

Science may never come up with a better office communication system than the coffee break.

— Earl Wilson

# SKYLINE

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FREE

## RNRA reports 'meaningful progress' but concerns remain over planned casinos

BY STEVEN DAHLMAN  
*Loop North News*

The organization representing River North residents says "some meaningful progress" has been made with city officials and representatives of Bally's Corp. in discussion of concerns with the two casinos planned in and near the downtown neighborhood.

A temporary casino is under construction at Medinah Temple on N. Wabash Ave. and a larger, more permanent casino is planned for Chicago and Halsted, directly across the Chicago River from River North.

Brian Israel, Director Emeritus of River North Residents Assoc. [RNRA], says Bally's has agreed to cancel its plans for an outdoor music venue and a pedestrian bridge across the river into Ward Park — changes that were announced at a community meeting last December. He says Bally's also agreed to expand the casino's public green space, reduce overall site density, consider increasing security around the casino, and



The now-cancelled pedestrian bridge in the lower frame of this rendering would have connected the casino to Ward Park in River North. River North group reports 'meaningful progress' but concerns remain over planned casinos.

build a Dog Friendly Area.

"These are encouraging steps, but more work remains to be done," said Israel in a recent statement. "We appreciate the willingness of city officials and the casino developers to engage in substantive dialogue with our association and other stakeholders to further improve this highly im-

pactful project, and look forward to continuing the conversation."

The temporary casino at Medinah Temple received preliminary approval on June 15 from the Illinois Gaming Board, which granted Bally's a Determination of Preliminary Suitability. It will

**CASINOS** see p. 12



The Eugenie Lane Apartments at 235 W. Eugenie St. Image courtesy Commission on Chicago Landmarks

## Another Landmark for Old Town?

**Eugenie Lane Apartments pass preliminary hearing**

After seeing a local landmark home pass muster, the Old Town community may be getting another new landmark approval for an apartment property on Eugenie St.

In May the Walter Clark Netsch home was chosen as a historical landmark, and now next up is the Eugenie Lane Apartments, 235 W. Eugenie St.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks [CCL] has approved a preliminary landmark designation for the apartment building, rental residences that were built in 1962 with a design from Ben

Weese. The property was erected at a time in Chicago when new apartments tended to be in tall towers, whereas this building rises only to tree-top height.

Supporters say the building reflects the architectural heritage of Old Town in the 1960s and 1970s, when the neighborhood established itself as a place for artists and the creative community.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Chicago architects of the modern era like Ben Weese designed small-scale residential infill buildings in the historic 19th century neighborhood adding an important layer to its built environment.

The modern-era building has

common brick walls, an absence of ornament, louvered accents and standing-seam metal mansard roof and large windows.

Weese was a significant architect with a long and rich career in architecture. The design of Eugenie Lane Apartments reflects principles that Weese would practice throughout his career. Back in his day, Weese was a member of the Chicago Seven, a group of young Chicago architects that formed in the 1970s to educate the public about a more pluralistic view of Chicago's architecture and to explore new directions at an inflection point

**LANDMARK** see p. 12



**How about NASCAR 2024 at I-90/94/290 Spaghetti-Bowl Junction?**  
page 5



21 E. Chestnut St. Photo courtesy Apartments.com

## Gold Coast condo deconversion deal goes sour

**Allegations of fraud, self-dealing while \$51M in debt heads to foreclosure**

Fingers are pointing, accusations are flying and legal papers are serving after an investment group filed a lawsuit against executives at Strategic Properties of North America [SPNA], stemming from a Gold Coast area condo-to-apartment reconversion project in 2020.

Crain's Chicago reports that the family of Chicago investor Joseph Cacciatore allege that SPNA

committed fraud, self-dealing and mismanagement over the 163-unit building at 21 E. Chestnut. The plaintiff claims that Yitzy Klor and Saul Kuperwasser didn't hold up their end of the bargain, and now the property is on the brink of foreclosure as about \$51 million in debt approaches.

In recent years, SPNA has been one of the most prolific condo deconversion firms in the Chicago area — an increasingly common trend as apartment rental demand

**DECONVERSION** see p. 12

## Man shot, critically injured in River North

BY CWBCHICAGO

A man is in critical condition after being shot in River North July 1, Chicago police said.

Witnesses told police they saw a fight and then heard shots fired in the 300 block of W. Ontario around 1:30 a.m. A 26-year-old man suffered gunshot wounds throughout his body, police said. Someone loaded him into an SUV-style limousine and drove

him to Northwestern Memorial Hospital. He is in critical condition.

Investigators found 20 shell casings and a bloody firearm in a surface parking lot on the corner of Franklin and Ontario streets. One car had several bullet holes in it.

Several nightclubs are in the immediate area, keeping the

**SHOT** see p. 12



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# Chasing away the cold damp of a ludicrous summer climate



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

Well, I'll admit it. I watch a lot of wacky TV/YouTube.

Not always wacky, but enormously curious. I get a thought in my noggin and then go on the ram-page researching the topic. Usually getting more than I bargained for.

Recently I've been working on a project on living presidential children. And I was checking out the Johnson girls, Lyndon and Lady Bird's offspring. And in looking at them I stumbled upon Lady Bird's 2007 funeral back in 2007 in Austin, Texas.

I loved and respected Lady Bird and spent one of the grandest holidays of my life among the Johnsons and their Texas friends in Martha's Vineyard in 1996. I was, literally, surrounded on all sides by Texans. Just 10 days before the 1996 Democratic National Convention at the United Center that nominated Bill Clinton for a second term.

My new Texas friends and I rented a fabulous "Architectural Digest" house in Martha's Vineyard that was owned by Chicago Bear's boss Michael McCaskey.

Then Lady Bird Johnson, the former First Lady, herself, arrived on the island with her full gaggle of

family, including LBJ's matronly, unmarried cousins, a cook and a couple of maids. And around-the-clock Secret Service. That's 12 agents. Four every eight hours. The former First Family took up residence in the famed Guggenheim House in nearby West Chop.

Our neighbor was the delightful Mrs. Joseph H. Hirshhorn, a name encrusted in artistic generosity. She and her industrialist husband built the addition to the National Gallery in Washington D.C., and filled it with world class art. The walls of the National Gallery speak loud in thanks.

Sharing the splendor of the McCaskey house was the most darling of Texans, Liz Carpenter. Lady Bird's press secretary during her White House years. A larger than life human being who needed no introductions in the world of that era.

The moment I met her I knew we clicked.

She loved my long list of publications and my deep roots in the urban politics of the Chicago City Council. I loved the fact that Miss Carpenter was old school. Someone willing to live with the unfolding of political liabilities.

Once we had fully engaged one another we had everything we needed except good weather.

But Miss Carpenter was full of rainy day ideas. Her best being an unsophisticated day of Irish poetry. Ireland and its arts had left a dramatic imprint on her poetic soul. I agreed to host and become the star of a Liz Carpenter production once we located a local bookshop that sold us a beautiful volume of Irish verse that featured all the best of



Lady Bird Johnson

our tribe. Most assuredly Mr. W.B. Yeats, our Nobel laureate.

We also managed to pick up the makings of some homemade Irish soda bread, as well as the fixings for Irish smoked salmon.

And the perfect Irish Whiskey with which to wash it all down.

My job became easier, to merely create the appropriate Irish accents in which to present the various poets' texts.

Our nextdoor neighbor, the celebrated composer and award-winning entertainer, Carole King, agreed to add a few selections from her Irish repertoire that we knew would create an unbeatable day. She would make the piano sing, chasing away any bad weather that got in our way. I remarked that if any of the local Boston Irish realized what we were planning, they would eat us out of house and home. I had my fingers crossed that the heavy rains would remain.

We got things started with a fireplace of burning wood that chased away the cold damp of a ludicrous summer climate change. We had invited my buddy John Kennedy Jr. who was on island diligently working on his George Magazine. He wound up unable to get away for the poetry, relieving me of the fear my acting debut would be splashed in the arts column of his celebrated publication. He promised to come for dinner.

In the end, despite the lashes of a downpour, it all came off without a hitch. Lady Bird herself arrived in her van with her four-member Secret Service detail and proclaimed

the soda bread was as perfect as the buttery poetry. It elicited great

shared stories of life at Lismore Castle and a heavenly Waterford visit arranged by the dearest Guinness friends the year before.

I love giving new listeners the words of W.B. Yeats. First, by teasing them with the epic elegance of Irish verse created in English. "Song of Wandering Angus" always seems to do the trick. Poignant observations of Irish life made palatable by the elegance of its matter of fact truth.

