



The owners of Tribune Tower are hoping to find a buyer for the first floor retail portion of their holding.

Tribune Tower retail space up for sale

In a town filled with landmark buildings, the Tribune Tower is one of the most well-known and beloved local landmark buildings of them all. And right now part of it can be yours for a real steal. The owners are looking to offload the building's 47,000 square feet of ground-floor retail at a steep discount.

The real estate trade publication CoStar reports that Chicago's Golub & Company and Los Angeles-based CIM Group tapped commercial real estate firm Eastdil Secured to find a buyer for the retail portion of the Tribune Tower, located at 435 N. Michigan Ave.

The first floor retail space in the Gothic complex is being marketed as a "generational opportunity" for investors seeking over 200 feet of frontage along Michigan Ave.

Golub purchased the 737,000-square-foot tower for \$240 million in 2016, later converting most of it into high-end condos. The price broke down to about \$325 per square foot.

This retail offering comes at a time of uncertainty for the Magnificent Mile, with retail vacancies posing significant challenges for property owners up and down the street.

The retail space at Tribune Tower is just 36% leased, with tenants including the German watchmaker A. Lange & Sohne,

the Museum of Ice Cream, and Blue Bottle. The Shops at Tribune Tower are located at the pulse of what was once the premier destination of retail in Chicago - and the Midwest - just north of Pioneer Square and the Chicago River.

Indeed it's been a rough decade so far for Michigan Ave. since the pandemic, economic lockdown, riots and looting of 2020.

Several major retailers have exited the Boul Mich over the past few years. Among them are luxury brands like Bottega Veneta, Macy's, Chanel and Van Cleef & Arpels. Formerly high end malls like Water Tower Place, Shops at North Bridge, and 605 N. Michigan Ave. are now being dumped and returned to their lenders, while at the north end, Neil Bluhm's real estate firm has put up more than \$56 million to keep control of its Mag Mile skyscraper at 900 N. Michigan Ave.

In 2018, the Chicago Tribune newspapers relocated its editorial staff out of their landmark tower and moved them into the Prudential Plaza office complex, ending a 93-year run in the tower. Then they moved off Michigan Ave. and into the newspaper's print shop on the Chicago River. Now that building been torn down and nobody is really sure where the editorial staff of the "World's Greatest Newspaper" have relocated to.

Old Town backlash hits Fern Hill's high-rise approval, page 3

Loop newsstand sells \$650,000 Lucky Day Lotto Ticket

The Headline Newsstand, located inside the lobby of 2 N. LaSalle St. sold a \$650,000 winning Lucky Day Lotto ticket. The newsstand primarily sells snacks to building employees and passersby. The winning ticket was purchased for the Thursday, Jan. 30 drawing.

"I sold the winning ticket!" said newsstand employee, Khadija Jiwani. "It was bought by one

of our regular customers, so she is probably an employee near the building. I'm looking forward to seeing her this week and congratulating her!"

The Lottery player matched all five numbers in the drawing: 13-15-19-33-42. This is also a win for Headline Newsstand, as the store will receive a one-percent bonus of the prize, or \$6,500.

'This is our Old Town, not theirs' 'Compromise' plan in Old Town, secret deals, and the high-rise takeover in Old Town

BY ADRIANA FOUSTANOU

The battle for Old Town is far from over, according to some neighbors. While City Hall and Fern Hill have agreed on a proposed new plan for their 1600 N. LaSalle Dr. project, the deal has not shaken the resolve and heated debate between developers, city officials and Old Town residents.

Despite reaching an agreement between themselves, residents of Old Town still feel their concerns have been largely ignored by the city and developer.

The new proposal announced last week, and now backed by Ald. Brian Hopkins [2nd], has raised suspicions and concerns about special interests and political backroom deals.

Fern Hill and Ald. Hopkins claim the project has been "scaled back" in response to the neighborhood's concerns. The revised plan reduces the tower's height from 480' to 379', a 21% reduction, and cuts the number of units from 500 to 349, a 30% reduction.

The deal basically reverts back to the original 2023 plan proposed by Fern Hill for 36-story, 395-foot tall building. For Old Town neighbors, it seems that af-

ter all the back-and-forth battling, Fern Hill got exactly what they wanted all along.

The parking garage capacity has also been decreased from 450 to 333 stalls, which is a 24% reduction, with many spaces designated for Moody Church. The

Despite the deal, the Fern Hill project remains at the top of the residents' concerns. And new 'problems' have emerged, about yet another development deal that could reshape the neighborhood.

developers argue that this shift will reduce the strain on public street parking during Sunday services and special events, while critics see it as an unnecessary favor that prioritizes institutional partnerships over public needs.

Last week Ald. Hopkins announced in his weekly newsletter that he now approves of the deal, saying, "I am pleased to announce the reaching of a solution that I find to be acceptable, and I will be supporting it."

At the core of the controversy for the community, the question is who stands to gain the most?

One financier and newspaper source broke the deal down, stating the deal reveals that Moody Church alone could walk away with at least \$18 million in land value or cash from the LaSalle project, assuming a \$200 million high-rise is completed on a \$150 million budget. "So, the extra cost falls on the neighborhood, where the residents will be affected by years of construction, higher property taxes, traffic, increased competition in the rental market."

Despite the deal, the Fern Hill project remains at the top of the residents' concerns. And new 'problems' have emerged, about yet another development deal that could reshape the neighborhood.

Documents revealed to this newspaper - and now being broadly shared in Old Town - show that in Jan. 25, 2024, a silent partnership agreement between Old Town Triangle Partners LLC and a group of people including Nick Anderson, Thomas M. Tully of Piper's Alley, Keith Miller of

OLD TOWN see p. 12

Annual Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce state of the wards meeting

Public officials express concerns about public safety

BY PETER VON BUOL

At the annual meeting of the Lincoln Park Chamber of Commerce [LPCC] held Feb. 6 at the Whirlyball entertainment center, 1825 W. Webster, State Sen. Sara Feigenholtz [6th] said the \$1.6 million of police equipment she helped secure in the General Assembly for the Chicago Police Dept. has already been paying dividends for local residents and businesses.

"I am not allowed to know where the cameras, pods and license plate readers are but they are now up and working," said Feigenholtz of the spy equipment that is being added all over town. With the installation of the

crime-fighting equipment, Feigenholtz said she is now looking to lessen the number of car crashes that occur annually on Lake Shore Dr., designated by the federal government as a highway, and part of the US Route 41.

"We [are now] looking at improving safety on Lake Shore Dr., between Hollywood and Marquette Dr., which has an enormous amount of car crashes every year. We need to remediate some of these tragedies. Many of them do end up as fatalities. I am going to be working with the local [aldermen] on that. Hopefully, I will get their support," she said.

The three alderpersons representing Lincoln Park, Ald. Brian Hopkins [2nd], Ald. Scott Waguespack [32nd] and Ald. Tim Knudsen [43rd] were featured panelists at the meeting and Feigenholtz - a surprise guest

- reminded them she had also secured state funding to bring additional parks to their wards.

"I brought money home from Springfield, I think everybody here got a new park, didn't you?" Feigenholtz said.

Addressing Lincoln Park businesses and residents, Feigenholtz said she continues to remain vigilant for bills in Springfield that will impact them, if passed.

"There are a lot of bad bills floating around that we're hoping to disassemble, in many ways. One of them would put an extra cost on condominium associations and is not needed, anyway," said Feigenholtz.

Among the pieces of legislation she was proud to pass and which she believes will have a positive effect on local businesses was SB

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Have you ever been to the Tower of London?



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

Truly a historic landscape. A piece of the Middle Ages plopped in the heart of modern London. On the banks of the River Thames on the City of London side of the famed London Bridge. None of this needs an introduction if you've ever read a book or seen a movie about historic events in the past 500 years.

For many folk, especially the English aristocracy, it was pretty much a hardline prison. You didn't last long there if you displeased Henry VIII. Those cold, damp cells chilled by river moisture and lapping stink with the bone frost of royal judgement hanging over your head.

Most prisoners left without their heads attached to their bodies.

Ironically The Tower was seen as the luxury of prisons for those accused of treason and crimes against the monarch. Whole families were often locked in together never to reappear outside its walls again. So were some of the king's wives.

The Tower is the headquarters of the Beefeaters, the royal guards who intimately stand around the sovereign in their grandiose ruffled collared costumes and strange hats. The facility has survived across the face of English history and still stands proud. Less horrific. More user-friendly for tourists these days.

Among the most popular items that bring people there today is the chance to see the full array of the English crown jewels. Wear a heavy jacket. The place is still freezing.

