

America's economic status might spell gloom, but Columbia's still got quality without high costs.

The word shakes people. The nine letters, ever so insidious, together produce a lurch in the stomach. They send people racing to check their stock market numbers. Eyes turn to the gas meter. Receipts and bills become important. Hands tremble; jaws clench.

Recession.

Almost a whisper, the word is never fully embraced. Call it a slow-down. Call it temporary sluggishness. Either way, it sucks.

Columbia, at least, sits in the heart of the Midwest, where we tend not to experience the high highs or low lows, according to Don Laird, the head of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce. We've got affordable

theater and sports. Folks the nation over praise the Midwest's stellar housing value. Still, geography only goes so far.

The golden word here is cheap. *Vox* gets the appeal. Thrift is a virtue. No one's judging that \$8 blazer from Goodwill.

In this spirit, *Vox* hunted down the best of the cheap. We want you to forget supply and demand curves. Blow off the perils of inflation and pay no mind to the chairman of the Fed. Even in the worst of times, these quality goods and services provide everything a well-rounded human being might need and still let you smile all the way to the bank.

— JOHN HENDEL

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TAN
\$9.88
Tan Co
(unlimited)

what doesn't kill you

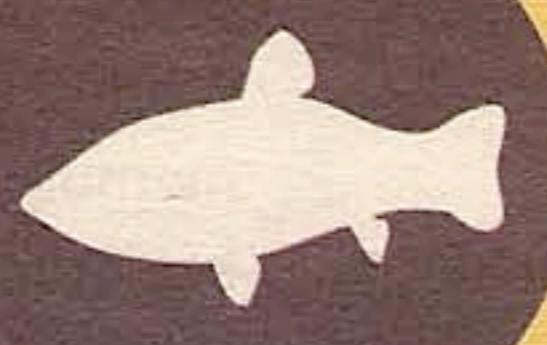
PITCHER OF BEER

Southside Pizza and Pub
(for best-priced Blue Moon and Boulevard Wheat pitchers)



SEAFOOD YOU WON'T REGRET

Catfish Corner
\$3 for one catfish



ESCORT ON CRAIGSLIST

Jessica, 23, \$95 for 30 minutes and \$130 for an hour



CIGARETTES

Liggett Selects
\$1.97 per pack at Wal-Mart



CAB RIDE

Tiger Taxi \$1.60 upon entry and \$2.40 per mile thereafter



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6-1
TOILET
\$3

DE
\$1

\$10 at Cha
Route B

sights & sounds

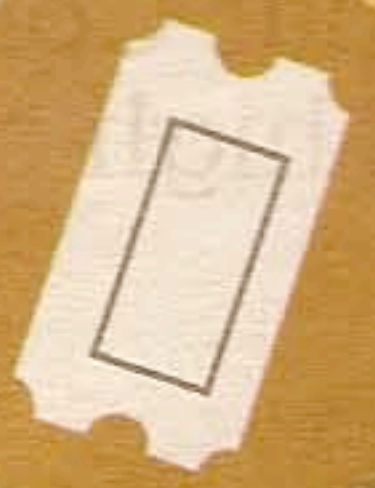
GYM MEMBERSHIP

per month at the Rec Center
ing-only membership
Fri. 5:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.,
a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)

GAME OF GOLF

\$12 for 18 par-3 holes at the Perche Creek Golf Club

MOVIE TICKET
\$4 at Ragtag's sneak peeks

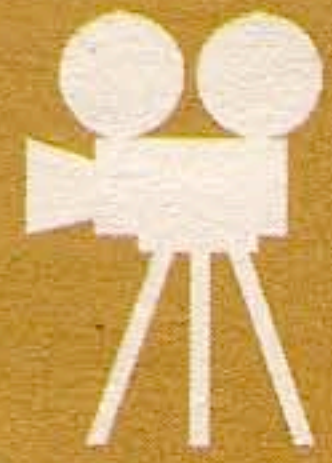


DVD RENTAL

\$1.49 for a 5-day rental at Schnucks (for an older movie), \$3.25 for two-for-one movies on Mondays and Wednesdays

MATINEE SHOW

\$4.75 daily twilight (4-6 p.m.) at Stadium 14



FILM DEVELOPMENT

\$6.96 for a single roll, \$.15 per digital print for 2-day service at Wal-Mart



It's a good neighborhood

e bare essentials

GALLON OF 2% MILK

\$2.99 at Gerbes and Schnucks



OIL CHANGE

\$18.95 at Plaza Tire Service
(coupon always available online)



epicurean delight



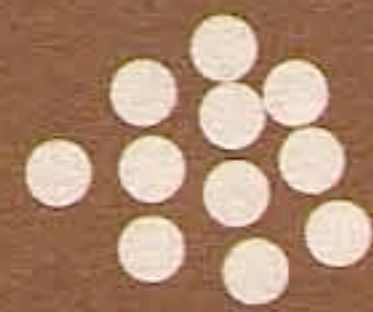
CUP OF COFFEE

\$1 at Lakota Coffee Company



BBQ PULLED PORK SANDWICH

\$4 at Grumpy's Bar B Que and More (in Rocheport)



CAVIAR

\$13.99 for 7 oz. of red at Natasha's Euromarket



GALLON OF ICE CREAM

\$3.19 for Skondras brand at Hy-Vee