

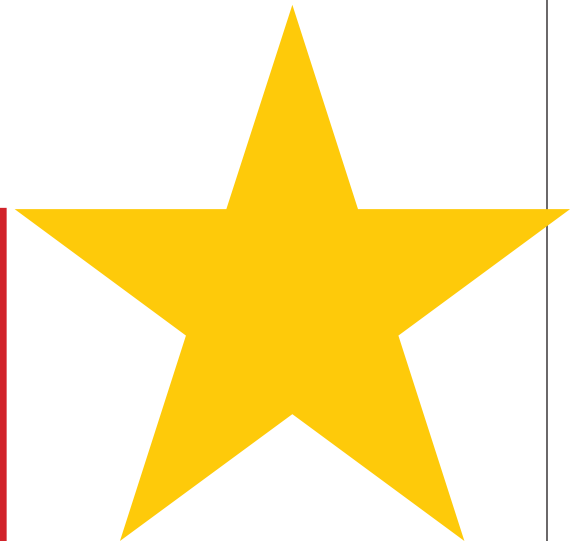


A-LIST 2009

SLM'S ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO THE EXCEPTIONAL

130 WINNERS ACROSS 9 CATEGORIES
FOOD / SHOPPING / AMUSEMENTS / KIDS / BODY
SERVICE / MEDIA / CULTURE / NIGHTLIFE

By Margaret Bauer, Bill Burge, Jeannette Cooperman, Nicole Benoist Edgerton,
Bryan A. Hollerbach, Dave Lowry, George Mahe, Christy Marshall, Jarrett Medlin,
Stefene Russell, and Stephen Schenkenberg. Photographs by Katherine Bish,
Whitney Curtis, Mike DeFilippo, and Josh Monken. Illustrations by Pablo



A-LIST 2009

KIDS



HAIR CUTTER THE HAIRY ELEPHANT

First of all, there's the barber's chair. Kids can sit in a jeep, sports car, or airplane as stylists whip their little locks into shape. Then they can mix shampoo "flavors" (different colors and smells) to create their own brands, and get their heads washed with a faucet shaped like an elephant's trunk. Each station comes with a TV/DVD player and PlayStation. The salon also serves clients with special needs, particularly those with autism. And for that, it gets an A. 106A Holloway, 636-227-7647; 3056 Highway N Plaza, 636-379-7647; thehairyelephant.com

READING PROGRAM ST. CHARLES CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT'S SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Last summer, more than 7,000 kids completed the St. Charles City-County Library District's summer reading program, reading solo but participating in related programming at the library's 12 branches. While the summer theme ("Catch the Reading Bug") spanned the region, St. Charles went an extra step by collecting 3,000 pint-sized book reviews ("The saddest part of the book is when the ship hit the iceberg"), which librarians have been publishing on their kids' blog all year long. A sequel comes this summer. 636-441-2300, youranswerplace.org

ALL-AROUND KIDS' STORE CITY SPROUTS

There is a magical place where practicality and great design meet. You'll find it in the form of a vibrant children's boutique on the Loop. At City Sprouts, shelves are stocked with clothing, gear, and toys that are well-made and easy on the eyes. The store's a divine example of co-owner Molly Curlee's credo: "You don't have to sacrifice your sense of style to be a good parent." 6354 Delmar, 314-726-9611, citysprouts.com



FIELD TRIP THIRD DEGREE GLASS FACTORY

Kids love art, especially when they get to make their own—and throwing in a little fire never hurts. If you want to take the tykes on a field trip they'll never forget, then visit Third Degree Glass Factory, where they can watch glass masters at work, then (if they're brave) create glass paperweights, magnets, or pendants. They'll have a blast. 5200 Delmar, 314-367-4527, thirddegreeglassfactory.com