Then there was the almost boastful quietude of "Lake Isle of Innisfree," that was so dangerously loaded with dynamic certitude. Providing an easy but dangerous reflection of what might be wrong with conditions in Ireland at that time.

Later in the presentation we engaged all with the brutal lyrical beauty of Ireland's political life. In such works as "1916" and "Sixteen Dead Men." Offering no excuse and no way out of the crisis of life that haunted every particle of Irish living.

This was a rainy afternoon that

wound up confronting the shambles of Irish life, offering no comfortable solution to the terror everyone had to face. Of course not quite what the rainy day people thought they would get on which to rest their heads.

I was intrigued by the emotion that the poetic words of the Irish created, even half a century after rebellion and all the political intrigue.

I was so glad it turned out not to be the usual antiseptic, and predictable, gibberish. In Ireland, they all learned, on a rainy day, you could never be too sure when some truth would jump off the page to terrify all who listened.

Needless to say the poetic words were a force that was not easy to

flee. I'm sure the Secret Service were scratching their heads as they drove Lady Bird and her detail back home for their mid-day nap.

I, of course, was never prouder of being Irish surrounded by such world class words.

I was happy to use them to poke away at what appeared to some folk to be the false calm and quiet of Irish life.

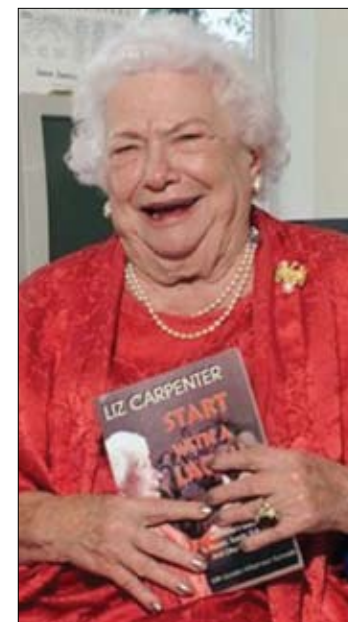
We were unearthing

truth on a rainy day that no one more than Lady Bird, herself, knew was always an unsettled issue.

"I will arise now, and go to Innisfree, and a small cabin build here of clay and wattles made."

**RISK AND TRUTH: James Crown, 70, was a man of his times. A recipient of great entitlement only**

**CHASING** see p. 8



Liz Carpenter

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# Alarm over rising CPS budget deficits, falling bond ratings

Chicago Public Schools have a looming fiscal cliff on the horizon after the Chicago Board of Education approved a fiscal 2024 budget June 28, balanced with the help of the maximum property tax hike allowed under state law.

The Chicago Board of Education signed off on the \$9.4 billion 2024 budget package for the fiscal year beginning July 1. It includes an \$8.5 billion operating budget, \$785 million for debt service, and \$155 million in capital spending.

The vote followed warnings from district officials and board members about a \$600 million to \$700 million budget gap expected in fiscal 2026 after all of the district's

\$2.8 billion of federal pandemic bailout cash runs out, threatening the district's progress toward restoring its investment-grade bond ratings.

The CPS says it will use \$670 million of remaining pandemic bail out cash in fiscal 2024 leaving \$300 million for fiscal 2025.

Mayor Brandon Johnson who formerly worked for CPS, campaigned on moving school funding away from being based on its tumbling enrollment, a shift officials claim is underway. Roughly 80,000 fewer students are enrolled in Chicago schools than there were a decade ago. The district has not yet released enrollment projections for next year.

But the overall budget could grow later this year after the district does a comprehensive facilities review and puts forward a supplemental capital budget.

District officials and school board members said Wednesday they hope the state will provide CPS with additional funding in the future to avoid a fiscal cliff once the federal bailout cash runs out next year. But asking the state for more taxpayer money has gone on for decades, with poor results.

"If it hadn't been for the federal dollars, that began to arrive, we'd be in even worse shape than we are," said Chicago Public Schools CEO Pedro Martinez, who also announced his plans to retire last week. He

said that roughly a quarter of the district's state funding goes toward paying down debt for both teacher pensions and past school construction.

Last week the Chicago Civic Federation raised concerns about the long term viability of the CPS budget. The group's annual analysis said it's imperative the CPS work with the City on a long-term financial plan that addresses several of the financial entanglements between the two before the school board begins its shift to being an elected Board, rather than appointed by the Mayor's Office.

## Did you check the 'Mob Box?'

### CTA-fueled crowd descends on Lakeview, calls failure of top-down command a 'close working relationship'

BY CWBCHICAGO

City officials circled the wagons after hundreds of people descended on Lakeview on June 26 and 27, closing Belmont Ave. for hours after the CTA rejected Chicago police requests to have trains bypass the nearby Belmont L station until the situation was under control.

An officer involved in the police response called the city's actions a "typical top-down command failure."

Chicago police commanders anticipated a crowd might form on June 26, the day after the Pride Parade, because the same thing happened last year. Extra CPD resources were assigned to the area near the CTA station, 945 W. Belmont, as a precaution.

But when those units noticed trouble brewing, the CTA refused to cut off the supply of partiers by temporarily bypassing the station.

In a collection of audio snippets from CPD radio transmissions between 9:08 p.m. and 9:33 p.m. June 26, a CPD sergeant asks a dispatcher to have the station bypassed at 9:08 p.m.

After some back-and-forth, the sergeant got CTA's answer 25 minutes later: No.

"Ya got [a sergeant] saying, 'Here's what we need,' and ya got a guy in a room somewhere saying, 'Ah, f\*ck that guy. We know better,'" an officer said June 27.

CWBChicago was the first to report the CTA's refusal.

Freshman Ald. Bennet Lawson [44th] called the takeover, which lasted until 3 a.m. Tuesday, "absolutely unacceptable."

In an email to his constituents, Lawson thanked the CPD and said he would meet with the Town Hall 19th District leadership to "identify ways we can prevent them from occurring moving forward."

Later, speaking with ABC7 News, he mentioned the CTA issue.

"I have to talk to the CTA. They need to be a partner in our success, and in our safety, and they are. But understanding people need to move through the city, but when it's appropriate to close the Belmont station, we should be able to do that," Lawson said.

Dominic Rescigno, who performed at the Annoyance Theatre, 851 W. Belmont, on June 26, is looking at a \$15,000 auto re-

pair bill.

"I could see that people were jumping on cars. I couldn't see my car, but I knew,"

***Dominic Rescigno says he and his partner are on the hook for repair bills because their insurance company said, "you don't have the package that covers mob insurance," ... I thought (it was a joke). I didn't realize I needed to check the 'mob' box."***

he told NBC Chicago. "This morning, we walked down at 6:30 a.m., and it was totally destroyed."

He says he and his partner are on the hook for repair bills because their insurance company said, "you don't have the package that covers mob insurance," ... I thought (it was a joke). I didn't realize I needed to check the 'mob' box."

On June 27, CPD and CTA both released written statements, respectively claiming that they "work closely with our City partners" and to having "a very close working

relationship" with other agencies.

CTA said it has "protocols in place to address possible station closures, which are designed to ensure a balance between public safety and providing service to CTA customers."

Police arrested two people during Monday's "mob," one adult and a juvenile. That followed a CPD estimate of 25 arrests during the June 25 Pride Parade and its after-party.

Two of Sunday's arrestees appeared for felony bond hearings on June 27.

Jhasalin Burkhalter, 25, was held in lieu of a \$1,000 bail deposit on allegations that she punched a Chicago police officer in the face as the cop tried to clear people out of the street near Belmont and Sheffield around 8:21 p.m. Sunday.

Shawna Shaw, 24, is also charged with aggravated battery of a police officer. Prosecutors said she "became verbally abusive" toward cops arresting someone a few steps from where Burkhalter was taken into custody.

Shaw pushed an officer in the chest and punched them twice in the face, Assistant State's Attorney Victor Aberdeen said during her bail hearing.

Judge William Fahy also held her in lieu of a \$1,000 bail deposit.

### Select streets now open following car race

As of Sunday evening, select streets have begun reopening following the NASCAR Chicago Street Race.

Commuters should have been able to access both on Northbound Lake Shore Dr. and Southbound Michigan Ave. On July 4, Southbound Lake Shore Dr. and Roosevelt Rd. were reopening.

All demobilization and opening activity should be concluded by Saturday, July 15.

Unfortunately that also means that downtown-area carjackings are back on.



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## Bike the North Branch returns on July 29

The North River Commission is hosting a bike tour of the North Branch 10 a.m. to noon July 29. The leisurely 5.6-mile bike ride will start at the Indian restaurant Thattu, 2601 W. Fletcher St., on the southwest corner of Rockwell St. and Fletcher St., and includes stops at several local businesses.

