

Horses lend us
the wings we lack.
— Pam Brown

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NEWS OF LINCOLN PARK, LAKE VIEW, NORTH CENTER & LINCOLN SQUARE

insideonline.com

Another high density project for North Center with parking shortfall

A zoning application has been submitted for another proposed bland, block-like cookie-cutter high density mixed-use development at 2035 W. Irving Park. Rising 60 feet, as is typical these days, the effort will add new density to the North Center community while not providing enough off-street parking to serve the mixed-use building's demand.

The building will offer 37 new residential units, plus 3,000 square feet of retail but provide only 16 parking spaces for residents and retail tenants and their customers. Prior to the new Transit Oriented Development [TOD] zoning, a building like this would have had to offer, at minimum, 37 off-street parking spaces, not including those that a future retail tenant might need.

Developed by Altitude Capital Partners, the project site is located at the southwest corner of W. Irving Park Rd and N. Seeley Ave. where a small strip mall ex-



This new high density mixed-use property is proposed for North Center, and will provide 37 new residential units but only create 16 parking spaces.

ists now. The building will rise 60-feet and rents are expected to be \$2,200 for one-bedroom; two-beds at \$3,000, and the three-bedroom at \$3,600.

Where the many delivery and ride-share vehicles this building will attract will park is a mystery, as the builders are making no accommodation for the future traffic it will create. Drawings show that the building's footprint will

cover every square foot of its site. It's easy to imagine those vehicles will be mostly double parking on Irving Park Rd., as is the case all over the city where ever these new TOD buildings are erected.

The developer is seeking to re-zone the site from B1-1 to B3-3. If approved, construction could begin this fall and completed by Spring 2026.

Vacant 7-Eleven may become performance site

The cultural organization Access Contemporary Music [ACM] is seeking a zoning change for 4116 N. Clark St., from RS-3 to B3-1 to turn the currently vacant commercial space into another location for ACM. The space would house rooms for music lessons for adults and children, as well as a 60-seat performance space.

The current site has been a vacant 7-Eleven for the last few years, located at the point of Clark St. and Southport. A zon-

ing change is required for the proposed new use.

The plan calls for 20 on-site parking spots.

There will be a community meeting for residents of the Graceland West Neighbors Assoc. 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 7, to review the proposal via Zoom, to register visit: bit.ly/4116clark.

ACM provides equitable access to the transformative power of music-making, hoping to foster the creation of new music at

all levels in collaborative concerts, festivals and digital media projects designed to reach a wide audience. Performances would take place Thursday-Sunday and operations would conclude by 10 p.m. ACM also hopes to serve alcoholic beverages at concerts.

All of ACM's programs serve several elements, such as their School of Music, the Thirsty Ears classical music street festival, Sound of Silent Film, and Open House.

Dom's, Foxtrot grocery stores crash, 16 North Side stores shuttered

Outfox Hospitality, the combined merged firm made up of the Chicago food retailers - Dom's Kitchen and Market and Foxtrot - closed their doors to customers April 23, and has announced plans to file for Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

Dom's North Side locations, one at Diversey and Halsted in Lincoln Park, and the other at 1562 N. Wells St. in Old Town, closed Tuesday morning, with one account claiming staff had to kick out Lincoln Park shoppers to close down the store.

The firm said closure affects those two Dom's stores and 33 Foxtrots across Chicago, Texas, and Washington DC areas.

In a released statement they claimed to be "exploring avenues to continue the business but found no viable option despite good faith and exhaustive efforts."

Reportedly, some 1,000 people work for Outfox across several states, including about 100 full-time workers located in Chicago.

Dom's was founded by grocery veteran Bob Mariano, who once worked for Dominick's and then Mariano's. They opened the first Dom's store in Lincoln Park in 2021. Foxtrot had created a digital-first e-commerce platform paired with a beautiful retail experience and rapid 30-minute delivery and 5-minute pickup service.

In Jan. 2022 the firm announced

\$100 million in Series C funding led by D1 Capital Partners with continued participation from existing investors Monogram, Imaginary, Almanac, Wittington, Fifth Wall and Beliaide and joining investors Lerer Hippeau and Revolution. The Series C funding brought their total funding to \$160 million.

