

Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few engage in it.

—Henry Ford

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Lost: Our Lady of Lourdes

Pastor announces historic church building slated to close May 19

BY PETER VON BUOL

It's a lucky break for the Archdiocese of Chicago that being disingenuous is not a violation requiring a defrocking.

Less than two years after they were told by the Archdiocese of Chicago that worship would continue for "the immediate future" at the historic Our Lady of Lourdes church building at 1601 W. Leland Ave., parishioners of the Lake and Our Lady of Lourdes parish were told the Lourdes building has now been declared surplus by the archdiocese and will be closing on May 19.

Until 2021, Ravenswood's Our Lady of Lourdes and Buena Park's St. Mary of the Lake, 4220 N. Sheridan Rd., had functioned as two separate parishes. After the merger, archdiocese officials had assured parishioners of the newly-created St. Mary of the Lake and



Church officials may not have been entirely upfront with parishioners over their plans to close Ravenswood's Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

Our Lady of Lourdes parish both buildings would remain open for services but would share a pastor. On Feb. 3, however, the parish pastor announced his decision to close the 108-year-old shrine.

"This is a very difficult moment in the life of our parish. We understand that this decision

will cause hurt, sadness, anger and confusion. I ask that we hold in prayer all the current and former parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Church who will be affected by the closure," wrote Rev. Manuel Dorantes in his February

LOURDES see p. 12

Cops caught serial arsonist red-handed as he lit dumpster ablaze

BY CWBCHICAGO

When Judge Maryam Ahmad explained that she would detain a man accused of setting a string of arson fires across the North Side because he could have caused more harm, he had an interesting response: "I didn't have the chance yet."

Ahmad made a note of Carmelito Rolon's utterance in an order jailing him as a public safety threat while he awaits trial on two counts of arson.

Chicago cops arrested Rolon around 9:15 a.m. Jan. 27 after 911 callers reported a man setting fire to dumpsters in the 1200 block of W. Ardmore. The officers said they saw Rolon reach into a dumpster with his right hand. Smoke and flames erupted from inside the bin, they alleged.

Rolon, 57, had a blue lighter in his hand as cops took him into custody, officials said.

Prosecutors charged him with setting that fire in the 1400 block of W. Norwood and another fire behind Hopleaf, a bar and restaurant at 5154 N. Clark, around 4:30 p.m. Jan. 3.

At least four more fires were set in the neighborhood on Jan. 3,



A surveillance image of the arson suspect (left) Carmelito Rolon (right) and the arsonist setting one of the fires on Jan. 3.

Image courtesy Chicago Police Dept., @ChicagoCriticrj

prompting CPD to issue a community alert about the arson spree earlier this month. While Rolon bears a striking resemblance to an image of the arsonist that police released to the public, he is only charged with setting one of the Jan. 3 fires so far.

A bystander caught video of one fire being set earlier this month.

Judge Ahmad conceded that Rolon has no criminal history, but setting fires is dangerous.

"When the court indicated that those fires could have caused greater harm, defendant uttered

that he didn't have the chance yet—or words to that effect," Ahmad's order stated. She decided that electronic monitoring "cannot follow [Rolon] around the community to ensure he refrains from setting fires."

In addition to the fire behind Hopleaf, police said the January 3 arsonist set fires in the 2400 block of W. Carmen at 5:34 p.m.; the 2100 block of W. Foster at 6:06 p.m.; the 2000 block of W. Berwyn at 6:17 p.m., and in the 2200 block of W. Berwyn at 6:25 p.m.



Humble beginning for Billionaire King of Rolling Papers, page 9

Meeting Feb. 7 over fate of Diplomat Motel site

A community meeting will be held 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7 to discuss the Haven on Lincoln, the new stabilization housing project for homeless with mental problems or addictions.

The meeting is open to the public and will take place at the Swedish Hospital Anderson Pavilion, 2741 W. Winona Ave.

The next stage of development for the conversion of the Diplomat Motel site, 5230 N. Lincoln

Ave., will be discussed. Plans call for converting the former hotel into 40 units of homeless housing and support service.

The meeting will include participants from the Chicago departments of Public Health, and of Housing; design and construction partner Gensler, site Operator VOA and Ald. Andre Vasquez [40th].

For more information call 773-654-1867.

Artists of the Wall 2024 registration includes lottery this year

Artists of the Wall 2024 will be on Saturday, June 15 and 16. It is one of the more popular, authentic and organic events on the North Side each year. This year's theme will be Community Dreams. Registration will be available on the website www.loyolapark.org.

Spaces fill up quickly, but this year they are announcing the first lottery for the third day to ensure

increased access to the event.

Registration will take place online with 150 spaces to be released as follows: 8 a.m. May 1 - 50 spaces; 8 a.m. May 3 - 50 spaces, and 5 p.m. May 5. A form will be available to enter a lottery, one entry per family/household and 50 participants will be chosen from those that enter the lottery.

City hands out \$25M in business development grants

City Hall has just announced the gifting of \$25 million in cash grant gifts. The gifting heavily focused on the South and West Sides, but some money did find it's way to the North Side.

Ranging from approximately \$37,900 to \$5 million, the gifts will help pay for eligible project costs and expenses that the city says pose barriers to small business owners, especially emerging entrepreneurs and minority owners within South and West side neighborhoods.

North Side recipients include:

- Bunny Ears Art House LLC, 4541 N. Lincoln Ave., Lincoln Square - \$183,439
- Downtown Loop Taxes, 205 W. Randolph St., Loop - \$106,910.42
- Ette LLC, 1509 W. Fullerton

Ave., Lincoln Park - \$43,749.75

- Exoerimental Sound Studio 5925 N. Ravenswood Ave., Edgewater - \$37,912.88
- Parkinson's Place Chicago, 444 W. Fullerton Parkway - Lincoln Park - \$250,000
- Printmakers LLC, 4912 N. Western Ave., Lincoln Square - \$250,000
- Swedish American Museum Assoc. of Chicago, 5211 N. Clark St., Andersonville - \$250,000
- 6018North NFP, 6018 N. Kenmore Ave., Edgewater - \$65,633
- Near North Health Service Corp., 1276 N. Clybourn Ave., Near North Side - \$130,000
- Ravenswood Fellowship United

GRANTS see p. 12



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Johnson casts tie-breaking vote on Gaza cease-fire resolution



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

Chicago appears to be engulfed in an unusual, creepy, set of off-camera set directions these days. You know, the kind of suggestions meant to influence our emotions and actions. As if more intensity will make them more true. More believable. Less false-hearted and misguided. Gaza is after all 6,129 miles from Chicago.

Mayor Brandon Johnson doesn't help. When was the last time a Chicago mayor broke a tie vote in the City Council?

Tie-breaking votes by a Chicago mayor are historically signs of personal political disasters. Powerlessness. A real boss counts the vote before they're cast. Close votes are a failure.

So it's fair to ask, is this resident of City Hall's fifth floor even

awake? I picture him having his favorite ham sandwich, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes. County Board style. Waiting for his regular daily phone call from the Chicago Teachers Union. Then all the activist apparatchiks running around in City Hall fulfilling the Union's demands.

After all these months what else could they be looking for? Gaza?

City Hall's corridors and hallways don't get used like they used to. You don't see many people, anymore, running out to the bathroom during a Rahm speech. Or cutting out to Starbucks during an Ed Burke historical rant. Or hovering around the exits of committee offices of politically powerful aldermen as they did for a Burt Natarus tirade. Or the minions making themselves crazy waiting around for the big boss to arrive.

I need to refresh my list of who gets a chauffeured car to their City Hall office. Or who gets around-the-clock police protection. Seems to me that those arguments have been left undone.

Everyone I knew that had the special treatment appears to be out of their leadership position.

As much as I cannot imagine rank and file aldermen taking the CTA to their LaSalle St. offices, I also have a hard time imagining them shouting orders, directions or shortcuts to their Chicago Police drivers and body guards.

That kind of hubris doesn't happen overnight. But only comes after many years of anointing or having actual real political power. I don't think anyone in the building has much of either anymore.

There's an old City Hall saying, "You can never know for sure just who's wearing a wire." A piece of historic Chicago wisdom too many politicos forget. Even the big shots.

With so many independents and socialists now sitting in the City Council, no one's really stood the test of time in regard to trust.

Just ask Danny Soliz.

No one seems to have the huge political debts that beget political control on the neighborhood level.

History tells us that Chicago's most powerful politicians were created by grateful political overlords and neighborhood bosses. Elected officials who had other elected officials in their pockets. They were talented at selecting a loyal ally. And they were generous dividing the pot into which they stuffed their financial success.

This was true when they reversed the flow of the Chicago River in 1900. It was true when large areas of land were rezoned in the aftermath of World War I. And it was true during Prohibition when Chicago's mayor kept a yacht near Belmont

harbor, but outside Chicago City limits on the lake, shuffling cards and shakin' cocktails.

There was always a way for an alderman or mayor to make some coin.

But as Chicago's political plan for ruling our 50 Wards begins to fall apart and fray at the edges, you gotta believe that all of that University of Chicago socialism is gonna leave things flat as a pancake.

Electing some local do-gooder without the sense to keep a carpet ready in their car trunk, is just asking for trouble. Who's gonna split those profits? Most big discussions, today, seem to rest with what "pronouns" you use.

So I really find it hard to feel for Mayor Johnson in what still are his early days.