The tour will cross the North Branch of the Chicago River via the new Riverview Bridge, the longest pedestrian and bike bridge in the city. This tour is a good way for those who may not have ventured west along the Chicago River, west of Ashland, to get a behind-the-scenes look at businesses along the North Branch.

Other destinations include An-

chor Babt Vintage and Vintage Grindhouse. During the tour, business owners will share their stories and future plans.

The ride will end at Hyun's Hapkido and Taekwondo School, 2743 N. Western Ave., and Boulevard Bistro, 2753 N. Western Ave., for lunch.

The bike ride will use the 312 RiverRun Trail, and Kedzie and Elston avenues bike lanes, and is designed for people of all ages and abilities.

Tickets for the bike tour are \$25, for reservations call Steve Simmons at 773-929-5552 x 2226 or write to [steve@northbranch-works.org](mailto:steve@northbranch-works.org).

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# Broadway Armory targeted as migrant shelter, decision on refugee housing due later this month

Fears and concerns expressed by Uptown and Edgewater residents over the last month about the potential loss of park space at the Broadway Armory now appear to be legitimate after a memo leaked out of City Hall last week.

The memo was related to a June 21 meeting hosted by Ald. Andre Vasquez [40th], Chairman of City Council's Immigrant and Refugee Rights Committee.

Chicago continues to grapple with a new refugee crisis that our own former virtue signaling may have helped to create. In declaring - and boasting about - Chicago as a sanctuary city, citizens and city officials are now being tested to see if those statements were authentic or just bluster.

That memo shows that city officials are now taking steps to open up to five new migrant shelters with a combined capacity of nearly 2,500 - including the Chicago Park District's [CPD] Broadway Armory, 5917 N. Broadway, to house a still-growing surge of asylum-seekers who illegally crossed America's southern border.

The memo claims that Mayor Brandon Johnson hopes to open a welcoming center at Roberto Clemente Community Academy High School, 1147 N. Western Ave., and a large new migrant refugee center at the former Marine Corps Reserve Center at 3034 W. Foster Ave., that would house 1,000 refugees.

The potential new shelter sites were identified in the memo distributed in advance of the June 28 committee meeting. The memo notes that each facility's status is described as "awaiting appraisal and environmental assessment."

Migrants have already been housed in many shelter locations across the city, including in the lobbies of Police stations, CPD field houses, a downtown hotel, shuttered schools, a shuttered West Rogers Park YMCA, and at Daley College on the South Side.

Located along Broadway at Thorndale Ave., the Broadway Armory Park totals 2.33 acres



An aerial photograph of the Broadway Armory Park.

and is the CPD's largest indoor recreational facility. Officially purchased in 1998 after being no longer needed by the National Guard for military purposes, the massive, 87-year-old park facility today houses five gymnasiums and 13 rooms.

The Armory's open space makes it ideal for special sporting events, and outside organizations and families use the park regularly for their own permitted events and parties.

Presently, the largest existing city-operated migrant shelter is at the Inn of Chicago, 162 E. Ohio St., with 1,398 migrants living there.

In Edgewater, freshman Ald. Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth [48th] was handed a difficult task in her first month on the job, dealing with city and CPD officials over a humanitarian crisis that's now knocking on her ward's front door.

Manaa-Hoppenworth told Fran Spielman of the Sun-Times that the armory has "a senior program, it has a youth program. It has small businesses running out of there. A theater has a ... trapeze school there. People rely on it for their livelihoods ... Our older adults come there Monday through Friday to probably get the only hot meal that they can get throughout the day ... People utilize the building as a resource - as part of their lives. It's where students from our public schools

go to after school to find a safe place to play sports."

She is now asking for "everybody in the 48th Ward to come together so that we can talk about it. So that we can hear their concerns. Especially those who actually use the facility, that depend on the facility."

Manaa-Hoppenworth claims that no final decision on the fate of the large facility has yet been made - or would be made - until the community weighs in later this month.

City officials estimate that about 10,500 migrants are already here in town with many more on the way. They estimate that roughly 460 migrant refugees are now sleeping on the floors of various police district stations, with about 60 living at O'Hare Airport.

The overwhelming number of new arrivals have come to Chicago from Venezuela, a formerly wealthy nation whose economy crashed due to misguided Marxist-Socialist economic policies. It's ironic that many of those same policies that destroyed the Venezuelan economy are endorsed by Ald. Vasquez, who must now deal with refugees forced to flee their homeland due to a crisis Marxism created. Migrants are also crossing America's southern border from Afghanistan, China, Africa, Columbia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru, Honduras, Mexico, Angola, El Salvador, Russia, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

"My concern is, there's a hard deadline for the new arrivals to find a place to sleep other than the police stations," Manaa-Hoppenworth told the Sun-Times. "There is an urgency surrounded by that date. I had no part in that decision. But there are a lot of things that are happening that are beyond our control. We need to find ways where people can exist together. And that's always hard - especially since the Broadway Armory is not an empty building. It's a building that's well-utilized. Some people have quoted 800 people. Some people have quoted over 2,000 people."

The leaked memo also says that the city policy of giving new arrivals only 30 days at a shelter before demanding they find a job and get their own housing has been put on pause.

Meanwhile, while citizens have claimed they are being turned away from making donations at Chicago's migrant shelters, the memo states that this policy is a matter of liability and establishing standards for donated items.

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[Left] Car racing at Soldier Field, [right] the Jane Byrne Interchange at Spaghetti-Bowl Junction.

# How about NASCAR 2024 at I-90/94/290 Spaghetti-Bowl Junction?



## The Home Front

by Don DeBat

With Canadian wild-fire haze hanging over the Windy City—giving Chicago the title of “The Worst Air in the World”—followed by those mighty rain showers, we knew that the NASCAR Street Race was anointed.

As 20 million acres of forests burned in 500 separate wild fires and the smoke wafted to Chicago, followed by the rain, it obviously was a bad omen from the gods. One race was cancelled and the second race shortened by 25 laps.

On Friday June 30, a worker death was reported as they set up 2,200 four-foot-high concrete crowd-protection barriers topped with eight-foot-tall wire fencing. Then, they added 9,000 bundled-tire walls on the 90-degree turns on the 2.2-mile course. (Those tire walls came in handy on the rain-slicked roads.)

During this construction activity a 53-year-old contractor suffered a fatal medical emergency. Sources said the man, Duane Tabinski of Hermitage, TN, died from a suspected cardiac arrest.

For months, this writer had an eerie feeling that the two-day NASCAR event would be cursed. Luckily, this year, a NASCAR racer didn’t crash in flames into Buckingham Fountain. But do pray for Mr. Tabinski’s soul and his loved ones.

On NASCAR weekend, inclement weather arrived and race cars were equipped with special rain tires, windshield wipers and red blinking hazard tail lights. Professional race-car drivers worry about weather shutting down races. This time one race was canceled and the other shortened by 25 laps.

NASCAR may have drawn 50,000 to 100,000 fans, generated an economic impact of \$114 million, boosted hotel business, provided hours of national TV coverage to polish Chicago’s image as a gleaming lakefront tourist destination.

However, a few days after the NASCAR event ended, the haze, race-car engine fumes and screeching tires may be gone, but the chaos of its impact on downtown traffic, Loop residents, many small businesses and our cherished 16-inch Grant Park softball leagues will linger for months, maybe years.

Yes, events on our lakefront look good on TV, but is the disruption and loss of park space worth it? That question is why it is time for the Home Front column

to list the following suggestions for 2024 NASCAR Road Race’s optional sites:

*Yes, events on our lakefront look good on TV, but is the disruption and loss of park space worth it?*

- U.S. Steel’s 415-acre “South Works” site likely would be the perfect spot to build a lasting NASCAR Chicago Road Race course, either circular or street style. The lakefront site is vacant. And, heaven knows, the neighborhood could use some commercial investment.

Last marketed in 2020 as 8080 Lakeshore Drive, this Far South Side lakefront location has been called a “magnificent property.” It was one of the five locations

considered for the Chicago casino. The site has been vacant since 1992, when U.S. Steel shut the plant and demolished the buildings.

In 2016, McCaffery Interests abandoned plans for a master-planned community with 13,000 homes, 17.5 million square feet of commercial space and a 1,500-slip marina. U.S. Steel pulled out when it was not able to finance the project.

In 2019, “Common,” the famed South Side-born rapper, partnered with other developers, drew plans to bring hotels, entertainment venues and a movie studio to the site, but COVID-19 killed the deal.

- Soldier Field would be a great second choice for NASCAR’s 2024 race. Little construction would be required to set up an oval or even a figure-eight track.

