

## Carson: Shuttered Keg sends message: Tone things down a notch

By [Mike Carson](#)

**Published:** Wednesday, June 30, 2010

**Updated:** Tuesday, July 6, 2010 19:07

Save your cab fare and cancel your pre-game. See if Jewel has a return policy on that \$11 handle of Heritage Vodka. Watch the Cub game, see a movie, go dancing in the city.

Just stay away from 810 Grove St. The Keg of Evanston sleeps tonight.

According to Evanston Now, the city has ordered the Keg to shutter its doors for tonight and tomorrow in response to an incident last month that required a call to the cops and an ambulance trip for one injured bar patron.

I read this and felt torn. I wanted to dive into the Supreme Court's decision on Chicago's handgun ban and its effect on violent crime, but it seemed like the rowdy antics at the Keg kept drawing my attention.

I imagine that's something like how it must feel to be an Evanston cop. After all, this latest incident was the 55th time that the police have responded to a call at the Keg since the start of the year.

Before anyone accuses me of being judgmental toward the place, let me make clear that I've drained a Big Cup or two in my day. I celebrated my 21st birthday at the Keg. And, if memory serves, my 20th.

But if I was an Evanston resident who witnessed or heard one of the four reported incidents of shots fired over this past weekend, I might take a dim view of the Northwestern, Evanston Township and New Trier kids who swap spit and pitchers and punches at the Keg on a weekly basis.

There's real crime in Evanston, and it makes it all the harder for police to fight it when they're wasting their time peeling tipsy undergrads off the sidewalk after a scuffle.

Owner Tom Migon told the city liquor board that fake IDs look too authentic for bouncers to spot. I'll bite my tongue and take that at face value—mostly because I don't mind the underage drinking, especially in a spot where everyone knows it's been going on since many of its customers were born. Some 18-year-olds will crawl through hell and back for the privilege of

dancing on a pole next to a sticky bartop, and if they don't get their Busch at the Keg they'll get it somewhere else.

But if I were mayor, I'd approach Mr. Migon and quietly suggest he find a way to make his bar operate less like the Double Deuce from "Road House." Maybe add a few lights, kick out a few drunks, or stick a big fella in the back of the bar to make a 130-pound NU freshman think twice before throwing that haymaker.

Or maybe just put forth the effort to make it look like anyone cares how customers behave themselves at the Keg. The bouncers seem bored, the bartenders overworked and exhausted. Most nights the only thing that flows more freely than the beer is water out of the clogged toilets and into the bar.

All that sends a message to drunk (ahem) 21-year-olds: No one is watching this place, and no one cares what you do here.

For the most part the Keg is harmless fun, and for better or worse it's an Evanston institution. I've never felt unsafe at the Keg, even when a fight breaks out—nothing more than kids flexing their beer muscles for the crowd.

Still, in 2005 that escalated to the fatal shooting of a 22-year-old right inside the bar.

No one cares if a few kids hop the fence and manage to buy themselves a beer, and no one should. But with 55 calls to the police in six months, it's time to tone down the act some.

Something to think about until Saturday, while you wait for the doors to open back up.

*Summer Northwestern columnist and Weinberg senior Mike Carson can be reached at [m-carson@northwestern.edu](mailto:m-carson@northwestern.edu).*



## NEWS

All Sections

Home &gt; Featured Articles

## Timeline of violence

December 13, 2012

Recommend

11

Tweet

1

1253

G+ C

June 19, 2005 — Robert Gresham, 22, of Evanston, is shot and killed during a dispute at The Keg, 810 Grove St. Gresham's father was a Bamberg, and Robert Gresham was a half brother of John and Javar Bamberg, family members and police said.

June 22, 2005 — Antoine Hill, then 19, of Evanston, is charged with Gresham's murder. Hill is related to the Davis family on his mother's side, relatives and police said. According to the Illinois Department of Corrections, Hill was later convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Sept. 30, 2010 — Marcus Davis, 23, of Evanston, is shot and killed as he was backing out of the service drive at Smitty's Garage, 1422 Dodge Ave. Davis and Hill lived at the same Evanston address, Evanston police confirmed.

Oct. 7, 2010 — John Anthony Bamberg Jr., then 26, of Evanston, is arrested and charged with Davis' murder.

Sept. 24 — Antoine Hill is released from prison, according to IDOC.

Nov. 29 — Justin Murray, 19, of Evanston, is killed outside the Evanston home of his grandmother, whose maiden name was Bamberg. Murray is a distant cousin of John and Javar Bamberg, relatives said. Police said he was associating with known gang members but might not have been specifically targeted in the shooting.

Nov. 30 — John Bamberg is found not guilty in the murder of Marcus Davis, resulting in an emotional scene between the families and requiring additional courthouse security.

Dec. 8 — A 20-year-old man is shot after being targeted by two offenders in the 1900 block of Howard Street, police say. Police did not release his name but said it surfaced during their investigation into Murray's killing. The man was in critical condition at St. Francis Hospital immediately after the incident, police said.

Dec. 12 — Javar Bamberg, 23, who police and relatives said is John's brother, is shot and killed in the rear alley of the 1700 block of Grey Avenue. Evanston police said Javar's name came up during their investigation into the Dec. 8 shooting.

Saturday — A gun buyback event scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Christ Temple Missionary Baptist Church, 1711 Simpson St., Evanston, was partially organized this fall by Carolyn Murray, Justin Murray's mother and a second cousin to the Bamberg brothers and Robert Gresham, Carolyn Murray said.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT/ SECOND DISTRICT

DAVID A. FOWLER and SUSAN E. FOWLER )

Plaintiffs )

VS. )

NO. 03 M2 2467

THOMAS E. FISCHL and OFISCHL SPORTS, INC)

Defendants )

NOTICE OF FILING

TO: PETER C. GODWIN, ATTORNEY  
1315 CHICAGO AVENUE, 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR  
EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

DOROTHY BROWN  
CLERK

2003 JAN 16 AM 10:12

FILED-2  
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on Friday, January 16, 2004,

before the hour of 4:30 P.M. I filed with the Circuit Clerk  
of the above named Court, Defendants' Motions to Dismiss  
pursuant to the Code of Civil Procedure, 735 ILCS 5/2-615  
and 5/2-619, out of time by notification to plaintiffs'  
counsel, a true copy of each of which I serve upon you.

---

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned lawyer certify I personally served  
or caused to be personally served upon the above named