I can't imagine him trying to embrace the County Boards' marching orders as a suitable plan for effective urban government. Do he and President Toni Preckwinkle even communicate? Do they ever have sit downs? So much of what goes on in the may-

or's office today appears more secret than the Pope's. While Pope Francis is pulling the drapes off the Vatican's stained glass windows, Pope Johnson appears to be pasting brown paper over the window panes of City Hall. And having to cast tie votes.

Does the mayor still have gatekeepers? Who is passing out the schedule for appointments? Who controls the flow of information in the mayor's office. Is a system even in place?

Who orders his ham sandwiches?

Are the members of the mayor's security detail happy with him? If they are, who is passing out those little inside stories giving credit to disgruntled cops as not fully loyal to the team?

Finally, I have reflections and concerns about the city's governance from a historical perspective. About the effectiveness of any mayor early in his career. Forced to be a tie-breaker.

We haven't even created a nickname for him yet.

When I look at any Chicago mayor I can't help see the long line of City Hall bosses who have had some unasked for disasters drop into their laps.

Remember when the first cop was killed on duty back in 1854? Mayor Long John Wentworth



Long John Wentworth

went nuts and led an army of volunteers to find the killer. Because one of the local saloon keepers was behind the death, Wentworth and his pals burnt many riverside saloons to the ground. They resolved the political issue in a hurry.

Or when on the night before the World's Columbian Exposition closed on Oct. 30, 1893, a de-ranked Chicagoan was admitted to Mayor Carter Harrison I's home on Ashland Ave. He shot and killed the mayor upon arrival and escaped out the front door. Dashing the peace and joy that 28 million people discovered during the six months of the fair.

No one thought much of Mayor Anton Cermak's enemies as a former Cook County Liquor Commissioner, after being elected mayor, went to meet with newly elected President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at a political rally in Miami. Cermak was shot and killed by an Italian immigrant said to be on the payroll of mobster Frank Nitti.

The Chicago Political machine that followed Cermak's death is the one we would be more familiar with. Mayor Ed Kelly, who succeeded him was a Bridgeport politico with thousands of political allies and loyal supporters, and who forged a Democratic power base that was unbeatable, for 60 years, all the way through

the Daleys. Golly, just last year that Kelly clout helped swing a rigged, insider sweetheart real estate deal in Lincoln Square worth millions.

From 1940 to 2011, the muscle and know-how of Chicago Democrats proved unstoppable.

Today there isn't much left of the parachute that saved bold Chicago political personalities.

Today appears to be all flash and flame. No core code appears to stand strong. Just the voice of faceless man-handlers shouting directions to a clueless crew. Just ask our new immigrants. Or the homeless in their tents. Or Chicago public school children unable to read but seem to know lots about Gaza.

Or popular restaurateurs who have closed their treasured eateries. And Chicago residents terrified to go outside their homes at night.

No one's buying this, Mr. Mayor.

Even Frank Nitti couldn't do that. You're trying to make "A Fish Called Wanda," into "Willie Wonka."

PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM: Cardinal Blase Cupich met with the Archdiocesan Vicars at the Cardinal's residence. After the six and one-half hour meeting, there was Mass in the chapel. Then Cardinal Cupich invited **Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa**, the Catholic Patriarch of Jerusalem who was bunking at the State Parkway house, to join them for drinks and dinner. The Patriarch was on a two-day visit to the

VOTE see p. 8

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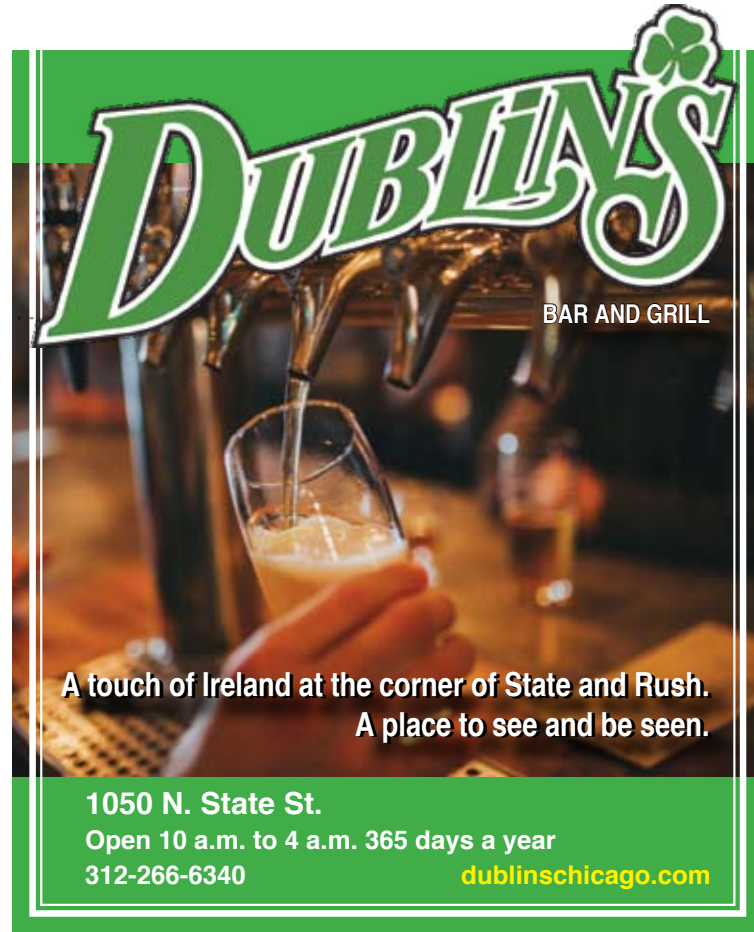
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Money from your property taxes pays for essential local services

BY MARIA PAPPAS

My office recently mailed property tax bills to owners of nearly 1.8 million parcels in Cook County. First Installment tax bills are due March 1.

Local governments, such as school districts and municipalities, count on my office to collect about \$18 billion a year from property owners. We then distribute funds to about 2,200 units of government. That money helps pay for public education, police protection and other essential services.

In Illinois, local units of government set levies that determine how much revenue they intend to collect from property taxes each year. The total amount of the levy is spread among all the properties within the boundaries of a taxing district. Each taxpayer owes an amount based on the value of their property.

The assessor determines property values. Owners can appeal their assessments to the assessor, then to the Cook County Board of Review. They can appeal the Board of Review's decision to the Illinois Property Tax Appeals Board or state courts.

The county clerk's role in the property tax system is to deter-

mine tax rates that are based on levies set by local governments. The clerk applies the rates to the assessed values of properties to determine how much each property owner owes.

The steps outlined here summarize the Illinois Property Tax Code.

The Tax Code is state law that contains more than 200,000 words that would fill more than 400 standard pages. The Tax Code is complex, which makes it hard for people to understand the property tax system and where their money goes.

In addition to appealing their assessments, homeowners can potentially reduce their tax bills by checking for missed exemptions or past overpayments. The county could potentially refund nearly \$150 million to taxpayers. We've identified nearly \$93 million in duplicate or overpayments that could be refunded and another \$57 million in possible missed exemptions.

Exemptions are tax breaks that lower tax bills. The most common exemptions are Homeowner, Senior Citizen and Senior Freeze. Many taxpayers are unaware they may be eligible for exemptions that significantly reduce their tax bills and potentially earn them

refunds.

I urge you to visit our website, cookcountytreasurer.com, and click on the purple box that says Your Property Tax Overview. Search for your property using your address or Property Index Number, and a picture of your property should appear so you know you've got the right place.

The county could potentially refund nearly \$150 million to taxpayers.

You can use the website to:

- Download a copy of your bill and pay your taxes electronically
- View a 20-year history of your property taxes
- Search for possible overpayments or missed exemptions
- Discover how much taxing district debt is linked to your property
- Learn how much your taxing districts owe for public pensions, and more.

Property taxes are critical sources of funding for essential local services. The property tax system is complex, but homeowners who invest the time to better understand their tax bills are more likely to save themselves money by capturing tax breaks for which they are eligible.



Maria Pappas

Police Run to Remember May 4

The Chicago Police Memorial Foundation is hosting their annual Run to Remember fundraiser Saturday, May 4, at the Gold Star Families Memorial and Park, 1410 S. Special Olympics Dr., adjacent to Soldier Field.

Registration is now open, and runners may register online at <https://give.cpdmemorial.org/R2R2024>.

Race packet pickup is scheduled for Thursday, May 2, at the CPD Education and Training Academy, 1300 W. Jackson Blvd.

The Run or (and walk) honors the 600 fallen Chicago Police Officers and supports their families. There will also be an after-party right on Stadium Green near the stage.

Cops looking for man who mugged CTA passenger at Granville

BY CWBCHICAGO

Chicago police are asking for help as they try to track down the man who robbed a CTA passenger on the North Side. Mass Transit Unit detectives released a picture of the man on Feb. 3.

They said he sprayed the victim with a "chemical irritant" on the Granville Red Line CTA platform around 5:30 a.m. Jan. 28. After spraying the victim, the robber forcefully took their cash and fled.

CPD said he is probably 19 to 25 years old.

Anyone who recognizes him can contact Mass Transit Unit investigators at 312-745-4706. The case number is JH130990.



Man wanted for attack at the Granville Red Line CTA station.



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North Side resale-home prices rose in 4Q of '23



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

Chicago home buyers are riding a teeter-totter market with interest rates falling and prices rising.

“Chicago’s North Side resale-home market showed signs of strengthening as prices rose a solid 6% during the final quarter of 2023,” reported Mary Jo Nathan of Baird & Warner’s North Center office, 4037 N. Damen Ave.