We might even give up part of northbound Lake Shore Dr. For a speedy straightaway and spectacular final home stretch finish line adjacent to Buckingham Fountain.

Seats and skyboxes are already in place for 60,000 spectators. Just install an asphalt track and pit-stop area.

The original Soldier Field stadium hosted a few NASCAR events on a track created around the playing field in 1939 and the late 1950s.

In 1956, the race course had a half-mile track for a 200-lap race and hosted a “Cup” series. It was better and safer than racing in the streets.

- The Jane Byrne Interchange at the spaghetti-bowl junction of the

NASCAR see p. 7

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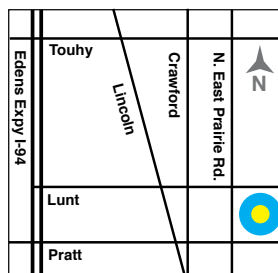


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# Police Beat...

## Bulletproof glass stops robber's gunshot at Rogers Park gas station

Armed robbers fired a shot at a Rogers Park service station employee on June 26, but a ballistic shield stopped the bullet in its tracks. The same offenders are suspected of robbing a restaurant in the neighborhood less than an hour later. No injuries were reported at either location.

Three men walked into Devon Shell, 1500 W. Devon, around 11 p.m. and tried to get into the cashier's secure area to rob the clerk, an officer said. But the room was securely locked, and they could not get in.

Before leaving, one of the men pulled out a gun and fired a shot into the bulletproof barrier that protects the clerk. Cops recovered a shell casing at the scene.

After reviewing surveillance video, an officer radioed descriptions of three suspects, all Hispanic men in their late teens who were 5'-8" to 5'-11" tall. The gunman wore a black "Champion" sweatshirt with black pants with a white bone design down the legs, mismatched flip-flops, and a surgical mask.

Another wore a black hoodie with gray pants and black Air Force 1s. He carried a white plastic bag from Corner Bakery. The third wore a blue hoodie with a Nike symbol and gray pants.

Just before midnight, at least two of the men successfully robbed Wingstop, 7003 N. Clark. One of them pulled a gun, and they took the store's cash register trays, according to a CPD report.

While citywide robbery reports sit at a five-year high, up 14% from last year, incidents in the Rogers Park 24th District are down sharply.

The district recorded 98 robberies through Sunday, down 27% from last year. Robberies are down 5% from 2019 in the area.

## Teen shot in Uptown Sunday night

A 17-year-old boy was shot in Uptown on Sunday night, Chicago police said. He's the second person shot on the same block in a month.

Cops responding to calls of shots fired in the area around 10:08 p.m. found the boy in the 4400 block of N. Malden. He had a single gunshot wound to his chest.

Officers found shell casings up and down the Sunnyside Mall after two men opened fire on the victim. CPD said the gunmen fled on foot, but officials did not release suspect descriptions.

The victim is at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center in fair condition.

Police responded to shots fired in the same area around 6 p.m. on Saturday, but no injuries were reported. Cops found shell casings at the intersection of Wilson and Magnolia and bullet holes in a nearby store. After firing the shots, the gunman fled through an alley on the 4500 block of N. Malden.

Last month a 24-year-old man was shot when he went to the 4400 block of N. Malden to buy a car from a social media marketplace. Police said someone tried to rob him when he showed up.

Six people have been shot in Uptown this year. That's down from nine at this point last year.

On May 23, a 22-year-old man was shot in the leg and shoulder as he walked down the 4500 block of N. Magnolia. An officer who reviewed surveillance footage said the gunman fired from a white SUV and fell out of the moving vehicle as he was shooting, but no arrests have been announced.

A 15-year-old boy was shot in a drive-by in the 1000 block of W. Lawrence on March 1. Someone inside the SUV called the victim by name, then began shooting, according to CPD.

On January 19, a 33-year-old man was shot at a bus stop in the 5100 block of N. Broadway. Police said another man walked up to the victim and shot him in the leg, but they did not provide a motive for the crime.

A group of car thieves shot a man who confronted them as they broke into a car in the 1200 block of W. Montrose on Jan. 4, Chicago police said. The 42-year-old victim was riding a bike when he saw a man breaking into a car and confronted him about it, according to CPD. The offender pulled out a weapon and shot the victim in the elbow.

## Five months after moving to Chicago, man charged with four armed robberies, carjacking

Jorge Gonzales has only lived in Chicago for five months, but he's really getting into the swing of things. On June 28, prosecutors charged him with committing an armed carjacking and four armed robberies in less than an hour on June 26.

Gonzales and a man who remains at large rode bikes from one robbery to another in the Loop, with the accomplice displaying a silver revolver each time, according to Assistant State's Attorney Victor Aberdeen.

They allegedly started by taking about \$60 from a 27-year-old man in the 600 block of S. State St. around 5:17 a.m.

Just a couple of minutes later, the accomplice fell off his bike in the 600 block of S. Plymouth Ct., and a 52-year-old woman came over to ask if he was OK. They robbed her, Aberdeen said. With the accomplice aiming his revolver at her, the woman replied that she didn't have anything and then ran away.

The third robbery fizzled, too. Aberdeen said Gonzales and the accomplice pedaled up to a 36-year-old man near Madison and Michigan around 5:35 a.m. Once again, the accomplice pointed a gun at the victim and demanded his money. But the victim didn't have anything, and he turned his pockets inside out to prove it, Aberdeen said.

A little before 6 a.m., the duo saw a 31-year-old man walking his dog in the 1100 block of S. Michigan. They stopped, and the accomplice pulled out his revolver, demanding the man's property and threatening to kill him and his dog, Aberdeen alleged.

Gonzales and his partner ordered the man to take them to his car, but he told them it was locked behind a gate in the garage. So Gonzales took the

## Twenty-five arrested during Chicago Pride Parade festivities

Chicago police say they arrested 25 people in connection with the 2023 Pride Parade and its unofficial "after-party," which stretched into the overnight hours on June 26. That number is in line with other recent parade totals.

A Chicago police spokesperson said four juveniles were among those arrested: one for aggravated battery to a police officer, two for resisting arrest, and one for reckless conduct.

Cops arrested three adults for aggravated battery to a peace officer, a felony.

Seven adults were arrested for reckless conduct, six for misdemeanor battery, two for criminal damage to property, and one was taken in on a warrant, according to the CPD spokesperson.

Two adults were charged with unlawful use of a weapon.

One of the people charged with illegal gun possession is William Bond, 29, a concealed carry license holder. Prosecutors said cops on foot patrol near the intersection of Halsted and Aldine saw the handle of a firearm sticking out of Bond's pants pocket around 9:40 p.m. June 25.

The weapon was unholstered, loaded, and "immediately accessible to the defendant and the rest of the public," Assistant State's Attorney Jim Papa said during Bond's bail hearing. He's charged with a misdemeanor violation of the concealed carry act. Judge Kelly McCarthy ordered him to pay a \$50 bail deposit.

Also appearing in misdemeanor bond court was Ahmari Baldwin, 21. Papa said she threw a glass bottle that shattered near officers who were trying to disperse a "large and unruly crowd" near Belmont and Sheffield around 2:30 a.m. June 26. No injuries were reported. She is held in lieu of a \$100 bail deposit on a charge of reckless conduct. Judge McCarthy also held her on two outstanding warrants.

The large group takeover resulted in at least two arrests as Chicago police corralled the crowd near the Belmont CTA station in Lakeview into the morning of June 27.

Belmont Ave. was shut down for several hours as people danced on cars and blocked the road. At one point, a Chicago police supervisor estimated that 300 people were in the crowd.

Cops seemed to be expecting the gathering as police supervisors assigned extra units to keep an eye on the area. But the situation quickly escalated, and other city departments seemed unwilling or unable to help police manage the situation.

A 16-year-old boy and 21-year-old Dominique Ray were also charged with misdemeanor reckless conduct in connection with the same incident. Ray bonded out of the police station without making a court appearance.

Video shared on the Citizen app showed police making at least one arrest after someone unleashed pepper spray during a fight in the 800 block

of W. Belmont.

Other videos posted to the app showed people twerking on moving cars, a tow truck, and in front of an ambulance that had its lights and sirens activated.

By 9:15 p.m. June 26, an officer said about 100 people were in the street under the L tracks. About 15 minutes later, a police dispatcher reported that the CTA refused to have trains bypass the Belmont station.

Another police request was denied around 9:45 p.m. when a supervisor requested that the Dept. of Streets and Sanitation deliver barricades to keep people out of the street.

Streets and San denied the request, saying barricades needed to be "special ordered" through a police commander to a street "commissioner or whoever," a dispatcher reported.