The Old Town Dom's store created their own bad karma when it took over the Old Town building that was home to an independent grocer, Plum Market, a move the owners of Plum Market claimed was a "back door deal."

Dom's had plans to open 13

SHUTTERED see p. 12



CDOT removes "Rat Hole" sidewalk in Roscoe Village

BY JACK LYDON

On April 24 the Chicago Dept. of Transportation [CDOT] removed the section of sidewalk in Roscoe Village with the animal impression frozen in the concrete—Chicago's world famous "Rat Hole."

CDOT workers removed and replaced sections of sidewalk and curb in the 1900 block of W. Roscoe containing the Rat Hole. The animal impression in concrete has drawn nationwide attention in recent months. By mid-afternoon, a new sidewalk was poured. By early evening, the concrete had set and the forms were removed

putting an end to the Rat Hole which some accounts said had been in place for 20 years.

It had become a pilgrimage of sorts lately due to all the visibility, with visitors near and far hiking to the site.

CDOT's Ambrosio Medrano, Jr., on the scene at the time of the removal said that the section of the sidewalk with the impression of the rodent was preserved and is in the possession of CDOT. Medrano said that the Rat Hole sidewalk would be given to the City's Rodent Control Office in the Dept. of Streets and Sanita-

RAT HOLE see p. 12

Public health officials keeping an eye out for Ocular Syphilis

BY PETER VON BUOL

Public health officials in Chicago are urging city residents to be aware of rare symptoms of syphilis which affect the brain, the eyes and hearing. These symptoms include headaches and vision problems and often are found in patients without the skin ulcers that are most often associated with the sexually-transmitted disease that is caused by a bacteria, *Treponema pallidum*.

Speaking at a recent health conference last week in Atlanta, Dr. Amy Nham, a public health investigator for the Chicago Dept. of Public Health [CDPH], and her co-authors Taylor Holly and Irina Tabidze sifted through the city's public health data and found there had been 28 cases of Neurologic, Ocular, and Otic [NOO] syphilis that had occurred last year, between the months of January and August.

Nham and her co-authors also found most of the reported cases lacked the skin ulcers which most often indicate presence of the sexually-transmitted disease. Most of those treated had reported vision loss and six reported acute headaches.

According to the study authors, while NOO syphilis is most common among men who have sex with men and are living with Human Immunodeficiency Viruses [HIV], two-thirds of the cases in Chicago were actually among men who identify as heterosexual.

Nham and her co-authors urge public health officials and medical providers to be vigilant to screen for cases which may be NOO syphilis.

Syphilis is treatable, through the use of antibiotics. Unfortunately, left untreated, a pregnant

SYPHILIS see p. 12



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I'll raise you a nickel



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

The primitive image, at right, is full of Chicago-style Prairie charm. Chicago's very first U.S. Post Office, frozen in time, back in 1833. Fifty years before Bertha Palmer put on an evening gown and hijacked Chicago high society.

Fifty-seven years after the founding of the nation.

The image conjures up the feeling of just how unsettled the character of the land was on which Chicago sat when it first came to be.

It stirs all the primitive emotion of this city's beginnings when everyone gathered their canoes around our lakefront glory. The perfect location to set about the task of building a settlement beyond the proportions of old Fort Dearborn.

The energy of the future modern city vibrated among the log

cabins and the outdoor latrines.

Mark Beaubien's Sauganash Inn was the perfect place for a corn whiskey nightcap and a tune on the fiddle, back at the dawn of Chicago life. There were few rules at first, just no guns in the Sauganash Hotel and no wearing your boots to bed.

At a time when a half pint of rum was 25¢, a room for the night cost about 12¢, and shelter for your horse was 50¢, postage was financially hefty in the early days. Distance governed the cost. At less than 30 miles a one-sheet letter cost 6¢ to mail. While 30 to 80 miles was 10¢. Eighty to 150 miles was 12¢; 150 to 400 miles cost 18¢. Over 400 miles, like back East to the folks, was a whopping 25¢.

But in 1851, as things changed in the nation, there was a new basic rate of 5¢ for each half-ounce up to 3000 miles.

Swampy Chicago was a paradise for the trappers and traders who frequented the region. You could paddle your canoe to your front door. And now you could send a letter to a loved one, if you knew how to write.