In 2023, a total of 8,311 resale housing units were sold on the North Side, thanks in part to falling mortgage interest rates over the past few months.

Nonetheless, full-year results were depressed by the combined impact of a limited inventory of homes for sale and interest rates that approached 8% at their peak.

On Feb. 1, Freddie Mac’s Primary Mortgage Market Survey reported that benchmark 30-year fixed-rate mortgages averaged 6.63% nationwide, down from 6.69% a week earlier. A year ago, 30-year loans averaged 6.06%.

During the fourth quarter, North Side home sales totaled 1,546 units, down -5.6% from the same period in 2022, Nathan said. However, that’s an encouraging contrast to the whopping -23.6% sales decline recorded for the full year.

The Baird & Warner North Side Market Report tracks sales of single-family homes and attached units—mostly townhouses and condominiums—in nine neighborhoods: Edgewater, Lake View, Lincoln Park, Lincoln Square, Near North Side, North Center, Rogers Park, Uptown and West Ridge.

The median sales price of homes sold in the final quarter of 2023 rose 6% to \$376,250. Over the full year, the median price slipped -0.3% to \$389,000.

“The lack of inventory remains a serious issue, and not just on the

North Side,” noted Nathan. “In the seven-county Chicago metro area, year-end 2023 inventory was down -18.5% from the comparable number in 2022.”

It’s possible that the recent decline in interest rates will encourage more homeowners to consider moving and thus add to the inventory of properties for sale, Nathan said. However, lower rates will also boost interest in buying a home among current renters.

It’s possible that the recent decline in interest rates will encourage more homeowners to consider moving and thus add to the inventory of properties for sale, Nathan said. However, lower rates will also boost interest in buying a home among current renters.

North Side Median Prices

	Full Year	% Change	4th Quarter	% Change
Total North Side				
Detached	\$1,252,500	+0.2%	\$1,200,000	+11.5%
Attached	\$360,000	+0.3%	\$350,000	+7.7%
Edgewater				
Detached	\$925,000	+1.8%	\$957,500	+17.1%
Attached	\$236,960	+0.5%	\$246,000	+19%
Lake View				
Detached	\$1,600,000	+3.2%	\$1,600,000	+28%
Attached	\$410,000	+5.2%	\$412,000	+20.1%
Lincoln Park				
Detached	\$1,850,000	+7.1%	\$1,965,000	+16.3%
Attached	\$560,000	+3.7%	\$630,000	+17.2%
Lincoln Square				
Detached	\$987,500	+19.7%	\$807,500	+18.5%
Attached	\$350,000	+11%	\$253,000	-19%
Near North				
Detached	\$2,200,000	+4.8%	\$2,190,000	+4.3%
Attached	\$395,000	-6.0%	\$390,000	-1.3%
North Center				
Detached	\$1,370,000	+9.6%	\$1,325,000	+20.5%
Attached	\$520,000	+7.5%	\$457,500	-3.5%
Rogers Park				
Detached	\$580,650	-6.0%	\$555,125	-7.5%
Attached	\$197,750	+3.8%	\$227,000	+20.1%
Uptown				
Detached	\$1,030,000	-12.3%	\$885,000	-21.9%
Attached	\$319,000	+4.6%	\$288,500	+3.0%
West Ridge				
Detached	\$455,250	-2%	\$415,100	-9.9%
Attached	\$165,000	+6.8%	\$180,770	+29.1%

Attached units dominate market

The attached homes category—primarily of townhouses and condos, continues to dominate the North Side market, accounting for 89.5% of all 2023 resale-home activity.

In the fourth quarter, there were 1,383 sales of attached homes, a drop of -6.2% from the same quarter of 2022. “The stronger number of deals indicate that sales were stabilizing after falling -23.2% for all of 2023,” Nathan said.

The median price of an attached North Side home rose 0.3% for the full year to \$360,000, which is an all-time record. The median price in the fourth quarter jumped 7.7% to \$350,000. The average time an attached listing took to find a buyer was 58 days in the final quarter and 65 days for the full year.

Attached sales rose in three of the nine North Side neighborhoods during the fourth quarter. Those gains were 3.7% in West

Ridge, 4.1% in Uptown and, most importantly, 9.6% in Near North, which is by far Chicago’s largest market for townhouses and condos.

The median sales price for an attached home rose in five of the nine neighborhoods during the fourth quarter, including hefty gains of 29.1% in West Ridge, 20.1% in both Rogers Park and Lake View, 19% in Edgewater and 17.2% in Lincoln Park.

Median-home price is \$1.2 million

There were 163 detached single-family homes sold across the North Side in the fourth quarter, unchanged from the same period in 2022. The median sales price

of \$1.2 million represented an increase of 11.5%. Average market time was 56 days, up from 55 days a year earlier.

For all of 2023, sales of detached homes totaled 754 units, a decrease of -26.5% from 2022. The 2023 median sales price rose 0.2% to \$1,252,500.

Fourth quarter detached-home sales soared 42.1% in West Ridge, which was the only North Side neighborhood surveyed that posted sales gains in both the attached and detached categories.

Single-family home sales were also up 16.7% in Edgewater and 4.5% in Lake View, while Lincoln Square sales were unchanged from a year ago.

Two other significant detached-home market areas had modest declines, -5.3% in Lincoln Park and -10.3% in North Center. Near North, Rogers Park and Uptown had fourth quarter detached sales in single digits, as they often do, making percentage comparisons less valuable.

Median detached-home prices recorded some sharp gains across the North Side in the fourth quarter. Of note were increases of a whopping 28% in Lake View, 20.5% in North Center, 18.5% in Lincoln Square, 17.1% in Edgewater and 16.3% in Lincoln Park. Those five neighborhoods accounted for 74.1% of all detached sales on the North Side in 2023.

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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Lincoln Park Community Services hosting volunteer orientation

Lincoln Park Community Services is seeking volunteers who want to learn more about how they can help homeless individuals.

They are hosting two workshops. The first is 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at Lincoln Park Community Services, 600 W. Fullerton.

The second will be held 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, at Lincoln Park Community Services, 1521 N. Sedgwick.

Volunteers will learn how to prepare and distribute meals, support the homeless with essentials like food and clothing, and assist street outreach teams.

For more information visit www.lpcschicago.org.

Migrant Shelter meeting Feb. 18

Three North Side wards are hosting a public legal clinic for new migrant arrivals 3 p.m., Feb. 18, with Anshe Emet Synagogue, 3751 N. Broadway.

This legal clinic will be available for all residents at the temporary migrant shelter at the American Islamic Center [AIC], and all North Side neighbors who are eligible for Temporary Protected Status and Work Authorization.

The synagogue is seeking lawyers and other interested parties in helping eligible individuals with Temporary Protective Status and work permit applications.

The workers will help staff legal clinics under the auspices of a sanctioned pro bono organization. Volunteers don't need to be an immigration lawyer, or have any specialized knowledge, or even have an active law license. Spanish is helpful but not required. They will provide training.

For more information contact Janine Landow-Esser at Janine811@gmail.com.

Anshe Emet is launching a family mentor program with residents of the AIC shelter at Marine and Irving Park.

They are seeking families, individuals, or groups of friends to volunteer to mentor a family living at the shelter. Spanish language abilities are not necessary—just a willingness to welcome a new family to Chicago and help them adjust to their new city.

Volunteers can anticipate a two to six month engagement. For more information write to naaseh.anshemet@gmail.com

Housing needed

Saint Mary of the Lake Catholic Church at Sheridan at Buena, is seeking housing for the migrant families. The Church will pay the rent and cosign for six-month leases. They are looking for 2-3 bedroom apartments a reasonable rents in Lakeview, Buena Park, Ravenswood, Wrigleyville, and Uptown.

Landlords may contact Jake Koertgen at jkoertgen@saintmarys.org with questions or to express interest.

Activists planning August protests downtown

Residents and businesses downtown and on the Near North Side may want to circle Aug. 16 to 23 in their calendars, as radical activists have made their intentions known that they plan to hold protest marches during that period.

Last week activist groups like Chicago for Abortion Rights, Stop-Trans Genocide, Gay Liberation Network and Bodies Outside of Unjust Laws said they hoped to use Water Tower Park as a rendezvous point for protests, targeting Aug. 18 as their announced protest date on their application.

Aug. 18 is the Sunday prior to the opening of the Democrat National Convention [DNC] in Chicago.

On Jan. 22, city officials rejected a Parade Permit application by Linda Loew, co-founder of Chicago for Abortion Rights, to hold a proposed protest march Aug. 18 centered at Chicago and Michigan avenues.

City officials issued no official



Lane Tech High School students - and students at many other public schools - staged a noon walkout Jan. 30 in support of a proposed Chicago City Council resolution calling for a cease-fire in Gaza.

Photo courtesy Jared Rutecki and X

statement on why they denied the application, but implied safety issues were the issue, and the city's lack of police and emergency resources necessary to manage such a protest. City officials are instead encouraging the organizations to hold their protest marches in Grant Park.

The activists and protestors will likely get their permit to protest,

as they're following the city's established protocols to exercise their free speech rights. They said that they plan to publicly appeal the city's decision to reject their Parade Permit application. (Organizers from Bodies Outside of Unjust Laws: Coalition for Reproductive Justice and LGBTQ+ Liberation held press conference Tuesday at 400 W. Superior St.

after this newspaper's deadline.)