CLASS ACTS: LESSONS YOUR CHILD WILL LOVE



KICKAROOS AT VETTA SPORTS

SPORTS VETTA SPORTS' KICKAROOS

Cones? Check. Soccer balls? Check. Coconuts and stuffed monkeys? Double-check. Welcome to the Kickaroos program at Vetta Sports. One class a week for eight weeks costs just \$89—and the 2- to 5-year-olds seem to love, if nothing else, just running around on bright green Astro-Turf. (There are occasional tears, sure, but have you never seen the World Cup?) "The Vetta coaches are patient," one parent told us, "and they really encourage participation." Four locations, vettasports.com

COOKING KITCHEN CONSERVATORY

Parents trying to raise their own little Chef Ramsay can take care of the swearing lessons on their home turf. But for a serious introduction to the culinary part, a fine local answer is The Apprentice Chef: Culinary Bootcamp at the Kitchen Conservatory (for 7- to 12-year-olds). After three days and \$100, your child will be better skilled with a knife, informed about basic techniques, and possibly able to whip up some chicken fajitas and apple crisps for those tuition-paying parents. Wonder how Ramsay would declare his appreciation. 8021 Clayton, 314-862-2665, kitchenconservatory.com

ART SLAM'S FAMILY SUNDAYS

The Saint Louis Art Museum's Family Sundays program has become a collective tradition, attracting an average of 1,200 kids and parents each month. The free weekly drop-in program lasts from 1 to 4 p.m., and each month has a different theme (June's was "Touchy Texture"). Kids and parents do hands-on projects right in Sculpture Hall before touring the collection. "It's an awesome program," a father of two young girls says, "because it gets kids into the museum in a nonformal way. I think they're more likely to go to museums in future years." 1 Fine Arts Drive, 314-721-0072, slam.org

A-LIST 2009

SERVICE



FLORIST SCOTT HEPPER, STRAUB'S (WEBSTER GROVES)

"Crap is not an option." So says Scott Hepper, floral manager/master designer at the Straub's location in Webster Groves. And he means it. Ordering from auctions in the Netherlands through a Chicago broker, Hepper forgoes baby's breath and ready-made bouquets in favor of European-style flowers in season. Customers love it, as their in-store hugs confirm. His arrangements are sophisticated and perfectly suited to the client or event. It's no wonder Hepper has quadrupled his store's floral sales since he started in 2007. 211 W. Lockwood, 314-962-0169, straubs.com

FRAMING ARTMART

Getting art and photos framed, much like taking clothes to the cleaners, is something we tend to put off, fearing expense or damage. Artmart's expert framers, however, always allay our fears and leave us satisfied. 2355 S. Hanley, 314-781-9999, artmartstl.com

PARTY HELP PARTY HELPERS UNLIMITED

Throwing the party is fun—but cleaning up afterwards? Not so much. Hire it done instead. Michelle Forthaus of Party Helpers Unlimited and her staff arrive early to finish the cooking, then set up, serve, clear, and, best of all, leave the place sparkling. The price for going to your own party and pretending you're a guest? Thirty dollars per hour, with a four-hour minimum. 314-846-6916, partyhelpers-stl.com

ALL-PURPOSE MOVER L&L MOVING

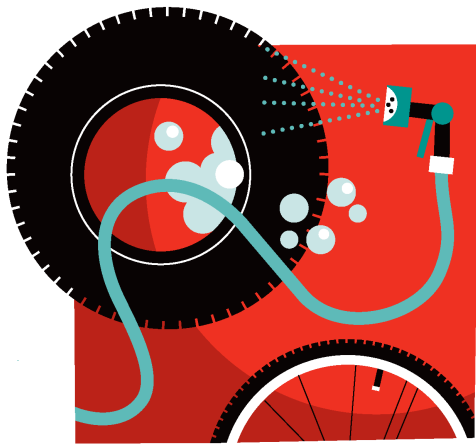
Moving, stressful? Not with L&L. Leroy Summers calls you "ma'am" or "sir" and makes philosophical wisecracks ("Just how much furniture do two people need, ma'am?") while he works. He's transported 400-pound gun safes and delicate antiques, and he'll deadpan, "Sorry, ma'am, that bed didn't fit," just to tease. But when it comes to price, he plays it straight. 314-646-0760