The post office [in the photo] was first established in Chicago on March 8, 1831, with Johnathan N. Baily, a fur trader, being appointed our first postmaster. The original post office was a log building near the present site of the Lake St. bridge at the east end.

The image of Chicago's first post office is important. Historically it announced Chicago's future. Its dream of becoming the capitol of the American Heartland. The image is the picture of promise.

Through the delivery of Chi-



Chicago's very first U.S. Post Office, 1833.

cago's mail over the years, it is possible to see how Chicago became connected with the rest of the country.

I raise the issue today, 191-years later, because I believe the U.S. Postal Service [USPS] always appears as such an enigmatic institution. Too vast. Beleaguered. Overly political. Disorganized. Unsupervised.

And because the USPS and our Post Master General Louis DeJoy, a Trump appointee, recently filed notice with the Postal Regulatory Commission that the cost of mailing to the public was about to change. New service changes are to take effect July 14.

Of course the new rates include a 5¢ increase in the price of First-Class Mail, the "Forever" stamp. From 68¢ to 73¢ for letters of 1oz.

The USPS is just ripe for the pork-barrel, manipulation of Congress, U.S labor unions, local behind-the-scenes political operators state by state. And county by county. And city by city. It is an institution whose footprints and fingerprints are everywhere. You know they love our new mail-in ballot systems, such power to swing elections, moving ballots around with zero supervision or oversight by local or federal election officials.

Over time it has created for itself an influential political lobby. Perhaps the most dynamic in the nation. It does not lend itself to efficiency under any conditions. Or to good judgments when the local vote getters and candidates mark their inside territory to promote their political strength and leverage.

Many Americans are critical of the cost versus service scenario of the USPS. The economic cost

of the system often appears not worth the cost of the poor functioning and delivery of an antiquated system.

Critics cite the excellence of many small nations for their high postal efficiency and effective organization. But often the political muscle of the Postal Workers Union themselves demonstrates a conflicted institution leveraging with official Washington.

The postal system appears antiquated, convoluted and built for poor management and failure.

Not unlike the realms of urban government in Chicago. It demonstrates a tragic system of fevered control and seasoned dysfunction, especially in the poor supervision and unwavering ineptitude of local city and county leadership.

The postal system, much like Chicago's City Hall, is in desperate need of intelligent supervision and reasoned judgment. The adolescent actions of elected officials demonstrate a deep inability to evaluate sound plans of effective organization. The current administration has demonstrated little skill with creating a more sound economic profile in Chicago or nationwide.

Chicago's government frequently stretches beyond its responsible reach to demand absurd economic rescues from the federal government and to create strange scenarios of revenue resources. Who can recall such economic ineptitude in any Daley administration, or in the Rahm Emanuel regime.

You don't need to have a Nobel Prize in economics to see the gaping error and holes in such misadventure. The poor quality of Chicago Police funding can be expected to be ravaged to stimulate and financially fund every

conceivable harebrained scheme of the Chicago Teachers Union because they hold the mayor hostage. No wonder his chief of staff fled the 5th floor well in advance of the Democratic National Convention that promises to be chaotic-filled and shamefully disorganized.

Many Americans would just be satisfied if their mail was delivered in the daylight. If it didn't arrive at the mercy of the mail carrier in a system that long ago forsook the "neither rain nor sleet nor gloom of night," the postman's oath.

Chicago's mayor, like many mail workers, needs to learn the route of their deliveries. Hard work and shoe leather are the only determinate of that commitment to office entrusted by others.

Something postmaster Johnathan Baily recognized in his riverside log cabin where his Chicago mail was delivered by horse cart and canoe.

"I'll raise you a nickel."

WGN RADIO: Thanks to everyone who listened to The Rick Kogen Show on WGN Radio Sunday, April 21, with **Neal Samors** and myself. We talked about our new book, "Memories of Growing Up in Chicago." Rick is a real erudite Chicago radio pro and the hour flew by. If you missed it, the show can be heard on the online.