As a volatile mix of existing issues may drive local and visiting protesters to organize actions for this summer's DNC convention in Chicago, it will be easy to recruit protest troops.

Chicago area students and Chicago Teachers Union members will be on summer vacation, and many other union officials will be closely involved in the DNC convention. Education, teachers and unions are some of the most powerful interest groups connected to the DNC.

Among the political issues that may be fuel for protests include migrants and migrant activists. With the ongoing arrival of illegal border crossers to Chicago, some fear Chicago's portion of that migrant refugee population may reach six figures by this summer.

Additionally, groups affiliated with various Gaza War protest organizations have already held

PROTESTS see p. 10



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Police Beat...

Gunfight erupts between robbery crew, concealed carry holder on the North Side

A concealed carry holder exchanged gunfire with an armed robbery crew in Edgewater Jan. 30, putting a quick end to the group's ongoing holdup spree.

Chicago police said the 23-year-old victim was walking in the 5400 block of N. Winthrop when two cars, a white sedan and a dark-colored SUV, stopped nearby around 4:22 a.m.

One gunman stepped out of one of the vehicles to demand the victim's valuables. But the victim, licensed to carry a concealed firearm, pulled out his weapon and engaged the robber in a gunfight, according to a CPD statement.

The victim was not injured, but police did find a blood trail at the scene, which may indicate that the robber was not so lucky. He returned to the SUV and fled with his accomplices. So far, police say, no one is in custody, and CPD doesn't know if the robber was injured.

Before the shooting, several other robberies were reported in the area, all involving a group of armed men who traveled in an SUV and a sedan.

At 3:40 a.m., two men walked up to a 45-year-old man who was in his car in the 2100 block of W. Lunt. They displayed guns and took a phone, wallet, and lunchbox from the victim at gunpoint. CPD said the crew fled in a silver SUV, possibly a Toyota RAV4.

Shortly before 4 a.m., the cars stopped in the 2000 block of W. Farwell. According to initial information, a man got out of one of the vehicles, opened a woman's car door, and snatched her purse from her hands.

Minutes later, another victim walked into the Rogers Park [24th] District police station to report that they were robbed in the 6000 block of N. Clark by a group of men who traveled in multiple vehicles.

CPD said a 29-year-old man was robbed at 4:08 a.m. in the 6100 block of N. Wolcott. He was sitting in his parked car when two vehicles pulled up. A couple of gunmen stepped out of the cars, took his property, and fled.

Several other holdups were also reported in the area, but details of those incidents are still coming in.

CPD did not release descriptions of the robbers. Some of the victims said they were Black males wearing black clothing and ski masks.

Three juveniles, all 15, committed robberies at and near North Side train station

Chicago police have announced charges against three people in connection with armed robberies reported Jan. 30 at and near the North-Clybourn Red Line CTA station. All three of the accused are 15 years old.

In a brief press release, CPD said two boys were identified as the people who robbed a 22-year-old man in the 1700 block of N. Sheffield around 8:30 p.m. The victim told police he was walking home from work when two offenders confronted him with unspecified weapons and took his valuables.

Those same boys joined a 15-year-old girl to rob another victim at the North-Clybourn CTA station about 15 minutes later.

The second victim, a 23-year-old man, reported that two men and a woman confronted him with knives and stole his property on the plat-

form. All three robbers escaped on an inbound train.

CPD surveillance officers coordinated with patrol units to intercept the train at Cermak-Chinatown about 15 minutes later. All three suspects were arrested there.

The boys are each charged with two counts of armed robbery with a dangerous weapon. The girl is charged with one count of the same crime, police said.

No other information about them is available because state law shields juvenile records.

Two men, including AWOL parolee, fired shots during armed robberies



Mugshots of Esteban Ocampo (L) and Richard Vinet.

Two men, including a multi-convicted felon who has been missing from parole, are charged with firing a gun and robbing two men in West Town Jan. 31, according to Chicago police.

Esteban Ocampo, 31, and Richard Vinet, 47, will appear for detention hearings this afternoon at the Leighton Criminal Courthouse. Chicago cops followed pings from one of the victim's phones to locate Ocampo and Vinet in River North shortly before 2 a.m. Jan. 31.

The victims, ages 39 and 52, were walking in the 400 block of N. Ogden when the robbers confronted them on the street around 1:20 a.m., a CPD spokesperson said. Both robbers displayed guns and demanded the victims' property. The men complied.

At that point, the spokesperson said, one of the robbers fired a gun into the air before they both entered a silver SUV and drove away. No injuries or property damage were reported, police said.

Police found Vinet in the 500 block of N. Franklin and Ocampo in the 400 block of N. Wells, according to a CPD press release.

They are each charged with two counts of discharging a firearm during an armed robbery. Vinet, also charged with possessing a controlled substance, is listed as a parole absconder on the Illinois Dept. of Corrections website.

He was released on parole in June after serving about half of the two-year sentence he received for being a felon in possession of a firearm. His previous prison sentences include six years for armed habitual criminal in 2013, two years for aggravated battery of a peace officer or fireman in 2002, and six years for armed robbery in 1995.

Three Senn High School students shot after class

Gunmen opened fire on a group of Senn High School students in a "targeted" attack that left one boy dead and two others injured, Chicago Police Supt. Larry Snelling said Jan. 31.

The students were walking in the 1200 block of W. Thorndale when a vehicle stopped nearby and "several" people got out of it with guns around 3:37 p.m., Snelling said. They opened fire on the students and then sped away in the vehicle.

While the attack is similar to a shooting that left two students dead outside Innovations High School in the Loop Jan. 20, Snelling said there is no evidence that the two shootings are connected.

A 16-year-old boy died from a gunshot wound to his chest, police said. Another 16-year-old boy is in grave condition with gunshot wounds to his jaw, chest, and arm. The third boy, a 15-year-old, is in good condition with a gunshot wound to his right leg, ac-

ording to CPD.

The Cook County medical examiner's office identified the slain teen as Daveon Gibson of the 1400 block of N. Talman.

"This kind of violence, it has to end," Mayor Brandon Johnson said at the press briefing. "The loss of life is horrific under all circumstances, but it is especially harsh when our young people are targeted."

"The harm and the chaos, and the trauma that's being caused by individuals who do not value life—the full force of government will be used to bring those individuals to justice," the mayor vowed.

Johnson addressed the gunmen directly: "Whatever conflict, whatever pain you are expressing, this is not the way to do it."

"The loss of life is tearing at the fabric of this city, and we need everyone—everyone—to work with our community members, with law enforcement, to put an end to this senseless violence," Johnson added.

Woman carjacked outside River North steakhouse

A woman was carjacked while sitting outside a high-end steakhouse in River North 9 p.m. Jan. 22, Chicago police said. It happened outside STK Steakhouse, 9 W. Kinzie.

The 40-year-old woman was inside her 2015 Mazda M6 when the carjacker walked up and forced her out of the car, police said. Once he removed her, he jumped behind the wheel and drove away with her vehicle. Police said the woman was not injured.

Officers at the scene described the carjacker as a Black male with dreadlocks who was wearing a black jacket.

Carjacking reports are down sharply in Chicago through the opening days of 2024. According to the city's data, CPD took 43 carjacking reports between New Year's Day and Jan. 17. By comparison, there were 103 during the same period last year and 102 during the first 17 days of January 2022.

Couple robbed at gunpoint in Lincoln Park, second robbery reported near UIC campus

A man and woman were robbed while walking in Lincoln Park on Feb. 1, according to Chicago police. Another robbery was reported overnight near the UIC campus.

The Lincoln Park robbery occurred in the 2700 block of N. Hampden around 9:30 p.m. A dark-colored sedan pulled up the street, and four men got out to rob the victims, a 24-year-old man and a 25-year-old woman, police said. One of the robbers hit the man in the face as they took the victims' valuables.

A wallet taken from one of the victims was found on Lake Shore Dr., not far from Buckingham Fountain, after the robbery.

The robbers were described as men of unknown race: one wearing all black, another wearing a red hat, and a third wearing white sweats with a white and black hoodie.

Then, around 12:30 a.m., a gunman robbed a group of people near Sheridan Park in the 1100 block of W. Taylor. The victims described him as Black, slim, and about 5'-7" tall. He wore a dark puffy jacket that had some green elements.

Charges filed in summertime hit-and-run that left 69-year-old Uptown woman dead

Charges have been filed in a hit-and-run crash that fatally injured a 69-year-old woman as she crossed a street in Uptown last summer.

Soyfa Athamanah was walking home when she entered a crosswalk in the 5100 block of N. Broadway around 10:30 p.m. July 25. Family members told the Sun-Times she was returning from a regular visit with friends at a Thai restaurant downtown.

As she crossed Broadway, the driver of a black 2017 Honda Civic slammed into Athamanah, witnesses said.

"I didn't see brake lights," said Tyler Pasciak LaRiviere, a Sun-Times photojournalist who happened to be driving behind the Civic. "I saw him swerve and speed up a bit. She then flew into the air."

Athamanah, who suffered a severe head injury, was pronounced dead at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center.



Ricky Hernandez

Chicago police released a stock image of the type of car that hit her, asking anyone with information to contact the department's major accident investigation unit. The story faded from the headlines and seemed to go cold.

But on Jan. 25, prosecutors said 31-year-old Ricky Hernandez was the driver who killed Athamanah. They charged him with leaving the scene of a fatal accident, saying he failed to stop, failed to render aid, and failed to report the crash to law enforcement.