The treasure rooms are a sight to behold. That's where the Imperial State Crown, the Crown of St. Edward and all the other crowns we see live at the coronations, openings of Parliament, and other official events of kingly governance. Large glass cases hold the vast collection of orbs and scepters, symbols of the monarch's power. Many items have an ancient lineage. The treasure rooms are fantastical. Sparkling and shining, radiating all available light.

There's no place like it anywhere. Except Chicago.

You see, our treasure room here is on the fifth floor of City Hall. It's where they



Officially known as Royal Coronation apparel, the Crown Jewels have been safely stored in the Tower of London since the 15th century. The collection includes some of the world's most valuable and historic jewels, such as the Imperial State Crown, which the monarch wears at the State Opening of Parliament. The Imperial State Crown boasts 23,578 gemstones and is thought to have a value of between two and four billion pounds.

stash all the gifts that Mayor "Teachers Pet" Johnson receives from generous benefactors.

I'm not sure there are any crowns or tiaras in the treasure room. It's difficult to get in to see who has sent what to the Mayor. I'm told that by law the Mayor is required to have all gift items catalogued. And valued. A list of who the gifts came from is necessary. You have to be able to evaluate the worth of each item.

But, of course, the treasures, the gift items earmarked for the Mayor, are beyond the realm of personal mementos. They are gifts to the City of Chicago. The gifts are supposed to be minutely catalogued and evaluated to ensure that they are not just financial rewards or monetary perks to the lucky Mayor. I don't believe he is allowed to, say, take home a Silver Urn from the League of Silversmiths. Or abscond with a butter churn from the milkmaids of Wisconsin.

I suspect if the keys to a new Cadillac are presented by the people at General Motors, the Mayor is not really allowed to drive the automobile home.

Not sure about fountain pens, ballpoint pens or large boxes of crayons. You can't pass things along to your Press Secretary. He'd have to purchase the item. And staff would have to catalogue the financial sale. Same goes for shoes. The Mayor may not slip on a pair of Michael Jordans should a pair arrive.

Ironically, cataloging and keeping track of the Mayor's bounty of treasure has apparently hit a snag in just the short time he has been in office. I'm not sure if he's pro-

hibited from walking barefoot through his treasure. But he's supposed to take good care of the items that come from other mayors, visiting kings, politicians, labor unions and airlines.

I'm not sure if he can eat a box of gift donuts, Longjohns or whipped cream cakes. I think he's supposed to purchase the pastries if he's hungry.

Many City Hall insiders believe we'll never get to the bottom of it. No one, I'm told, is permitted inside the confines of the Treasure Room.

Some wonder just how big the room is? Can staff members help themselves to something that catches their eye? Has Chicago's First Lady, Stacie Johnson, ever peeked in the Treasure Room? Can officials of the Chicago Teachers Union [CTU], like President Stacy Davis Gates, enter at will?

Apparently it was the Inspector General who spotted the discrepancy in the cataloguing in the "gift room." And apparently it was the Mayor, himself, who blocked all access to the "gift room."

In fact it was the Chicago Police who blocked folk from entry by order of the Mayor. Protecting the Hugo Boss cufflinks and the Mont Blanc pens. There's the question, too, of the Mayor just writing down the gift received without reporting to the Board of Ethics. Investigators are "rebuffed" when attempting further examination.

It's time to rethink and refashion some rules for the treasure trove of gifts. We've all seen enough of the familiar pattern of incompetence in the full exercise of following the law.

More than 236 gifts are supposed to have been overlooked.

Perhaps the Mayor is just doling out the treasure as gifts to trusted aides. Or to his CTU pals. After all, theirs was the biggest gift of all. The cash that sustained his election to the Mayor's Office in the first place.

The treasure debacle is even making

headlines in New York.

I'm reminded of the old English catchphrase from the Tower of London's Tudor period of history. It's so appropriate today. "Off with their heads."

PEACE AND TEARS: Marianne Evelyn Gabriel Faithfull, one of the leading English rockers to join in the great British Invasion of global music and American discography in the 1960s, has died in London at 79. I don't claim to be an expert on her music, but I cannot forget that moment in high school when I heard her sing "As Tears Go By," written by Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Andrew Loog Oldham. I still have tears listening to it today. For her. For me. For our youth. For us all. Recalling what it was like to be a young teen again looking at the world in the 1960s.

Looking at the emotions and wonders of long ago.



Marianne Faithfull

Marianne's mother lived just outside of Dublin, in County Kildare and was a neighbor of my friend, the late **Desmond Guinness**. I often stayed with Desmond at his home, Leixlip Castle. Marianne spent a good part of the summers, especially, at her mother's home. And she was a frequent visitor to Desmond. I often had lunch with her and came to know her totally outside her musical fame.

She was, of course, the love of Mick Jagger's life. And vice versa. He, too, was a great friend of Desmond.

They often stayed with him at Leixlip. And did a lot of traveling together. Desmond's cook, a marvelous Irishwoman, **Eileen**, from the village, often traveled with them making her famous soufflés and seafood pies. Lunch in more contemporary times, still with Eileen's cuisine, was always a love fest, remembering old days of exotic experiences.

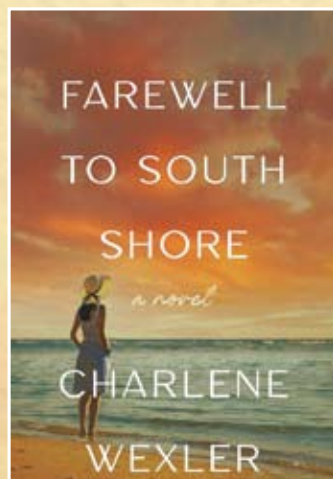
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Meet the authors

Charlene Wexler, author of *Farewell to South Shore*, and Alina Rubin, author of *A Girl With a Knife*, will discuss their novels featuring strong female main characters and sign copies of their books at Chicago Loop Synagogue, 16 S. Clark St., Chicago, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16.

The public is invited. Reservations are required. Register online at <http://www.chilooopsyn.org>. Suggested minimum donation is \$10 and includes light refreshments. Discounted parking (\$10 for 12 hours, ask for coupon when you arrive at event) is available at the Madison-Washington-Wells Garage at 172 W. Madison St.

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Old Town backlash hits Fern Hill's high-rise approval



The Home Front
by Don DeBat

Despite overwhelming Old Town neighborhood opposition, a giant high-rise with 349 apartment units, 36 stories, and 333 parking spaces likely will be built in the next few years at the northwest corner of North Ave. and LaSalle St.

After extensive input and comments from Old Town property owners, it is an understatement to say the neighborhood feels betrayed by Ald. Brian Hopkins [2nd] for his approval of the Fern Hill Co's mammoth project.

Veteran Old Town political analysts argue that the approval was a cleverly choreographed progression of local political maneuvering.

On Feb. 3, the high-rise "compromise" was announced by Ald. Hopkins. "No further involvement of community groups, and no previews of next steps was offered," noted the



Ald. Brian Hopkins

Old Town Triangle Association [OTTA]. Fully 80% of OTTA members voted in opposition to the Fern Hill project.

"This action is beyond fishy," said a member of the OTTA. "We know that Ald. Hopkins is at odds with Mayor Brandon Johnson and his progressive caucus that supports residential development across the city."

Political insiders say there also is the threat that Mayor Johnson will invoke the 2022 "Connected Communities Ordinance," which circumvents aldermanic prerogative and directs to City Council zoning approval.

In a follow-up Feb. 7 letter to Ald. Hopkins, Old Town Friends for Responsible Development [OTFFRD] issued the following statement: "We are reaching out to request that you reconsider your position on the Fern Hill development. It is unclear whether the developer misrepresented key details or if there was an oversight in the decision-making process."

The OTFFRD letter continued: "The developer has repeatedly misled the community and your office. While they have made minor concessions, such as reducing the number of Moody Church parking spaces, the overall density remains nearly unchanged, and the livable square footage

of the revised 36-story building actually has increased."

In addition, the letter noted: "It appears the setback of the tower from LaSalle St. has been reduced from 126 feet to 76 feet. This increases the width of the tower by 50 feet and adds 4,000 square feet per floor, which more than offsets the 7-story reduction in height."

Less height, but more width

Essentially, the developer simply shortened the proposed high-rise's number of stories, then added more width expanding the interior square footage by 14,718 square feet to 342,718 square feet from 328,000 square feet.

The building's floor plan for 349 apartments now calls for 105 studios with 400 square feet of living space, 126 one-bedroom units with 700 square feet, 42 two-bedroom units with 1,400 square feet, 42 three-bedroom units with 1,850 square feet, 30 four-bedroom layouts with 2,113 square feet and four penthouse units each encompassing an expansive 3,170 square feet.

