

New lawsuit aims to block clustering of downtown dope dealers

A battle is brewing over drug dealing turf... but this time it's not the Gangster Disciples, Gaylords, Four Corner Hustlers, LOC City or Latin Kings tangling over open-air drug markets on the West Side, hoping to sell small \$10 baggies of your favorite addiction. This one is the Rainforest Cafe vs Bio-Pharm.

The politically-connected GRI Holdings LLC, which operates a Green Rose marijuana store, has filed suit against Bio-Pharm LLC hoping to keep them from opening its doors nearby.

The city's Zoning Board of Appeals gave the Rainforest Cafe plan the OK amid a fight from neighbors who argue there are too

many dispensaries in the neighborhood. There were also issues with the ownership of the group behind the plan, forcing them to bring on staffers that would allow them to qualify for a privileged "Social Equity" license.

The lucrative drug selling business opportunities in River North are nothing like dealing out of rough Chicago neighborhoods, done by some of the nation's largest gang-run narcotics networks. Still, GRI Holdings wants to stop Bio-Pharm from opening a store two blocks away in the former Rainforest Cafe, 605 N. Clark St., at Ohio and Clark streets.

The suit claims that the Illinois Dept. of Financial and Profes-

sional Regulation is illegally approving the license.

The real issue is part of the law that legalized Social Equity marijuana licenses in Illinois.

To prevent an over-saturation in the most lucrative areas - like River North - city and state law has a general prohibition against pot stores locating within 1,500 feet of an existing pot retailers. Well, except if one of the applicants has a magic "social equity" exception, which throws out all the rules everyone else must follow.

Businesses that are defined as those with majority ownership

LAWSUIT see p. 12



Residents at The John Hancock Center are accusing their homeowners association, its property management company, accounting firm, and a reserve fund consultant of alleged criminal activities.

John Hancock Center HOA fields complaints about reserve fund, late fees

BY STEVEN DAHLMAN
Loop North News

An accountant studying the finances of the condominium association at The John Hancock Center is accusing the association, its property management company, accounting firm, and a reserve fund consultant of "potential criminal activities" involving its reserve study and other financial documents.

Michael Novak, a CPA with an MBA in Finance, says various types of fraud, along with federal and state income tax evasion, have occurred at the homeowner association dating back to 2015.

Novak battled his Gold Coast HOA, State Parkway Condominium Assoc., in the latter years of the 2010s, over a variety of issues, including being cited for a "pet violation" for having a service dog. Novak is deaf.

He has since moved to Las Vegas but was hired by 13 unit owners at 175 E. Delaware Place who, he says, are concerned about the finances of their 703-unit condo.

Novak says he has examined more than 170,000 pages of the

condo association's records and has attended "numerous" condo board and committee meetings over the past 15 years.

The focus of his criticism is the HOA's reserve studies, which recommend how much the association needs in its reserve fund to handle unforeseen expenses such as repairs and replacements.

Novak says reserve fund consultants hired by 175 E. Delaware Place "engaged in deceptive practices" by recommending funding plans in 2017 and 2022 that Novak says were flawed and did not acknowledge "a significant uptick in the required reserves for critical property repairs and replacements."

He says the 2022 reserve study recommended a reserve contribution for fiscal year 2023-24 of \$2.128 million but should have recommended a contribution of at least \$4.256 million. He estimates that by 2052, the association's liabilities and deferred assessments will surge to \$85 million, with the shortfall paid by homeowner assessments.

HOA see p. 12

Serial bank robber has tried to rob three downtown banks

BY CWBCHICAGO

A serial bank robber has tried to rob banks in downtown Chicago three times since mid-September, according to the FBI, and he's failed each time.

While the would-be robber has not made any money from his efforts, you might be able to. That's because the feds are offering up to \$1,000 for information that leads directly to his arrest.

The agency said the man first tried to rob Citibank, 100 S. Michigan, at 3:29 p.m. Sept. 19. He was wearing a hoodie, mask, and black button-down jacket.

On Oct. 11, he tried to rob Citibank at 180 N. Michigan around



Surveillance images show a man suspected of robbing three downtown Chicago banks since Sept. 19. *Images courtesy FBI*

3:35 p.m. The feds say he wore a black hoodie, a dark gray vest, jeans, and dark shoes.

He returned to the 180 N. Michigan location around 2:50 p.m. Nov. 7, and again failed to get any money. His outfit included a

blue beanie, and a red or orange hooded jacket with a yellow zip-up underneath, the FBI said.

Tips can be shared with the agency's Chicago field office at 312-421-6700 or online at tips.fbi.gov.

City to convert struggling Selina-run hotel into migrant homeless shelter

Mayor may create another Mag Mile mess

Mayor Brandon Johnson is not making any friends on the Mag Mile, Near North Side or in Streeterville as they just announced a unilateral decision in creating another migrant hotel and shelter in the area that will be operated by a struggling European outfit whose landlord is facing a foreclosure complaint.

The city says they plan to convert the Selina Hotel, 100 E. Chestnut St., into a homeless shelter starting next month, and according to the two nearby aldermen, they were never consulted ahead of time, nor was any community meeting held to alert nearby neighbors to the city's plan.

The city already has one troubled hotel serving as a migrant shelter with the Inn of Chicago, 162 E. Ohio St. Aldermen Brian Hopkins [2nd] and Brendan Reilly [42nd] have both called

for shutting down the hotel shelter after its city contract expires in December. City officials and nearby residents have seen order breakdown at the site as gangs and thugs took over control of the property, leading to daily law-breaking activity.

A grant of taxpayer funds from the Illinois Dept. of Human Services will be used help fund the initiative, but the real problem lies in the fact that is that City Hall does not have the staff, resources or expertise needed to operate these shelters. That have instead contracted with lightly-vetted and ethically-challenged vendors to do the policing and management.

The hotel is expected to house 116 people and serve as a shelter for up to seven months, according to Ronnie Reese, a spokesman for Mayor Johnson, who referenced the upcoming winter months as the reason for the swift decision.

The city says that the conversion plan is unrelated to the thousands of unhoused migrants presently

living in Chicago. The Johnson administration has been broadly criticized across a wide swath of neighborhoods citywide for the secrecy and lack of transparency when making migrant housing site decisions. They have also intentionally blocked city council members from being a part of the decision-making process.

The Selina Hotel's owner is Indianapolis-based firm Hotel Capital. They are presently facing financial problems due to a \$25 million foreclosure lawsuit from the property's lender. Hotel Capital bought the property for \$22.5 million in 2018.

With the hotel millions of dollars behind in rent payments, Hotel Capital's CEO Michael Collier says his firm's financial troubles were created by the lawsuit. The firm's stock valuation has crashed since going public last year.

Despite several years of virtue signaling over being a sanctu-

HOTEL see p. 12

Bridge work will affect traffic for a year on Columbus, Randolph, Stetson

The city will begin a project to replace pin and link plate assemblies and expansion joints associated with the bridges of upper and intermediate Columbus Dr., Randolph St., and Stetson Ave. that is anticipated to take a year to complete.

Pin and link plate assembly work will be performed from the underside of the bridge decks while expansion joint replacements will occur from above. The work began Monday and project completion is targeted for the Fall of 2024.

Work is to start along upper, intermediate, and lower levels include N. Columbus Dr. between E. Wacker Dr. and E. Randolph

St.; E. Randolph St. between N. Michigan Ave. and N. Field Blvd., and N. Stetson Ave. between E. Wacker Dr. and E. Lake St.

During construction, portions of these bridge structures will be barricaded off to prohibit vehicles and pedestrians directly over the active work. That will create traffic tie-ups throughout the affected communities.

Vehicles will be shifted and/or detoured to allow the work to progress. The sidewalk on at least one side of the roadway and crosswalks at roadway intersections will remain open for pedestrians.

Buildings adjacent to the work will experience temporary access restriction during the project.

Other people have a nationality, the Irish have a psychosis



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

Do you remember the Jack Parr Tonight Show, the precursor to Johnny Carson, David Letterman and the rest?

Jack Parr was background noise to my childhood. My Irish grandmother was devoted to the soft-spoken New Yorker who seemed so 5th Avenue-sophisticated and erudite. To me he always seemed more like a prep school literature professor than a showbiz mid-town Manhattan habitué.

It was the late 1950s so TV wasn't very sophisticated or high brow.

But every once in a while, between appearances by comedienne Phyllis Diller and stripper Gypsy Rose Lee, a Parr guest would come out and simply take over the show.

No one did that better than Irish writer Brendan Francis Behan. Somewhat an unknown among the showbiz fans, Behan was a Dublin man of words, x-ray memory and beverage. It permitted him the long look. The chance to look back on his life and create stories that would peel the shells off eggs.

Behan was a writer of breakthrough brilliance as only the self-destructive Irish can produce.

He was a large man. A big rough, bouncy boy who let his lower class Dublin persona shine through his television antics and tough poetic prose.

He had all the gifts, save common sense, I reckon.

