

## Web site serves up mayhem near club

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Kathy Kozan was there long before the **club** scene was. She was the third owner of her 100-year-old brick three-story building, originally home to a seed company. An artist, Kozan had renovated it with care, creating industrial work space, an apartment and office space.

So when the **club** scene in the rapidly changed West Loop near Lake and Halsted closed in on her, she fought back.

First, she asked owners of Chromium, a **club** across the street, not to block her driveway. Then she told them about the graffiti on her walls; about the noise and the fights. She wrote letters. When it didn't stop, she used her still camera to document what she could.

But when her front window was smashed in 2005, Kozan got a little more active. Mostly out of fear for her life, she put video cameras in her front window.

"I figure what goes on inside their doors is their business," said Kozan, who described herself as part of the hippie generation. "But when something is happening in the street, that's a whole different thing."

What she caught on tape has since become Lakeandhalsted.com, a slick Web site dedicated to "documenting Chicago's Lake & Halsted neighborhood."

The sights and sounds of the fights and scuffles -- with a warning about offensive language and violence -- are all captured. It's an urban journal of sorts, with dates and entries like "Gang Street Fight" and "Girls and Guys Fighting."

'PEOPLE AREN'T DISPOSABLE'

The site, up for two years, got far more active and eye-catching in August after Kozan captured, in part, exactly what she and her neighbors feared most: a fatal shooting outside Chromium.

Omari Houston, 28, was shot and killed about a block from the **club** at closing time. On the tape, a large crowd is gathered in front of the **club** and then gunshots echo as Chicago Police officers charge east to the shooting.

Houston's death persuaded Kozan to update the site and really make it active.

"The fact that he did get killed here in this neighborhood, I thought something should happen because of it," she said. "As tired as I was, I thought . . . people should recognize there is a person that got killed here. People aren't disposable."

Late last week, Chicago Police said they solved the murder, arresting a 23-year-old with deep ties to West Side gangs after tracking him for months.

This comes a month after Chromium agreed to close because of license violations. City officials said there were two years of complaints about activity outside the **club**.

Kozan was hardly the only person organized to fight the **club**, but she came up with perhaps the most unusual way to do it, officials agreed.

"She devoted a tremendous amount of time and expenditure on her own," said Monroe District Police Capt. Gerry Carroll. "She is asking for nothing in return."

Sitting in her office on a recent Friday night, the L rumbles by as she clicks through the graphic footage she has captured.

She also talks about harassment, including a graphic and violent song about the site, written and distributed as part of a promotion for a party at the **club**.

"Do I run and hide? Do I move? A gun? All this went through my head, and I thought, 'I'm not running,' " said Kozan, a former Catholic high school teacher.

Percy Perez, whose father owns the building that housed Chromium and who did marketing for the **club**, said he thinks a camera posted outside any **club** will yield the kinds of problems Kozan uncovered. But he said his family was eager to put the problems behind them, although he said Kozan should keep documenting trouble on Lake Street.

"Our lives have moved on," Perez said. "We want to put this behind us. The problem still exists, and there is not a peep."

Kozan's regular home security system is still capturing the street scenes below -- should things get rowdy again.

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