



A-List 2010

St. Louis Magazine's annual tribute to the best this city has to offer
New this year: 53 picks from readers just like you!

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A-LIST 2010

Kids



ART CLASSES

Saint Louis City Open Studio and Gallery

Art's fun, but it can become frustrating when dried-up markers, a small work space, or picky teachers fetter kids' natural inspiration. Our favorite "safe space" for art: Saint Louis City Open Studio and Gallery. Make an appointment for open studio hours (\$12 per hour, or \$10 per hour with a 10-hour card, available during the school year only), or sign your child up for a ceramics or illustration course, and see inspiration set free—no dining-table cleanup required.

SOUTH GATE LODGE, TOWER GROVE PARK, 4255 ARSENAL, 314-865-0060, SCOSAG.ORG

STORYTELLER

Georgy Rock

It's no exaggeration to say Georgy Rock is, well, a rock of stability. She's been spinning tales here for nearly 30 years, from the old Library Limited to ongoing gigs at Catholic Supply of St. Louis and various congregations across the city. Last June, she was ordained as a *maggid*, or Jewish itinerant storyteller, and in August established the Thursday Child Story Time (11:30 a.m. to noon Thursdays) at Subterranean Books. It's the perfect combo: Book-browsing and stories, then lunch on the Loop.

SUBTERRANEAN BOOKS,
6275 DELMAR, 314-862-6100,
GEORGY-ROCK.COM

FULL-SERVICE PRESCHOOL

The Elegant Child Early Learning Center

This is one of Wildwood's best-kept secrets: a state- and nationally accredited preschool...where you can get your dry-cleaning done. Where you can get cappuccino and a breakfast sandwich—or a classy dinner and birthday cake—to go. Where your child can get a haircut while you check out a book from the on-site library. And did we mention that the learning center offers classes in martial arts, computers, dance, gymnastics, and soccer? In a word: Wow.

513 STRECKER, 636-458-4414,
ELEGANTCHILDCAMPUS.COM

MEAL OUT WITH THE KIDS

Pei Wei Asian Diner

We know: It's a chain. But it's one where you can get a kids' meal that's both cheaper and healthier than the usual fast-food fare—plus a glass of wine for Mom. (No need to pack that flask!) Add gluten-free options, dishes with tons of veggies and protein, locations right off the highway, and the option to order ahead online, and you see why many mothers swear by it.

8885 LADUE, 314-656-5980;
11430 OLIVE, 314-656-2004;
PEIWEI.COM

KIDS' MUSIC SERIES

Musical Merry-Go-Round, Off Broadway

In 2008, Paul Stark, longtime host of KDHX-FM's *Ska's the Limit*, switched genres and created a radio version of Saturday-morning cartoons, *Musical Merry-Go-Round*. He plays folkies and novelty standbys like Spike Jonze, but he's also the only DJ here playing "kindie rockers," or rockers who play music for kids, e.g. Del Fuegos frontman Dan Zanes. Stark's not doing this to earn cool points; he plays it because it's good. Parents love these family matinee shows, unlike the mind-zapping treacle that's been peddled to kids in the past. Everyone wants to be there. And what promotes quality family time more than that?

3511 LEMP, 314-773-3363,
MUSICALMERRYGOROUND.ORG



ANIMAL ENCOUNTER

Warm Springs Ranch

There's no question: Our kids have many animal options within a short drive, including the Zoo, Grant's Farm, Purina Farms, Suson Park...the list is long (and exemplary!). But when we heard Warm Springs Ranch, home of the Anheuser-Busch Clydesdales, was opening up to the public, we were on board. If anything says St. Louis, it's the Clydesdales—and now you and the kids can take a bus out to meet Clydesdale colts and fillies in their natural mid-Missouri pastureland (and spy others in the fields along the way). Say it with us now: "Horsies!" Call for tour reservations.

BOONVILLE, 888-972-5933, WARMSPRINGSRANCH.COM

Readers' Picks

KID-FRIENDLY RESTAURANT:

**RED ROBIN (NATIONAL);
FITZ'S, BLUEBERRY HILL
(TIE) (LOCAL)**

HAIRCUT:

THE HAIRY ELEPHANT

CLOTHING STORE:

PUDDLE DUCKS

PLAYGROUND:

TILLES PARK (COUNTY)

Culture



Bill Chott

NONTRADITIONAL THEATER

The Improv Trick

Too often, when it comes to comedy, St. Louisans look north to Chicago, and overlook our own homegrown talent. Know this: Whether you desire to dip a toe into performing yourself or simply want to see people bring the funny, Bill Chott's got your back. The nationally acclaimed actor and his troupe of comedians are working nightly to teach and perform here—and restore our city to comedy prominence. 2715 CHEROKEE, 314-922-1998, THEIMPROVTRICK.COM