**HAPPIEST DRY CLEANING
YES CLEANERS**

Fill up the gas tank, buy milk, pick up the dry cleaning...and leave laughing. Owner Jong Park makes a stop at the original Yes Cleaners special, offering free dry cleaning on birthdays or asking when you'll need your "vacation clothes." Park tends to his customers' silks and cashmeres as assiduously as Lord Peter Wimsey's butler, erasing all the stains and rips of a busy life. 1318 Clarkson Clayton Center, 636-207-7161

HOT WHEELS: THE BEST OF WHAT GOES 'ROUND



**BIKE SHOP
MAPLEWOOD BICYCLE**

Making new bikes look alluring is the easy part—the cycles gleam beautifully all by themselves. But Maplewood Bicycle excels at the hard part: providing an environment amenable to both devoted cyclists (loads of gear, expert staff) and the naive newbie. This 38-year-old company's ongoing clinics and group rides create a collaborative vibe that lets customers feel like part of the team. 7534 Manchester, 314-781-9566, maplewoodbicycle.com

**CARWASH
WATERWAY (KIRKWOOD)**

Pull on in to the Kirkwood Waterway. Gas up if you'd like before a young'un from the fleet takes your seat and sends you into the immaculate shop, with its 40-foot ceilings and rows of goods. There's fresh coffee. And Frisbees. And greeting cards. Another few steps and you're in the seating area—with comfy, padded lounge chairs. By the time you notice the "Free Wi-Fi" sign, you're out the door, where your car's purring, scrubbed clean, and the teens, towels over their shoulders, are moving on to the next one. 10850 Manchester, 314-965-3757, waterway.com

A-LIST 2009

MEDIA



COMICS CREATOR MATT KINDT

Local writer/artist Matt Kindt's star has risen fast, bringing in multiple Eisner and Harvey Award nominations—the comics equivalent of the Oscars and Golden Globes—plus a 2007 Harvey win for work on Alan Moore and Melinda Gebbie's *Lost Girls*. But critical acclaim alone does not an A-List winner make. Kindt makes the list because we love his work, plain and simple, from the meta-comic *Bizarro World of Pistolwhip* to the clandestine joys of *Super Spy*. supersecretspy.com

SPORTS ANALYST BERNIE MIKLASZ

The sports-talk radio landscape changed as quickly as the Blues' late-season luck this winter, with MOVIN' 101.1 morphing into 101 ESPN. Among the FM-flocking free agents, Miklasz's move from the AM dial's Team 1380 was the equivalent of Shaq going to the Suns. Though not as silky smooth as those TV-turned-radio sportscasters, the award-winning *Post-Dispatch* columnist remains among St. Louis sports' elite, playing double coverage in ESPN's noontime slot. 101.1 FM, stltoday.com

DJ WHO CARES GUY PHILLIPS

Sure, Guy Phillips is celebrating his 30th year on the mics of Y98 FM, but it's his tireless work for local non-profits that has us raising our glass. His calendar-busting emcee duties and board-of-director meetings take up 100-plus evenings a year, but he always sounds happy to lend his name, voice, and ideas to organizations he believes in, from The Saint Louis Men's Group Against Cancer to A.L.I.V.E. (Alternatives for Living in Violent Environments), to name just a few. Y98.com

LOCAL LEGEND-IN-THE-MAKING JOE BUCK

The kid's done all right for himself, becoming the youngest announcer ever to regularly cover the NFL on network TV; calling the World Series, the Super Bowl, and the All-Star Game; even recently landing his own HBO show. And through it all, the Bud commercials and Conan appearances, he's stayed true to his roots. But don't take our word for it: Flip to page 98 to meet the guy behind the mic.