With Old Town and Lincoln Park monthly apartment rents now more than \$3 per square foot, you don't have to be a math expert to see market rents ranging from an estimated \$1,200 for a tiny studio to \$6,339 for a four-bedroom layout. Penthouses likely would run \$9,510.

In a terse summation, the OTFFRD letter said: "Supporting this development will have long-lasting, irreversible consequences for Old Town, and you as the decision maker. The community has been clear in its concerns, particularly regarding the severe traffic implications and inappropriateness of a high-rise at such a prominent and heavily utilized location."

On Jan. 23, Ald. Hopkins appeared as a special guest at the Old Town Triangle Assn's. annual meeting and announced his opposition to the then proposed 44-story, 500-unit development. He received a standing ovation.

Then, the protagonists—the developer, various partners, and the alderman—retired to the historic "smoke-filled room" to hammer out the "so-called compromise," which greatly benefited the developers and his partners—at the expense of area residents.

'High-Rise Town' on horizon?

In the opinion of the Home Front column, this high-rise approval is only the tip of the iceberg in what will be unveiled in the future of Old Town, which may eventually be renamed "High-Rise Town."

Several major Old Town rezoning requests were quietly approved in January and February of 2024, and currently are included in a new amended zoning ordinance that will change the face of the neighbor-



This writer was presented this t-shirt during an earlier, 20th Century, high-rise fight in Old Town.

hood for decades to come.

Critics say Fern Hill worked in the shadows for months to quietly engineer a completely new high-rise zoning map for Old Town. Through a new entity, Old Town Triangle Partners I LLC, the revised 2024 Old Town high-rise zoning application calls for much more than rezoning of the original proposed a vacant Moody Church parking lot into an apartment tower.

The partnership also includes the Moody Church, and Walgreens, which despite its recent financial problems is planning a

Rezoning players listed on revised Old Town map

While the current use of Old Town Triangle Partners I LLC's expansive umbrella of properties is a mix of commercial, residential and religious assembly, the rezoning amendment passed in early 2024 likely could bring more high-rises to the Old Town neighborhood, critics say.

The complex rezoning from B1-3 Neighborhood Shopping District, Planned Development 89 and RM-5 Residential Multi-Unit District to B1-5 Neighborhood Shopping District, and then to a Residential-Business Planned

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new store at North and Wells.

The secret 11-page zoning document obtained by the Home Front column further includes the Piper's Alley tract, now owned by Old Town Development Associates, LLC, a partnership headed by politically connected Thomas M. Tully, who served as

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Condominium owners beware, proposed State legislation could target your home

Condo owners and their associations should be aware of legislation drafted by Illinois State Sen. William Cunningham that may have an impact on your condo association funds.

HB220 (103rd), requires a reserve study on condominium buildings that could impact your own associations mandatory reserve. The proposal would amend the Common Interest Community Association Act.

A recent survey of local contractors found that the average estimated cost of a reserve study for a 4-unit condominium building would be \$3,500.

Real estate law experts are now alerting condo association leadership to review the legislation and contact your Illinois senator to see how this legislation may impact condo and homeowner association on the

North Side of Chicago.

Locally, North Side State Sen. Sarah Feigenholtz has brought attention to this legislation and is working with local aldermen to get the word out about the possible impact to Chicago residents. She can be reached at 773-296-4141.

The House Bill would provide that any association with major shared components or significant infrastructure that has had a reserve study conducted on or after Jan. 1, 2020, shall have an updated reserve study conducted within five years after the date the reserve study was conducted and at least every five years thereafter.

The Bill sets forth requirements for the reserve study, and amends the Condominium Property Act, and requires that any association must make a conforming change.



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planting is typically only done in the spring and fall, with the exact timing of each season varying based on weather and ground temperatures.

Planting trees improves air quality, prevents flooding, provides shade and cool air, and reduces pollution.

For more information visit www.chicago.gov/OurRoots.

BACKLASH from p. 3

Cook County Assessor from 1974 through 1978.

The Old Town Canvas

Insiders say Fern Hill's original proposed 500-unit Old Town Canvas high-rise—now reduced to 349 units—apparently is planning through various partnerships to stretch the “land-canvas” for at least two additional towers on the north side of North Ave., west of Wells.

In play in this rezoning chess game is the Piper's Alley complex, including the X-sport Fitness Club, Starbuck's, Second City Theater, and more than a dozen commercial properties that ring the northwest corner of North and Wells running west to North Park Ave.

PLAYERS from p. 3

Development would allow “Tall Buildings” and “Large Residential Developments,” according to the rezoning document.

Here is a breakdown of the corporate entities and limited liability corporations [LLCs] which signed as partners to the zoning document:

- Old Town Triangle Partners I LLC. This umbrella partnership covers the entire amended high-rise zoning plan for Old Town. Based at 360 N. State St. in Chicago, the partnership's authorized signatory is Nick Anderson, CEO of Fern Hill.

- Old Town Development Associates LLC is owner of the Piper's Alley commercial complex, including the Second City Theater, at 200 W. North Ave. Authorized signatory is former Cook County Assessor Thomas M. Tully.

- Walgreens Co. is owner of the property at 1601 N. North Ave., site of its existing Walgreens store. The plan calls for Walgreens to move to the former Treasure Island site to make way for demolition of the store at the northeast corner of Wells and North. Authorized signatory: Keith Miller, Vice President of Real Estate for Walgreens.

- 1647 N. LaSalle LLC. The owner of the property at 1647 N. LaSalle, which includes the former site of Treasure Island grocery at 1639 N. Wells, is developer Nick Anderson, who acquired the property for \$14.85 million in 2020. Authorized signatory: Nick Anderson, CEO of Fern Hill.

- 130 W. North LLC. Owner of the Shell gas station property at 130 W. North, on the northeast corner of North and LaSalle, is Nick Anderson. Authorized signatory: Nick Anderson, CEO of Fern Hill.

- The Moody Church is the owner of the parking lot at 1600 N. LaSalle, and the church properties at 1609-1641 N. LaSalle. Authorized signatory: Kim Lahti, Moody Church Trustee.

- 1620 N. LaSalle Dr. The property, a Victorian mansion with side driveway located on the northern edge of the existing Moody Church parking lot at 1620 N. LaSalle. The mansion is owned by the Brian K. Furlong Trust. Authorized signatory: Brian K. Furlong, Trustee.

Zoning experts say the rezoning of the 84,078-square-foot Piper's Alley site to allow a floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 420,390 square feet could eventually pave the way for two additional high-rise towers on the north side of North Ave. between Wells St. and North Park Ave.

As proposed, the sweeping zoning changes under Fern Hill's expanded planned development could result in up to 1,400 new units for 4,000 to 5,000 people along a two-block stretch of North Ave. between LaSalle and North Park.

Although Fern Hill's rezoning application does not immediately allow residential units on the Piper's Alley commercial site, that likely will happen in the future.

The rezoning application also provides that the 392 parking

spaces in the deteriorating Piper's Alley garage could be removed at the time of that parcel's “site-plan approval,” resulting in a sharp reduction in the area's much-needed parking.

Earlier, Anderson said Piper's Alley owners recently signed a new long-term lease for the Second City Theater and have “assured him that they have no future plans for high-rises.”

“If another development proposal for Piper's Alley comes along it will be judged on its own merits,” Ald. Hopkins said.

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.

88 Keys to Cure Concerto Fest

On Sunday, February 9, 1 p.m., the Christ Church Chicago, 6047 N. Rockwell St., will be hosting 88 Keys to Cure, a Benefit Concerto Fest featuring Piano Concerto by Beethoven, Chopin, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Prokofiev, and performed by students of Sueanne

Metz. All proceeds will go toward the Ann and Robert Lurie Children's Hospital, NICU.

Complimentary beverages and snacks will be served, and donations taken. No reservation is required. For more information call 773-338-8170.

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Nick Anderson, authorized signatory of OLD TOWN TRIANGLE PARTNERS I LLC, being first duly sworn on oath, states that all of the above statements and the statements contained in the documents submitted herewith are true and correct.

Signature of Applicant

Subscribed and Sworn to before me this 30th day of February, 2024.

Notary Public

SETH HARRINGTON
Official Seal
Notary Public - State of Illinois
My Commission Expires Dec 21, 2025

before the Chicago Plan Commission and the Chicago Committee on Zoning without a formal consent being granted by Old Town Development Associates, L.L.C.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has executed this Authorization as of this 5th day of FEBRUARY, 2025, 2024

By: Thomas M. Tully
 Name: Thomas M. Tully
 Its: Authorized signatory

Chicago relating to the Subject Property.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has executed this Authorization as of this 25 day of January, 2023, 4

By: Keith Miller
 Name: Keith Miller
 Its: DVP, Real Estate

approval with the City of Chicago relating to the Subject Property.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has executed this Authorization as of this 25th day of January, 2024.