The group popped up one night after the Chicago Pride Parade, much like a similar gathering formed on the night after last year's parade.

Additional police units from surrounding districts were brought to the scene as the crowd swelled to 300 people around 10 p.m. Surveillance camera operators radioed that the group was fueled by the CTA, which delivered more parties with every train.

Belmont Ave. remained closed down to traffic until about 3 a.m.

victim's gold chain and biked away with the gunman, Aberdeen said.

Possibly sick of bicycling, the pair rolled up on a 22-year-old man sitting in a car in an alley behind the 1100 block of S. Wabash. They knocked on the man's window, and the accomplice ordered him out of the vehicle at gunpoint, said Aberdeen. With Gonzales allegedly behind the wheel, they drove off with the man's gray Honda.

Chicago police officers spotted the car around 11:30 a.m. near Chicago Ave. and the Kennedy Expy. Gonzales was behind the wheel when they pulled it over, Aberdeen alleged. No one else was in the car, but Gonzales had the fourth victim's gold chain, and he was wearing the same clothes that one of the robbers was seen wearing on surveillance videos, according to Aberdeen.

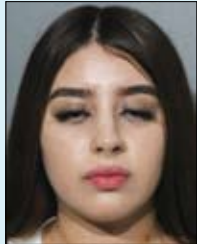
Gonzales' defense attorney during Tuesday's bail hearing said he is a native of Colombia who has lived here with his family for about five months.

Judge William Fahy set bail at \$250,000. Gonzales can go home on electronic monitoring by posting 10% of the bail amount.

He is charged with aggravated vehicular hijacking with a firearm, two counts of armed robbery with a firearm, and two counts of attempted armed robbery with a firearm.

## Offenders charged with aggravated vehicular hijacking

Heidi Ramirez Reyes, 20, has been charged with one felony count of vehicular hijacking



Heidi Ramirez Reyes

aggravated battery, while her accomplice Omar Pasquier, 21, of the 2200 block of N. Kildare Ave., has been charged with felony count - vehicular hijacking aggravated firearm after they were arrested 2:12 a.m. June 27, in the 400 block of E. Ohio.

They two were identified as the offenders who, less than two hours earlier, took a vehicle by force at gunpoint

from a 20-year-old male in the 2200 block of S. Kedzie. Officers later located the offenders inside the victim's vehicle, which crashed in the 400 block of E. Ohio. The offenders were then taken into custody and charged accordingly.



Omar Pasquier

## Charges filed in apparently random West Ridge murder on restaurant rooftop

Prosecutors on July 1 accused a man of murdering a heating and cooling contractor on the roof of a West Rogers Park restaurant in May. The baffling, apparently random attack was part of an hours-long string of crimes and bizarre behavior by 33-year-old Brandon Sanders, officials said.

Brandon Sanders



Rasim Katanic, 69, was working on a cooler compressor on the roof of Tahoor restaurant, 2345 W. Devon, when someone attacked him at 4:25 p.m. May 12, officials said. The Cook County medical examiner's office determined that he died from injuries suffered in an assault, including multiple stab wounds.

During Sanders' bail hearing on Saturday, prosecutor Kathryn Morrissey detailed Sanders' movements before and after the murder, citing eyewitness accounts and extensive video records.

About two hours before the murder, Sanders entered Hanmi Bank, 6335 N. Western, which is directly behind the eventual crime scene, Morrissey said. Bank employees asked him to leave because he was acting erratically. Instead, he called the FBI's national threat center, gave his name, birthdate, and phone number, and claimed a plot was afoot to overthrow the U.S. government. He left before the police arrived.

A few minutes later, he walked through a shoe store adjacent to

Tahoor and exited the back door into a courtyard area, Morrissey said. The shoe store employee locked the back door, leaving Sanders outside.

Morrissey said the only way out of the courtyard was through the stairwell of an adjacent mixed-use building. Two Loyola students who live there returned from graduation on May 12 to find their apartment burglarized, she said. A skylight had been removed.

The students told police that someone had shaved in their bathroom and discarded some clothing and a Hanmi Bank flyer. The burglar also stole some of their clothes, left a pair of boots in the oven, and dropped Katanic's wallet on their computer table. Morrissey said investigators found a discarded water bottle in the apartment that preliminarily tested positive for Sanders' DNA.

Video showed Sanders leaving the building about 90 minutes after the murder wearing the Loyola students' clothing with Katanic's keys hanging from his waist, Morrissey continued.

Sanders proceeded to a nearby furniture store where he used to work. He told a manager there that the store did not have to pay rent anymore because their landlord was "dead on the roof" and he "took care of it," Morrissey said. Two store employees agreed to drive Sanders home, but they kicked him out of the car in the 6400 block of N. California because he was acting erratically. Police found Katanic's wallet, phone, and keys on that block.

Late that night, allegedly wearing the Loyola students' clothing, Sanders flagged down an Evanston police officer and asked to be taken to a hospital.

Investigators arrested Sanders on June 29. He's charged with first-degree murder, murder during the commission of a forcible felony, armed robbery, and residential burglary. Judge Ankur Srivastava held him without bail.

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# Two charged after feds seize fentanyl, cocaine worth \$1.56 million on North Side

BY CWBCHICAGO

Two men face felony charges after prosecutors accused them of possessing more than four pounds of fentanyl on the North Side. And one of them is also charged with possessing 27½ pounds of cocaine.

The men walked out of a home that Drug Enforcement Administration agents had under surveillance in the 4700 block of N. Kennicott on June 27, Assistant State's Attorney John Kyle said.

Agents saw Noe Cabrera-Hernandez hand a large box to Enrique Garcia-Alvarez, Kyle said. Garcia-Alvarez put the box in his vehicle and drove to the 3900 block of W. Lawrence. The feds approached him there and asked what he was up to.

He told the agents that he had a box in his vehicle that he thought might contain drugs, Kyle alleged. His hunch was apparently correct. Kyle said agents found 2,000 grams of fentanyl worth \$311,100 inside the box. He said they also found a loaded ghost gun with an extended magazine inside a backpack that was inside the vehicle.

Back at the house, agents stopped Cabrera-Hernandez as he walked out of the home with a bag containing a kilo of cocaine, Kyle alleged. He said agents searched the house with Cabrera-Hernandez's permission and found another 12,500 grams of cocaine.

Altogether, the cocaine had a street value of \$1,562,500, according to Kyle.

Their attorney said both men are 33 and



Mugshots of Noe Cabrera-Hernandez (left) and Enrique Garcia-Alvarez.

work as restaurant cooks, and only Cabrera-Hernandez has any criminal background. He's on probation for DUI and had an earlier DUI in 2015.

Judge William Fahy set bail for Cabrera-Hernandez at \$500,000 cash on charges of manufacture-delivery of fentanyl and possession of cocaine.

Garcia-Alvarez is charged with armed violence, manufacture-delivery of fentanyl, and aggravated unlawful use of a weapon. Armed violence is a state charge that essentially means someone is accused of possessing a firearm and narcotics at the same time.

Fahy set Garcia-Alvarez's bail at \$200,000 cash.

Cash bail amounts must be posted in full, unlike the more common deposit bond, which requires a 10% deposit.

# DePaul student among four victims in Lincoln Park robbery, carjacking spree

BY CWBCHICAGO

Another wave of robberies and carjackings rolled through Lincoln Park June 29, repeating a pattern that first emerged several weeks ago. And once again, a DePaul Univ. student is among the victims. Chicago police have announced no arrests in the growing crime pattern.

The crime spree began around 12:10 a.m. when a woman was driving in the 600 block of W. Belden, and a dark SUV passed her to block her path, according to a CPD spokesperson.

A gunman exited the SUV and confronted the woman. After robbing her of her belongings, he drove away with her car, police said.

Another woman was robbed around 12:35 a.m. in the 1000 block of W. Armitage, according to preliminary information.

Then, at 12:43 a.m., two vehicles pulled up next to a man sitting in his car in the 1400 block of W. Fullerton. He said two men got out of each vehicle and displayed a firearm.

The group "began to damage the victim's vehicle from the outside," a CPD spokes-

person said, and a fight broke out when the victim's friend showed up to help him.

An officer at the scene said the men broke out all of the victim's car windows but didn't get anything from him.

They fled in one of the vehicles they drove to the scene, leaving behind a Nissan Rogue that had been carjacked from the 300 block of W. 24th St. The Rogue may have also been used in the robbery on Belden.

Moments later, a DePaul student was robbed in the 900 block of W. Webster. She was walking when a man demanded her property while armed with a weapon. She said she thinks the weapon may have been a Tazer because she heard a crackling noise, the school's public safety office said in an email to the DePaul community.