NO PARKING: "National Small Business Week celebrates our commitment to enhancing support and providing resources to small businesses underscores our dedication to nurturing the resilience and growth of every local business owner in our great city. By providing targeted initiatives and programs, we empower them to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace," said BACP Cmsr. **Kenneth J. Meyer**, of the Chicago Dept. of Business Af-

NICKEL see p. 9

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Cubs get their gambling

**Cubs Win! Cubs Win!
Cubs Win!**

**Gamblers Lose!
Gamblers Lose!**

The Chicago Cubs won the closest thing there is to a “sure thing” last week when the Illinois Gaming Board [IGB] awarded them their Master Sports Wagering License for Northside Crown Gaming, LLC [i.e., DraftKings].

The IGB approved the Cubs plan for gambling and sports wagering at Clark and Addison at their April board meeting.

DraftKings Sportsbook at Wrigley Field is part of a multi-year partnership between the Chicago Cubs and DraftKings. Marquee Development [the Ricketts Family] are partners in the sports bar and wagering facility - and served as the owners - on the 17,000 square foot addition that was recently built at Addison and Sheffield.

The sportsbook is open year round both on game days and non-game days, also offering food and beverage service.

Despite the fact that more than 96% of Illinois’ \$30.28 billion all-time sports betting handle has come via online and sports betting apps, sometimes wagering can truly be about the old real estate axiom of location, location, location. And on the North Side, there are few locations better than Wrigley Field.

IGB Administrator Marcus D. Fruchter reminded Illinois sports

wagering, video gaming and casino gambling operators of their obligations not to directly market or advertise to minors. Gamblers in Illinois need to be at least 21 years of age or older.

“[We are] committed to maintaining the safety and integrity of Illinois gaming, and [we recognize] that issues of underage gambling and gambling advertising that may target young people are matters of public concern,” said Fruchter. “We encourage and expect all Illinois operators to remain similarly steadfast, mindful, vigilant, and compliant.”

Ninety percent of Illinois’ \$30.28 billion all-time sports betting handle has come via online and sports betting apps

At the meeting, the Board also took many other regulatory actions including for video gaming. The IGB approved licenses for one supplier, three terminal operators, 123 video gaming locations, 37 terminal handlers and four technicians. The IGB denied video gaming licenses for four video gaming location applicants, rescinded one terminal handler denial, and non-renewed five location establishment licenses.

For casinos, the IGB approved nine casino Key Person applicants, 76 Level 2 casino occupational licenses and 86 Level 3 casino occupational licenses.

The deal

BY SPORTSHANDLE.COM

When Gov. JB Pritzker signed the Sports Wagering Act into law in June 2019 to legalize sports betting, there was a banning of wagers on Illinois schools. There are plenty of opportunities for wagering on in-state schools with 12 Division I teams over the course of college football and college basketball seasons, but those opportunities largely dry up come March for the latter.

The grouching about the inability to wager on these games hit a crescendo in March 2021 when Illinois faced Loyola of Chicago in the sec-

ond round of the NCAA Tournament. The ban on betting for that game sent some bettors scrambling over the Chicago Skyway Toll Bridge to Indiana to make wagers on that contest in Indiana.

The frustration was loud enough that then-State Rep. Mike Zalewski authored an amendment that would allow betting on in-state schools — but only in-person at sportsbooks and only for “Tier 1” wagers, which are pre-game bets involving the moneyline, point spread, and totals.

That amendment passed as part of HB 3136 in the final hours of the 102nd Illinois General Assembly veto session in Nov. 2021. Those

rules were extended through the end of the 2023-24 academic year last May via Senate Bill 0089 by the current General Assembly since Zalewski’s amendment was scheduled to sunset July 1 and remain the status quo.

Former Rep. Jonathan Carroll introduced a bill that would remove the in-state carveout for both retail and mobile betting last April, but he resigned in January, and there has been no movement on the bill in Springfield since it was referred to the Rules Committee upon filing. Zalewski lost his seat in state legislature via election in 2022, leaving Rep. Bob Rita to shoulder most of the load.

At Wrigley Field, they OK’d two Management Services Provider licenses, for Crown IL Gaming and Northside Crown Gaming, LLC; one Master Sports Wagering License for Northside Crown Gaming, LLC; 43 sports wagering key

persons, and 111 Level 2 sports wagering occupational licenses.

DraftKings Sportsbook at Wrigley Field now gives North Side bettors a second option to place wagers besides Rivers Casino in Des Plaines.



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Buyers beware: North Side homes and condo prices are on the rise



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

North Side home and condominium price increases, along with higher mortgage costs, are hitting buyers with a one-two punch this spring.