His literature appeared to have no bottom. He brought to life the broken wanderers of Dublin streets. Its penal system, especially for the young. The victims of broken families. The living corpses of modern 20th century poverty as only the Irish could fashion.

He portrayed a people of unflinching religious self-conscious-

ness. A haunted adult population of unfulfilled adolescent sexual understanding. Emotionally malnourished and seeming incapacity for adult fulfillment. All against a background of centuries old persecution and woundedness by a neighbor nation. Further firmly placing a layer of broken expectations after being granted political independence.

This was Behan's real world, hardly the landscape of happy leprechauns, green beer and pious clergy. Greasy. Bleeding. The streets of Dublin filled with broken dreams, drunkards and the wickedly sinful just trying to cope.

This is hardly the Irish world, all physically torn and emotionally threadbare, that Irish immigrants in the U.S. wished to be reminded of, or even introduced to. It made my grandmother insane.

Behan's remarks about Ireland, cynical political crime, sexual naughtiness and rough Irish living, made in such television interviews, were a horrific nightmare for my grandmother and most pious folk we knew.

His literary works might be one thing on the Tonight Show, but among the hard-working Irish he was often portrayed as the "devil himself."

Armed by a reputation for hard dangerous drinking and skirmishes with the New York Police, Behan often became the star of his own melodramas. His membership in the Irish Republican Army, the banned military and political rebels of Irish history, added a criminal layer of patriotic shame to his rebellious behavior, often more embarrassing than dangerous. But it spiced up his writing and gave his poetry an edge.

It is said that Behan was up by 7 a.m. each day and worked till noon. When the pubs would open.

He carried off well his hard-earned reputation as "the carouser-in-chief."

His career soared in the early 1960s, thanks to the power of American publicity creating a fan base. He mingled easily with American illuminati such as Arthur Miller, Jackie Gleason and Bob Dylan.



Brendan Francis Aidan Behan was an Irish poet, short story writer, novelist, playwright, and Irish Republican, an activist who wrote in both English and Irish.

In Dublin his unusual fame was reinforced by his closeness to famed contemporary Irish writers like Flann O'Brien, Patrick Kavanagh, Patrick Swift, Anthony Cronin, John Jordan, J.P. Donleavy, and artist Desmond McNamara. All were captivated by his self-destructive joviality, self-revealing literary drama and outrageous use of language.

Behan's literary world exploded in 1954 with the production of his play, "The Quare Fellow." The work was heavily influenced by Behan's own personal experience of the penal system. A play filled with satire, it catalogues the true human experience wrought by capitol punishment. It ran for six months. And later opened at the Theatre Royal Stratford East.

His autobiographical work, "The Borstal Boy," became an international best seller.

Behan would enjoy 10 years of literary celebrity before his death on March 20, 1964. His addiction to alcohol and physical deterioration due to diabetes brought him quick death at the age of 41.

Thus passed Ireland's heroic playwright, poet and begrudged literary giant whose eyes and ears were the product of another age of Irish renaissance. A mystical moment of literary genius when the heart outruns the details of the drama of life and reshapes it with the cold hard facts of reality on plateau of human life.

The centennial of his birth was earlier this year on Feb. 9, 2023.

In the thick literary soup of Ireland's ferocious passion and dutiful commitment to the literary traditions of its people, Behan's accomplishment as a writer once more

works before the world.

The texture and climate of Irish writers to record the deepest depths of being human remains mysterious.

Out of the most provocative carnage of human passage Irish literary achievement spills over the cauldron of everyday living.

The gnawing persecution of poverty, hunger, life-time exile, warfare, my grandmother's criticisms and centuries of religious antagonism are unable to damage the imaginative literary soul of its people. Behan is the proof.

Behan surrenders the secret of his success and lays out the clues to his brilliant career when he says - "I have total irreverence for anything connected to society except that which makes the roads safer, the beer stronger, the food cheaper and the old men and the old women warmer in the winter and happier in the summer."



Tom Demetrio with Justice Joy Cunningham.

LEGAL EAGLE: Chicago mega-attorney **Tom Demetrio** was honored with the 2023 Jury Verdict Reporter Award for Trial Lawyer Excellence at their annual event at RPM Events hosted by the Chicago Daily Law Bulletin. This year holds the record for highest attendance in the history of the event as per **Peter Mierzwa**, president and publisher.

MORE IRISH: The gala awards dinner for iBAM is 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 18. It's the 15th annual iBAM, featuring past media and journalism awardee, NBC Channel 5's **Mary Ann Ahern** as Master of Ceremonies; **Colm Toibín**, Visual Arts; **Róisín O'Farrell**, Music; **Jimmy Keane**, Media and Journalism; **Eileen Dunne**, and Person of the Year; **Dr. Mary Pat Kelly**. Their mission is to honor the best in Irish culture while supporting the efforts of the Irish American Heritage Center.

TIME OFF: **Tom Tresser** is retiring from the CivicLab. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of the CivicLab, opened in the West Loop on Aberdeen St. in July of 2013. He's worked tirelessly fighting the good fight over the mystery around your tax dollars

going into TIF districts. They're everywhere. Just last week he did his 225th public meeting on civic finances and TIF for a group of organizers seeking to stop the \$58 million TIF subsidy for the re-location of the Hollywood Aurora Casino. He plans to release a new book by Routledge Press in mid-2024 with the working title of No Games Chicago: How a Small Group of Citizens Derailed the City's 2016 Olympic Bid.

TREMONT HOTEL: Once known as a swank Chestnut St. hangout for Gold Coasters, **Mayor Johnson** is said to be planning on reusing the Tremont, now known as the Selina Hotel, as a hotel for more homeless in the city. He was kind enough to blind side **Ald. Brendan Reilly** [42nd], who had no warning of the change of purpose for the hotel. The mayor is showing his skill at vanquishing his City Council allies and the people of Chicago. He's had hard days between eating ham sandwiches and finding cold beers.

HE GONE: The bad news about **Jason Benetti** leaving the White Sox, and heading to the Detroit Tigers, is so hard to take. A gut punch. Benetti's announcing alongside **Steve Stone** was the best we'll ever get. Undoubtedly the best announcing team in the nation. Benetti's deep, soothing voice and inquisitive mind, asking Stoney questions about his experiences during his baseball career, gave all us listeners the inside scoop on the game.

To make matters worse, rumor has it that it was **Jerry Reinsdorf's** decision to oust Benetti. Some people can do no wrong, but in the case of Reinsdorf, he can do no right. What a fool.

Benetti and Stoney were the only reason to tune into the game. And now that's over.

Hopefully one day, we will get rid of Reinsdorf and bring back the best voice in sports, Benetti.

IRISH see p. 8

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Unintended consequences are the feature of Chicago's privileged bike lanes

The obstacles the city and its Dept. of Transportation [CDOT] are creating now on Chicago's surface streets are creating the broadly-expected unintended consequences that tend to follow poorly thought-out bureaucratic good intentions.

The vast expansion of privileged bike paths, pedestrian islands, curb bump outs and their ubiquitous concrete barriers on commercial streets have sent motorists scrambling for alternative routes to avoid the new government-created traffic jams that now plague the North Side, and in general the whole of Chicago.

Toss in a dozen double parked Amazon, UPS, FedEx, DoorDash and 18-wheel semi delivery trucks, an articulated CTA bus or three stopping for passenger pick ups, plus the Uber and Lyft drivers stopping mid-block, and shoppers and commercial customers desperately seeking parking, and it seems the only people in Chicago who now have freedom of movement are the bikers secured behind their privileged concrete barriers.

Like many technocratic schemes, it's no surprise that these privileged bike lanes and their concrete transportation obstacles and barriers come with unintended consequences. As the city continues to constrict these commercial thoroughfares, motorists are heading into alleys and side streets to pass through communities. The new biking plans have added dangerous barriers and constricted transportation corridors throughout Chicago, backing up traffic in all directions.

But the blocking and slowing of traffic may not be an 'unintended' consequence, as city officials are pushing a new 15-Minute City scheme dreamed up by the World Economic Forum. The idea be-

hind the concept is to build cities in such a way that most daily necessities and services are located within a 15-minute walk or bike ride. In Chicago that means city officials want to harass and irritate vehicle drivers so much that they'll stay in their own communities and off the streets.

As the city continues to constrict these commercial thoroughfares, motorists are heading into alleys and side streets to pass through communities. The new biking plans have added dangerous barriers and constricted transportation corridors throughout Chicago, backing up traffic in all directions.

But the plan and its privileged bike paths mean when it snows, city streets will be narrowed as plows throw snow off the middle of the streets, as they will be inhibited by the cement barriers. Of course, the bike lanes themselves will not be able to be plowed. That's unintended.

Then there is the man-made problem for motorists created by the city's micro-managerial bubble, using the portion of the bike lanes near intersections as turn lanes for cars, forcing drivers to make blind turns through gaps in the privileged concrete bike paths where street parking has been pushed further out into streets. Also unintended.