TV NEWSPERSON JASMINE HUDA

Too often, TV newscasters remind us why the insult “talking head” exists. KSDK general-assignment reporter Jasmine Huda embodies the antithesis of that phrase. Since returning here to her hometown two years ago, following stints in Springfield, Mo., and Washington, D.C., Huda has consistently reported with poise and intelligence—to the delight of news wonks across the area. ksdk.com

MORNING DJS THE TOTAL INFORMATION AM TEAM

Serious times demand serious reportage, and “in this economy”—don’tcha hate that phrase?—that means the NewsRadio 1120 KMOX duo of Doug McElvein and Debbie Monterrey. Each workday, without the typical morning-show folderol, the *Total Information AM* co-hosts give groggy St. Louisans a prelatte overview of events. Beyond providing the most exhaustive rush-hour traffic updates available, they smoothly cover the day’s other figurative jams, leavening it all with reports on lighter topics like (gulp!) the stock market. kmox.com



DIGITAL NATIVES: SOCIAL MEDIA STANDOUTS

TWITTERER MARK REARDON

Mark Reardon already has his own show on KMOX and regular spots on KMOV’s *Great Day St. Louis*, but on Twitter he’s a force of nature, busting out more than 1,000 messages to 750-plus followers since his maiden tweet in January. Topical, sarcastic, self-promotional—isn’t that what Twitter’s all about? twitter.com/markreardonkmox

FLICKR PHOTOGRAPHERS MARK AND JEN HALSKI

Mark and Jen Halski’s respective Flickr streams are by turns gorgeous and tender. The couple runs Halski Studio, an ad and design firm, so it’s no surprise they can do slick. But the photos of their daily lives—particularly those of their two young kids—are artful and full of joy, and the best thing they end up selling us is themselves. flickr.com/photos/markhalski; flickr.com/photos/16833989@N00

FORUM STL HOPS

While some forums—and most online comments sections—are lamentable, glass-is-half-toxic affairs, STL Hops is a friendly foamer; members actually ask for explanations or offer to pick up a special brew on a trip to the West Coast. If other forums are a third-grade recess (with masked kids lobbing water balloons), this one’s a lovely outdoor patio. stlhops.com/forums

COMPANY BLOG LIFE AT HOK

So corporate communications *can* be cool. Launching Life at HOK last fall, the St. Louis-based, international architecture firm empowered employees at many levels and all over the world to publish posts, photos, and videos about their work lives. By allowing the direct and personal broadcast of individual voices, the company has strengthened its own. It’s an exceptional example of a company using social media well. hoklife.com

A-LIST 2009

CULTURE

COOLEST PARTNERSHIP THE PULITZER FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS AND WASH. U.'S BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

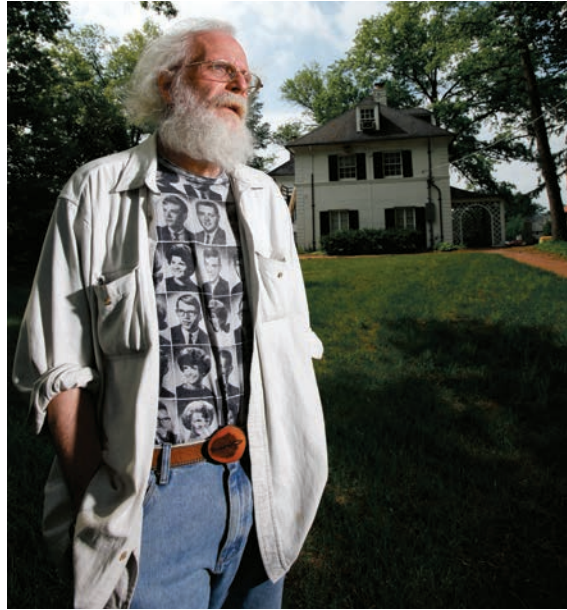
Art lives in museums, and art-lovers visit it there...but that wasn't good enough for the Pulitzer. When it mounted an exhibit about light, schoolkids built light installations in the community. When it exhibited "Old Masters," convicted felons staged themes of betrayal and redemption, and people with Alzheimer's talked about the memories that art burns into the soul. Art *can* make a difference. Let's Look: Making Connections at The Pulitzer, 314-754-1861, letslook.pulitzerarts.org