1647 NORTH LASALLE LLC, a Delaware limited liability company

By: Nick Anderson
 Name: Nick Anderson
 Its: Manager

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has executed this Authorization as of this 25th day of January, 2024.

130 WEST NORTH LLC, a Delaware limited liability company

By: Nick Anderson
 Name: Nick Anderson
 Its: Manager

and its attorneys, OLD TOWN TRIANGLE PARTNERS I LLC (OTI), to use the attached application for zoning approvals and related permits and approvals with the City of Chicago relating to the Subject Property.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has executed this Authorization as of this 19 day of January, 2024.

By: Kim Lahti
 Name: Kim Lahti
 Its: The Moody Church, Trustee

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has executed this Authorization as of the 8th day of February 2024

BRIAN K. FURLONG, AS TRUSTEE OF THE BRIAN K. FURLONG TRUST UNDER AGREEMENT DATED JULY 26, 2007

By: Brian K. Furlong
 Name: Brian K. Furlong
 Its: Trustee

Pictured above are the signatures from a secret 11-page zoning document obtained by this newspaper that includes the Piper's Alley tract, now owned by Old Town Development Associates, LLC. This shows the corporate entities and Limited Liability Corporations which signed as partners to the zoning document.

Paying your tax bill online is easy and safe

You can also pay by mail or in person

BY MARIA PAPPAS

In 1789, Ben Franklin wrote that nothing was certain “except death and taxes.” Today I write about the taxes part of the great American statesman’s uncomfortable reminder:

The due date for Cook County property owners to pay their First Installment 2024 tax bills is March 4, and there are numerous ways to do so.

Many property owners authorize their mortgage company to pay their two annual property tax installments from an escrow account. Those homeowners pay their mortgage company an amount every month that covers the cost of taxes as well as princi-

pal and interest on their loan.

But many others are responsible for paying themselves. Those owners have numerous ways to pay their property taxes: Pay online (for free with your bank account), pay at a Chase Bank location or at other community banks, pay by mail, at the Treasurer’s Office, or pay by credit card.

Paying online is the quickest and easiest way to pay a tax bill. There’s no fee to pay online by transferring funds from your bank account. It’s the most convenient option because you can pay any time, day or night. Plus, this method is secure and avoids the risk of someone stealing your

check from a mailbox and draining funds from your bank account.

A second option is to pay in person at any one of nearly 400 Chase Bank locations in Illinois, including those located outside Cook County. You must present your tax coupon with your payment. Payment coupons can be printed online or detached from the bottom of tax bills that were mailed in late January to owners of nearly 1.8 million Cook County parcels.

When paying at a Chase Bank, your check must include the following information: A Property Index Number (PIN), the Tax-

payer name, property location, including unit number and mailing address, a telephone number, email address, and Tax year/installment.

Another option is to pay at more than 100 community bank locations. A list of participating local banks where tax payments are accepted is available online at cookcountytreasurer.com. Bring your entire original tax bill with you, and a bank representative will give you a payment receipt.

For those opting to pay by mail, your check must include a PIN and the same information listed above for paying at a bank branch. Your canceled check is your receipt. Mail checks for current tax bills to the Cook County Treasurer’s Office, P.O. Box 805438, Chicago, IL 60680-4116.

The Treasurer’s Office welcomes walk-ins who prefer to pay their tax bills in person at 118 N. Clark St., Room 112, in downtown Chicago.

You also can pay via credit card online at cookcountytrea-

sure.com. There’s a 2.1% convenience fee associated with credit card payments that goes to the payment processor.

State law requires those who fail to pay their bills in full by the due date to be charged 0.75% per month in interest, or 9% a year. The Treasurer’s Office allows taxpayers to make partial payments over time as their budgets allow. But taxpayers are responsible for paying the total tax amount owed, along with any interest associated with late tax payments.

A payment plan calculator is available at cookcountytreasurer.com at no cost to help property owners who are paying late after the second installment. The calculator will help taxpayers spread out their expenses over monthly or biweekly payments.

While what Ben Franklin wrote about taxes 236 years ago is nothing we look forward to, it should be made as easy as possible in Cook County today. I hope the above shows that it can be.



Maria Pappas

Emil Bach house, Lang house and \$1M gifted to Loyola U.



Bach House (R), 7415 N. Sheridan, and Lang House, 7421 N. Sheridan. Photo by Bob Zuley



Col. Jennifer Pritzker, ING, (ret). Courtesy Tawani Enterprises, Inc.

Pritzker’s Tawani Property donates two homes on Sheridan Rd.

BY BOB ZULEY

Tawani Property Management on Greenleaf Ave. in Dolands Addition, the property management division of Tawani Enterprises, announced the donation of its Rogers Park homes on Sheridan Rd., the Lang House Chicago and Emil Bach House to Loyola Univ. of Chicago, according to a release from Tawani Property Management.

“Emil Bach House and Lang House Chicago have a long-standing connection with Tawani Property Management,” said Tawani Property Management founder, Colonel Jennifer N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (ret). “This donation is intended to further Loyola University’s mission, enhance its campus infrastructure,

and underscore Tawani’s enduring commitment to supporting the community and fostering educational growth.”

For eight years, Tawani Property Management managed both Lang House and Frank Lloyd Wright’s Emil Bach House until officially closing its Hospitality Division in 2023.

Pritzker, a scion of the Hyatt Hotels fortune and a cousin of Gov. J.B. Pritzker, now has donated both the Bach House, 7415 N. Sheridan Rd., and its neighbor, the Lang House, 7421 N. Sheridan Rd. to Loyola along with \$1 million earmarked for upkeep and maintenance.

The Bach House was built in 1915 for Bach, a Wright admirer and co-owner of Bach Brick Company. He was also a government information officer during World War One. Despite the war, Bach had access to walnut lumber which was controlled domestical-

ly by the U.S. Army. It is one of 11 Wright homes in the city.

Its neighbor to the north, the Lang House, was designed by architect Edgar M. Newman and was later owned by the Atlass family. Brothers H. Leslie Atlass and Ralph Atlass began broadcasting newly launched WBBM Radio from the basement of the house in 1924 before moving it to a nearby hotel.

Pritzker paid \$1.7 million for the Bach House in 2010 and \$1.32 million for the Lang House in the early 2010’s, according to the Chicago Tribune. The Chicago Sun-Times first reported on the donations.

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Police Beat...

Man, 14-year-old girl kidnapped and carjacked a woman outside post office

Prosecutors say an 18-year-old man teamed up with a 14-year-old girl to carjack and kidnap a woman who was sitting in a car outside a West Loop post office on Feb. 4. Now, Chicago police have identified the adult carjacker as Taylen Byndum, 18, of Bolingbrook.

The 29-year-old woman and a 1-year-old girl waited in the back seat of a 2019 Toyota sedan while the woman's husband ran into the post office at 433 W. Harrison around 2:30 p.m., according to a CPD report.

When the man returned outside, he found his car, wife, and baby gone. According to a witness who spoke with the man, this was particularly upsetting for him because the woman doesn't drive.

A Chicago police spokesperson said Byndum and the 14-year-old girl hopped into the front seat of the Toyota and drove away with the woman and child still in the back seat. Ultimately, the hijackers displayed two guns and forced the woman and baby from the car near Harrison and Paulina, according to the spokesperson. The victims were not injured.

Cops located the car and arrested Byndum and the 14-year-old in the 3500 block of S. King Dr. around 3:53 p.m., officials said.

Byndum is charged with aggravated vehicular hijacking with a firearm, aggravated vehicular hijacking with a passenger under 16, kidnapping while armed with a firearm, and kidnapping a child younger than 13.

The girl is charged with aggravated vehicular hijacking with a firearm, armed kidnapping, and possessing a stolen motor vehicle.

Lakeview psychic pleads guilty to operating 'curse removal' scheme

A woman who worked as a "psychic" at three Lakeview storefronts has pleaded guilty to defrauding a customer by promising to remove a curse from the victim for \$72,000.

Jennifer Williams, 51, entered her

plea on a charge of theft by deception and received a two-year probation sentence from Judge Shelley Sutker-Dermer. During her sentencing hearing last week, she paid the victim \$25,000 in restitution, officials said.

Private investigator Bob Nygaard worked the case and said the victim thought Williams' sentence was a "slap on the wrist." The woman had lost \$74,669.10 in payments to Williams and other expenses incurred during the scam, he said.