CPD officers arrested Hernandez at the Howard CTA station on Jan. 23. According to his arrest report, he works as a canine security officer for a CTA contractor. He has never been arrested in Illinois before, according to public records.

Judge Barbara Dawkins released him on electronic monitoring during an initial court appearance on Jan. 25.

"I cover this stuff a lot for the @Sun-times," Pasciak LaRiviere tweeted after the crash, "but it's a different perspective to actually witness it and be a part of the story... I can't detach myself like I'm normally able to do. I've seen a lot of s*** over the years but this might be something that sticks."

Chicago cop charged with killing pedestrian in off-duty crash outside Marina City

An off-duty Chicago police officer was under the influence when she crashed into two pedestrians, killing one, near Marina City last month, prosecutors said Jan. 30.

Tangie Brown, 40, was relieved of police powers on Dec. 7, hours after the crash killed 56-year-old Maria "Tonie" Schwab in the 300 block of N. State, according to CPD.



Tangie Brown

Brown and other CPD employees were attending a "non-sponsored holiday retirement party" at Treehouse, 149 W. Kinzie, according to a written proffer provided by the Cook County state's attorney's office. She left the party shortly after midnight and headed to her car.

At the same time, Schwab was on an after-dinner walk with a group of co-workers, all visiting from out of town.

The group was right outside the Marina City driveway when Brown, driving south on State St., dropped her phone while trying to use its GPS, prosecutors said. She bent down to get the phone.

When Brown looked back up, she was heading toward a median. She overcorrected, swerved onto the sidewalk, hit a planter, and struck the leg of a 37-year-old woman in Schwab's group as the woman dove out of the way, according to the proffer.

Brown's car then struck Schwab, pinning her against a railing that runs along the sidewalk with a patio below. Prosecutors said Brown reversed, causing Schwab to fall several feet to the patio.

A blood test taken about two hours after the crash showed Brown's blood alcohol concentration was .093, above the .08 limit. After turning herself in on Jan. 29, Brown admitted to having three drinks at the party and confirmed that she struck Schwab after

losing control of her car while trying to retrieve her phone, the proffer said.

She is charged with aggravated DUI causing death and aggravated use of a communication device while driving causing death, both of which are felonies. She's also facing misdemeanor charges of reckless driving and failure to give information or render aid.

Judge Kelly McCarthy released her from custody after an initial appearance Jan. 30.

The Sun-Times reported in December that Fred Melean, a high-ranking Chicago police officer, retired after learning he would be demoted for his alleged mishandling of the crash.

As the ranking officer that night, he was responsible for overseeing the department's handling of the crash since it involved an off-duty cop. But, the paper reported, Melean never even showed up at the scene.

While it may seem odd that criminal charges weren't filed against Brown for several weeks, such delays are common in traffic-related cases.

In one recent example, prosecutors this month charged a 33-year-old woman with two counts of aggravated DUI causing bodily harm for a crash that occurred on Nov. 19. The charges were delayed even though, driving with a blood alcohol level more than twice the legal limit, she allegedly collided head-on with a marked CPD squad car that had an active dash cam.

The officer driving the squad car suffered life-threatening injuries, including a fractured pelvis, a broken hip, and a fractured leg, prosecutors said. She also left her 12-year-old son alone in the car while she drank at a bar before getting behind the wheel and driving away, according to prosecutors. The boy suffered a broken wrist and ankle in the crash.

Last week, prosecutors filed reckless homicide charges against a 39-year-old man who allegedly killed the passenger of another car in a crash at 54th and Western on Oct. 27. The charges were delayed even though police arrested him at the scene, and the victim succumbed to her injuries while he was still in custody.

Man shot while walking in River North on Friday afternoon

A man was shot while walking in River North on Feb. 2, apparently struck by a bullet intended for someone else.

Chicago police said the 47-year-old was on the sidewalk in the first block of E. Grand when someone fired shots, striking him in the left leg. Officers said they found the victim in a bathroom on the second floor of the nearby Nordstrom department store.

He told police that a gunman in a black Dodge Durango fired shots at a Dodge Charger, but one of the bullets wound up hitting him instead. CPD said he's in good condition at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

The man is the second person shot in River North this year and the fourth person shot in the Near North community area.

On Jan. 14, a hired driver was shot when gunmen opened fire on a group of people as he was dropping off a passenger outside a hotel in the first block of N. Dearborn.

A 55-year-old Chicago police officer and Deshawn Lucas, 33, were both shot during an exchange of gunfire in the first block of E. Walton early on Jan. 8.

— Compiled by CWBChicago.com

Chicago again #1 in bed bugs, North Side is center of Bed Bug Universe

Bed bugs love high density housing

Chicago has been identified as one of the worst cities on earth for bed bugs, taking the #1 spot on Orkin's Top 50 Bed Bug Cities List for the fourth year in a row.

A heat map of bed bug infestation reports, published on The Bedbug Registry, shows that high density housing downtown and along the North Lakefront is where the highest concentrations of infestations exist.

Yes, bed bugs are here in Chi-

cago big time. And if your home gets infested, it may not be your fault. Like catching the flu or a cold, contracting bed bugs from a neighbor or stranger is common.

It could also be an accident, when one little sneaky bed bug comes home with you from the movies, grocery store, restaurant or bar, a CTA bus or train, or from recent travels. It happens all the time.

And if you live in a high density building, you and your many nearby neighbors are growing exponentially your building's risk of

sharing an infestation.

Bug bugs love high density living, and there is plenty of that on the North Side. As the bed bug population grows it is likely that some hosts will spread into nearby areas, putting high-density residences like apartment buildings at a higher risk for an infestation.

Travelers should be more concerned than ever with avoiding these stealthy pests, as many are found in hotels and other shared housing. As Americans look towards travel in 2024 it is critical to know how to identify and

thoroughly check for bed bugs in hotel rooms (both internationally and domestically) while being careful not to bring the pests home with them. These pests are hematophagous, which means blood is their only food source. Clinging to items such as luggage, purses and other personal belongings, bed bugs can travel from place to place with ease.

The bed bug cities list is based on treatment data from the metro areas where Orkin performed the most bed bug treatments from Dec. 1, 2022 – Nov. 30, 2023. The

ranking includes both residential and commercial treatments.

Bed bugs, who like to feed on blood from people and animals, live in places such as apartments, shelters, hotels, rooming houses, dorms, and cruise ships, according to WebMD.

Bed bugs usually get into your home from another place that's infested with them. If you live in a high density apartment or condominium, they can sneak into your unit from another unit in your

BED BUG see p. 10

Cops found mail, packages, forged postal service keys during Lakeview traffic stop

BY CWBCHICAGO

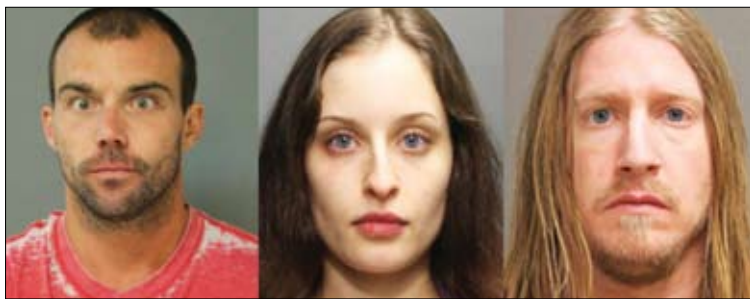
Three suburbanites are facing charges after Chicago cops allegedly found them in a car with forged postal service master keys, bags of mail, and credit cards and IDs belonging to other people.

The police investigation began as a simple traffic stop for Kenneth Knight when cops saw him driving near Irving Park Rd. and Broadway around 4 a.m. Jan. 24. He had a dark-tinted plate on his rear license plate, according to a CPD report.

But the traffic stop quickly turned into something else. A police incident report said cops saw two bags of unopened and undelivered mail in the car's back seat, along with a box of packages. On the front passenger floorboard, police say, were three forged postal service master keys, also known as "arrow keys."

Altogether, CPD officers said they recovered 210 pieces of mail and nine unopened packages.

Neither Knight nor his two passengers could provide "verifiable information on the rightful owners of the mail," said Knight's arrest report. The Palatine resident is only charged with operating a motor vehicle with a plate cover and possession of burglary tools,



[L-R] Kenneth Knight (2015), Liliana Therault, and Jacob Wellington.

a charge stemming from the fact that cops said they found a screwdriver in his pants pocket.

Judge Ankur Srivastava released him from custody.

Knight's back seat passenger, Liliana Therault, was sitting next to all of the mail, police say. She had a couple of pry tools in her purse along with an ID, credit cards, and a TJ Maxx rewards card issued under different names, according to a police incident report.

She's charged with two counts of felony ID theft, possessing a fraudulent ID card, unlawful possession of three or more debit or credit cards, misdemeanor theft, and possessing burglary tools.

Front passenger Jacob Wellington, 38, of Berwyn, is charged with identity theft, possessing a fraudulent ID, misdemeanor theft, and possessing burglary tools. In

addition to the forged master keys allegedly found at his feet, police said they found a concealed carry license issued to a different man in his wallet.

Therault and Wellington were released from the police station with notices to appear in court.



Surveillance images of a man being sought for mail theft in Lincoln Park and Old Town. Photo courtesy U.S. Postal Inspection Service

Mail theft reward

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service offered a \$100,000 reward on Jan. 29 for information leading them to a mail thief working in Lincoln Park and the Near North Side.