THEATER PRODUCTION

Woyzeck, Upstream Theater

No one but Upstream is staging obscure, neglected works in translation for the stage. Artistic director Philip Boehm is clearly a perfectionist, which is why he won a Kevin Kline Award in the Outstanding New Play category for *Woyzeck*. How could Georg Büchner's 1837 play, one of the most influential scripts in the German canon, be new? It was half-complete at the time of the playwright's death. As *Riverfront Times* theater critic Dennis Brown noted, lots of people have bungled this play by trying to mind-read its author; Boehm just tried to tell a compelling story, and "fashioned an essentially new play." Then he cast two of the finest actors in town—J. Samuel Davis and Brooke Edwards—in the lead roles to bring that fine script to life. 314-863-4999, UPSTREAMTHEATER.ORG

Readers' Picks

MUSEUM: SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM

GALLERY: PHILIP SLEIN GALLERY

THEATER/THEATER COMPANY: FOX THEATRE

BAND: DR. ZHIVEGAS

TALENT TO WATCH

Tim Lane

He blew everyone away when Fantagraphics Books issued his collection of graphic short stories, *Abandoned Cars*, last year. *Print* wrote that *Cars* "signal[ed] the arrival of a major new voice on the American literary landscape, with or without the illustrations." Which were by no means shabby—as *Booklist* noted, the "beautifully crafted pen-and-ink drawing combines a master artist's eye for detail with a predilection for the grotesque." Now, Lane is translating one of the stories, "The Passenger," to film. You can see it this month at Cinema St. Louis' Filmmakers Showcase at the Tivoli Theatre (July 17 to 23, cinemastlouis.org).

JACKIENONAME.WORDPRESS.COM

PARTY BAND

Groovethang

It's likely you've shaken your own thang along to this night-brightening seven-piece, which has been getting even the most reticent partygoers out on the dance floor since 1997. The band may cover Chicago (and Steely Dan, and Al Green, and Madonna), but it's pure St. Louis.

314-421-9400, GROOVETHANG.NET

COMMUNITY ARTS PROGRAMMING

Urban Alchemy/ Gordon Matta-Clark: "Transformation"

Want to guarantee a yawn? Throw out that word "community"; it's the desiccating kiss of death. But it wasn't in the hands of Gordon Matta-Clark, who swung from buildings in harnesses with a chain saw in one hand, cooked sea-monkey soup for starving artists, poked fun at the landed gentry, and saw many topics—ecology, poverty, cities—through the eyes of a visionary. When the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts showed Matta-Clark this year, it created eight months' worth of fun, compelling, and relevant programming around the exhibit, including lectures, projects, walking tours, art shows, and a dense, interactive website. It turned

the whole city into a staging area for Matta-Clark's work, truly transforming St. Louis in the process.

MATTACLARK.PULITZERARTS.ORG/TRANSFORMATION

RIGHTEOUS FIGHT FOR THE ARTS

Sarah Bryan Miller on the Classic 99 Sale

Thanks to *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* classical-music critic Sarah Bryan Miller, we now know why the Lutheran Church's Missouri Synod pushed so hard to sell the city's only classical station, 99.1 KFUO-FM, to Christian-pop outfit Joy FM, even though there were other able and willing buyers—ones who'd keep the programming intact. Though her reporting couldn't prevent the FCC from approving the deal, it did show how crucial the station was to small arts groups, and how beloved it was to St. Louisans.

STLTODAY.COM/BLOGZONE/CULTURE-CLUB

ULTIMATE CULTURE DESTINATION

Cherokee Street

O Cherokee, why do we love thee? Let us count the ways: All Along Press, Apop Records, The Archive, ArtDimensions, bARter Collective, Boots Contemporary Art Space, Binge and Purge, Black Bear Bakery, Carniceria Latino Americana, Casa Loma Ballroom, Cherry Bomb Vintage, Cinco de Mayo, Community Arts and Media Project, Cranky Yellow, El Borracho, El Torito, Firecracker Press, Foam, Fort Gondo Compound for the Arts, Hammond's, The Improv Trick, Jackson Pianos, La Vallesana, Lucky You Productions, MADE, The Mud House, Panorama, phd Gallery, the People's Joy Parade, Saxquest, the Shangri-La Diner, Sleepy Kitty, Snowflake/City Stock, The Stable, Stirrup Pants Chapbooks, STYLEhouse, Tower Tacos, 2720 Cherokee... whew. And if the past two years are any guide, there is a *lot* more to come...

CHEROKEESTREETNEWS.ORG