



FEBRUARY, 2015 EDITION



## LIFE GETS SKI'S GOAT

In hindsight, it was an omen. Driving East on I-90 on a late Saturday afternoon, dodging weekend drivers and out-of-state license plates by weaving between lanes like herding lost SUVs, the radio is blaring the seven and one-half minute version of Yes' "Roundabout."

There is more traffic going to the Loop on a Saturday afternoon than rush hour during the week. Where are all these people going? Why are they all in my way?

At this moment in time, people cannot disparage my brain function, but could question some of those oddities bouncing around my skull attic. The logic was that since we were in the midst of the Chinese New Year, a week long celebration that began February 19th, I should take a side trip on the way to the EIU North Reunion.

China is a vast nation with many subcultures and traditions, so it is hard to say what animal is the guiding spirit in 2015: the goat, ram, sheep or any horny quadruped. So I went with

the common Year of the Goat; which meant a diversion to the old journalism proving ground, the Billy Goat Tavern.

Tucked at the deadline of Rush Street and the Chicago River, under Michigan Avenue, the Goat is the gritty little city icon off the beaten trail. It is one of those places that is an anchor to a boat load of memories.

So the plan was simple: stop by the Goat and have a beer.

But there was one problem. It was not quite the old man screaming "GET OFF MY LAWN!" moment, but all these slow weekenders GET OUT OF MY WAY!

The ninety minute crawl to Ohio Street did not help matters. Double parking in the snow drifts, a gaggle of suburbanites pouring out of vans and taxis, would have set me off until I thought things would open up a little when I got to the blighted Hotel Toyko block. No, it got worse. People jumping out of cars, jaywalking across, wandering in bent neck looking at the phones while walking . . .



## RYAN RETIRES

CHICAGO (RNWS): John Ryan made it official that he will retire as a journalism professor in 2015.

He decided that the time was right to retire, after weighing factors that included the uncertainty of state fiscal policies.

The journalism department is currently short several full time faculty members. It is not thought that when Ryan retires his position will be replaced due to falling enrollment and state cuts in university payments.

In other EIU North news, preliminary ideas are still being discussed on the Eastern Journalism 100 program set for November 7, 2015. The department has several blocks of hotel rooms in Charleston. The department will be sponsoring the event, so program ideas are still welcome in regard to the dinner and events.

## GOAT p.1

So I figured that once I got to Rush, things would clear out. The parking garage across the street from the Marriott would be sanctuary from the preppy crowd.

Suddenly, there were some new buildings, a Shake Shake corner, and when I got to Rush, the parking garage was gone. An upscale furniture store had taken its place.

A slow turn onto Rush turned into a night mare. Rush is basically a glorified alley toward the river. There were two guys in the middle of the road directing traffic in and out of the Marriott's main entrance. But what was worse was the glaring eye shock of the new panorama. Instead of the old, bland warehouses and low buildings that occupied this strip of town, massive billboard plastered NORDSTROMS took up three plus blocks (with a catwalk) with more Lettuce restaurants to feed an Army division of breeding rabbits.

A steady jam of people trying to turn into the Marriott (is coming downtown to spend a weekend at the Marriott a thing now?) The next block down, there was another hotel, which had its own access nightmares.

So as I finally get to the last block, I find that the street parking outside the Goat has been taken away, for no apparent reason. So I spun under Lower Michigan for a round of

laps, but found that the time was too short to try to park in a busy lot, have a brew, and make it to Lincoln Park for the reunion.

I darted through the suburban sheep onto Grand Avenue to blast West toward LaSalle Street, thinking it was the widest boulevard to go North toward Lincoln Avenue.

Well, those same interstate laggards were in front of me. Then, in the mayor's great public works nonsense, LaSalle Street was closed going North. So a detour to Wells Street to trudge north through Old Town, which incidently now looks more strip mall New Town than the Bohemian outpost.

Since this is my city, I knew enough that Wells funnels into Lincoln Avenue so I made better time to the EIU venue, the Seven Ten Lounge.

Feeding the corrupt parking meter got my goat, but there was little to do but pay the piper since most of the side streets still had ice dam curbs and permit parking zones. No one needs a \$500 tow and fine on a cold Saturday night.

Walking into the new entrances, the Lounge had totally changed its private bowling room into expanded lanes, moved bar and an odd maze of dark side rooms of a classic opium den.

There was a mix of various group parties and individuals attempting to bowl and drink, juggling tabs and a young kid keeping track of shoes. Slowly, our group took over four lanes.

## LOLA SHOOTS



*The set up of Lego Lola's shoot.*



*It is tough balancing act. But part of the art is getting the right frame of mind.*







**“My degree from Eastern Illinois played a vital role in this book. I used research methods gained from my history side as well as interviewing principles and writing skills from my journalism side.”**

**Dan Verdun**

I used research methods gained from my history side as well as interviewing principles and writing skills from my journalism side,” he said. “The experience I gained through coursework and through working on a daily newspaper in college taught me a wealth of techniques and methods that I continue to use to this day.”

Since graduating, Verdun has used knowledge acquired from Eastern and his love for teaching, which

Photo: Paul Pinderski

Dan Verdun ('88) signed copies of his book at Homecoming in October.

*SKI must be back in good Alumni stead with the Department since he got a photo credit in the latest issue of -30-! The old journalism skill sets don't atrophy when they hibernate.*