Prosecutors said Williams, working as an "alleged psychic fortune teller," tricked a 21-year-old Edgewater woman into believing that she was under a curse. Williams convinced the woman to remove the

curse by giving Williams large sums of cash that Williams was supposed to "cleanse and return to the victim," according to court filings.

The woman gave Williams a total of \$72,200 for "cleansing," but Williams never gave it back, according to initial allegations.

Nygaard said Williams worked at three storefronts near Belmont and Broadway. Prosecutors listed two of those locations as the addresses where the victim was scammed. All three storefronts have long featured neon signs promoting psychic services.

Nygaard said Williams claimed she had the supernatural power to remove a "curse" that plagued the victim and her family members. Over time, Williams convinced the woman to transfer tens of thousands of dollars to an associate via Zelle and Venmo. Nygaard explained that Williams was supposed to remove the curse from the money and return it to the victim, but the victim only received \$300 back.

Loop man faces felony after thousands of stolen shoes found in warehouse



Erick Lujano Bautista and a large number of stolen Nike shoes were being stored at a warehouse.

A 26-year-old Chicago man is facing a Class 1 Felony Theft charge after the Sheriff's Police Organized Retail Crime [ORC] unit recovered thousands of suspected stolen shoes from a West Side warehouse, said Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart.

In January, Cook County Sheriff's Office, ORC investigators learned that a large number of stolen Nike shoes were being stored at a warehouse in the 1500 block of S. Western Ave. Investigators determined the warehouse was being sub-leased by a man named Erick Lujano Bautista, of the 0-100 block of E. Randolph St.

On Jan. 31, investigators executed a search warrant at the warehouse, where they recovered approximately \$1 million worth of Nike and New Balance shoes believed to be stolen.

Both shoe companies continue to work with Sheriff's Police to determine the status of the remaining items. Lujano Bautista was not an authorized seller of either brand.

On Feb. 1, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office approved a Class 1 Felony Theft charge against Lujano Bautista. On Feb. 2 during his initial appearance hearing at George N. Leighton Criminal Court Building, he was ordered released from custody pending trial.

Sheriff Dart formed the ORC unit in 2023. Last year, the unit recovered more than \$3.6 million in stolen merchandise. This will bring the total amount of recovered stolen merchandise to over \$4.5 million in the last

nine months.

"My office will continue to aggressively pursue organized retail crime organizations, which have been shown to fund other illegal activity," said Dart.

Man gets 15 years for soliciting minor, lying to the FBI about pro-ISIS social media postings

A defendant has been sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for soliciting a minor to engage in commercial sex and lying to the FBI about social media postings supportive of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [ISIS].

Hardy Lee Browner, 37, of Chicago, pleaded guilty in 2023 to one count of making a materially false statement to the FBI involving international terrorism and one count of soliciting a minor to engage in commercial sex. U.S. District Judge Andrea R. Wood imposed the sentence on Feb. 5 and ordered that it be followed by five years of court-supervised release.

Browner admitted in a plea agreement that Browner used various accounts on the social media site X to communicate with individuals associated with ISIS, including a media arm of the terrorist group. Browner also used the accounts to make public posts regarding, among other topics, jihad, martyrdom, and ISIS.

When FBI agents interviewed Browner about the posts, Browner falsely claimed not to have used the accounts and not to have communicated with certain Twitter users, including the ISIS media arm.

The solicitation charge relates to Browner's attempt to traffic a minor with whom Browner had engaged in a sexual relationship. Browner communicated with the minor on Instagram and through texts and phone calls.

Browner then met the minor on multiple occasions and had sex with the minor. Browner sometimes gave the minor cash or other items of value. Browner also took steps to traffic the minor for sex with others for money, although Browner's crimes were discovered before the minor was trafficked.

The sentence was announced by Morris Pasqual, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Douglas S. DePodesta, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the FBI.

Migrant arrested 13 times in Chicago is 'eligible' for deportation after pleading guilty to robbery attempt



A collection of Santiago Josue Baragas Rodriguez's mugshots.

Santiago Josue Baragas Rodriguez, a Venezuelan migrant arrested 13 times in a year, received the old "good news, bad news" treatment at the 26th and California courthouse on Thursday.

The good news? A judge gave him probation for trying to rob a woman in Streeterville in November. The bad news (for him): Since he pleaded guilty, he's now eligible for deportation.

We introduced our readers to Baragas Rodriguez in November after a 43-year-old woman intervened upon seeing him use a rock to try to break the lock off her electric bike in the 400 block of N. City Front Place.

When she tried to take her bike back, Baragas Rodriguez, 20, swung the rock, then slapped and struggled with her, according to a Chicago police report. A witness jumped in to

disarm and detain Baragas Rodriguez until officers arrived.

Baragas Rodriguez was on pretrial release for three separate shoplifting cases at the time of the robbery attempt. The first judge to see him about the robbery allegations noted that he "continues to commit crimes against citizens in Chicago."

On Feb. 6, he pleaded guilty to attempted robbery before Judge Shelley Sutker-Dermer, who handed him the two-year probation sentence. She also sentenced him to six months in jail, offset by 112 days he had already spent behind bars since being arrested in Streeterville.

Sutker-Dermer took a moment to advise Baragas Rodriguez that he could be deported in light of his robbery conviction, according to an individual who was in court during sentencing.

Baragas Rodriguez entered his plea barely a week after President Donald Trump signed the Laken Riley Act, which "mandates the federal detention of illegal immigrants who are accused of theft, burglary, assaulting a law enforcement officer, and any crime that causes death or serious bodily injury."

Prosecutors on Feb. 6 dropped the three active shoplifting cases Baragas Rodriguez faced. They previously dropped most of his other nine criminal cases, primarily retail thefts, even though he didn't attend court for some of them.

On May 20, a Macy's employee accused him of shoplifting at the 111 N. State store. He was on pretrial release at the time for allegedly shoplifting from Nordstrom Rack, 101 E. Chicago, on May 3. Both cases were dropped.

On April 4, he was arrested for trespassing after allegedly refusing to leave the Northwestern Memorial Hospital parking garage. Prosecutors dropped the case on June 11.

Rodriguez didn't show up on May 16 for a case that accused him of assault and criminal trespassing in the Loop. Prosecutors dropped the charges in his absence because the alleged victim didn't show up either. He didn't show up on March 7 for a case involving allegations that he shoplifted from Home Depot, 4555 S. Western Ave. Prosecutors dropped that case, too.

He didn't show up on December 12, 2023, for a shoplifting case in which he was accused of stealing two pairs of shoes from Nordstrom Rack, 24 N. State. Once again, prosecutors dropped the charge because the store did not send a representative to court.

Second man charged with double-murder of Innovations H. S. students

Police have announced charges against a second man in connection with the murders of two students outside Innovations High School in the Loop one year ago. James Allison, 20, was returned to Chicago from Crown Point, IN, to face charges in the case.

The announcement of charges against Allison came just days after prosecutors charged another man, Tommie Coleman, with participating in the murders. Officials have said a third gunman who was involved in the murders died in June.

Childhood friends Monterio Williams, 17, and Robert Boston, 16, were killed as they walked out of the school onto the first block of N. Wabash around 12:30 p.m. on January 26, 2024. As they approached the nearby CTA station, three gunmen jumped out of a stolen Infiniti SUV and fired shots for about 15 seconds, prosecutors said during Coleman's detention hearing last week.

A bullet narrowly missed a 25-year-old woman who happened to be walking by, piercing her coat sleeve and falling into its lining.

Video from the school allegedly showed Allison changing clothes and leaving campus about 90 minutes before the shooting, prosecutors said.

Video and GPS data from his phone allegedly showed he boarded a CTA train to Roosevelt and then walked to a nearby parking garage, where video shows he got into the stolen Infiniti.

Police received a tip within hours that the now-deceased individual participated in the shooting. A search warrant served on that individual's Instagram account revealed a video that prosecutors suggest was recorded inside the stolen SUV about 18 minutes after the murders.

In the video, the deceased gunman "sang the verse of a song making references to being masked and armed with others in a stolen car and getting out and shooting at opposition," prosecutors alleged. Detectives allegedly obtained another video that Coleman recorded in the SUV's front seat while the now-dead gunman was recording his video in the back seat. Coleman's video also showed all three suspects had guns, prosecutors said Feb. 1.

Prosecutors said location data from all three suspects' phones showed their devices tracked together before, during, and after the murders.

Allison is charged with two counts of first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, unlawful possession of a weapon, and aggravated discharge of a firearm toward an occupied vehicle.

Woman who killed 8-year-old daughter while high on PCP gets 28 years

On Feb. 5 an Uptown woman received a 28-year prison sentence after pleading guilty to murdering her 8-year-old daughter while high on PCP. Andreal Hagler, 41, must serve 100% of the prison sentence.