MULTIPURPOSE VENUE LUMINARY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Formerly a convent, the nuns' quarters—tiny, well-lit, equipped with sinks—make perfect artists' studios. The Luminary also curates art shows that generously invite audiences to participate; its monthly Elevator Music Series is marvelous. But its conscious merger of art and service sets it apart, with its "Blank Canvas" art classes for low-income kids serving as just one example. 4900 Reber, 314-807-5984, theluminaryarts.com

EXHIBIT EERO SAARINEN: SHAPING THE FUTURE

We think of the Arch, and Saarinen, as ours; this superlative national touring exhibit reminded us that both are part of a larger cultural conversation and demonstrated, in high style, how looking backward can sometimes propel us forward. Extra kudos to the Kemper for engaging St. Louisans directly with programs like the "1000 Arches" film competition. Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, 1 Brookings Drive, 314-935-7282, kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu



POET DAVID CLEWELL

Regarding this local poet, one Amazon.com reviewer may have said it best: "Yes, David's poems reference flying saucers, LSD conspiracy theories, and H.G. Wells...but that's not why you should read him. Read these poems because you care about language as art." Though Clewell is a Webster University professor, his poems are both earthy and fancifully fictional, revealing a man deeply invested in the everyday life of language—and eager to reveal the medium's uncharted possibilities.

NEW GALLERY GOOD CITIZEN

The magic here is in the mix: street and academic, local and national, screen prints and installations. Oh, and large and small: from the 14- by 48-foot billboard on the gallery roof (which features work by the artist currently on exhibit) to sculptures like Kenny Gilbert's *Micronauts*, which required a magnifying glass to view. 2247 Gravois, 314-348-4587, goodcitizenstl.com



GOOD CITIZEN GALLERY PROPRIETOR ANDREW JAMES

A-LIST 2009

CULTURE



VISUAL ARTIST CRAIG NORTON

White Flag Projects discovered him in 2007, but this is Norton's breakthrough year, with a solo show at William Shearburn, a group show at Laumeier, a spot at the Vancouver Biennale, and his work registered with The Drawing Center in New York. Self-taught, Norton is best-known for his figures, which have photorealistic heads and hands drafted with 29-cent ballpoint pens and "clothes" made from wallpaper; he arranges dozens of them in large-scale scenes depicting war, racism, or genocide. As cultural tectonic plates shift and people dare to say, "Waterboarding is torture," his work feels like part of the zeitgeist.

DRAMA KINGS: STARS OF THE STAGE

DRAMATIC THEATER THE REPERTORY THEATRE OF ST. LOUIS

There's just no arguing with the 33 nominations and 10 statues at this year's Kevin Kline Awards. Or the fact that the Rep took four of the five nominations for "Outstanding Production of a Play," including for *Evie's Waltz*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore*, *Rabbit Hole*, and *The Little Dog Laughed*—the show that scored the company half of its 10 awards. Sure, it's been around since 1966, but it's easy for old, venerated institutions to get lazy. The Rep simply hasn't. Loretto-Hilton Center for Performing Arts, 130 Edgar, 314-968-4925, repstl.org

MUSICAL THEATER THE BLACK REP

Though mainly a dramatic company, the Black Rep's take on musical theater is the freshest around, from its Kevin Kline Award-winning production of *Sarafina!* to the purely pleasurable *Tell Me Something*