Another perhaps 'intended' consequence of the plan is that some congested streets lose an entire lane of traffic. In Edgewater and Rogers Park it can take 30

minutes to travel one mile down Clark St. when parents arrive to pick up or drop off students in nearby schools. Clark St. is now down to one lane in some areas, effectively meaning many parents just double park in that one lane of traffic to pick up children.

Sadly, that stretch of Clark St. has a Chicago Fire Dept. station house on one end of the constricted zone, and a police station at the other end, both that are now trapped by traffic during long periods of the day ... so it's best you don't have a medical emergency, fire, or get shot when the local schools open or let out.

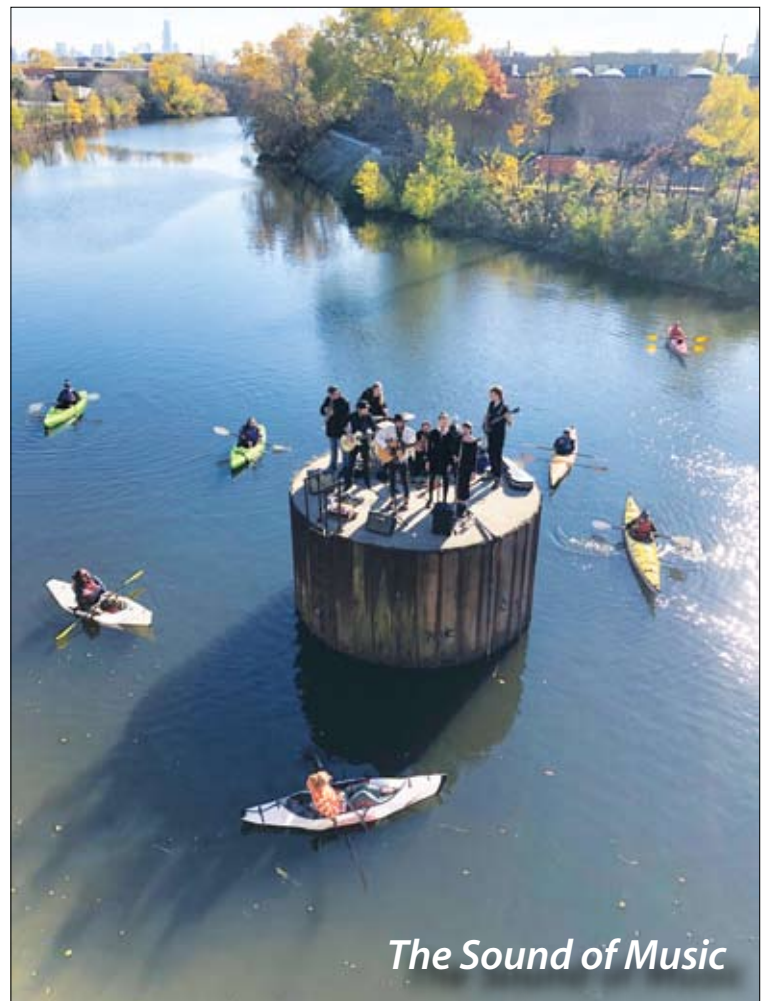
As many of the new bike lanes are on commercial streets, delivery trucks can't fit in the bike lanes. So they load and unload not at the curb, but in the street. That's unintended, and has no clear fix as consumers in the 15-Minute City still need products and materials brought to them.

And the destruction of commercial corridors is expected to continue unabated in 2024. Next up are plans to narrow Dearborn with protected bike lanes that will create traffic obstacles from Chicago Ave. north to Walton in the 2nd Ward.

Indeed, CDOT is designing and implementing 150 miles of new privileged bikeways city-wide in the next year under a program titled The Chicago Cycling Strategy.

Since 2020, that plan has grown the bike network by an average of 30 miles per year - double the annual rate at which the bike network had been expanding from 2011-2019. Chicago's network of bicycle infrastructure currently includes more than 420 miles of privileged bike lanes, neighborhood greenways, off-street trails

CONSEQUENCES see p. 4



The Sound of Music

The Sound of Music floated along the Chicago River on Saturday captivating scores of kayakers and a multitude of fans who populated the Belmont bridge and the concert cavern underneath.

This was the last concert of this season of The Secret River Sessions, a music venue created by Ben Kissinger, the leader of the band, and Lawrence Tome, who was playing that afternoon.

The stage was a giant circular piece of steel clad cement in the middle of the Chicago River whose original purpose is to protect the bridge from being crashed into by ships and barges.

Something new and exciting has been added to The Chicago Music Scene with this aquatic venue.. "Creating the opportunity for other people to discover something magical is what I strive to do," said Kissinger.

Mission Accomplished. See you next season. *Photo by Jim Matusik*

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Black Friday Night Market Nov. 25

The Black Friday Night Market will be held 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday Nov. 24, at Mrs. Murphy & Sons Irish Bistro, 3905 N. Lincoln Ave. The Market will feature fine handmade goods by local Chicago-area artists.

The event will showcase a wide variety of offerings from fine and funky jewelry, dreamy watercolors, cozy knitwear, unusual textiles, natural soy candles, heavenly scented soap, childrens goods and more.

In addition, there will be live

music, great food and great drinks.

This is the Market's 11th year pop-hosting a night-time market at Mrs. Murphy's. This year they are adding something special and supporting young artists. In addition to their adult artisans, they will have three young artists – a brother/sister duo who make three dimensional drawings and wire sculptures, three sisters who make indoor and outdoor sculptures out of concrete, and a teenager who makes exquisite wooden pens.

Conference to examine turmoil in banking markets

Events are open
to the general public

The George G. Kaufman Center for Financial Policy Studies [The Center] at the Quinlan School of Business of Loyola Univ. Chicago's 2023 Policy Conference will examine "Recent Turmoil in Banking Markets: Evidence, Causes, Regulatory Response, Lessons, and Future Needs" 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 29, at Loyola's Schreiber Center, 16 E. Pearson St. 9th Floor, Wintrust Hall.

The public is invited to join in, and topics will be presented for a broad audience. Attendance is

free but registration is required at: https://loyolafamilybusiness-center.formstack.com/forms/policy_conference_2023.

The keynote speakers will be Sheila Bair, former chair, Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. and Loreta Mester, president and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland.

Research and policy presentations will examine recent turmoil in banking markets, issues associated with accessing credit, and topics related to the research efforts of the late Loyola Professor Dr. George G. Kaufman in bank regulatory reform, monetary policy, and financial services regulations imposed to achieve social goals.

The Center is named for the late George G. Kaufman, PhD, who was one of the world's leading experts on banking, a prolific researcher in economics and finance.

For more information visit <https://bit.ly/45HUEhU>.

Luxury home prices rise; listings fall

Dramatic 13% price rise
in October



by Don DeBat

The Home Front

Chicago's North Side home market this autumn continues to slide sideways as home buyers and sellers roll their eyes and hang on for dear life.

"While Oct. 2023 was the 20th consecutive month of year-over-year home sales declines in Lincoln Park, the Near North Side, Lakeview and North Center, we are beginning to see some positive signs in the market, but no definitive trends have emerged," observed Realtor John Irwin, co-author of the Baird & Warner November Market Analysis with broker Jackie Lafferty.

According to Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey, benchmark home-loan interest rates nationwide declined to 7.5% last week from 7.76% a week earlier. The November Baird & Warner market analysis also noted the following positive trends:

• Homes under contract: "While the number of homes that went under contract in Oct. 2023 dropped 1.6%, compared with the same month in 2022, this is a vast improvement over recent months where we were seeing double-digit decreases," Irwin noted.

The Near North Side and Lakeview neighborhoods experienced increases of 9.7% and 4% respectively, for homes under contract over October of last year. However, contracts in Lincoln Park and North Center declined.

"When you look at residences under contract by price point,

much of the increased activity came from luxury homes priced at more than \$1-million," Irwin noted.

• Home-price increases: Median home prices on the North Side rose a dramatic 13% in October. However, most of that increase was fueled by a whopping 39.9% price increase in Lincoln Park. Lakeview and North Center home prices also rose, as did North Side homes priced from \$500,000 to \$2 million.

"There is a healthy pool of buyers, however many are sitting on the sidelines until inventory levels rise and interest rates stabilize," said John Irwin.

• Homes for sale: Inventory levels continue to drop. "In October of 2023 the market experienced a 16.2% decline in listings compared with the same month in 2022," Irwin said. "Lincoln Park, Lakeview and North Center all experienced double-digit decreases in listings ranging from 20% to 31.9%."

Lack of inventory continues to be the main obstacle to a North Side real-estate rebound, Irwin said.

"There is a healthy pool of buyers, however many are sitting on the sidelines until inventory levels rise and interest rates stabilize," he said.

"Many sellers have built equity in their existing homes, but inventory levels and interest rates will have to be more favorable for them to sell and become buyers."