“It remains a challenging market for buyers, particularly first-time buyers struggling to save an adequate down payment,” said Realtor Mary Jo Nathan of Baird & Warner’s North Center office at 4037 N. Damen Ave.

Baird & Warner’s quarterly Chicago North Side Market Report, authored by Nathan, tracks sales of single-family and attached homes in the neighborhoods of Edgewater, Lake View, Lincoln Park, Lincoln Square, Near North Side, North Center, Rogers Park, Uptown and West Ridge.

The current inventory shortage puts upward pressure on prices, Nathan noted. And that has been most noticeable in the market for single-family homes. “The first-quarter median sales price on the North Side this year was 31.1% higher than it was in 2020,” Nathan noted.

On the other hand, attached homes—condominiums and townhomes—the increase in median price across that same four-year period was only 8.1%, she said.

The first-quarter median home price for the North Side registered a modest increase largely in line with the overall rate of inflation, gaining 3.9% to \$395,000.

“However, we saw substantial first-quarter increases in the median prices of both attached and detached homes in Rogers Park, Uptown and West Ridge, which suggests to me that the more moderately priced homes in those communities are attracting greater interest from buyers

these days,” Nathan concluded.

Sales volume slides

First quarter North Side home sales totaled 1,589 units, down -5.6% from the same period last year. That contrasts sharply with the results of one year ago when first quarter sales fell -32.5% from the comparable period in 2022.

It took an average of 84 days for a home to go under contract in the first quarter—10 days fewer than in the first quarter of 2023.

“The steep year-over-year declines in sales volume we were seeing in the 18 months prior to



Mary Jo Nathan

the start of 2024 appear to have abated, but the market is still hampered by inventory levels that are near historic lows,” Nathan said.

Here is a detailed analysis of the Baird & Warner statistics on the first quarter of 2024:

Single-Family Homes

Unit sales of single-family homes across the North Side rose 2% in the first quarter to 152 units, while the median sales price climbed a hefty 20.9% to \$1.285 million. It is the 14th consecutive quarter for which the median sales price exceeded \$1 million.

The time it took to find a buyer for homes sold during the quarter was 107 days, up from 91 days a year earlier.

“One reason we saw such a strong increase in the median price is that sales rose in the areas where homes are most expensive and generally declined in areas where prices tend

to be more moderate,” Nathan explained.

For example, Nathan said sales volume rose 16% in North Center, 23.8% in Lincoln Park, and 41.2% in Lake View. But unit sales were lower in Lincoln Square, Edgewater and Rogers Park and essentially flat in West Ridge.

Nathan also noted that the single-family market on the North Side is seeing a modest increase in the inventory of homes for sale, with 165 listings available at the end of the first quarter this year compared to 155 homes last year.

As for median prices of single-family homes, they rose in six of the nine neighborhoods. When compared with the same period in 2023, the first-quarter 2024 gains were:

- Rogers Park, up a hefty 65.7% to \$916,500.
- Uptown, up a solid 35.6% to \$1.2 million.
- West Ridge, up a strong 26.4% to \$480,500.
- North Center, up 13.2% to \$1.415 million.
- Lincoln Park, up 11.7% to \$1,842,500.
- Lincoln Square, up 8.4% to \$1,192,500.

The median home price fell -12.1% in Edgewater to \$859,000. In Lake View the home-price decline was -2.1% to \$1,498,125. On the Near North Side, the decline was a modest -1.7% to \$2,457,000.

Condos and Townhouses

There were 1,437 attached-home sales during the quarter. That represents a -6.3% decline from one year ago. Attached homes consist primarily of condominium apartments and townhouses.

Attached-home unit sales rose in just one of the nine neighborhoods that make up the North Side. But that one—the Near North Side, including the Gold Coast and Streeterville—was the most significant in terms of the attached-home market. Unit sales there rose 7.6% to 537 units, accounting for 37.4% of all attached sales for the first quarter of 2024.

The overall median sales price of a condo or townhouse on the North Side rose 3% for the quarter to \$367,500, while average market time decreased by 12 days to 82 days.

The median attached-home sales price rose in seven of the nine North Side communities. Uptown led the way with a 29.2% gain to \$342,500, followed by Lincoln Park, where the median of \$612,500 represented a 25% increase.

