

LOGO BY
PAUL KOOB



EDZO'S BRINGS A SEVENTIES SHOW TO EVANSTON

Stairway to (Hamburger) Heaven

By Michael Nagrant

IF YOU LIVED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF CHICAGO in the early eighties you might have seen a gleaming brick red Crown

Victoria rolling down Dempster Avenue blasting Boston's "More Than a Feeling." If you pulled up next to that bitchin' ride and glanced in the back seat, you probably would have seen a young Eddie Lakin slunk down in the maroon leather bench seat slurping on a milkshake.

Lakin's father, the car's owner, grew up in Albany Park with the Skokie hotdog barons who opened legendary spots like Herm's and Poochies, and many weekends, he'd take his son to visit his friends' restaurants. It was there, chowing down on burgers and polishes that the seeds for his forthcoming Evanston burger shack Edzo's were planted.

Lakin is probably the most overqualified owner of a burger and hotdog joint since Hot Doug Sohn walked out of Kendall College and bestowed duck-fat French fries upon the world. A political science graduate of the University of Illinois, Lakin worked as a record-store clerk after college, but realized there was no future in it, and enrolled at the Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago (CHIC). He says, "You come up with an idea in the morning, do the prep, plate it, and send it out to the customer all in the same day. There's an immediacy to cooking that's really gratifying."

After graduation, Lakin worked at the defunct Chicago restaurant Spruce and then toured Europe with some friends. He stayed behind in Barcelona and cooked traditional Catalan lunches like fried cuttlefish and paella for local factory workers. He says, "I'd put out lunch, go nap on the beach off the Mediterranean Ocean, and then party all night."

Recharged, he came back to Chicago and got a job at Tru when Rick Tramonto still helmed the pass. When he started there, he'd hoped to learn how to put out the best food in world, but for him the reality never met his expectations.

He moved on to Bin 36, Carlucci's, opened a short lived tapas spot in Wheeling for the Bar Louie folks, and eventually became a general manager for the Rosenthal Group, which operates the local Sopraffina cafes. When he got laid off from that job last fall, he took some time off to spend with his young children Henry and Nora, and started the thoughtful food blog Cooking and Eating in Chicago.

Despite his wide-ranging experience, Lakin never really wanted his own place. But, in this economy, he knew he needed to open a spot if he wanted to earn a decent living. He says, "In the restaurant world, the kind of jobs that pay well are tough to get. In this climate corporate chef gigs are often the first to go."

With his gourmet pedigree, you'd expect Lakin to open a high-end spot or at least a downscale gourmet place. Lakin says, "I can count five places like that that are opening in the next few months. You got Michael Kornick (MK) and Graham Elliot (Bowles). I wanted to do something different."

With Edzo's, Lakin is instead opening a 1970s-style greasy spoon inspired by those pilgrimages to his father's friends' places. He's bypassing the familiar 1950s-era chrome-trimmed look in favor of a bright funkadelic purple, orange and green paint scheme. His logo, which could double as the header on a disco-era album cover, is inspired by the vintage Houston Astros uniforms. There is no shag carpeting in the restaurant, but there is an old "pure beef" Vienna hot dogs sign and a vintage tub of Cudahy's Leaf Lard.

Though there is a burger or hotdog stand on seemingly every corner in Chicagoland, Lakin's competitive edge will come through subtle attention to quality. Edzo's will feature freshly ground burgers, hand-dipped milkshakes and fresh-cut buttermilk-marinated onion rings and chicken tenders fried to order. He says, "We're not gonna be so hardcore that we make our own pickles or sauerkraut, but we'll always look for fresh product and avoid any product with life-extending chemicals."

Though his primary aim is to serve the everyman, as a gourmand and trained chef, he'll roll out a few fun food tricks including an inside-out grilled cheese (basically an American-style croque monsieur), truffle-fries, and Taylor St. Fries topped with Al's Italian Beef gravy, roasted peppers and giardinara. There's also a P B and B, a peanut butter and bacon sandwich that he invented as a kid by slathering pancakes with peanut butter, stuffing them with bacon and folding the whole thing in half.