At least two more robberies may have occurred June 28. One victim was robbed by three masked men near the intersection of Barry and Leavitt in Lakeview.

At 10:11 p.m., a man called 911 after being robbed at gunpoint by a man near LaSalle and Chestnut on the Near North Side. But dispatchers did not assign the call until 10:48 p.m., and officers said they

could not find a victim when they arrived.

The Lincoln Park robbery pattern has been growing, despite repeated assurances from CPD leaders and Ald. Timmy Knudsen [43rd] that the city would be on top of the issue.

Five people were robbed in the area June 22, including a 76-year-old man and a 55-year-old woman who were standing outside when two robbers walked up and said they had a gun around 11:30 p.m. They demanded the victims' property but ran away after the man swung his briefcase at them, a CPD spokesperson said.

About five minutes later, a man and woman were robbed in the 400 block of W. Grant. They told police they were walking when two male robbers confronted them and implied they had a firearm, police said. The victims handed over their property to the offenders, who ran eastbound.

Three people were robbed in the neighborhood on June 12: A 19-year-old DePaul student was walking in the 2200 block of N. Lincoln when a robber came up behind him around 4:30 p.m., according to CPD. He told police that the robber implied that he had a gun and demanded his property,

which the victim turned over.

A 26-year-old woman told police she was robbed while walking in the 600 block of W. Armitage around 4:23 p.m., and a 30-year-old woman was targeted in the 2200 block of N. Geneva Terrace around 4:32 p.m., according to police.

Nearly four weeks ago, Ald. Knudsen reassured his constituents in an email that the city had everything well in hand.

"Our police are sending additional patrol vehicles and tactical missions to the area," the freshman alder wrote. "We will continue to advocate for strategies including consistent police presence in the 43rd Ward and a robust community policing approach."

But this reporter learned that much of Knudsen's ward sometimes went without any active beat cars. Knudsen again promised residents that police were beefing up patrols. We reported on June 21 that the area again went without any beat cars on the night that five people were shot outside Lincoln Park Zoo.

## NASCAR from p. 5

Dan Ryan, Kennedy and Eisenhower expressways (Interstate-90/Interstate 94 and Interstate-290) would be an exciting site for NASCAR 2024. Imagine race cars flying around those cloverleaves at 130 miles an hour! There is nothing like that in racing today.

The "NASCAR Flyover" course could be set up to run two miles west to Ashland Ave., then loop back to downtown. Of course, temporary bleachers and skyboxes would have to be set up on the south and north sides of the Eisenhower, and choice

seating could be provided on the CTA platforms in the middle.

Sight lines would be sensational because the expressway is sunken in a valley. The Byrne Interchange would only have to be closed for a few hours on race day.

When the inevitable crashes happen, the injured could be whisked for treatment to Rush University Hospital, only a hub-cap's throw from the race course.

In 2004, the interchange was rated as the nation's third-worst traffic bottleneck. That led to an \$800-million reconfiguration that was begun in 2013 and completed in 2022.

The Illinois Dept. of Transportation

expects a 50% reduction in traffic delays as a result of the project's conclusion.

• If the in-city NASCAR sites don't pan out, the next suggested choice is Arlington Park Race Course in northwest suburban Arlington Heights. After all, this 326-acre horse-racing track, which recently was purchased by the Chicago Bears for \$197.2 million, really is a deeded race track.

We already have an experienced Chicago Bears QB to serve as the Grand Marshall.

Only minor rezoning and asphalt paving installation would be required to get the

engines revving on this perfect oval. Too bad the Bears received demolition permits to remove the beautiful stands.

Bears loyal season ticket holders should get reduced ticket prices for the NASCAR races.

*For more housing news, visit [www.dondebat.biz](http://www.dondebat.biz). Don DeBat is co-author of "Escaping Condo Jail," the ultimate survival guide for condominium living. Visit [www.escapingcondojail.com](http://www.escapingcondojail.com).*

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**STOP IN. WE'RE OPEN FOR BUSINESS!**

**CHASING** from p. 2

correctly measured for him by his lifelong commitment to lifting the burden of others. He knew by his familial commitment to the details of the Shoah, the horror of the Holocaust, that human recovery is long and empty without fresh commitment to all human life. It shaped him to be a person for others, always willing to go further to bring a survivor back. His humanity did change the world. His early departure from it pure human heartbreak. He brought such sensitivity to Chicago commerce and international diplomacy always brightening wider understanding. He knew as the Irish bards sang, "There is risk and truth to yourself and the world before you." Peace always. And forever.

**TROUBLES:** Yes we have troubles, right here in River City. Teens in abundance are boarding trains once more to ride North to incite felonous behavior while the CTA looks the other way. Police can do nothing when Cook County refuses to prosecute. The new missing mayor only offers excuses. A fresh summer rampage is off and running. If you have the wherewithal, hire Israeli security.

**ARCHITECTURAL:** Last week guests gathered at The Arts Club of Chicago for a sold out event, the Streeterville Organization of Active Resident's Blueprints Vision into Reality celebration honoring **Lucien Lagrange** for his architectural achievements and heritage. **Natalie Martinez** of NBC5 Chicago served as the emcee and **Robert Sharoff** and **Bill Zbaren**, author and photographer for the book they published about Lucien, gave a presentation on his career. The program concluded with **Michael Reschke Sr.** and SOAR President **Deborah Gershbein** presenting the award to Lagrange. **Dr. Joaquim Brieva**, **Jennifer Sutton Brieva**, **Todd Hatoff**, **J. Frank Jeffery** and **Melinda Jakovich Lagrange** all there for the honoring. The atmosphere was filled with energy, love and appreciation for all that Lagrange has contributed to Chicago's iconic architecture.

**SHUTTERED:** The Bristol, Bucktown's farm-to-table pioneer, is now closed after 14 years... **Dos Urban Cantina** has closed after eight years in Logan Square... **Pearl's Southern Comfort**, an Ode to New Orleans in Edgewater, has closed after eight years... On Division St. at **Damen Modern Asian Kitchen** shut after 13 years and a fire, not to reopen.

**BYE BYE:** Chicago Board of Education President **Miguel del Valle** has left his post. Tapped as president by then-Mayor **Lori Lightfoot** in 2019, del Valle announced at last week's Board of Education meeting that it will be his last.

**A TOAST:** Gov. **J.B. Pritzker** signed a bill into law that will allow bars and restaurants to continue serving cocktails to-go for another five years. **Andy Deloney**, a big cheese with the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, said the pandemic-era law was a lifesaver for many businesses. The cocktails to-go movement is spreading around the country, now in 14 states. So buy more booze!

**ART UNDERFOOT:** Join the unique exploration of the hidden artwork along Edgewater's lakefront with **Bill Swislow** 11 a.m.



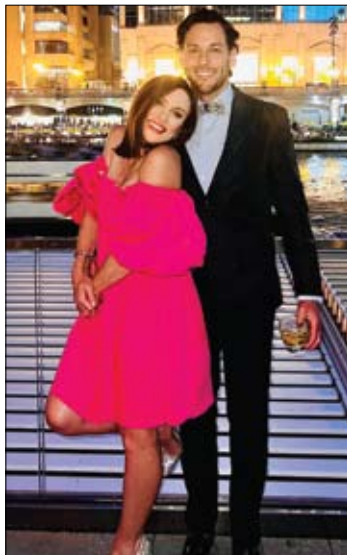
Lucien Lagrange (center) receives the Vision into Reality Award from Michael Reschke, Blueprints Honorary Chair and SOAR President Deborah Gershbein.



Dr. Joaquim Brieva, Jennifer Sutton Brieva, Melissa Jankvich Lagrange, Todd Hatoff and J. Frank Jeffries.



Kathy Wolter Mondelli and Kathy O'Malley Piccone.



Whitney Reynolds and David Heiner.



Alexi Giannoulias



Mary Pat Gannon



Sherry Lea Fox



Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cooney.

July 22 in the walk along the shore. The tour begins at the foot of the pier at Kathy Osterman Beach (Hollywood Ave. Breakwater).

**LYRIC REMEMBRANCE:** Remembering their friend **Mary Pat Gannon** at the Lyric Opera, three of her most frequent companions of the past couple of decades, **DePaul Fr. Dennis Holtschneider**, **Mark Mroz** and **Rich Daniels** gathered to watch a wonderful production of "West Side Story," gratefully recalling the many nights she had them as her guests at this place she loved so dearly and supported so generously.