The man seen in these pictures is responsible for "numerous vandalism and mail theft incidents" in the 60610 and 60614 ZIP codes between late November and this month, according to the

service's reward poster. Officials said he breaks into mailboxes and steals mail, which he totes away in a plastic grocery bag.

Investigators linked him to mail thefts in the 1300 and 1400 blocks of N. Cleveland, the 1600 block of N. Hudson, the 300 block of W. Concord, and the 300 block of W. Scott.

Information can be shared with postal inspectors at 877-876-2455. Refer to case number 4142062.

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VOTE from p. 2

Arab Catholic community in the Midwest. He shared all of what is going on in Jerusalem, Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel.

FOUND IT: It's always the last place you look. Adoption advocate **Sen. Sara Feigenholtz** received her original birth certificate Jan. 15 for the first time. That same day, 20,000 Illinois adopted adults also received this simple piece of paper that illuminates the first chapter of their lives. She tells us it was a 14-year fight to pass the Act, but a worthy battle.

CITY CLUB: Micheál Martin serves as Ireland's Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister), Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defense. He will speak at the City Club 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, at Maggiano's, 111 W. Grand.

GOOSE ISLAND: After 35 years Goose Island Beer Co., the well-regarded brewpub, is shuttering its doors, hoping to jumpstart its clientele and reputation when they move to the Salt Shed on Clybourn. Their imagination and good taste began Chicago's move to brewing excellence. This newspaper was there to cover their opening.

CHICAGO POLITICS: What's the real story behind the current cold temperature between the governor and the mayor? Insiders say it has been decades since so much frost. Some say it's a matter of personalities. A clash of style and incongruous wealth. But others in the know

say that the root cause might just be a long series of catastrophic disappointments rearing its head whenever they meet. That and the high school-style competition for power mixed with hubris. Meanwhile what's getting accomplished here?

SUMMERTIME: Old Town Triangle Association unveiled the poster for the upcoming Old Town Art Fair. Thanks to **Barb Guttman** for all her hard work. And mark your calendars, the Air Fair is June 8-9.

BANCHET AWARD: Congratulations to **Phil Vettel**, former Chicago Tribune food critic, and winner of the 2024 Jean Banchet Award for Culinary Excellence, the highest honor bestowed by the organization.

BUTCH MCGUIRE'S: "If I run such a famous singles bar how come so many of my customers keep marrying each other?," asked Butch McGuire. Did you fall in love at Butch's? Message them your story and a photo.

QUARTINO'S: The Gibson's Restaurant Group have reopened the doors at Quartino's, their fabulous pizza place, after much renovation at 626 N. State.

FILM: This year celebrates 25 years of Irish filmmaking excellence with an amazing selection of drama, documentaries and short films. The festival takes place in-person, Feb. 29 through March 3 with screenings at Theater on the Lake, AMC-New City, the Gallery Theater and online with selected programming March 4-10, with both segments of the festival cel-

ebrating independent filmmaking at its best and championing both new and established Irish filmmakers. Opening the festival on Feb. 29 at Theater in the Lake, director **Patricia Kelly** will present her debut film, *Verdigris*, starring **Geraldine McAlinden** and **Maya O'Shea** as two women from very different backgrounds who form an unlikely bond as they walk the streets of Dublin towards new and empowering futures for both. The opening night includes a pre-screening reception. Check it out at: www.chicagoirishfilmfestival.com.

BLOOMERS: Hundreds of people will brave the cold in just their undies during Cupid's Undie Run, the nation's largest pantless party and mile-ish run for charity. This year's run is Feb. 24, and starts and ends at Sluggers in Wrigleyville. The event raises awareness of neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow on nerves throughout the body. It affects one in 2,000 births, which is about 4 million people worldwide. Funds raised go toward research through the Children's Tumor Foundation. More information regarding the event can be found here: my.cupids.org/event/2024-cupids-undie-run-chicago/e490578.

WHO'S WHERE: **Rich Daniels, Candace Jordan** and **Walt Whitman Jr.**, of Soul Children of Chicago, spotted at **Art Smith's** Reunion on Navy Pier... **Jennifer Sutton Brieve, Kathy O'Malley Piccone, Julia Jacobs, Carol Gipson** all gather at LeColonial to say "bon voyage" to **Nikki Friar**, who is departing for new adventures, we'll all miss her and the outstanding work she did at Marchesa on Wells... Irish newsy **David Caldwell** and wife, **Jo**, have made it to St. Kitt's... Artist **Tom Byrne** just travelled from Malta to Paris to see the new **Mark Rothko** exhibit there... **Jeff and Stephanie Leese Emrich** doing an anniversary lunch high above the Water Tower... **Mark**

O'Malley and wife, **Patricia Anne Treacy**, having dinner with young son, **Patrick O'Malley** at Erie Cafe... The Chicago Cubs new senior director of media relations is **John Steinmiller**, a concerted Brewer's fan. Look for he and his wife, **Kate**, and daughter **Nola** hanging out at Clark and Addison... **Rose Marie O'Neill** noshing at Erie with her next-door neighbor, **Cynthia Olson**, and this columnist splitting a huge slab of Prime Rib... **Andy Pierce** at the Cincinnati Art Museum lifted by the works of **Alexander Calder** and **Joan Miro**... **Bryan White** and **Jim Kinney** festooned in their costumes for a scenario of Shakespeare's 12th Night... **Karin Carlson, Wynniss Mackie** and **Megan Griffin Kenny** all in town having a reunion with some chilled bubbly... Chicago Film Festival founder, **Michael Kutza**, a guest for the opening of the Rotterdam Film Festival... **Sherry Lea Fox** sunning in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico... **Pennie Taylor, Eamonn Cummins** and **Julie and Mike Tobin** at Old St. Patrick's for Mass and Wishbone for brunch before newsman Mike heads to Israel and Gaza for a month for WFLD... Artist **Adam S. Umbach** at the Palm Beach Art Fair where he is very popular and selling well... The Peninsula Hotel was the scene of **Mamie Walton's** chic luncheon hosting the lovely **Lynn Graham, Michael Rembert** and **Col. Paul Malarik III**... **Joey Marjumdar** birthdaying in Hollywood with actor **Dan Blagaich**... **Diane Abt** in NYC at the Metropolitan Museum of Art loving **Diego Rivera**... **Dan Balanoff** in NYC at the famed McSorley's Old Ale House... **Hector Gustavo Cardenas** and **Marius Morkvenus** hitting the pavements of NYC's Upper Eastside, what do they mean "officially New Yorkers?"... **Dr. Rose Gomez** dining under the clear alpine night sky in Switzerland at the Park Hotel in the temperature controlled "outdoor" tubes... **Sherrill Bodine**

exploring the vast expanse of Chile way south of the border.

A FIRST: This Spring, the Driehaus Museum will present *A Tale of Today* with the first solo U.S. museum exhibition of Copenhagen-based artist **Sif Itona Westerberg**. *Twin Flame, Double Ruin* will be on view from Feb. 16 to April 14.

Curated by **Stephanie Cristello**, *Twin Flame, Double Ruin* takes inspiration from the Ancient Greek myth of soulmates—a single body that was divided into two parts, fated to forever yearn and search for its reflection. The exhibition title borrows terminology from concepts of interpersonal connection, a 'twin flame' often described in modern psychology as akin to soulmates. **Westerberg** contrasts ideals of creation and metamorphoses with the idea of 'ruin,' a double entendre in reference to either disaster, or the remnants of Classical artifacts.

CSO: Performing in what is arguably the most storied city in the history of Western music, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra returned to Vienna's gilded Musikverein Wien for concerts last week. Maestro **Riccardo Muti** and the Orchestra performed two distinct programs. The first concert featured the Austrian premiere of **Philip Glass'** "The Triumph of the Octagon," **Igor Stravinsky's** "Suite from The Firebird" and **Ricard Strauss'** "Aus Italien."

CHICAGO CHINATOWN LUNAR NEW YEAR PARADE: Each year, Chicago honors the Lunar New Year with parades and festivities. Feb. 10, marks the lunar new year of the Dragon 4722. Celebrate the excitement and colors of the lunar new year at the Chicago Chinatown Lunar New Year Parade on Feb. 18.

A man who views the world the same at 50 as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life.

- **Muhammed Ali**

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[L-R] Don Levin, Levin's Adams Apple storefront, and some of the rolling paper products that made him a business success.

Humble beginning for Billionaire King of Rolling Papers

After 52-years of non-stop service to the community, Adam's Apple in West Ridge closed in late 2022. For their many years it was one of Chicago's touchstones of hippie culture.

But what many may not realize is that the small storefront at 6229 N. California Ave. launched an epic worldwide brand, and a career that helped create one of Chicago's most noted self-made billionaires.

Back in the 'olden days' buying marijuana rolling papers wasn't as easy as it is these days. When Adam's Apple opened in 1969, it was one of the few places in the city where one could buy rolling papers and other paraphernalia for the burgeoning pot culture.

Throughout those years the store served as a destination for thousands of North Side youths (and sometimes their parents) looking for hippie gear and rolling papers. At the same time the store was dodging, and combating area neighbors and police, who were not so happy that 'those kids' were smoking weed.

In the early 1970s, the son of a used car salesman had bigger ambitions. That's when Don Levin learned about a groovy

specialty store in West Ridge that was up for sale.

"It was a boutique, I thought, and it sold bell-bottom jeans and English music," Levin told Will Yakowicz of Forbes magazine.

When Adam's Apple opened in 1969, it was one of the few places in the city where one could buy rolling papers and other paraphernalia for the burgeoning pot culture.

