the kind you might find in a secondhand store.) Frankly, the spot looks like the diner from Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks" crashed into a Goodwill and the mélange of debris just worked itself out.

The restaurant also features a tall Vegas-like flashing marquee, proudly perched above the horizon. It's an iconic, proud Southwest Side symbol akin to downtown's Hancock or Sears towers that beckons 95th-Street travelers to some of the best post-World-War-II-era burgers and fries in the city.

The burgers are freshly ground and formed daily, griddled thin and smoky, perched atop a toasted pillowy bun and topped with a patty-hugging coat of oozy cheese, a slather of mayo, sweet grilled onions, crisp lettuce, tomato and pickle, and accompanied by a jumble of fresh-cut crispy fries, all for \$5.

Here's where the willpower comes in. After sucking down one of these classic burgers, you'll have a mighty time turning down Top Notch's Oreo Cookie shake as a sweet ending. You need to stay strong, and instead walk or drive the seven blocks to the terra cotta and adobe Spanish-mission-style confines of The Original Rainbow Cone for your just desserts.

Founded in 1925 by Joseph Sapp (cones were twelve-and-a-half cents apiece back then), this 83-year-old ice-cream shop makes Top Notch look like a teenager. And like Mario's, the business is a seasonal affair, closing on December 23 and re-opening each season on March 1.

The interior here doubles as an ice-cream parlor and a history museum, featuring vintage wire-metal-backed chairs, old chrome-trimmed straw holders, malted-milk dispensers and a wooden Hires root-beer keg. Bottles of Chicago's own Filbert's soda line the counter of a freezer filled with buckets of swirled ice cream.

When the hot weather hits, lines queue out the door as if someone had announced a run of free pizza and beer. But there's nothing free about it, except the way people feel when they pay and take a bite of the name-sake wafer crisp cone featuring five slices of hand-paddled ice cream—chocolate, pistachio, strawberry, Palmer House (a cherry nut concoction) and orange sherbet.

Though it was invented over eighty years ago by Sapp, with its multi-color swirl and uncouth melding of flavors, the cone seems more like the brainchild of an entrepreneurial acid-tripping jam-band devotee trying to improve on Spumoni. Crazy as it is, the Rainbow cone is tasty, an antidote to the bubble-gummy blahness of Superman ice cream, and twice as fun.

Top Notch Beefburger is located at 2116 West 95th and Rainbow Cone is located at 9233 South Western.

GOING DOWN UNDER FOR THE BEVERLY-BI

Partners in Crime

By Michael Nagrant

MOST PEOPLE ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE TAYLOR STREET TWOSOME, but how many know about the Beverly-Bi? The Taylor Street Twosome is the tradition of sucking down a nutmeg-spiced Italian beef, with your knuckles slathered in gravy and flecked with stray giardiniera, at the original Al's, followed by a saunter across the street for an icy sweet plastic-spoon-dip into a wax-lined paper cup of Mario's Italian Lemonade.

The Beverly-Bi isn't quite so easy, as you need a bit of willpower and have to walk about seven blocks to complete it, but it's no less venerable than the Taylor Street Twosome. But, unless you come from a long line of far Southwest Siders, it's probably not as well known.

The "bi" begins with a stop at Top Notch Beefburger in the neighborhood of Beverly. Top Notch was established in 1942 at 925 West 79th Street by Armenian immigrants John and Asanette

READINGS

THU/8

David Samuels

The author reads from "Only Love Can Break Your Heart" and "The Runner." *Quimby's*, 1854 W. North, (773)342-0910. 7pm. Free.

John Hagedorn

The author discusses "A World of Gangs: Armed Young Men & Gangsta Culture." *57th Street Books*, 1301 E. 57th, (773)684-1300. 6pm. Free.

Patricia Wells

The author discusses "We've Always Had Paris...And Provence: A Scrapbook of Our Life in France." *The Book Cellar*, 4736 N. Lincoln, (773)293-2665. 4pm. Free.

FRI/9

Betty Shiflett, Patricia Ann McNair, Mahmoud Saeed

The contributors to *F Magazine* read from their work. *Women and Children First Bookstore*, 5233 N. Clark, (773)769-9299. 7pm. Free.

George Motz

The author discusses "Hamburger America." *Barbara's Bookstore*, Oak Park, (312)222-0890. 7:30pm. Free.

Tim W. Brown, Paul McComas

The authors read from their work. *Quimby's*, 1854 W. North, (773)342-0910. 6pm-7pm. Free. Also at, *The Book Cellar*, 4736 N. Lincoln, (773)293-2665. 7:30pm. Free.

SAT/10

Michel Valdes

The writer discusses zine "School Daze Year 1." *Quimby's*, 1854 W. North, (773)342-0910. 5pm. Free.

MON/12

Elizabeth Hand, Matthew Sharpe

See **Tip of the Week**. The authors discuss their work. *The Book Cellar*, 4736 N. Lincoln, (773)293-2665. 7:30pm. Free.

TUE/13

David G. Whiteis

The author reads from "Chicago Blues: Portraits & Stories." *57th Street Books*, 1301 E. 57th, (773)684-1300. 6pm. Free.

Madeleine Albright

The former Secretary of State signs copies of "Memo to the President Elect." *University of Chicago Bookstore*, 770 E 58th, (773)702-7712. 2pm. Free.

Quickies! Reading Series

A monthly reading of very short prose. *Innertown Pub*, 1935 W. Thomas. 7:30pm. Free.

WED/14

Charles M. Payne

The author discusses "Teach Freedom." *57th Street Books*, 1301 E. 57th, (773)684-1300. 6pm. Free.

Chip Kidd

The author reads from "The Learners." *Quimby's*, 1854 W. North, (773)342-0910. 7pm. Free.

TALKS

THU/8

Out at CHM: Screaming Queens & Lavender Panthers

Gay historian and filmmaker Susan Stryker explores the world of the drag queen prostitutes who rioted against police in San Francisco, the collapse of the Lavender Panthers and other events throughout America since the 1960s. *Chicago History Museum*, 1601 N. Clark, (312)642-4600. 6:30pm, \$10-\$12.

TIP OF THE WEEK
ELIZABETH HAND AND
MATTHEW SHARPE



The one-two punch of Hand and Sharpe reading from their respective works should make for a fine evening of literary muscle. Hand's "Generation Loss," a clenched fist of a novel about a punk photographer engulfed in a Maine mystery, broods with atmospheric tenseness and flies right by. To give you an idea of Sharpe's "Jamestown," it is a fantasy-like telling of the settlers at the Virginia colony, featuring a protagonist in Pocahontas who spouts Ebonics and Elizabethan English. (That's when, of course, she's not going all-out Valley Girl, reminiscent of those early nineties "Saturday Night Live" sketches.) Both books are batshit crazy in their own ways, and both authors, despite some pretty dark material, find ways to involve some enlightened humor. (Tom Lynch)

Elizabeth Hand and Matthew Sharpe discuss their books May 12 at Book Cellar, 4736 North Lincoln, (773)293-2665, at 7:30pm. Free.

Powell's Bookstore

1501 East 57th Street
828 South Wabash
2850 North Lincoln Avenue



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