**BISCOTTI FROM HEAVEN:** **Debi Catenacci** has created the finest homemade Italian biscotti I have ever tasted. She recent-

ly shared some with me and knocked me over the flavor and quality. The whole story is in her book, "Divine Biscotti," that contains the whole story and many recipes for the sweet Italian treats. Lots of great photos too. Had a lunch with the author, **Susan Gohl** and **Lucia Adams** at RL, filled with superb food.

**AT AUCTION:** **Gustav Klimt's** 'Lady With a Fan' sets a new auction record in Europe, making \$108.4 million at Sotheby's Mini-Marathon of London sales.

**CANDLE GLOW:** The **Katz Family** was out in adorable force at Erie Cafe to celebrate Auntie **Rachel Katz'** 40th birthday with a Sweet Mandy B's Buttercream torte and two graceful restaurant friendly tots. Niece, **Toni**, and nephew, **Mason**, plus Mommy, **Marnie**, and Daddy Katz, aka bro **Alex**, plus Grandma **Toby Katz** looking chic and urbane in a fab straw summer hat. No lie, lovely Rachel looks 30.

**WHO'S WHERE:** **Nick Hahn** hand-somely presiding at the bar at elegant MartAnthony's at 1200 W. Hubbard, looking like young **Gianni Versace** pre-South Beach, the Nick's more of a Hampton's lad... Local boy **Tim Bales** after a lifetime, playing with Rich Daniels' City Lights Orchestra... Former British Consulate **Caroline Cracraft** arranging lectures at her lovely new residence, Admiral on the Lake apartments... **Nicola Diego dell'erba** in Monopoli, Italy... **Denise McGowan Tracy** doing birthday cake... **Stephanie** and **Geoffrey Emrich** viewing an actor's art work and sending good fortune to Maine East classmate of sorts, **Harrison Ford**, the star of "The Dial of Destiny"...

**Ken and Mary Claire Scorsone Moll** with **Charlie** celebrating 20 years... Illinois Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulias** doing Pride walk in a downpour to the delight of the crowds... **Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cooney** christening the summer roof deck and their recent marriage... **Dr. Glenn** and **Mary Constable** with the Lord Mayor **Shelley Howard**... **Sherry Lea Fox** pretty in pink... Doing the White Sox game, **Kathy Wolter Mondelli** and **Kathy O'Malley Piccone**... **Whitney Reynolds** and **David Heiner** on a social media break... **Heather Farley** and **Mamie Walton** cheered at NASCAR... Tea at the Drake for Mama **Georgia Leese** and **Stephanie Leese Emrich** and family.

**WEDDING OF THE SUMMER:** The emotions and devotions of the summer and a lifetime unfolded at **Bethany Florek** and **Andrew Kitick's** nuptials. They uncovered beauty and truth beyond the tulle and Champagne. The social army of friends made sure all the traditions, new and old, were embraced. **Denise Tomasello**, **Sherrill Bodine**, **Julia Jacobs** and **Tina Gravel** surrounded their pal with love, fashion, humor and hope. The bride was fabled in beauty, some supplied by **Lauren Lein Cavanaugh** in layers.

A poet is someone who stands outside in the rain, hoping to be struck by lightning.  
- James Dickey

tog515@gmail.com

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# Lookingglass looking sad, going dark on July 16

The downtown arts scene took a hit late last week when Lookingglass Theater announced plans to lay off most of their staff and go dark once the current run of "Lucy and Charlie's Honey-moon" ends on July 16.

The ranks of the Michigan Ave. theater group will be thinned from 24 to 10 as they announced a pause in programming until sometime next spring.

The show "Sunset 1919" was set to premier at Lookingglass on Thursday, July 27, while "What to Send Up When It Goes Down" was scheduled to run from Sept. 24 to Oct. 16.

The ensemble-driven theater at 821 N. Michigan Ave. has produced live works for over 35 years, winning the 2011 Tony Award for excellence in regional theater.

Despite benefitting from a rent-free home stage in the city-owned Water Tower, the fannies are just not in the seats these days. Like many other Chicago theaters, audience attendance at Lookingglass has not recovered from the government-imposed pandemic economic shutdown.

While the formerly popular theater once had an annual budget of about \$6 million, they are now undertaking an urgent fundraising campaign hoping to raise

\$2.5 million.

"None of our recent shows have hit our box-office goals, even after we have reduced our goals," artistic director Heidi Stillman told Chris Jones of the Chicago Tribune. She told Jones that the theater's surveys revealed some audience members were reluctant to come downtown this season and that they have experienced a drop-off in subscription and single-ticket sales, as have other non-profit theaters companies across the country.

Nationwide, audiences and income are down from pre-pandemic levels by anywhere from 20% to 50%. That means a great deal of America's theatre industry's future hangs in the balance. Profitability still matters in the arts.

It's not that trend lines are all heading in the wrong direction. According to Jill Robinson, CEO and owner of TRG Arts, which collects data on performing arts organizations in the U.S. and U.K., the gap is closing. Using 2019 as a pre-pandemic benchmark, TRG data shows June 2022 theaters reporting admissions down by 51% from 2019 levels, and income down by 50%. By Dec. 2022, those numbers had shrunk to 33% and 35%, respec-

tively.

"Overall, I think 99% of us are back now only because of the federal funds that we received, the extraordinary fundraising we did, the generosity of our communities, and decisions that are a bit of a slippery slope, like additional draws from an endowment," said Jennifer Bielstein, executive director of San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater.

By and large most all of those relief funds have dried up or been been used up. Crain's Chicago reported that the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Goodman Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre say ticket sales rebounded from 2021, but not enough to restore their financial health, as federal dollars that got them through the worst of the pandemic are drying up.

Other North Side theaters that have also gone dark, or reduced programming, including Eclipse Theatre Co., 4001 N. Ravenswood Ave., Victory Gardens Theater with two Lincoln Ave. locations in Lincoln Park, House Theatre of Chicago, 1543 W. Division St., BoHo, 7016 N. Glenwood Ave., and Underscore Theatre Company, 4609 N. Clark St.



Tickets to the Rogers Park Taco Crawl are \$20 per route, visit [www.RPBA.org](http://www.RPBA.org).

## Rogers Park Taco Crawl July 20

The Rogers Park Business Alliance [RPBA] has announced the return of its Taco Crawl, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, July. Fourteen restaurants along Clark St. between Devon and Touhy will offer their signature tacos to ticket buyers, rain or shine.

New this year are tequila tastings included for all ticket buyers 21 and older, as well as two taco routes to choose from, each offering seven restaurants, including options of vegetarian and desert tacos in addition to al pastor, chicken, steak, and fish.

Rogers Park is considered one of the most diverse community

in the city, and the strip of Clark St. north of Devon Ave. has a distinctly Mexican flavor to it, thanks to the Mexican food scene. Located there are many Mexican restaurants, taco stands, tamale carts and grocery stores.

Tickets are \$20 per route and are available at [www.RPBA.org](http://www.RPBA.org). The number of tickets is limited, and online registration is now live.

Each ticket warrants one signature taco or dish from each participating restaurant on their respective routes. Restaurants will stop serving at 7 p.m.

### Letters to the Editor

#### Chicago parents have homework this summer

Parents of Chicago schoolchildren have homework assignments. More accurately, the homework is for all Chicago property taxpayers and residents.

Your reward could be thousands of dollars in lower taxes and tax write-offs.

Gov. Pritzker and our lackey legislators are about to degrade your children's education by destroying your options. By taking away your choice.

They are about to let the "Invest in Kids Act" expire.

Why would they want to hurt the kids?

The "Invest in Kids Act" gives donors a tax deduction for endowing school scholarships for poor and special needs students. Those are our kids.

The governor and our legislators want to shove these poor and special needs children into failing schools.

How bad are these schools?

Over 90% of these students cannot read or do math at grade level. And we are paying dearly

for this failure. Most modern societies know that it is a cross-cultural moral imperative that an advanced society educate its children. And Chicago is broadly failing.

The State of Illinois' own education website shows that from 2017 through 2023, taxpayers funded an 85% increase in Chicago Public Schools spending, going from over \$15,000 up to over \$23,000 per student.

Did test scores go up 85%??

We all know the answer.

So here is your summer homework. Get on the horn and call our Lakefront lackey legislators and tell them to re-start the "Invest in Kids Act." It won't cost taxpayers a dime. And it will change thousands of school children's lives for the better.

So call now, statehouse operators are standing by. Be nice to the office staffers, but be tough on the lackeys.

Mike Sullivan  
Avondale

#### Thank goodness

Now that the Chicago Tribune is a shell of its former self, and now that the City of Chicago no longer publishes its annual booklet of all the Millennium Park events, thank goodness for The Skyline - the only place I can find out what's happening.

P.S. Don't even try the City of Chicago website unless you've got all day.