• Interest-rate shock: After the shock of interest rates doubling to 6% from 3% in a relatively short period of time, many buyers were beginning to settle into the reality of higher rates, Irwin said. "We now have moved past the 7% range and could be headed to

8% on benchmark 30-year fixed mortgages."

Irwin noted that sharply higher home-loan rates have had a profound affect on the market. "The multiple-offer frenzy brought on by historically low inventory levels has noticeably slowed. Property showings and open-house attendance appear to be down," Irwin said.

Are mortgage rates stabilizing?

On Nov. 9, Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey reported some good news. Charges on benchmark 30-year fixed-rate home loans fell a quarter of a point to an average of 7.5% nationwide from 7.76% a week earlier. A year ago, 30-year fixed loans averaged 7.08%.

Fifteen-year fixed mortgages also declined on Nov. 9 to an average of 6.81% from 7.03% a week earlier. A year ago, 15-year fixed loans averaged 6.38%.

The survey is focused on conventional, conforming, fully amortizing home-purchase loans for borrowers who place 20% down and have excellent credit.

"As Treasury yields declined last week, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage dropped a quarter of one percentage point—the largest one-week decrease since last November," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's chief economist.

However, Freddie Mac data shows that household debt continues to rise, primarily due to mortgage, credit-card and student loan balances. "Many consumers are feeling strained by the high cost of living, so unless mortgage rates decrease significantly, the housing market will remain stagnant," Khater predicted.

For more housing news, visit www.dondebat.biz. Don DeBat is co-author of "Escaping Condo Jail," the ultimate survival guide for condominium living. Visit www.escapingcondojail.com.

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CONSEQUENCES from p. 3

and other on-street bikeways.

Of the identified projects, 85% are protected bike lanes or neighborhood greenways currently serve about 50% of Chicagoans who live within half a mile of a concrete bike lane, greenway, or off-street trail. The city's goal now is to grow that to 70%.

It's human nature to seek relief from traffic jams, and in Lincoln Square that means driving the wrong way on Francisco Ave.

As a part of the Lincoln Ave. Streetscape scheme, the direction of Francisco Ave. was reversed from southbound to northbound to allow for the construction of a concrete vehicle obstacle island on Lawrence Ave. Now there are reports from neighbors that drivers are ignoring signs and concrete barriers to drive southbound on Ainslie to reach Lawrence.

CDOT is surveying the area to make more changes, hoping to stop locals from violating the new one-way road directions.

In Rogers Park, Edgewater, and Andersonville, alleys and side streets adjacent to Clark St. are being filled with speeding cars where the city has installed their concrete barriers and vehicle obstacles, creating vast traffic bot-

tlenecks that extend from Bryn Mawr north to Pratt.

And the pinch is on in Andersonville now, too, where CDOT has attacked Clark St. north of Wrigleyville under the Clark St. Crossroad scheme, that is removing a traffic lane and parking spaces on an already narrow Clark St. in favor of the privileged bike lanes and the concrete barriers. That plan will call for constricting traffic and removing half of the commercial street parking all the way north to Foster Ave.

This newspaper is hearing from residents of Lakeview now, who are also getting frustrated by the new traffic jams created by the concrete bike barriers and traffic obstacles added to Belmont. The Belmont, Ashland and Lincoln Ave. intersection has always been a congested commercial district, and the city constricting the roads have only added to the traffic jams.

Further south, many residents of West Town are furious over what has become of the formerly wide open Milwaukee, Elston and Augusta avenues intersection.

The community lost their beloved Gillman Ace Hardware, 2118-20 N. Milwaukee Ave., which closed after 75 years in Logan Square because it lost its

commercial street parking to a privileged bike path. That effort alone eliminated some 100 commercial street parking spots, infrastructure that is a critical need for small business survival. Home Depots, Menards and Walmarts can afford to buy and build their own off-street parking lots for giant warehouse stores; small mom-and-pop commercial businesses cannot. They have always depended on street parking to serve their customers.

The scheme exposes the fake sincerity over the "Shop Small, Shop Local" marketing narrative offered each holiday season. Small retailers cannot survive solely on passerby, walk-in customers. They need street parking, particularly those stores selling 50-lbs bags of dog food, sidewalk salt, big bags of ice for parties, and other heavy consumer good best moved in a car trunk.

It should be noted that a ticket for double parking/standing in a non-central business district is \$100, with a late fee of an additional \$100. And a parking ticket for double parking/standing in a central business district will cost you \$250.

Cook County Sheriff says human trafficking is 'going on all around us'

BY DONNA ROLANDO

The Cook County Sheriff's Office hopes to crack down on human trafficking, child porn and prostitution after a wave of recent arrests over a two-week period highlighting the enormity of the problem.

Sheriff Tom Dart said it's essential that not only the federal government, but internet sites and parents take action to fight this growing trend.

Dart recently held a news conference after six separate arrests,

which included child pornography, prostitution and trafficking. One trafficking case involved a child. The Sheriff's Office also acted relating to the operation of a bordello. Additionally, numerous women, who were being trafficked or could have been, responded to sheriff's office ads, Dart said.

These cases are just a microcosm, he said, of all the activity nationwide, especially now that so many immigrants have illegally crossed America's southern border with the help of organized

crime coyotes. The Inn of Chicago, 162 E. Ohio St., has recently become a hotspot for human trafficking and prostitution. Housing about 1,600 migrants, the hotel is the single largest migrant shelter in the city. Nearby neighbors and local alderman have complained about the quality of life crimes going on there now.

The neighbors have witnessed issues including narcotics sales, prostitution, drug and alcohol use on the public way, theft from local businesses, unlicensed street vendors, aggressive panhandling,

and loitering on the public way.

Sadly, some of the migrants have turned to illegal activities to pay off the fees the smugglers charged to get them across the border and into America.

These crack down cases were accomplished by the Sheriff's office without a special effort, which he said points to the "pervasiveness" of the problem.

Although Cook County claims to be a leader in fighting such crimes, he said, it's more than law enforcement can tackle alone. Instead, it must be a three-pronged

attack, involving the federal government, internet sites used to perpetuate these crimes, and parents as watchdogs of their children.

Dart stressed the need for internet companies to adopt protocols to prevent these crimes.

"They need to work on their sites whether it be filters or whatever ... and they need to work with us in law enforcement when things aren't right. They need to be doing this with passion because they're interested in stop-

TRAFFICKING see p. 10

Seniors earning less than \$65,000 per year may be missing a big property tax break

A lower assessment equals lower tax bill

BY MARIA PAPPAS

A Maywood senior received more than \$13,000 to spend on home improvements after my office helped him secure a property tax refund.

Michael Warner was a guest on my weekly radio show, "Black Houses Matter," on WVON-AM 1690. Like many Cook County residents, Warner had no idea he was eligible for two types of tax relief, the senior citizen and the senior freeze exemptions.

"I never knew about it," Warner told me.

The senior citizen exemption is a credit for homeowners who are 65 years or older. The less common senior freeze exemption is for homeowners who are over 65 and whose household income is less than \$65,000 per year.

"This exemption 'freezes' the senior citizen's property's assessed value the year that the senior citizen qualifies for the exemption," according to the Illinois Dept. of Revenue. A lower assessment results in a lower tax bill.



Maria Pappas

Tax bills may still increase if tax rates go up or if improvements are made that increase the value of the property. But for many, the senior freeze exemption prevents tax increases due to inflation. Senior citizens seeking the freeze benefit must apply for it every year.

Illinois law allows us to refund money for four years' worth of missed exemptions, which Warner learned when he called into a televised ABC7 phone bank hosted by my office and reporter

Samantha Chatman.

You can conduct your own search at cookcountytreasurer.com. Click on a purple box that says, "Your Property Tax Overview," type in your address and a picture of your home should appear.

Scroll down to learn if there are any overpayments on your property or whether you have received exemptions for recent tax years. If you are missing an exemption or eligible for a refund, you can apply online.

Property owners may be entitled to a share of \$84 million in overpayments going back 20 years and up to \$34 million for missed exemptions for the past

four tax years. In Warner's case, about half his \$13,474 refund was for missed senior citizen exemptions and half was for missed senior freeze exemptions for tax years 2018 through 2021.

Warner told me he was going to use his refund to replace a fence that secures his home's corner lot. Part of the fence was replaced after it was damaged during a storm and he wants to finish the rest with treated wood that will be more resistant to insects.

"They're going to come back and estimate another part of the fence so it will match all the way around," he told me. "So that's what I'm doing with it."

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Man and teen charged for North Side burglary spree

BY CWBCHICAGO

An 18-year-old man and a 15-year-old boy are charged with a host of felonies in connection with a wave of nighttime business burglaries last week.

More than a dozen locations, mostly bars and restaurants, were burglarized by a five-person crew. Stores along Lincoln Ave. in North Center and Lincoln Square were especially hard hit. Rather than quit while they were ahead, the crew pressed their luck by continuing to strike businesses as they headed back south.