Andreal Hagler

Hagler told police she killed her daughter in May 2022 because she felt like the girl didn't love her anymore, prosecutors said. It all

happened hours after an investigator from the state's Department of Children and Family Services visited the family's home.

Police responded to Hagler's apartment on the 4600 block of N. Winthrop around 11 a.m. after her sister asked police to check her well-being. Officers found Hagler lying face down on a bed with a clear plastic bag over her head, officials said. Police removed the bag and reported that she had no other injuries.

Next to Hagler, officers saw the lower legs of Hagler's daughter, Amaria Osby, sticking out from under a comforter. Her body was cold and she was pronounced dead at the scene.

The Cook County Medical Examiner's Office ruled that Amaria died from multiple injuries that she suffered in an assault. She had bleeding under her scalp, and there were other indicators consistent with asphyxiation.

Hagler told police that she and Amaria said their prayers between 8 and 9 o'clock. She then did PCP and began drinking bleach because she felt like Amaria did not love her anymore and was "taking her dad's side," prosecutors claimed.

Officials said Amaria saw her mother drinking bleach and screamed, "Mama, stop!"

Hagler then smothered the girl with a plastic bag because it was their time to go, prosecutors alleged.

"So this little girl's last image—or one of her last images—is that of her mother placing a plastic bag around her head to asphyxiate her,"

POLICE BEAT see p. 10

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Surveillance images show the burglar responsible for at least 27 break-ins since mid-January.
Courtesy Chicago Police Dept.

Serial burglar has targeted at least 27 businesses in three weeks

BY CWBCHICAGO

Police are working to identify a one-man crime wave responsible for burglarizing at least 27 businesses across the North and Northwest Sides of Chicago over the past three weeks.

The serial burglar is breaking front windows and doors to get inside the businesses so he can steal money from the cash registers, according to a new CPD alert.

Area Five detectives have linked the man to the following burglaries:

- Jan. 16, 5000 block of W. Irving Park at 3:26 a.m.
- Jan. 17: 2500 block of N. Lincoln Ave at 4:10 a.m.; 2600 block of N. Lincoln Ave at 4:14 a.m.; 2400 block of N. Lincoln at 5:40 a.m., and 2800 block of N. Sheffield between 8 p.m. and 6:33 a.m. the next day
- Jan. 18, 2900 block of N. Broadway between 5:30 a.m. and 6 a.m.
- Jan. 21: 4300 block of N. Elston before 7 a.m.; 4000 block of N. Elston at 4:34 a.m., and 3600 block of W. Irving Park at 4:57 a.m.
- Jan. 22, 2000 block of W. Howard at 5:14 a.m.
- Jan. 27: 5400 block of N. Broadway between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m.; 1000 block of W. Argyle at 5:07 a.m.; 5000 block of N. Sheridan at 5:20 a.m., and 1100 block of W. Argyle at 5:21 a.m.
- Jan. 28: 1100 block of W. Granville at 11:30 p.m., and 5300 block of N. Clark at 6:36 a.m. (two incidents)
- Jan. 31: 6700 block of N. Clark at 3:45 a.m., and 6600 block of N. Clark at 3:54 a.m. and again at 4:50 a.m.
- Feb. 2: 1500 block of W. Devon Ave at 6:15 a.m., and 6600 block of N. Broadway at 6:18 a.m.
- Feb. 3: 7000 block of W. Higgins at 2:57 a.m., and 6300 block of W. Higgins at 4 a.m.
- Feb. 4: 4200 block of W. Irving Park at 3:43 a.m.; 5100 block of W. Irving Park at 4:59 a.m., and 5100 block of W. Irving Park between 5 a.m. and 5:30 a.m.

Police described the suspect as a male of unspecified race wearing a black hat, black gloves, a black mask, dark clothing, and a black backpack.

Anyone with information about him can contact investigators by calling 312-746-7394 or going online to CPDTIP.com. Refer to crime pattern #25-CWP-007

New York man mailed thousands of packages of counterfeit drugs to people across America, including federal agents in Chicago

BY CWBCHICAGO

Federal agents say a Buffalo, NY, man mailed thousands of counterfeit prescription pills to people across the United States, including an undercover Drug Enforcement Administration [DEA] agent in Chicago. Some of the pills contained the extremely deadly chemical fentanyl, while others contained ketamine, and still others contained no controlled substances at all, according to a federal complaint.

Investigators obtained U.S. Postal Service security footage that showed Edwin Batista mailing dozens of Priority Mail packages at a time from post offices around Buffalo, the complaint said. Agents who raided Batista's storage unit allegedly recovered an estimated 100,000 pills.

The complaint said DEA agents began focusing on Batista during



Edwin Batista's New York driver's license photo, inset, is seen with images of the man who allegedly mailed pills to undercover agents and a photo of vacuum-sealed pills seized during the investigation.

Image courtesy U.S. District Court records

an investigation of three online pharmacies that were suspected of selling controlled substances without prescriptions: Health-careShopy, Acetaminophenbutalbitol, and BuyFioricetNow.

An agent in Chicago ordered 90 oxycodone pills from the Ac-

etaminophenbutalbitol site on Oct. 21, 2024. A representative from the site contacted the agent, arranged to receive a \$449 payment via Zelle, and then provided a USPS tracking number, the

DRUGS see p. 10

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TOWER from p. 2

Mick and Marianne often stayed at Desmond's castle where they were always given the grandest of bedrooms. The one with the large 18th century solid copper bathtub. Just under a window in the bedroom. They loved to soak in the tub. Even more than sleeping in the kingly 18th century four poster bed. Enormously tall shutters rose on either side of the window. Desmond always kept them open. But he loved to have visitors close them one at a time. Behind them, each had a photo. One of Mick. And one of Marianne. "Starkers," as the Irish say. Naked and dripping wet. A freeze frame of the 1960s.

It always brought hysterics of laughs. I cherish those days and those lunches. I truly loved Marianne Faithfull and her sweet soul. The full voice of "As Tears Go By." Wiser words for us today, I think, than back in moments of their revolutionary impact more than 50 years ago.

With both Desmond and Marianne now gone, the tears are more intense. Sweet peace my friend. "Smiling faces I can see, but not for me, I sit and watch as tears go by."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Yes it's the 196th birthday of President **Abraham Lincoln**. America's most famous rail splitter. His gift room featured a fine selection of splitting mauls, sledgehammers, wedges and axes.

HARD ROCK CAFE: Hard Rock Cafe has announced that after 39 years at 63 W. Ontario St., in River North, they will close down operations on March 29. Sorry to see them go.

A HIT: **Dave Bonomi** really has a hit on his hands with Peanut Park Trattoria on the corner of Taylor and Loomis, doubling his contribution to Chicago eating as he is also the owner of the two Coal Fire pizza establishments.

CHICAGO SYMPHONY: **Ricardo**



Irene Michaels and Army Garant.



Joey and Tracey Tarantino DiBuono with the Rathes.



Maestro Riccardo Muti and the CSO.



Gerry Gainer with Bridget, Nora, Maureen, Billy, Mary and Sheila Gainer.



Sherrill Bodine



Larry Cummins

Muti was in New York's Carnegie Hall conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in a program of **Bellini's** "Overture to Norma," **Verdi's** "The four Seasons" from The Sicilian Vespers, and **Tchaikovsky's** "Symphony No. 4." It was a stunning engagement.

FIRE FUNDRAISING: **Irene Michaels** headlined a show in New York for victims of the fires in Los Angeles rais-

ing a lot of financial support among the very upscale crowd.

THE DRAKE: Sadly the Turkey dinner brought back to the Drake's nostalgic menu last week for the Coq D'or had to be postponed a week because refrigeration malfunction ruined all the turkeys in their Fridge. Can't wait to try.

SLAINTE: Happy Birthday to the great **Gerry Lennon Gainer**, a friend of 50 years, marking 80 gifted years, the matriarch of a splendid family of movers and shakers that have transformed the Beverly Community, Chicago and the American nation. Her wisdom and kindness have no equal. A grand shindig brought all loved ones together for a celebration at Tufano's in Little Italy.