Hallie Metzger  
Gold Coast

Have something on your mind about your community?  
Write a Letter To The Editor at [insidepublicationschicago@gmail.com](mailto:insidepublicationschicago@gmail.com)

### Pricing your writing for profit

For some, pricing one's own work can feel arbitrary and out of your control. Writers have a chance to examine their work's worth 6 p.m. Tuesday, July 11, during the Independent Writers Of Illinois [IWOC] meeting in room 4G at the Gratz Center, 126 E. Chestnut St. / 115 E. Delaware, adjacent to Fourth Presbyterian Church.

Pricing one's work appropriately is key to being able to pay bills and provide for a future. It also contributes to healthy boundaries with clients, and puts the worker at the controls of their career.

IWOC is hosting a live, hands-on workshop from Jessica Abel who will explain how to use ones own needs, strengths, and capacity to set prices that can make a writing business profitable and sustainable. (Bring your laptop

to be able to interact fully in this presentation.)

Discounted parking (after 5 p.m., with validation) is located at the 900 N. Michigan Ave. garage. Networking at 5 p.m. Main program, 6 p.m.

Members do not need to register. Non-members, pay \$10 if pre-registered at <https://www.iwoc.org/event-5086599>, \$15 at the door.



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This sale is to be held on Tuesday July 25, 2023, at 2:00PM.  
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— Sigmund Freud

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## Summer Nature Fest July 13

Explore the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum after hours at Summer Nature Fest, 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, July 13, at 2430 N. Cannon Dr. Guests will enjoy an evening featuring live animals, live music, guided nature walks, a drop-by scientists table, crafts, and an appearance by WTTW Kids' Nature Cat. Admission is free, but that museum will be accepting donations.

# One in custody after two nights of robberies hit Loop

BY CWBCHICAGO

Chicago police have one suspect in custody, but they're still looking for at least one more after a string of robberies were reported in the Loop and South Loop.

The robbery streak began around 2 a.m. June 25 in the 100 block of W. Ida B. Wells. A CPD spokesperson said two victims, a 20-year-old woman, and a 23-year-old man, were walking when the two robbers confronted them.

The men displayed a gun, took the victims' property, and fled north on Federal St.

Over the next two hours, additional robberies were reported at Dearborn and Lake, Franklin and Madison, and near the Prudential Building.

More robberies were reported June 26, starting around 5:20 a.m. when a 42-year-old woman was targeted in the 600 block of S. Plymouth.

Minutes later, a 27-year-old man was robbed at gunpoint at State and Van Buren.

At 5:25 a.m., a 36-year-old man was targeted in an attempted armed robbery at Michigan and Madison.

A 31-year-old man called 911 around 5:55 a.m. and reported being robbed at gunpoint while walking his dog in the 1100 block of S. Michigan.

Finally, at 6:50 a.m., a 22-year-old man was carjacked as he sat in his vehicle in the 1100 block of S. Wabash, a police spokesperson said. He said two men displayed a gun and forced him out of his gray Honda Civic.

They drove away with the vehicle.

Several hours later, police arrested Jorge Gonzales, 23, on the Kennedy Expy. near Chicago Ave., CPD said. He is charged with vehicular hijacking with a firearm, two counts of armed robbery with a firearm, and two counts of attempted armed robbery with a firearm, in connection with Monday's crimes. He is not charged with any incidents from June 25, according to CPD. No suspects have been arrested.

## CASINOS from p. 1

allow Bally's to continue construction and hiring but they will need a temporary operating permit to open to the public. That is expected to happen in late summer of 2023. The Medinah Temple casino will operate for no more than three years while the Chicago and Halsted casino is built.

Ald. Brendan Reilly [42nd] says he still has "a number of outstanding concerns relating to the temporary casino operation at Medinah Temple, namely traffic management and security."

Reilly, along with Ald. Brian Hopkins [2nd] and RNRA, initially opposed the casino development at Chicago and Halsted, saying it was incompatible with the nearby residential neighborhoods and would, according to RNRA, strain an "already over-taxed infrastructure."

When the Chicago City Council approved the project on May 25, 2022, RNRA turned its attention to identifying and advocating for adjustments to the plan

with the goal, said the organization, "of reducing harmful impacts to the surrounding communities, the citizens of Chicago, and the natural environment."

RNRA leaders met with Bally's representatives on July 7, 2022, to discuss 52 recommendations. They met with Chicago city officials on April 11, to discuss other concerns, including traffic issues.

According to RNRA, Bally's originally assumed the outdoor performance venue would be a welcome amenity for the neighborhood, but now, says RNRA, "understands the significant concerns of nearby residents about associated noise, light, and traffic disruption near their homes."



Brian Israel

## SHOT from p. 1

neighborhood busy as patrons come and go until the early morning.

So far this year, nine people have been shot in River North. That's down from 16 at this point last year but up from eight in 2021. The neighborhood had two shooting victims as of this date in 2020.

Just two weeks ago, dozens of shots were fired during a shocking daytime ambush that left a man critically injured just a block away from the July 1 shooting. The area's alderman linked that crime to a nearby club.

Surveillance video showed the victim walking down the 300 block of W. Erie as a group of men stepped out of a vehicle to ambush him around 6:30 p.m. The footage showed one of the gunmen chasing the victim down the street with a large firearm extended toward the victim.

"Based on preliminary findings, the victim of the shooting was a patron of Blüm [nightclub], and the shooter(s) came downtown to seek him out," Ald. Brendan Reilly [42nd] wrote in a letter to neighbors.

"The shooting ... placed potentially dozens of lives at risk. I live just a few blocks away and know this happened at a time of day when many residents are out on the neighborhood streets. It is a miracle more people weren't injured or killed," Reilly wrote.

"I have asked the local police commander and liquor commissioner to investigate the nightclub Blüm and, if witness reports

are substantiated, initiate the license revocation process to shut them down," he continued.

The alderman pointed out that there was a shooting outside the nightclub in 2021 when it operated as Clutch Bar. Reilly also shared a letter he wrote to "strongly" urge the local liquor commissioner to "immediately close" Blüm.

"River North residents should not be forced to endure the deleterious impact that these problem liquor establishments are having on our community. Enough is enough," Reilly fumed.

He asked the 18th District commander to increase police presence on Erie St. and at a nearby park where people gather for nighttime parties.

## LANDMARK from p. 1

in American architecture at the end of the modern movement.

Preservationists believe that the Eugenie Lane Apartments retain sufficient historic integrity to preserve its historic and architectural value in Chicago. And based on its evaluation, CCL staff has recommended moving forward on the landmarking effort, and will present a final report to the CCL before it votes on a final landmark recommendation and sends the proposed designation to City Hall. A vote from the Committee on Zoning and the full City Council will be needed to officially designate the building as a Chicago landmark.

## DECONVERSION from p. 1

remains strong on the North Side.

Cacciatore and SPNA teamed up on the Gold Coast project in 2020. Klor and Kuperwasser acknowledged that the pandemic and market conditions contributed to an unsuccessful venture, but they deny any wrongdoing.

The SPNA executives recently asked for an additional \$1.5 million from the Cacciatores to help stabilize the property, saying they were short on cash to cover unspecified costs, but Crain's says the family didn't comply.

The lawsuit focuses on an alleged breach of an agreement in which Klor and Kuperwasser were supposed to match the Cacciatores' \$6 million investment in the property. Instead, unbeknownst to the family, the SPNA executives took out a \$40.8 million mortgage on the property and a \$10.2 million mezzanine loan.

The lawsuit alleges that the pile of debt could have been evaded if they paid their \$6 million share. The \$51 million mortgage was set to mature in April, but the SPNA executives negotiated an extension of the due date to July 9.

In court filings, Klor and Kuperwasser deny any wrongdoing, and asked a judge to dismiss the case last month, claiming the allegations are rooted in frustrations over

***In court filings, Klor and Kuperwasser deny any wrongdoing, and asked a judge to dismiss the case last month, claiming the allegations are rooted in frustrations over the costliness of the project, rather than illegal acts. The executives blamed the pandemic and market conditions for the situation, says Crain's.***

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"Rather than honor their obligations under the LLC agreements, [the Cacciatores] grew impatient, and brought this baseless lawsuit," the executives wrote in a motion to dismiss the complaint.

However, there is some legitimacy to the claim that the lawsuit is "baseless." As part of an earlier agreement with SPNA, the Cacciatores don't have the rights to sue on certain matters, the motion says. Plus, the executives claim they weren't contractually obligated to pay into the deal.

The Cacciatores also allege that the executives profited by charging excessive closing and acquisition fees worth nearly \$6.7 million at the front end of the deal.

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