Chicago cops who responded quickly to a burglary call at New Archview restaurant, 3480 S. Archer, saw the burglars driving away from the scene, according to CPD records. Officers pursued the Kia Optima until its five occupants bailed out around 2 a.m.

A canine unit found Vernon Edwards, 18, hiding in a yard in the 4400 block of S. Troy, a CPD report said. Cops arrested the 15-year-old nearby, but the other three burglars got away.



Vernon Edwards

Edwards is charged with one count of burglary for allegedly breaking into each of these businesses: Market Square, 4701 N. Lincoln; #1 Chop Suey, 2550 W. Addison; AT&T, 1724 W. Lawrence; Franco's Ristorante, 300 W. 31st Street, and the New Archview Restaurant, 3480 S. Archer

He is also charged with one count of attempted armed robbery. Officials said the burglars encountered an employee after breaking into Roscoe Village Pub, 2159 W. Addison., and Edwards tried to rob the

worker at gunpoint.

A CPD spokesperson said the juvenile is charged with four counts of burglary. He also had an outstanding warrant.

Charges have not been filed in connection with at least 10 more burglaries that occurred that night, including: Starbucks, 4557 N. Lincoln, Wild Goose Bar, 4265 N. Lincoln, Country Financial, 4306 N. Lincoln, Pastores Brunch, 4661 N. Lincoln, Rocks N. Center, 4138 N. Lincoln, Bad Apple Bar & Grill, 4300 N. Lincoln, Gannon's Pub, 4264 N. Lincoln, Breakfast House, 3001 N. Ashland, Dreamtown Real Estate, 4553 N. Lincoln, and Mangis Restaurant, 3801 N. Lincoln.

Judge David Kelly ordered Edwards jailed to await trial during a detention hearing Nov. 9.

Commentary

Local community, aldermen not consulted over new migrant hotel

BY ALD. BRENDAN REILLY [42ND]

Mayor Johnson is now considering converting the Selina Hotel, 100 E. Chestnut, in the Gold Coast neighborhood to operate as a seasonal homeless shelter.

Much like the Inn of Chicago migrant hotel, this location is just steps from the Magnificent Mile, proximate to popular tourism destinations, hotels as well as densely populated residential buildings.

Again, much like the Inn of Chicago site selection, the Mayor has decided to make this decision unilaterally, rather than confer with the local aldermen who represent residents in the area (Ald. Brian Hopkins [2nd] and myself).

The Johnson Administration's continued lack of transparency and communication regarding the opening of potential migrant and homeless shelter locations in wards throughout the city is neither acceptable nor good government. Simply put: it is wrong.

My office was not consulted by the Mayor or the Dept. of Family and Support Services [DFSS] before they secured this location. We have requested more information about the implementation, impact, timeline, and operational details of this facility.

We will share details with the community as we receive them. In the meantime, we recommend you contact the Commissioner of DFSS and the Mayor directly to communicate your concerns: Mayor Johnson: bjmoc@cityofchicago.org, 312-744-3300; Commissioner, DFSS: Brandie Knazze: Brandie.Knazze@cityofchicago.org, and First Deputy Chief of Staff, Cristina Pacione-Zayas: cristina.pacione-zayas@cityofchicago.org, 312-744-6280.

Getaway driver gets five years in Dakotah Earley shooting, robbery

BY CWBCHICAGO

Five years. That's the sentence for the driver of the getaway car Chicago police linked to the heinous shooting and robbery of Dakotah Earley in Lincoln Park.

Joy Dobbs, Dakotah's mom, shared the news with us on Nov. 5.

"He was tried as a juvenile, got five years, and then goes back to court when he turns 21," Dobbs said.

Any so-called "closure" the sentence may have provided was offset by the behavior displayed in court by one of the driver's relatives.

"The thing that bugged me most was the grandmother crying about how good her grandson was and how he wished that night never happened," Dobbs recalled. "At some point, she knew and was harboring him. He has been in the juvenile system for eight years."

The woman even had the nerve to ask the judge to return the phone police seized when they arrested her grandson.

Since turning 18, her grandson was arrested as an adult in January. Cops said he was driving a stolen car with three passengers, including two juveniles, and two guns.

Chicagoans have been cheering for Earley, who nearly died and lost part of his leg in the wake of that awful morning on May 6, 2022.

As a homeowner's surveillance camera rolled, a gunman confronted Earley and announced a robbery in the 1300 block of W. Webster. There was a brief struggle before the gunman shot Earley repeatedly and demanded his phone PIN as he lay on the pavement.

Prosecutors say the gunman was Tyshon Brownlee, 19. They've linked him to a string of violent holdups on the North Side, including one on the DePaul Univ. campus moments before robbing and shooting Earley. Brownlee's cases are still pending.

Prosecutors charged the driver as a juvenile in May, one year after the shooting, with attempted murder, armed robbery with a firearm, possessing a stolen motor vehicle, and misdemeanor criminal trespass to a vehicle. While he was 18 when they charged him, he was only 17 when Dakotah was targeted, so his case went to juvenile court. Officials did not identify the driver publicly, and we are withholding his name.

The robbery crew was very well organized. It quickly transferred money electronically from victims' phones to other accounts. A lawyer for one of the victims who conducted his own investigation said he found open-source information linking transfers from her accounts to Brownlee.

Making the whole situation even worse for many people: Chicago police officers spotted the stolen BMW that was used in Earley's robbery about an hour before he was shot. They knew the car had been used in other violent holdups, but they chose not to pursue it.

Their decision was certainly made easier by the Chicago Police Dept.'s automobile chase policy, which essentially holds cops responsible for anything that goes wrong during a pursuit and also stipulates that no officer will ever be penalized for not chasing violent offenders.

That policy is now at the center of a lawsuit Earley filed against the city in February.

Dobbs reflected on last week's juvenile court hearing, where the driver received his sentence. Much of her thoughts were reserved for the man's grandmother, who insisted he was a "good boy."

"Questions for me were, 'Did you know [he was involved in the robbery] the day you saw your grandson on the video?' Or, 'Did you know before the detectives came to get him a year later?'"

"Then she had the nerve to ask about her phone that police took the day he was arrested," Dobbs continued. "Was she one of the people who they were transferring money to? All the cars and phones and cash [taken in robberies] and what happened to my son. She is worried about her phone."

"Her tears come from the violence of my son. But if the shoe was on the other foot, she would say that the person was evil and should be behind bars."

Shortly after the first of the year, and before prosecutors charged him in Earley's case, the getaway driver was arrested as an adult.

Chicago police said he was driving a car stolen from the South Loop. He sped away and ran a stop sign when the cops turned on their blue lights. The officers terminated their efforts to pull the car over.

A few minutes later, they saw the car run another stop sign and turn down a dead-end road. They flipped on their blue lights and followed the car. Prosecutors said the driver plowed into the squad car and reversed into three more parked cars as he

FIVE YEARS see p. 10

Art Institute free weekdays entrance Nov. 27 to Dec. 22

The return of Free Winter Weekdays at the Art Institute of Chicago are approaching, from Nov. 27 through Dec. 22.

Illinois residents can gain free admission on Mondays (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.), Thursdays (11 a.m. to 8 p.m.), and Fridays (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

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Lucy Ranger Salinski



Sherrill Bodine with the ladies of Service Club.



Janet Owen and Peggy Snorf.



Jason Benetti

IRISH from p. 2

SPACCA NAPOLI: This extraordinary pizza has been ranked in the top 50 in the world. Yes. Right here in Ravenswood at 1769 W. Sunnyside. Some of the best I've ever eaten in Chicago.

SWAG RESALE: Menswear chain Paul Stuart is leaving Oak St. for the Mag Mile. The move runs counter to the recent trend of luxury retailers decamping from N. Michigan Ave. for the famed high-end shopping corridor. But the move appears to respond to the long lines of folk returning merchandise stolen from high end shops off Michigan Ave. in the Gold Coast. Retail workers are anxious to leave the dangers of Oak St.

SHOPPING GHOST TOWN: After Macy's closing their store at Water Tower Place and a host of other building vacancies, and amid overall struggles over in-person shopping dropping off in the Gold Coast, especially on the mile-long retail avenue, longtime Water Tower Place owner Brookfield Property Partners in April said it was handing the mall back to its lender, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. The owner of Water Tower Place has authorized brokers to lease or sell five of its eight floors for uses other than stores.

STAGE: Performer **Gregory Stewart**, 2023 Jeff Award nominee (Reasons: A Tribute to Earth, Wind & Fire) is in a limited run of his tribute Just One of Those Things (And More): The Nat King Cole Story, Dec. 8, through Jan. 7, 2024, at Venus Cabaret Theater, 3745 N. Southport Ave. Music heals the

soul, and **Nat King Cole** bridged the racial line by leading with love.

SWEETGREEN: The popular fast-casual salad and bowl restaurant is set to open at 3601 N. Southport Ave., the former location of Julius Meinl. With its commitment to healthy and delicious food, Sweetgreen is sure to become a great addition to the dining scene.



Merle Reskin and Myra Reilly.