WHO'S WHERE: **Jeffrey and Stephanie Leese Emrich** Gong xi fa cai! Happy Lunar New Year! #4723 Year of the Snake, shedding negativity and adding rejuvenation. We're all for that... **Sherry Lea Fox, Joanna Slusky, and Loralie Knutson Beaucaire** sending thanks to **Joey and Kathy Wolter Mondelli** for such a dinner at La Scarola Italian Restaurant, over-the-top cocktails at The Pearl Club... **Rochelle Trotter** in Los Cabo, Mexico... **Karen Conti** celebrating birthdays with high school buddy, **Larry Baker** at Bruna's on Oakley, nothing like having decades-long friendships with **Due Ho** and **David Nguyen** dining at Obelix on Huron for fine chow... **Maralyn Maralyn** says she's on NBC, One Chicago, let me know when you see her, she'll be looking pretty rough... **Mark O'Malley** and wife, violinist **Patricia Tracey** off to Ireland for commerce and music... So great to run into the lovely **Judy Lee** lunching at RL... **Courtney Daley Thompson** having some fancy Mexican cocktails in a hidden little spot in Chicago, before leaving for Mexico... Bravo **Iliia Malinin** leading the men's

program in figure skating by nearly 20 points after scoring 114.08 in the short program... **Sherry Lea Fox, Paul A Iacocca, Todd Hatoff** and **Frank N. Jeffery** dining at Tre Dita... The Junior Board of Service Club hit a home run with their inspiring Luncheon with speaker **Brooke Skinner Ricketts** of Beyond Barriers... **Joey and Tracey Tarantino DiBuono** with their friends the **Rathes** attired in Indian formalwear in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico for the wedding of **Nina and Ravi**... **Larry Cummins** enjoying a fresh pint of Guinness at The Chicago Guinness Brewery with his son, **Eamonn Cummins**... Great to run into **Al and Joy Sandner** at Gibson's Steakhouse looking chic as always, nearby was **Kim Duda** lunching with **Joyce Selander**.

ROVING REPORTER: The impressive global journey continues for **Sherrill Bodine** traveling from Japan to Viet Nam and missing nothing.

TWINS: **Ken and Mary Claire Scorsone Moll** celebrating their Irish twins, **Keely** and **Charlie**, both now 21. Mama Moll says they were overachieving newlyweds and accidentally made two babies in 11 months.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for the elegant article about our dear friend Dan Levin. He was a happy soul who loved his life. He knew every person that worked for his empire by name. Took time to chat with so many people and he left a great Legacy. - Adrian Race

Sooo, I do what I always do when sitting down to read Thomas O'Gorman's column... cell off, the "we'll be back in 30" sign goes up. I don't want to miss any intricacy of phrasing, meaning, information, truth, artistry or humor. - Irene Mojica

Thank you, Tom. Continue to use your wonderful gifts. They are so refreshing. This is such a horrible time in history. Never did we see this coming, it's drastic. Well we can keep praying and searching for the truth. - Peggy Harmon

Thanks for the mention. Your articles are always dynamic and fun. - Patricia Bidwill

I don't know of many other writers that thrust me as quickly into experiencing all that's written. You truly are a master story teller. I must enjoy more often. Wonderful renderings of words, my friend. - Toni Di Meola

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Letters to the Editor

North Side will lead the way

The Gold Coast and Streeterville will lead the way. And Old Town. And Wrigleyville. And North Center. And Lincoln Square. And Edgewater. And Uptown. And Bucktown. And Rogers Park.

Lead what? Innovation? No, silly. In property tax increases.

The North and Northwest side townships - North Chicago, Lakeview, Jefferson and Rogers Park Townships - take up 35% of the city's acreage, hold 55% of the city's population, and pay 65% of the property taxes

Who hasn't yet seen what is happening downtown?

Office high-rise buildings are selling for 77% less than they did a decade earlier. The Skidmore Owen's Merrill building at 224 S. Michigan Ave. The Groupon building at 600 W. Chicago Ave. The 313 S. Wacker building. Those forfeiting their properties before foreclosures include the Shops at North Bridge mall, 520 N. Michigan Ave. returning the keys to Pacific Life Insurance and Brookfield dumping 605 N. Michigan Ave. at a steep price

Chicago's financial obligations don't disappear

It's fascinating to watch certain aldermen perform political acrobatics these days. They loudly decry Mayor Brandon Johnson's proposed tax increases, warning of the burden on Chicago residents and businesses. Yet when presented with opportunities to expand our tax base through sensible development, they suddenly become very selective about which kind of economic growth they support.

Take the recent cases of 1840 N. Marcey St. and the Fern Hill proposal in Old Town. Together, these projects would have generated \$250 million in property tax revenue over the next 30 years. While Ald. Brian Hopkins eventually allowed a scaled-down version of Fern Hill - after forcing a 30% reduction in units - Ald. Scott Waguespack outright blocked the Marcey development.

Both projects had strong community support at public meetings, yet our aldermen chose to prioritize a handful of complaints over significant long-term benefits to our city.

The math is simple: every unit denied is tax revenue lost. When aldermen reject or downsize these projects based on a hand-

ful of complaints about "traffic" or "density" - the perennial bogeymen of urban development - they're effectively choosing higher taxes for the rest of us. Chicago's financial obligations don't disappear just because we turn away new development or slash unit counts.

Perhaps our aldermen believe money grows on trees - though they'd probably oppose planting those too, citing concerns about leaf density and increased squirrel traffic.

The next time these aldermen rail against tax increases, perhaps they should explain why they keep turning away or dramatically reducing private investment and recurring property tax revenue. Their constituents might be interested in knowing why they prefer higher taxes on existing residents over welcoming new neighbors and businesses to share the burden.

Lincoln Park will lead the way. And Old Town, Wrigleyville, North Center. And, and, and, and, and yes finally you.

Then there's the parking shell game. Fern Hill claims reallocating parking to Moody Church

*Mike Sullivan
Avondale*

*Alec Schwengler
Lincoln Square*

Spin class

Fern Hill's announcement about their "compromise" on the North & LaSalle project is a masterclass in developer spin. They frame their revisions—reducing unit count, lowering the building's height, and reallocating parking—as grand concessions, yet the reality is clear: this is still a massive, out-of-scale luxury tower that does little to address community concerns.

First, Fern Hill's comparison to neighboring high-rises is deliberately misleading. They point to 500+ unit towers as justification for their still-enormous 349-unit project. But Old Town is not a blank slate for unchecked high-density development. A project's scale should be based on what benefits the neighborhood, not on selective comparisons to the tallest buildings nearby.

Then there's the parking shell game. Fern Hill claims reallocating parking to Moody Church

will ease congestion—when in reality, it just privatizes public space and ensures more traffic, not less. Meanwhile, their traffic "improvements" sound nice on paper but primarily serve the development itself.

And as for their 750 letters of support, really? How many of those came from actual Old Town residents, rather than ChatGPT, business partners, and paid advocacy groups?

Let's be clear: these "concessions" don't change the fundamental problem. This project prioritizes private interests over the community's needs. Ald. Brian Hopkins may have given his approval, but Old Town residents aren't fooled—we deserve real community-driven planning, not developer-driven deals.

*Tim Carew
Old Town*

What problem are we really trying to fix?

Regarding the article "Chaotic Broadway planning meeting held as deadline looms" by Bob Zuley, [Dec. 25, Jan. 15, 22, 29]...

Reading this prompted the question I've had in mind when reading about all the other plans for densifying arterials, including Western Ave. Are the pols trying to use zoning and planning to solve a problem which is best solved more directly?

The problem is the increasing concentration of wealth and income among a smaller percentage of Americans. One of several factors causing this is the failure of the Federal government to increase the Federal Minimum Wage to keep up with inflation since it was first instituted.

This failure violates the original intent, which is to enable employed Americans to support themselves and their families decently, not as a floor for high-school teenagers living with their parents working their first summer job.

We need results when the Federal Minimum Wage is raised to get caught up with inflation, a relationship it hasn't had in decades. We also need legislation enacted and enforced for the end of invol-

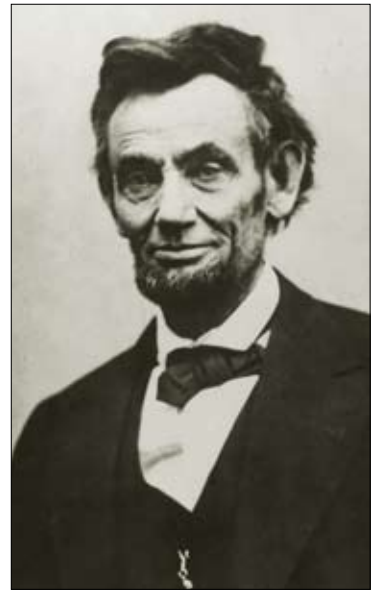
untary long-term unemployment, and all involuntary underemployment.

Both of these changes would reduce the concentration of wealth and income among Americans, and make it easier for more Americans to afford (without any government programs) the housing they need (though not what's in "our wildest dreams"); also for us to have more disposable income to spend among the many small businesses we value, and want to succeed in our local streetscapes.