That's when Levin and another friend decided to buy the store, known for its psychedelic sign, and all of its inventory... except for a shoe box filled with rolling papers.

Levin told Forbes he'd never seen cigarette papers before and "didn't want them."

But in just a few days Levin realized most of the store's customers came there seeking them. "I called the previous owner and bought the box," says Levin.

To restock their rolling paper inventory, Levin had to send money to a distributor in New York, and a few months later they would receive a new shipment of paper made in Spain. Levin quickly realized that the distributor was collecting money from different retailers, placing an order, and selling them for a big markup.

"I figured I could do that too and so I jumped on an airplane," he told Forbes.

Soon Levin's customers were asking for other cannabis paraphernalia like roach clips and pipes. "I don't know what a bong is, but we can get it," he remembers telling clients.

He started publishing a catalog and advertising in High Times Magazine and his business boomed during the 1970s. By the end of the '70s, Levin was bringing in \$10 million in annual sales.

The effort turned into Republic Brands, a massive publicly traded business Levin built into an empire with name brands including Zig-Zag, E-Z Wider, Job, and OCB.

Levin attributes his achievement not to his personal aptitude, but to his devoted

team based primarily in France, as well as a robust network of distributors scattered across the globe, from Argentina to Sweden.

His business approach champions transparency and honesty, nurturing trust within his broad network. This straightforward communication style not only fostered strong relationships but also extends to the company's dedication to supporting its distributors and retailers.

Not bad for a guy who doesn't smoke pot.

He has had a good ride, with tales to tell. He hung out with Hunter S. Thompson, partied at the Playboy Mansion, lost his car while high on edibles, and had his warehouse raided by the feds.

He also once bid on buying the Chicago Cubs with billionaire Mark Cuban and produced a handful of movies.

And while he owns iconic brands known by stoners worldwide, he doesn't smoke weed or even know how to roll a joint. "I was the guy who smoked a joint and I'd be

PAPERS see p. 10

Chicago Metro History Day volunteer judges needed

Formerly known as the History Fair, Chicago Metro History Day [CMHD] is a research program for students in grades 6-12.

The call has gone out now for those who may be willing to serve as volunteer judges.

Each year, over 8,000 students from across the metro region research a topic of their choice connected to an annual theme and develop historical arguments that are shared with the public in a series of local, state, and national competitions.

Volunteer judges evaluate the historical quality of students' documentaries, papers, exhibits, performances, and websites.

CMHD is co-sponsored by the Univ. of Illinois Chicago, the Chicago History Museum, and the Latin School of Chicago.

Teacher and student registration are open now, and student registration due Feb. 12.

Website lockout and final project paperwork uploads are due by 9 p.m. Feb. 21.

Beginner historians often write the first chapters of history, and CMHD prepares students for college, career, and citizenship. Those who are passionate about history and interested in getting involved, should consider becoming a volunteer judge. Visit <https://www.chicagohistoryday.org> for more information.

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BED BUG from p. 7

building. They might hitch a ride on used upholstered furniture. Or you could carry them in on luggage or a purse that you set down in a place that has bedbugs.

Second-hand items such as clothing and furniture are common bed bug hiding places, allowing pests an opportunity to hitch a ride home with new consumers. Examining any new items before they enter your home will help to catch a bed bug infestation sooner, rather than later. They're tiny and good at hiding during the day, so it's easy for them to get into your home without you knowing it.

Bed bugs are typically 3/16 inch long, red to dark brown in color and are mostly nocturnal insects that come out of hiding to take blood meals from sleeping humans. Adult bedbugs are reddish-brown, wingless, and about the size of an apple seed. They are flat with oval-shaped bodies.

America's top 10 bed bug cities

- 1 Chicago
- 2 New York
- 3 Philadelphia
- 4 Cleveland-Akron, OH
- 5 Los Angeles
- 6 Detroit
- 7 Washington, D.C. (+2)
- 8 Indianapolis (-1)
- 9 Charlotte (+5)
- 10 Champaign, IL (+1)

Young bedbugs are smaller and can appear translucent or yellowish in color. If they have not been recently fed, due to their coloring, they can be almost impossible to spot. Bedbug eggs are tiny and white.

"Bed bugs are extremely resilient, making them difficult to control. As travel plans ramp up,

INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

it's important that Americans know how to protect themselves through pest identification and proper control," said Ben Hottel, Orkin entomologist. "While bed

bugs are visible to the naked eye, they are excellent at hiding. Involving a trained professional at the sight of a bed bug introduction is recommended."

Always store luggage away from the bed. When you get home place all dryer-safe clothing from your luggage in the dryer for at least 30-45 minutes at the highest setting.

Known for rapid population growth, female bed bugs can deposit one to five eggs a day and may lay 200 to 500 eggs in their lifetime. They can survive for several months while waiting for their next blood meal, so they're likely to emerge the moment a food source, e.g., humans or ani-

mals, becomes available. Orkin recommends that people inspect their home for signs of bed bugs regularly. Check the places where bed bugs hide during the day, including mattress tags and seams, and behind baseboards, headboards, electrical outlets and picture frames. Inspect when you move in, after a trip, when a service worker visits or after guests stay overnight.

During travel, survey the hotel room for signs of an infestation. Be on the lookout for tiny, ink-colored stains on mattress seams, in soft furniture and behind headboards. Lift and look in bed bug hiding spots: the mattress, box

spring and other furniture, as well as behind baseboards, pictures and even torn wallpaper. Elevate luggage away from the bed and wall. The safest places are in the bathroom or on counters.

Examine your luggage carefully while repacking and once you return home from a trip. Always store luggage away from the bed. When you get home place all dryer-safe clothing from your luggage in the dryer for at least 30-45 minutes at the highest setting.

With nearly 125 years of experience with bed bugs and state-of-the-art tools and products, Orkin is well-equipped to assess your bed bug problem, offer trainings for short-staffed hospitality teams and mount a strategic response to rid your home of the pest and provide maximum protection.

PROTESTS from p. 5

multiple marches in Chicago, some that have shut down major roadways and highways.

The war in the Middle East also is already driving protests in Chicago, and nationwide, some that have resulted in violence and damage to public and private property. Those pushing the federal government to try to impose a cease fire in the Gaza Strip just last week organized a Chicago Public School [CPS] student walkout and march on City Hall.

During school hours, students from many public schools gathered outside and inside City Hall Jan. 30, to rally for a City Council resolution supporting a ceasefire in Gaza.

There was no word if CPS had any truancy officers on hand during the protests to record which students were cutting school. According to CPS policy, an unexcused absence for all or part of a school day by a student in grades K through 12 is deemed a truant absence and the student is designated a truant student. (A truant

absence by a grade 9 through 12 student is referred to as a "cut.")

CPS policy states that students' absences are considered as excused absences only when they take place for student illness; observance of a religious holiday (an absence note is required); death in the immediate family or another family emergency; circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for their child's safety or health (which must be approved by the principal), or other situations beyond the control of the student (as determined by

principal).

A lack of proper order, or enforcement of existing rules is de rigueur and fashionable in society today, which should tip off those who live or work downtown that they may want to schedule an out-of-town summer vacation in August. And those with storefront businesses along protest routes may want to consider proactive measures and actions that can be taken to protect their business assets if things get out of hand.

North Township Real Estate For Sale

Real Estate For Sale

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC Plaintiff, vs. WILLIAM BUTCHER, AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ESTATE OF THE DECEASED MORTGAGOR, DONALD KNIGHT, FORTY EAST DELAWARE PLACE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NONRECORD CLAIMANTS Defendants 2023 CH 00533 40 E DELAWARE PLACE UNIT 1303 CHICAGO, IL 60611 NOTICE OF SALE PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on June 13, 2023, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 10:30 AM on March 8, 2024, at The Judicial Sales Corporation, One South Wacker, 1st Floor Suite 35R, Chicago, IL, 60606, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate: Commonly known as 40 E DELAWARE PLACE UNIT 1303, CHICAGO, IL 60611 Property Index No. 17-03-209-019-1056 The real estate is improved with a condo/townhouse. Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, in certified funds/wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court. Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale. Where a sale of real estate is made to satisfy a lien prior to that of the United States, the United States shall have one year from the date of sale within which to redeem, except that with respect to a lien arising under the Internal Revenue laws the period shall be 120 days or the period allowable for redemption under State law, whichever is longer, and in any case in which, under the provisions of section 505 of the Housing Act of 1950, as amended (12 U.S.C. 1701k), and subsection (d) of section 3720 of title 38 of the United States Code, the right to redeem does not arise, there shall be no right of redemption. The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g) (4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1). IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW. You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales. For information, examine the court file, CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. Plaintiff's Attorneys, 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100, BURR RIDGE, IL, 60527 (630) 794-9876 THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales. CODILIS & ASSOCIATES, P.C. 15W030 NORTH FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 100 BURR RIDGE IL, 60527 630-794-5300 E-Mail: pleadings@il.cslegal.com Attorney File No. 14-22-09551 Attorney ARDC No. 00468002 Attorney Code. 21762 Case Number: 2023 CH 00533 TJSC#: 44-188 NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. Case # 2023 CH 00533 13237697 070707 ----- 313131 ----- 242424 -----

PAPERS from p. 9

in the corner drooling," Levin, 72, told Forbes. "I was comatose. It killed me; I was the odd person out."