HOLLYWOOD STAR: **Barb Bailey** definitely made another deep show biz impression on fans in L.A. where she had them holding hands and humming with some old friends in the seats. Her show at **Herb Alpert's** Vibrato Grill Jazz garnered **Valerie Gobos, Jerry Berliant, Rebecca Holden, Angelika Epperlein, Annie Will**



Bill Murray

Buik family. Having an extensively rich history that spans over three generations of leadership and service to the Chicago Scots, the evening will celebrate the accomplishments of **George C. Buik Sr., Donald W. Buik** and **James W. Buik.**

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Andre Dawson and Karen Conti.

for fragrant winter with her wood-burning stove... Fun evening in Printers Row for **Susie Forstmann Kealy** at Thai restaurant and the **Jeffrey Pelt** Quintet at the Jazz Showcase... **Peggy Snorf** celebrating designer **Lily Pulitzer** with friend **Janet Owen**, both looking great Palm Beach smart.

NINTH INNING: Comedian



Gregory Stewart

WISHBONE: Chef **Joel Nickson** founded Wishbone Restaurant at 1800 W. Grand Ave. in July 1990 with 23 seats, nine stools, and a half dozen paintings by his mother, **Lia Nickson.** Dishes and breakfast with a Cajun spin. It's been five years since Wishbone moved to 161 N. Jefferson St. and will soon they celebrate 34 years since it all began in March.

CABARET STAR: **Lucy Ranger Salinski** looked cool and pitch perfect for her cabaret show last week wrapping her listeners in a soothing nostalgia of graceful romance, especially her proud family, and especially her sweet daughter, **Ralph Lauren Bar & Grill's Molly Ranger Castellanos.**

and **Lorenzo A. Beard** in the audience.

CHICAGO MOURNS: **Myra Reilly** mourning the loss of her longtime friend **Merle Reskin**, a remarkable Chicago philanthropist, and a glittering Broadway star. With the love of her life, **Harold Reskin**, they were patrons of the arts, establishing the Merle Reskin Theatre at DePaul Univ. and The Merle Reskin Garage Theatre at Steppenwolf Theatre Co., in addition to years of the generous support of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Goodman Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Ravinia Festival, and Writers' Theatre – among countless others. Merle was a card-carrying member of Actors Equity Assoc. She made Chicago glisten.

HAGGIS: The 178th Annual Saint Andrew's Day Gala, "Feast of the Haggis" will be 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2 at Wintrust's Grand Banking Hall, located downtown. All proceeds will benefit the organization's principal charity, Caledonia Senior Living & Memory Care. At the Feast, the Chicago Scots will present their highest honor, the Distinguished Citizen Award, to the

a group of immigrant Scots gathered at the city's finest hotel, the Lake House, to celebrate Saint Andrew's Day. There, they established Illinois' first and still oldest charity, the Illinois Saint Andrew Society.

WHO'S WHERE: Illinois Supreme Court Justice **Joy Cunningham** front and center for Daily Law Bulletin Award dinner... Cook County Treasurer **Maria Pappas** attending the 80th anniversary celebration of All Saints Armenian Apostolic Church... **Sheila Lamb-Gabler** attended the Gateway Foundation gala with son, **Matt... Shaun Rajah** twirling at a Monday night shindig in black penny loafers and a polka dot tux, cuz it's the style not the brand... **Rose Marie O'Neill** lunching with Irish Consul General **Kevin Byrne** and Irish Georgian Society's **Michael Kerrigan** at Ralph Lauren Bar & Grill... **Janet Owen** and the staff expecting a few friends over for cocktails, dinner and dancing at "my home away from home" the Fall Ball... **Catherine Johns** had a lovely evening celebrating birthdays with Scorpio sisters **Marilyn** and **Lindsay**, plus her sweet husband **Frank Tertinsky**... A terrific evening at the Swedish American Museum Gala in Andersonville with **Helen Melchior** and **Jose Conforme**... Congrats to new Grandpa **Dennis Donn** on the birth of **Louis Patrick Donn**... Chicago's own **Linda Matlow** was one of the **Jerry Springer** Show photographers during the decades when they filmed in Chicago... **Jane Canepa** off to Hawaii for her brother's funeral... **Carolyn** and **Dave Richter** in Cincinnati at the Bengals game... birthday joy to **Bethany Kitrik** and **Sheila Swann**... **Dr. Rose Gomez** staying cozy in her Swiss home preparing

and actor, **Bill Murray**, is now co-owner of the Joliet Slammers Illinois minor league baseball team, with **Mike Veeck.**

RESTFUL PEACE: For 33 years **Chris McCaffrey** was a wonderful brother-in-law. For 49 years he was a dear friend, first meeting in freshman year high school at Brother Rice. Best pal Maestro **Rich Daniels'** and family's loss is deep and we send prayers and sympathy to all.

FOR THE CURE: WGN Radio lawyer, **Karen Conti**, at Fans For the Cure, a prostate cancer awareness group at Smith and Wollensky. Honoring Cubs Hall of Famer **Andre Dawson**, one of the nicest guys around. Did you know he runs funeral homes in Florida?

SOCCER CHAMPIONSHIP: The Warriors of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Glenview rock, says **Father Jeremiah Boland.** Yes they were victorious in the league championship. A great victory but much more important a great group of coaches, athletes and parents. **Coach O'Gara** is the best. Kudos to Queen of All Saints for a great experience of sportsmanship. The Catholic League has a great legacy.

BEST BISTRO: Au Moulin à Vent in Paris won Bistro of the Year. Food critic **Gilles Pudlowski** credits **Théophile Moles** for the success.

JFK AIRPORT: The Port Authority has broken ground on a \$19 billion dollar public/private redevelopment program to build a new JFK International Airport. Travelers should plan for the inconvenience. Best to visit the Port Authority's alerts page for updates and tips for navigating the airport.

I'm a drinker with writing problems. — **Brendan Behan**

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Memorial for Rogers Park softball star Ron Kelly

BY DON DEBAT

A memorial is planned this weekend for Ron Kelly, a West Rogers Park native and 16-inch softball icon who starred for the championship Chicago Sun-Times Old Style Chicago Classic team in the 1994 major tournament in Grant Park.

The memorial will be held 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 19, at Tripoli Tap, 1147 W. Armitage Ave. in the DePaul neighborhood.

“Ron Kelly passed away suddenly at age 53 on Labor Day weekend. He was a gregarious, popular man who left us too early. He will be missed,” said Bob Egan, his teammate and long-time friend.

“Ron was single guy with no wife or children,” Egan said. “Professionally, he was a very successful salesman who had a reservation a Table No. 1 at Gibson’s on Rush St. any time he wanted it.”

Kelly grew up in West Rogers Park. He played baseball and



Ron Kelly

softball teams, including Free Agents, Iron, Misfits, Trips, Red Dog, Still Cruising, and the “AA” Raiders team at Mount Prospect.

“Ron was inspired by the career of his uncle, Hall of Fame player Duke Gregerson, who passed away in 2017 and is honored on the Wall of Fame at the HOF in Forest Park,” Egan said.

Assisted by Egan, Kelly launched the 100 Proof team in 2017. That year, the team won the Ald. O’Connor Tournament at Mather Park. In 2018 and 2019, the 100 Proof team went to the semi-final round of the tournament. And, in 2021, 2022 and 2023, the fine 100 Proof team won the tournament three more times.

In 2003, Kelly started refereeing basketball games at Bridgeport Catholic Academy on the South Side. Later he started coaching there with his friend Pat Check from the Get ‘Em softball team, and the duo had much success.

basketball at Mather High School and Augustana College. “Ron was a very good long-ball hitter and had a great arm in the infield,” Egan said.

In addition to the historic Chicago Daily News / Sun-Times team (HOF 2008), Kelly played for many “A” and “B” saloon

Letters to the Editor

Washington Square location for Mother Jones connects both topics

Thanks very much for the piece [by Thomas O’Gorman] about honoring Mother Jones. I hadn’t known about the proposal to put a memorial to her by the Water Tower. I’d long thought that the Haymarket monument in Forest Home Cemetery was enough.

But your suggestion of Washington Square is excellent and deserving of consideration. As a participant in the Chicago History Book Discussion Group of Edgewater Historical Society / Chicago Public Library at the Edgewater Branch Library, I’ve read multiple books on both the Great Chicago Fire and the Haymarket event in the context of the

labor movement back then in Chicago. Mahlon Ogden’s mansion, which stood where the Newberry Library now stands, was one of the few buildings which survived the Fire.

Some people thought it should have been opened to shelter many “common folks” during and after the Fire. It wasn’t. Washington Square connects both topics, to those who have been educated well about them.

Apparently the Irish government is not in the latter group.

Jean SmilingCoyote
West Ridge

Driving is a privilege

I’m curious who submitted the “More density...parking?” article, but could find no byline.