Lakin says he's inspired by Doug Sohn and sees Edzo's as a cross between Hot Doug's and the national burger chain Five Guys. Like the amiable hotdog proprietor Sohn, Lakin hopes to be standing at the counter of his restaurant years from now, a central character, mixing it up with the locals. It's too early to tell whether he'll become an Evanston fixture, but in a week or so when Lakin opens up the doors and fires up the Journey and Zepplin on Edzo's speaker system, he'll definitely be on his way.

Edzo's, 1571 Sherman, Evanston, (847)864-3396 (Opening is estimated the week of October 5.)

TIP OF THE WEEK
MAKE MAGAZINE
RELEASE PARTY



Local literary magazine MAKE celebrates the release of its new issue, titled "This Everyday" and featuring contributions from Stephen Elliot, Laura Gabel-Hartman, Dan Beachy Quick, Caroline Picard and more. The release event features readings from contributors Rob Schlegel, Robert Duffer, Brian Anderson and Emil Ferris, musical performances from Leroy Bach and Marvin Tate, plenty of giveaways and, if I know MAKE, lots and lots of beer. The ten-dollar admission nabs you a copy of the issue, which boasts MAKE's new redesign. (Tom Lynch)

MAKE Magazine Issue #8 release party is October 2 at Roots & Culture, 1034 North Milwaukee, (773)235-8874, from 7pm-10pm. \$10.

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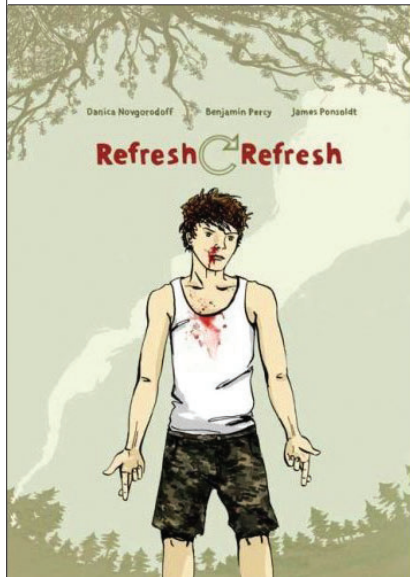
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Refresh, Refresh

THE IMPORTANCE OF A FATHER FIGURE in a young boy's coming of age is well-known, but what happens when the father is absent—not by choice so much, but instead at war? It's a question pondered in the troubling new graphic novel, "Refresh, Refresh," a collaboration between Danica Novgorodoff, Benjamin Percy (whose acclaimed short story of the same title is the basis for this book) and James Ponsoldt. Three rural Oregon boys, whose fathers are reservists serving overseas, wage their own wars with each other, with authority, with anyone they can as they struggle with the absence and uncertainty hanging over their lives. Sometimes they feel the loss of both parents, as mothers work overtime to try and make enough money to hold it together. Meanwhile, their kids take on a nihilistic existence, playing soldier and brawling, without knowing what they're fighting for or about: "He wanted to be ready. He wanted to hurt those who hurt him." The book draws its title from this, the first email war, where soldiers' families look not to the postal carrier but rather the computer, sometimes hitting the refresh button in desperate hope for word.

Novgorodoff renders the book in functional illustration with occasional flourishes of impressionism, but the strongest images come from the dialogue, such as the time when one of the boys talks to his father on the phone: "Ask your father if he needs more Handi Wipes," his mother commands. "Everyone sends Handi Wipes," the son snaps back. "He doesn't need Handi Wipes. He needs body armor, OK?"