Now, in addition to rolling paper brands, Levin owns the factories that turn hemp, wood, bamboo, and rice into paper and the manufacturing plant that puts that paper into booklets—all of which have made him a billionaire, as he blazed a path forward in the \$26 billion industry.

Forbes estimates that Levin, who owns 100% of Republic through D.R.L. Enterprises, along with his wife and son, is worth at least \$1.7 billion. Presently, Republic makes more than 1.2 billion booklets of rolling paper a year, which Levin translates into

3.7 million miles of paper.

One of his most famous brands, E-Z Wider, was created by former billionaire Bob Stiller—who went on to build Green Mountain Coffee and Keurig—and Burton Rubin. Stiller sold the company to Levin in 1981 for \$6.2 million.

"Today, we're the largest manufacturer of rolling papers in the world," says Levin told Forbes. "We are the whole supply chain." Paper has long been a good business with high margins. Republic controls about one-third of the North American rolling paper market. Forbes estimates that Republic generates a 35% margin.

Levin grew up in the Albany Park neighborhood in the 1950s, with a father who was "the most honest" used car salesman. When



When Adam's Apple opened in Rogers Park, it was one of the few places in Chicago where one could buy rolling papers and other pot paraphernalia.

Levin was 14, his dad's dealership got into trouble, and the family had to move. "We lost everything," says Levin. "I've been rich. I've been poor. And it's better to have money."

In the late 1960s, after a stint in the Marine Corps Reserves, Levin attended a General Motors' training program to become a car dealer himself. He didn't go to college, but he always worked and found he was great at selling cars.

When the federal government had started enforcing anti-paraphernalia laws, which targeted bongos and pot pipes but not rolling paper, and Levin saw his friends and peers in the industry

on the wrong side of the law. "One person I knew got 104 months in prison," he says. "I said: 'Okay, I'm out.' And we stopped selling everything except for rolling papers."

A few weeks later his Chicago warehouse was raided by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Illinois police, but they found nothing except rolling papers.

Despite not being a pot smoker, Levin understands his customers. But after several decades of being at the helm of his empire, he is thinking about his successor and his legacy in the industry. He says he won't sell to a private equity firm because they would gut the company of most of its employees to hike up profits. One thing Levin doesn't try to rationalize is what a wild ride the rolling paper industry has given him. "Where I am today is not where I expected to be," he says. "I thought I'd be selling cars on Western Avenue in Chicago."

So the next time you roll up a fatty and light up, remember that behind every joint, there's a story of a resilient and innovative kid from Albany Park who took a risk and created an empire.

Much of this story came from Will Yakowicz and his recently published story in Forbes Magazine.

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East Bank Storage located at 730 West Lake Street, Chicago, IL, 312-876-2000, is opening lockers:
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1060H-Hecyk, Angela
5495E- Johnson, Reneesha
7610F- Kujjo, Josephine
3205E- Obrien, Patricia
7620X- Obrien, Patricia
1120G- Gino and Marty's
1250F- Gino and Marty's
1280F- Gino and Marty's
3250G- Gino and Marty's
3455A- Phillips, Bernad
4255F- Rosenfield, Ben
8180SM- Vaughn, Maya I for public sale.
This sale is to be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 2:00PM. Cash payments only.

Notice of Public Sale

THE LOCK UP SELF STORAGE at 1930 N Clybourn Ave, Chicago, IL 60614 will sell the contents of the following units to satisfy a lien to the highest bidder on 02-20-24 by 11:00 AM at WWW.STORAGETREASURES.COM. All goods must be removed from the unit within 48 hours. Unit availability subject to prior settlement of account. Unit #705 Ronald Masters Unit #1409 Laquinta Hampton

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The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.
— Walt Disney

LOURDES from p. 1

bulletin.

Dorantes has already submitted his recommendation to the archdiocese and it is scheduled to be discussed at an upcoming church council in March.

In his written statement, Dorantes added that while one of the parish's worship sites will be closing, he may be expanding services at the St. Mary of the Lake location and is taking into consideration some of his elderly parishioners in Ravenswood may have a difficult time getting to Mass in Buena Park.

"[We may be] adding a few more masses at the Saint Mary of the Lake site and getting a church van to pick up seniors on Sunday at their homes to bring them to Mass," he wrote.

Designed by the prominent Chicago architectural firm of Worthmann and Steinbach, the Spanish-Renaissance style church was built in 1916. The firm designed dozens of churches and homes throughout Chicago, many of which are now listed by the city of Chicago on its Architectural Resources Survey.

When it was originally built, the church faced west and was located across the street. Just 12 years later, the city of Chicago announced plans to widen Ashland Ave. and the church was in danger of losing 10 feet of its facade. The pastor at the time, Rev. James Scanlon, developed an engineering solution which today seems almost impossible.

"Instead of letting them chop 10 feet off the front, [Scanlon] decided to move the 10,000 ton church across the street and turn it halfway around so it faced north on Leland.

Scanlon then cut the 100-by-175-foot building down the middle and inserted a 20-foot addition, increasing seating capacity from 800 to 1200," wrote longtime In-

side Booster contributor Patrick Butler in his 2013 book Hidden History of Ravenswood and Lakeview.

Astonishingly, the engineering feat was primarily accomplished by manual labor, not machine.

"Engineers and architects from around the world came to watch as a handpicked crew of 150 men slowly lifted the building off of its foundation on 2,500 jacks and then edged it across the street on 400 rollers after using air drills to clear away several inches of ice still coating the street that frosty March."



Rev. Manuel Dorantes

"To keep from pulling too hard on one part of the building, six heavy chains in front and six heavy chains in rear were hooked to 72 pulleys connected to four horse-powered capstans. On a signal from a whistle, the teams turned their capstans and the church began to move one foot a minute, stopping every four feet to check lines and replace rollers as needed."

"Crowe Brothers, one of the Midwest's oldest building movers, had to post a \$300,000 bond to cover any possible damage. But, [their] calculations were so good that the building didn't suffer a single crack as it was being hauled across the street and then split in the middle for the 20-foot insert and attached to a new rectory. By the time the move was completed in May, Scanlon had a collection of newspaper clippings from around the world," wrote Butler.

The church honors Our Lady of Lourdes, an honorific title bestowed upon the mother

of Jesus Christ. Its stained-glass windows were meticulously restored about 20 years ago and depict the life of Mary.

Preservation Chicago, a nonprofit organization dedicated to architectural preservation in the city, continues to list Our Lady of Lourdes on its list of highly-endangered buildings and the group advocates for reuse if a building can no longer serve its original purpose.

"We want to encourage the Archdiocese of Chicago to consider inviting other religious orders to Chicago, when the archdiocese can no longer support them," said Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago. "Additionally, if it is determined that a church or house of worship can no longer function in such a capacity by all stakeholders and the City, plans should be considered to encourage cultural reuses for these most sacred structures. Such reuse efforts may include a reuse as concert venues, music centers, cultural centers for the community and other such respectful uses."

In 1858, Bernadette Soubirousa, a young teenager who lived near Lourdes, France, began seeing visions of a person who appeared to be Mary. Despite initial skepticism by local church officials, the young girl's visions were eventually accepted "worthy of belief" and the site of her visions has become a popular site for religious pilgrimages.

Soubirousa's story was the subject of a

1941 best-selling historical novel Song of Bernadette. The book served as the source for a popular 1943 movie of the same name.

Chicago's Our Lady of Lourdes has been the designated national shrine of the French pilgrimage site and includes a replica of the grotto in Lourdes. The official history of the archdiocese of Chicago, in 2006, described the grotto as "a jewel-box of stained glass and statuary."

Despite being listed on the city's Architectural Resources Survey as being architecturally significant, a city ordinance exempts religious properties from having landmark status imposed on their property.

According to Dorantes, closing a church building is never an easy decision and he knows there will be parishioners who will be saddened by the decision and he acknowledges there will be some who will leave the parish to worship elsewhere.

"While I would hope to have all current parishioners who worship at Our Lady of Lourdes join parishioners at the Saint Mary of the Lake, I know that this is not realistic for some. Our staff will work with every family to identify the best way to stay connected to the life of the Church even if it is not at Saint Mary's. We will also be open to meeting and praying with people individually who will be affected by this loss," he wrote.

GRANTS from p. 1

- Methodist Church, 4511 N. Hermitage Ave., Ravenswood - \$199,597
- The Ecumenical Institute, 4750 N. Sheridan Rd., Uptown - \$199,400
- Clark Investments LLC, 7000 N. Clark St., Rogers Park - \$250,000

Additional gift grants were also given to Double Door, 1050 W. Wilson Ave., in Uptown. They got \$125,000 for the window and masonry component of a \$9.9 million conversion of a 1909 theater as a performance venue.

Also in Uptown, Aragon Ballroom, 1106 W. Lawrence Ave., got \$250,000 for the masonry component of a \$1.9 million restoration of a 98-year-old ballroom.

Finalists were selected from more than 260 proposals that were submitted during an open application period in 2023.

Equity grant gifts given out

Six Equitable Transit-Oriented Development projects were given \$1.3 million in City gift grants to promote walkability near public transit locations. Two were located on the North Side.

- Clark Commercial Corridor, 7000-20 N. Clark St., in Rogers Park got \$250,000 for interior and exterior improvements at a multi-tenant retail space, including roof repairs, new HVAC units, and flooring.

- The Comedy Clubhouse, 1462 N. Ashland Ave., West Town got \$83,771 for interior improvements at a comedy training school, including a new heat pump system and insulation.

Gift awards are distributed incrementally as individual project phases are completed.

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