There was no mention, in the midst of the alleged “war on cars and parking,” of the guy who got us into so much of a mess: Richie Daley, who made a sweetheart deal with LAZ Parking, signing away all on-street and much off-street potential/likely parking revenues for decades into the future, nor who the shadowy Abu Dhabi owners of LAZ are — forget reaching any of them to complain, so do it in the paper, while they’re laughing all the way to the (offshore?) banks!

This writer must be young and healthy, to kvetch about “the menace of the double-parked... FedEx, UPS and U.S. Postal Service delivery truck, or the ... Lyft drivers...when waiting for the non-car-owning passengers to show up for a ride.” Elderly and disabled folks trying to get to their doctors and parents with kids in tow should just take a hike, I guess, even though they’ve all been doing this since forever! And poor “business owners, their employees and customers...[where] they will park is a mystery.” God forbid they would actually choose to take the CTA.

Of course developers should create “rear loading zones, drive-

ways, porticos” and such, if only to keep traffic moving smoothly. But this vitriol is what seeks to enshrine driving and is what serves to “[pit] Chicago resident against Chicago resident in a mad search for legal parking spots.”

Perhaps the writer can tell us where is it decreed that any non-handicapped citizen has an absolute right to a parking space. Oh, that’s right: Nowhere!

Driving is a privilege, its attendant parking challenges go hand-in-glove, and the more cars on the roads, the worse it will be.

Maja Ramirez
Avondale

Note from the editor:
Our readers can safely assume that any article that does not have a byline was written, or edited, by our editor.

Rolling Red Library hopes to change futures of children of the incarcerated

Funded by
Kiwanis Club of LakeView

The founders of the Rolling Red Library recently celebrated the culmination of a series of contributions that now fill their large red “Library on Wheels” with specially selected literacy materials for “John Stephan’s Escape from the Jeopardy Zone” program for Logan Square at Funston Boys & Girls Club.

The Rolling Red Library was created by Jennifer Barrera and Maria Hayley, Founder and President of the Freedom Road Foundation.

Hayley is also a member of the Kiwanis Club of LakeView which completely funds this program. Many Kiwanis Club members also personally selected and purchased numerous additional materials. The Rolling Red Library is designed to help break the cycle of intergenerational incarceration.

The two hope to change the futures of children of the incarcerated, save lives and make a difference in young people’s lives.

Contents of the Rolling Red Library include hundreds of reading, writing and drawing materials including books, bilingual materials, art, crayons, coloring pencils, sketchbooks, and other known literacy enhancers.

These items are used by Barrera and her staff to coordinate with their program activities including their recently established initiative of training older students enrolled in the Club’s After School program to read to the younger ones on a regular basis.

The program serves approximately 60 students grades K – 5. Most are bilingual or new immigrants. These materials help them to learn English. Language mastery is a key to success in school and staying out – or getting out – of the “Jeopardy Zone.”



Standing in front of their Rolling Red Library are (L-R) Club Director Jennifer Barrera and Maria Hayley, Founder and President of the Freedom Road Foundation.

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Skate in the Parks

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Mag Mile Holiday Festivities, Christkindlmarket begin Nov. 17

The Holiday season kicks-off next weekend with the annual Chicago Christmas Tree Lighting, Christkindlmarket opening, and Magnificent Mile Lights Festival.

The annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held in Millennium Park, Nov. 17.

The 110th Annual City of Chicago Christmas Tree, a 45-foot Colorado Blue Spruce was donated by the De La Cruz family of Darien.

The Colorado Blue Spruce will be illuminated during the ceremony 6 p.m. Nov. 17, which will be emceed by Irika Sargent and Joe Donlon of CBS 2 Chicago.

The Christkindlmarket celebrates its 27th season at Daley Plaza, beginning Nov. 17, at 50 W. Washington. The Christkindlmarket Chicago is an authentic traditional holiday market similar to those hosted in Europe.

Magnificent Mile Lights Festival The Magnificent Mile Lights Festival will occur on Saturday, Nov. 20. The parade will step-off this year at 5:30 p.m. from Oak and Michigan and proceed south to Wacker Dr. The parade concludes with a fireworks show

over the Chicago River at Michigan Ave. Unfortunately, this year spectators are not allowed to view fireworks on any of the Chicago bridges.

As usual also, traffic in the area will be horrible. The dire traffic impacts starts on Saturday, Nov. 18, when the following streets will be closed from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.: Clark St. (Oak St. to Delaware St., east curb lane only); Delaware St. (Dearborn St. to Clark St., north curb lane only); Oak St. (Clark St. to State St.), Dearborn St. (Delaware St. to Maple St.), and on Walton St. (State St. to Clark St.).

Those closed 3 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. are Oak St. (State St. to Michigan Ave.); N. Michigan Ave. (Oak St. to Wacker Dr.), and Upper Wacker Dr. (Michigan Ave. to east turnaround).

This year's Tree Lighting Ceremony will include multiple viewing locations with screens and concessions in the Park.

Nov. 17, Tree Lighting Ceremony generally runs from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, visit Chicago.gov/Holiday.

INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

Thanksgiving Day Parade returns Nov. 23

The iconic Chicago Thanksgiving Parade returns, and steps off at 8 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 23, traveling up Chicago's legendary State St. from Ida B. Wells Dr. [Congress] to Randolph St. featuring the return of the beloved giant balloons.

This free family tradition, now in its 89th year, showcases the best talent from across the nation. This year it will feature some of the nation's top marching bands, including Tennessee State Univ., Minnesota State Univ., Horace Mann Academy, Riverside Brookfield High School, Marist High School and many others.

There will also be festive floats, staged performances, equestrian units, cultural performance troupes, inflatables, celebrity hosts and a visit by Santa Claus.

This year's Parade will be co-hosted by actors Jen Lilley (Days of Our Lives, B&B Merry, Paris Christmas Waltz) and Jesse Hutch (Batwoman, B&B Merry, Blessings of Christmas). There will also be special appearances by HGTV's Lauren Makk and Chicago's Poet Laureate Avery R. Young. A high-



There will also be a visit by Santa Claus at this year's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

light of the parade will be performances by country music's Reyna Roberts and Tayler Holder.

Attracting hundreds of thousands of spectators each year, this year's Parade features an eclectic roster of festive participants, including staged live performances from American Blues Theater, Ballet Folklórico Sones Mexicanos, Black Ensemble Theater, and SOUL Harbour Ranch Animal Therapy Program.

TRAFFICKING from p. 5

ping this and not profiting out of it," he said.

It's not the dark web that is harboring these practices, he said, but sites that can be visited without a password. That's why parents need to get more involved. He empowered parents to monitor their kids' internet activity

because these crimes can happen anywhere.

"Being a parent means you need to snoop around," he said.

He noted an astronomical increase in child pornography, which law enforcement is also battling. In 1998, there were approximately 3,000 such images on the internet. This past year, the number has spiraled to 33 million,

he said.

"It just shows you how exponentially all this stuff has grown," Dart said. It's also a myth that such crimes don't happen close to home. "The vast majority, (90-95%) of the people that are involved in trafficking, are local people, trafficking local people, and it's going on all around us," Dart said.

POLICE BEAT from p. 6

on Oct. 25.

Judge Susana Ortiz granted the state's petition to detain Griffin as a public safety request, saying he ordered an Uber and threatened to shoot the driver if he didn't surrender the vehicle.

Prosecutors said surveillance video showed Griffin climb behind the wheel and drive away.

Chicago cops followed the car's GPS signal to the 500 block of N. Central Park, where it sat unoccupied, Griffin's latest arrest report said. Investigators put the car under surveillance and allegedly watched Griffin drive it to a new location about a half-mile away.

When they arrested him, he had the car's key fob and the Uber driver's phone, according to the arrest report.

He is now charged with aggravated vehicular hijacking with a firearm, unlawful vehicular invasion, and pos-

sessing a stolen motor vehicle.

Man shot outside downtown strip club

Chicago police say a man was shot after escorting a customer out of a downtown business Nov. 9. The shooting occurred just two blocks from where two men were shot during a botched robbery Nov. 8.

In a media statement, CPD said trouble began after a 30-year-old man escorted another man out of an unnamed business in the 700 block of S. Clinton around 4:12 a.m.

Moments later, a black Tesla pulled up, and a gunman fired shots from the vehicle, striking the 30-year-old in the right knee, according to the police statement. EMS took the victim to Stroger Hospital in good condition.

Investigators at the scene were concentrating their efforts outside Deja Vu Showgirls, a strip club at 750 S. Clinton. At least six shell casings

were seen on the sidewalk and pavement.

Officers were told that the Tesla, which had no front plate, fled south on Clinton with three Hispanic male occupants.

On Nov. 8, a concealed carry license holder got into a shootout with robbery suspects in the 700 block of S. Desplaines, two blocks over from Clinton St.

CPD said a robbery crew traveling in a Dodge Charger rolled up on a 29-year-old man who had crashed his car shortly after 9 p.m.

Three gunmen stepped out of the Charger and were quickly engaged in a firefight with the man, police said. The shootout ended with the victim and one robber suffering gunshot wounds. Both are expected to recover.