It's a pervasive tragedy, especially when the word comes that a father is lost forever, a loss that you'd think would drive sons far away from the lives their fathers lived. But as the title of the book implies, there is a vicious cycle at work, as young men, some with college-bound destinies, some not, all seem to be drawn magnetically toward the same sad life they've watched unfold in front of them. (Brian Hiegelke)

"Refresh, Refresh"

By Danica Novgorodoff, Benjamin Percy and James Ponsoldt
First Second Books, 138 pages, \$17.99

READINGS

THU/1

Arika Okrent

The author discusses "In the Land of Invented Languages."
57th Street Books, 1301 E. 57th, (773)684-1300. 6pm. Free.

David Lida

The author discusses "First Stop in the New World: Mexico City, the Capital of the 21st Century."
Stop Smiling Storefront, 1371 N. Milwaukee, (773)342-1124. 7pm. Free.

John Shors

The author discusses "Dragon House."
The Book Cellar, 4736 N. Lincoln, (773)293-2665. 7pm. Free.

→ MAKE Magazine Release Party

Celebration for the release of the new issue, featuring Robert Duffer and Rob Schlegel. See Tip of the Week.
Roots & Culture, 1034 N. Milwaukee, (773) 235-8874. 7pm-10pm. \$10.

Moacyr Scliar

The Brazilian writer discusses his work.
Instituto Cervantes de Chicago, 31 W. Ohio, (312)587-1992. 5pm. Free.

SAT/3

→ David Cross

The actor and comedian discusses "I Drink for a Reason."
Borders, 2817 N. Clark, (773)935-3509. 2pm. Free.

→ Women and Children First 30th Anniversary Celebration and Benefit

Featuring Alison Bechdel and Dorothy Allison.
The Breakers, 5333 N. Sheridan. 5:30pm.

SUN/4

Chicago Calling Arts Festival

With poetry readings.
Myopic Books, 1564 N. Milwaukee, 773-862-4482. 7pm-9pm. Free.

MON/5

Punch Buggy Tour

Featuring Liz Baillie, Ken Dahl, MK Reed.
Quimby's, 1854 W. North, (773)342-0910. 7pm. Free.

Randolph J. Rogers

The author discusses "The Key of Life."
The Book Cellar, 4736 N. Lincoln, (773)293-2665. 7pm. Free.

TUE/6

→ Marcus Sakey

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

→ Parlor Reading Series

Featuring James Kennedy.
The Green Lantern Gallery, 1511 N. Milwaukee, (773)235-0936. 7pm. Free.

WED/7

→ Bookslut Reading Series

With Brian Evenson, Tod Goldberg and David A. Taylor.
Hopleaf Bar, 5148 N. Clark, (773)793-9488. 7:30pm.

Patrick Somerville

The author reads from "The Cradle."
Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State, (312)747-4300. 6pm. Free.

RUI: Reading Under the Influence

This week's theme is "Where the Wild Things Are."
See 411 for more.
Sheffield's Wine and Beer Garden, 3258 N. Sheffield, 773-281-4989. 7:30pm. \$3.

→ Series A

Featuring poets Michelle Taransky and Nick Demske.
Hyde Park Art Center, 5020 S. Cornell, (773)324-5520. 7pm. Free.

The Week Behind Celebration

With Scott Jacobs, Marilyn Wulff and Bob Brink.
Quimby's, 1854 W. North, (773)342-0910. 7pm. Free.



Piano Concert by José Luis Nieto
Instituto Cervantes Auditorium
Thursday, October 8th, 6:30 pm

FREE & open to the public. Limited seating, first come first served.
This concert is part of the 2009 Latino Music Festival of Chicago

José Luis Nieto is one of the leading Spanish pianists of the new generation. His concert and recital career has been prolific, including performances in the United States, South America, Russia, and at celebrated concert halls throughout Europe.

The International Comic Arts Forum: Max & Pere Joan
Instituto Cervantes Auditorium
Thursday, October 15th, 6:30 pm

The lecture will be in Spanish with English translation available

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