SARAFINA! AT THE BLACK REP

Good, which opened the Black Rep's 32nd season. Matter of fact, the company closed its curtains this year with music as well: the beautiful, visceral *Blues in the Night*. 634 N. Grand, 314-534-3810, theblackrep.org

THEATER EXPERIENCE ONSITE THEATRE COMPANY

Theater folk are perennially concerned with "getting butts in the seats." But what if the butts went bowling with the actors? Or took

photos of the cast with disposable cameras? OnSite's debut production, 2007's *Bowling Epiphany*, was staged in South City's Epiphany Lanes; its most recent show, *Exhibit*, took place inside the new Craft Alliance gallery during Jennifer Angus' "Locusts & Honey" exhibit. Nine out of 10 butts agree: In an increasingly distracting and interactive world, environmental theater is a must-try. 314-686-0062, onsitetheatre.org

DANCE EXPERIENCE SPRING TO DANCE FESTIVAL AT THE TOUHILL

Thanks to Dance St. Louis and the Touhill, you could have spent every day of Memorial Day weekend immersed in dance—for a mere ten-spot. In its second year, Spring to Dance featured a roster of 30 dance companies, including locals like aTrek Dance Collective and Saint Louis Ballet, as well as artists we'd never see otherwise, like the Chicago Human Rhythm Project and Philadelphia's BalletX. springtodance.org

A-LIST 2009

CULTURE

ARTS-RELATED FESTIVAL CHEROKEE STREET'S CINCO DE MAYO

Cherokee's not just our Latino district—it's a big arts district. So St. Louis' biggest Mexican independence party has inevitably become a fireworks fountain of unbridled creativity. This year, that included artists' booths set up like a *vecindario* (neighborhood), a "People's Joy Parade," and a suite of Volvos parked behind City Art Supply, where local musicians performed—via the car radios. cincodemayostl.com



ARTS EDUCATOR ALICIA GRAF

She danced as "center woman" in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*, has dazzled critics at *The New York Times*, was profiled in *Smithsonian*. After reactive arthritis sidelined her from dancing full time, she tried business school and publishing, but still longed to be around dancers. Now St. Louis is lucky enough to have this world-class artist teaching at COCA. Center of Creative Arts, 524 Trinity, 314-725-6555, cocastl.org

TUNES OF THE TIMES: MUSIC BY THE DECADES



'60s THE RALPH BUTLER BAND

The band's leader and namesake began his career at the end of this decade and can still flawlessly channel its Motown sound. web.mac.com/ralphbutler

'70s FANTASY

This band has the music of the '70s firmly in hand, from Chicago to Van Morrison to any funk-pop standard you can name. davefowler.20m.com

'80s TORY Z STARBUCK

Talk about '80s incarnate. In concert, Starbuck comes off like a strange space-age mashup of Bowie, Eno, and Ocasek. myspace.com/toryzstarbuck

'90s SON VOLT

As Son Volt's latest hits shelves this month, its new labelmates include Utah Phillips and the coal miners of Pennsylvania—meaning they're not just Americana anymore, but part of the folk canon. sonvolt.net

'00s SO MANY DYNAMOS

The band recorded its latest with Death Cab for Cutie's Chris Walla on the boards. But live shows—combining joyful noise and X-Acto precision—are its ace-in-pocket. myspace.com/somanydynamos

'20s DIZZY ATMOSPHERE

These Gypsy-jazz masters of swing bring a full catalog of American, European, and Latin standards to life.

'30s POKEY LAFARGE

Soulful and simple, Pokey LaFarge's ragtime blues and down-home country rambles shake the dust from the road in true Depression-era fashion. myspace.com/pokeylafarge

'40s AMBASSADORS OF SWING

For a real postwar boogie, catch these cats live at the Casa Loma Ballroom on a hot Friday night.

'50s CHUCK BERRY

See the man—yea, the legend—himself in Blueberry Hill's Duck Room, and hear "Maybelene" how it was meant to be played. chuckberry.com