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## Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine Profiles Film Critics

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March 10, 1995

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Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine**Profiles Film Critics--****Chris Hewitt, St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press &****Dave Gathman, Elgin (Ill.) Courier-News**

*Locals  
Centelles  
Chicago  
Entertainment  
St. Paul & Elgin*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Movie critics for the *St. Paul (Minn.) Pioneer Press* and the *Elgin (Ill.) Courier-News* get two thumbs up in the spring, 1995, edition of *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine*.

Dave Gathman of the *Courier-News* and Chris Hewitt of the *Pioneer Press* are IWU graduates--Gathman, class of 1974, and Hewitt, class of 1983.

In separate interviews, reported in *IWU Magazine*, Gathman and Hewitt give candid responses to questions about their work as film critics for daily newspapers, "good" movies, and other critics.

Here's a sample:

- Gathman: "I have great respect for Michael Medved [*New York Post*] . . . He comes to Chicago to tape his TV show and I've run into him at some screenings. His book, *Hollywood vs. America*, denounced and documented how much Hollywood dwells on the seamy side of life, ignores the role of religion, and casts a negative light on businessmen and politicians."

- Hewitt: "My editor and I noticed I agree a lot with *Entertainment Weekly* critic Owen Gleiberman, and I do like his writing a lot. I try not to read any reviews until I've finished mine, so I won't unconsciously swipe something. I think Roger Ebert's a really good writer, whereas I think Gene Siskel is terrible."

Their favorite films:

- Gathman: *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Citizen Kane*, *E.T.*
- Hewitt: *Citizen Kane*, *Blow Out*, *Shoot the Moon*, and director Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, *North by Northwest*, and *Notorious*.

The article features a sidebar listing Hewitt and Gathman's top 10 films of 1994. The rundowns have little in common. Neither of the reviewers' top picks--"The Lion King" (Hewitt) and "Forrest Gump" (Gathman)--even made

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the other's list.

The story, "Two IWU Alumni give 'Thumbs Up' to Careers as Movie Critics," was written by Stew Salowitz, the magazine's associate editor and IWU's director of News Services.

Gathman's reviews have won him two Peter Lisagor Awards for "Arts Criticism in a Chicago-Area Daily Newspaper"--awards given by the Chicago Headline Club, which is the Chicago branch of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Hewitt, a movie critic since December, 1993, is ecstatic about being paid to watch movies. "Typically," he said, "I see four or five movies a week and the busiest week I had was the week before Christmas 1993, when I saw 12 movies."

So, on a day off, does Hewitt feel like seeing a movie?

"I do," he said. "I saw *Lion King* five times and *Pulp Fiction* four times. All the films on my top 10 list of 1994 I saw more than once."

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,800 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. In recent years, the university's endowment has grown to more than \$92 million; a \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$24 million science building will open in 1995. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 164 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition. *101 of the Best Values in America's Colleges and Universities* calls IWU "undoubtedly one of the finest small colleges in the country," adding, "Illinois Wesleyan has surged to national prominence on the basis of its reputation as a school with a rock-solid academic program."

**Editor's Note:** Dave Gathman and Chris Hewitt's views on films and film criticism are recounted in the spring, 1995, edition of *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine* in an article, "Two IWU Alumni Give 'Thumbs Up' to Careers as Movie Critics," by Stew Salowitz, the magazine's associate editor, director of IWU's News Services, and a 1976 IWU graduate. For permission to reprint the article, please contact: *IWU Magazine* Executive Editor Bob Aaron at 309/556-3181.