— Compiled by CWBChicago.com

FIVE YEARS from p. 7

tried to get away.

Meanwhile, an 18-year-old in the front seat tossed a gun into the back seat, where two juveniles were seated, officials said.

The cops arrested them all.

Prosecutors charged the driver, the guy involved in Earley's murder, with possessing a stolen motor

vehicle and aggravated fleeing. He is preliminary scheduled to enter a plea deal later this month, according to court records.

Cops found a loaded 40-caliber handgun with a laser sight and an extended magazine attached in the back seat. They charged the front-seat passenger who allegedly tossed it there with unlawful use of a weapon.

Also in the back seat, propped against the driver's side door, was a loaded AR-15 rifle and a second 40-caliber handgun, also with an extended magazine.

As it turns out, the front-seat passenger had another pending gun case. Sources said he has links to the robbery crews that stalked the North Side in the spring of 2022.

LIBRARY from p. 9

The "Jeopardy Zone" refers to the high risk of future incarceration of children reading below grade level by the end of third grade. The program was co-cre-

ated by, and named after, longtime Kiwanian and former Logan Square Club Director John Stephan. Who was also the former officer of the Kiwanis Club of Lakeview, and legendary former Club Director of the Chicago Boys and

Girls Club of Logan Square.

This legacy program aims to reverse the dire prediction of future incarceration for third graders falling below proficient in national reading test scores through partnered reading promotion activities, incentives, whole family engagement, custom home libraries and strategic community connections, especially libraries.

They also provide reading resource support for recently released prison detainees who are on probation or parole.

The goal of the three-way partnership among Logan Square at Funston Boys & Girls Club, The Freedom Road Foundation, and Kiwanis of LakeView is to provide children with "a way out" of the "Jeopardy Zone" – all the while having fun.

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Grant Park Curb Management Study update

The city has presented the preliminary results of the Curb Management Study for the Grant Park/Streeterville area. The study area is east of Michigan Ave. from Monroe St. north to Oak St.

The study is a traffic management planning initiative focused on the North Grant Park and Streeterville neighborhoods. The goal of the study is to discover related transportation and traffic problems in the area and assess prospective physical, operational, and regulatory solutions and recommendations.

The Streeterville Organization of Active Resident's Land Use Development

Task Force assisted CDOT in the early data collection. Members of the task force participated in several neighborhood walk arounds, identified the areas where traffic/pedestrian conflicts are evident.

The study has identified ways the city can continue to analyze critical areas within the areas which need modifications to ease the traffic/curb/pedestrian conflicts. The city has identified various options to correct spaces which create the conflicts, and will review the preliminary results with the other park users, then finalize the plan for implementation.

LAWSUIT from p. 1

by people with minor cannabis charges or convictions, or those who live in areas with high poverty or arrest rates, or employees from those areas have a separate set of rules which provides special privileges not open to those not suffering from social inequities.

Bio-Pharm is among the companies that received one of the state's 185 Social Eq-

uity licenses in 2021, part of an effort to bring more people of color into the legal dope dealing business.

The majority owner of Bio-Pharm was arrested in 1972 for marijuana possession, making the company eligible for the Social Equity license. Their licensee is majority owner and manager Michael Munroe Jr. (His father started the Pickens-Kane Moving & Storage Co. in Chicago.) The majority owner's son, Kevin Munroe, is listed as

HOA from p. 1

"Auditors are strongly advised to scrutinize reserve studies, as there is external pressure within the [Common Interest Realty Association] industry on reserve study professionals to ensure their reports do not lead to sudden and substantial assessment hikes," said Novak.

Reserve studies merely 'estimates,' says HOA president

The president of 175 E. Delaware Homeowners Assoc. calls the claims "unsubstantiated, misleading, and often nonsensical allegations without factual support."

In a letter to Novak from the HOA president, Scott Timmerman said the association had, at homeowner expense, retained legal counsel and auditors to check the allegations.

"These allegations are an inept attempt to suggest that the HOA's professional audit firm, the HOA's counsel, the HOA's reserve study provider, the HOA's management company, and the HOA's board are incompetent or corrupt," wrote Timmerman.

Timmerman defended the reserve studies, saying they are "estimates...based on many assumptions that are uncertain," but "there is no basis" for Novak suggesting actual expenses will be significantly higher.

"The reserve study was conducted by an

outside consultant specializing in reserve studies. The Finance Committee and the board carefully analyze the reserve study estimates/assumptions when the Finance Committee annually reviews each account as part of the budget review process," wrote Timmerman.

The managing principal of the association's accounting firm denies Novak's allegations at least as strongly.

In a detailed and contentious letter, Ralph Picker, of Picker & Assoc., defended its accounting and provided background on how income and liabilities are determined. Picker is a CPA and Certified Fraud Examiner.

He says Novak's claims are based on a difference of opinion regarding assessments, whether unit owners are considered "customers" of the association, and whether unused assessments for major repairs and replacements are considered equity or liabilities.

"At present, there is substantial debate, diversity of thought, and confusion among CPAs relative to...assessment accounting, especially those assessments designated for future repairs and replacements of common property," wrote Picker. "Each CPA who serves homeowners' associations must interpret this new revenue standard and apply it based on his or her judgment and experience. No consensus exists

the company's Chief Operating Officer.

The rubber in those two sets of rules has hit the River North road, resulting in four weed dealers locating within a few blocks of each other in our notorious downtown entertainment district.

Green Rose includes owners restaurateur Phil Stefani, former Chicago police Cmdr. Thomas Wheeler Jr., and Jay Stewart, the former head of cannabis dispensary licensing for the state. They cleverly qualified for their dope dealing licensing by hiring people who lived in social equity areas, rather than having owners who qualified.

Progressive Treatment Solutions [PTS], which operates a grow house in East St. Louis and five dispensaries elsewhere in Illinois, had originally been denied a license at Rainforest Cafe because PTS was not a social equity license holder. It then partnered with Bio-Pharm, which is a social equity licensee, and suddenly all their problems dissolved.

PTS is a multi-state marijuana growing and retailing company with an ownership group led by David Flood, a member of the family that runs Flood Brothers waste management. Their marketing director is listed as Patrick Flood, and their CEO is former

amongst CPAs as to how this accounting guidance should be applied to homeowners' associations."

He called the claim of income tax evasion "totally irresponsible," explaining that tax avoidance "uses a legal method to lower the tax obligations of a taxpayer in accordance with prevailing tax law, regulations, court cases, taxpayer, and professional interpretations, etc."

A new, higher late fee, implemented on April 17 by Timmerman, continues to outrage unit owners at 175 E. Delaware Place.

Any past-due amount of \$250 or more results in a \$250 late fee.

"These fees are not only outrageously high, they've been designed to intentionally force owners into falling into a trap where the association begins charging fees for even a single unpaid fee," said unit owner Drew McManus. "If an owner contests the fee, they end up with another fee the next month if it still isn't paid."

Allowed to accumulate, the late fees, he says, are punitive.

So far, 45 unit owners have been hit with the new late fee, including McManus. He says he was charged \$250 for being \$7.21 over the \$250 limit, and late only because the association's property management company, Sudler Property Management, set up his online account incorrectly. He says he missed a 10-day grace period after

CTA board Chairman Terry Peterson.

But the opening has now been delayed by another lawsuit by River North residents which asserts that Chicago's zoning review, regulation and approval process is flawed. That case is being driven by Robert Brown, who lives in the River North neighborhood. He thinks that his neighborhood has become the city's unofficial weed district, with four pot shops already operating within a few blocks of each other. As crime and shootings have risen in the community, many River North area residents are now opposed pot shops, fearing they will stoke further crime and loitering pot smokers.

HOTEL from p. 1

any city, Chicago and Illinois public officials struggle to maintain order under the strain of backing up that boast. They are now forced to deal with a real migrant crisis as winter approaches. It is a crisis that was created primarily by the federal government's failure to live up to their Constitutionally mandated responsibilities to secure America's borders and manage customs and immigrations services.

Sudler took eight days to send him a correct, current statement.

Another unit owner over four months had account balances of \$438.50, \$765.07, \$492.25, and \$252.25, and was charged a \$250 late fee each month, according to McManus.

Novak says during the fiscal year that ended on Aug. 31, the association made \$41,250 from late fees.

He says there was no formal vote by the condo board on the late fee. McManus says unit owners only learned of the new amount three days before it went into effect.

"The most disturbing aspect is how the board president assumes they have the authority to simply change fee policies by decree and that three days' notice is somehow acceptable or complies with [Illinois Condominium Property Act] regulations," said McManus.

The board's legal counsel has defended the late fees. David Sugar, a partner at Saul Ewing LLP, told the board the ICPA authorizes associations to impose a late fee proportionate to the unit owner's share of common expenses.

"Given the amount of the association's monthly common expense assessments, the dollar amount of the association's \$250 late payment charge is not unreasonable," said Sugar.

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