How about we make these changes first? Zoning and planning is necessary and important, but it can't solve the problem of increasing concentration of wealth and income, which has been making it harder for Americans to both afford decent housing and to spend money more widely.

*Jean SmilingCoyote
West Ridge*

Write a Letter to the Editor at insideonline.com



Portrait of Abraham Lincoln in Washington D.C., April 10, 1865. Courtesy Chicago History Museum, photo by Alexander Gardner

President's Day at History Museum

The Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark St., will host a free Commemorative Presidents' Day 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17.

This Presidents' Day, the museum will help guests get more civically engaged through family-friendly activities such as writing a letter to the President of the United States to tell him what matters.

All letters can either be taken home or left with museum staff to be mailed out together to the White House.

Participate in arts-based activities and create a piece that reflects your social and political interests. Guests can also make their own campaign signs and buttons as if you were running for the Office of the President of the United States of America, and design them in ways that reflect values, aesthetics, and major topics of interest.

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Pro Self Storage intends to enforce its lien on certain self-storage Storage Spaces in default listed below on the 20th of February, 2025 at 12:00 p.m. at 2724 W. 21st St, Chicago, IL 60608 at www.storage-treasures.com with the sale to conclude no earlier than 12:00 p.m. 1096 Tyrone Turner, 1047 Dorothy Williams. This public sale will result in the goods being sold to the highest bidder. The winning bidder must pay by cash at the time he/she is declared the winning bidder. Certain terms and conditions apply; see the Manager for additional details.

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Polar Plunge March 2 at North Avenue Beach

Make a splash and make a difference on Sunday, March 2 at North Avenue Beach by joining in at Polar Plunge Chicago benefiting Special Olympics Illinois and Special Children's Charities. This winter event is celebrating the its 25th Anniversary, as thousands of fellow warm-hearted people will jump into freezing cold water. To join in the event, register at specialchildrenscharities.org.

Senior Citizen Law Enforcement Academy kicks off March 5

The 18th District is accepting applications for the Senior Citizen Law Enforcement Academy, starting March 5. Those who are interested in applying may call 708-865-7341 (Sheriff's Office), or contact the CAPS office at 312-742-5778, and ask for Officer Nomellini. The classes will show people how to protect themselves from crime, understand con games and scams, and how to communicate with law enforcement. Classes will be offered over six weeks at Park Community Church, 1001 N. Crosby St.

OLD TOWN from p. 1

Walgreens Co., and Kim Lathi, Trustee of the Moody Church—may pave the way for high-rises in Piper’s Alley.

The Application for an Amendment to The Chicago Zoning Ordinance shows Anderson as the point man on the agreement, and Katie Jahnke Dale and Rich Klawiter of DLA Piper LLP as the lawyers fronting the deal.

(Don Debat is doing additional reporting on that deal in this newspaper.)

While Fern Hill’s proposed skyscraper project has dominated public discussion, this less-publicized zoning amendment raises questions about how much of Old Town’s historic character is being

quietly traded away behind closed doors with plans for massive new density forced on the community.

Residents who already have felt excluded from the high-rise debate on North and LaSalle may now have even more reason to be concerned, wondering what other deals are being made without community input. And who is truly shaping the future of Old Town—and at whose expense?

As for the specifics of the Fern Hill project—those minimal changes have sparked maximum controversies as some people found the changes of the project insignificant. A torrent of emails have been received by this newspaper from people skeptical of the motives behind this project.

Ald. Hopkins appears stuck be-

twined a rock and a hard place, as for months he resisted approving the project, recognizing the overwhelming community opposition. Opposition that never waned despite 10 community meetings designed to drain the community of their energy. The alderman may have given up, without warning, and thrown his support to this revised ‘plan’ knowing that the community was not going to give up.

Old Town residents who contacted this newspaper view the situation as a political maneuver rather than a reflection of community input. Community members who attended those 10 meetings, and provided input online into Fern Hills Artificial Intelligence marketing system, feel that

their opinions were ignored. Those emails describe the process as “rigged” and an example of “Chicago way politics.” One Old Town resident expressed high frustration with what they view as predetermined outcome, writing “After 10 community meetings and months of massaging the plan in the City Planning Dept. and the Dept. of Transportation, the outcome was never in doubt. Thought the Chicago Way was dead? Doesn’t look like it. The game is rigged, and we’re being played for fools.”

Residents still believe they deserve answers about the real-estate interests and political trade-offs disclosed in the 10-page Jan. 25, 2024 contract. As one resident put it in a note sent to this news-

“Thought the Chicago Way was dead? Doesn’t look like it. The game is rigged, and we’re being played for fools,” said one Old Town resident.

paper, “This is our Old Town, not theirs. A neighborhood for everyone—not just for special interests with favors and connections.”

It appears that despite the alderman’s change of heart, residents in Old Town say they will not be silenced. Members of the community continue to mobilize to oppose Fern Hill’s plans.

WARDS from p. 1

3679, which is meant to help revitalize business corridors.

“The business improvement district bill is sort of a new and improved SSA [Special Service Area tax]. There’s more flexibility around and it allows for a lot more collaboration. There is also less government involvement with City Hall. Some of these decisions [could be made] in a more organic way,” said Feigenholtz, who added it took her three years to get the legislation passed.

After Feigenholtz’s presenta-

tion, the Small Business Advocacy Council’s Elliot Richardson hosted a panel discussion with the three alderpersons representing Lincoln Park.

While all three expressed their continued concerns about public safety, each also discussed specific concerns in their own wards.

“I hate to say it, but the Courtland Bridge construction work is going to be one of those things that is going to be taking place. It will be similar to the recently completed Webster St. bridge,” said Waguespack. “We are going to have shutdowns for a while. In

the long run, it will lead to better traffic and better movement.”

“Also, to help traffic, Ashland, Diversey and Damen are all getting new signaling. I also would like to mention 1840 N. Marcey St. in Lincoln Park,” said Waguespack. “We are still working with Sterling Bay on the Marcey Project. We want to make sure they can continue to move forward with the entitlements they have for zoning and other aspects. We want to see that move forward,” he said.

Also on Waguespack’s agenda is a revitalization of the southern portion of the Chicago Housing Authority’s [CHA] Julia C. Lathrop Homes into a remodeled mixed use community. For many years, the mostly vacant public housing development has suffered from neglect at the hands of the CHA, which has been a magnet for crime and an eyesore for the community.

“It has been an eyesore for many, many years. My staff and I have pushed hard to get the CHA and its developer to get to the table immediately to get Lathrop fixed up. Businesses like the Midtown Athletic Club have to look at it. After having it split between the First Ward and the 32nd Ward, it is now all in the 32nd Ward. We have the funding to put affordable housing in there, as well as a lot of mixed use and some commercial property, as well,” said Waguespack.

Also featured as a panelist was Ald. Knudsen who told those in attendance the three alderpersons who represent Lincoln Park have been working well as a team representing their shared interests.

“I represent the central portion of Lincoln Park. All three of us share a lot of similar concerns and that is a great thing. We work together really cohesively,” said Knudsen.

Public safety remains the primary concern of Knudsen and his constituents and he continues to seek ways to help make it safer for residents and businesses to operate in the current environment of growing systemic crime problems.

“Safety continues to be our main priority in the ward. [My office and I] do a lot of public safety walks in our commercial corridors, whether it is Clark, Lincoln or Armitage. We are starting to fine-tune those. We want businesses to reach out to us. Just last week, the 18th Chicago Police District even sent a police sergeant along with us,” said Knudsen.

Echoing Feigenholtz, Ald. Hopkins addressed the ongoing discussions being held about Lake Shore Dr. construction.

“The latest plans presented include getting the most bang for the buck. It doesn’t include dedicated bus lanes, but it does include dedicated bus interchanges. Where the CTA buses will get on and off will be completely redesigned. Buses will have their own ingress and egress. It will have minimal impact on the non-CTA traffic but the travel time gains for the buses will be significant,” he said.

According to its website, the purpose of the LPCC is to support and celebrate Chicago’s historic Lincoln Park neighborhood. Its goal is to help make Lincoln

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Park a thriving destination to live, work and play.

At their annual meeting, the LPCC recognized its two 2025 Neighborhood Champion Award winners, Gilaad Matar, Vice-President and Financial Advisor with Morgan Stanley and the Wrightwood Neighbors Assoc.

Since 1947, the organization has assisted local businesses get exposure, find new customers, create new partnerships and to share knowledge with one another about local issues and challenges. Located at 2468 N. Lincoln Ave., the LPCC hosts events throughout the year. For more information contact the chamber at info@lincolnparkchamber.com or 773-880-5200.

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