Other gains were: Rogers Park, up 19.1% to \$224,000, West Ridge, up 12.7% to \$169,000, Lake View, up 6.3% to \$416,000, North Center, up 2.5% to \$525,500, and Lincoln Square up 2.3% to \$340,000.

The Near North Side’s median attached home price fell -7.3% to \$380,000, while Edgewater’s median slipped -1.4% to \$241,500.

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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Mayor and Bears unpack a new stadium deal

BY
ALD. SCOTT WAGUESPACK,
32ND WARD

Last week, the Chicago Bears and Mayor Brandon Johnson held a joint press conference to unveil a plan to spend more than \$1 billion in taxpayer funds on yet another stadium project for the team. Including the old Soldier Field debt, the expected cost for a new stadium is \$6.9 billion.

This Mayor was elected on a platform centered around investing in the City's South and West sides and creating a more equitable City for the benefit of all Chicagoans. Instead of delivering on this promise, he has co-opted himself into supporting a massive billion-dollar plus taxpayer subsidy for the benefit of the Chicago Bears' owners.

There have been no meetings with the City Council to discuss the possibility of city taxpayers funding for the Bears stadium. Gov. JB Pritzker and Speaker Chris Welch both spoke to the public about this press conference indicating there is no appetite for the funding demand in Springfield.

Instead of collaborating with city, park district, county, state, and federal stakeholders on a plan for the future of Soldier Field, the Mayor has decided to unilaterally throw his support behind yet another taxpayer funded stadium plan before the debt supporting the last plan for the Bears has even come close to being paid for.

Presently, the outstanding debt for Soldier Field's 2003 renovation for the Bears is more than \$620 million, and there's also about \$50 million in debt for the Guaranteed Rate Field renovations.

Mayor Johnson said giving more than a billion dollars of public tax revenue to this project amounted to economic development. What it does is generate debt and debt service.

It matters how the City decides to invest its taxpayer dollars. Rather than investing in healthier, vibrant, equitable neighborhoods, schools, public safety, or parks he

is advocating for handing it over to the owners of the City's football team.

The purported economic impact from this new plan of \$8 billion is just as ludicrous as it sounds.

These impact studies are known in the world of economics as garbage in, garbage out models that are paid for with the implicit understanding that their sole function is to justify spending public resources for private benefit.

The lakefront has been and should be an amenity for all Chicagoans and those who visit our City. The Bears' plan doubles down on the use of this public space for their private benefit.

The transportation challenges that currently plague Soldier Field are only intensified by this plan and moving roads and traffic signals will not meaningfully improve access. The museums suffer each day there is a spectator event at this site, as potential patrons avoid the area due to in-

evitable traffic gridlock.

Nothing in the plan presented earlier addresses this fundamental flaw.

Commentary

Equally important as what was said at the Bears' press conference is what wasn't said. The public tax revenue that they are asking for comes from hotel taxes that, in the words of the City's Chief Financial Officer, are "volatile."

When the revenue from this volatile tax falls short of projections, the City's general fund will make up for the shortfall. This means less funds available for core public services including education, public safety, infrastructure, and more. These same hotel taxes were used to fund the ill-fated renovation the Bears did to Soldier Field 20 years ago. The City taxpayer has repeatedly had to cover revenue shortfalls as this hotel tax revenue fell short of projections.

Considering how poorly this investment turned out, how can we possibly support yet another massive public subsidy to the same sports franchise?

The question is, what are our highest core concerns and priorities? Do we need to divert federal, state, and city dollars to a new stadium that has been proclaimed the top priority by one official?

What promises have been made that the public needs to know?

Beyond the simple question of priorities, there are dozens of questions that were not addressed

or asked and avoided by the press conference promoters. Those questions will be put to the Mayor's office.

In the meantime, former Gov. Pat Quinn has joined the list of citizens submitting referendums. His submission to the City Clerk last month hopes to ask taxpayers on the November election ballot the question: "Shall the people of Chicago pay any taxpayer subsidies to the Chicago Bears or Chicago White Sox in order to build a new stadium or new real estate development?"



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Police Beat...

Recognize him? Cops say he pulled a woman into an alley, intending a sex crime



A surveillance image of the man wanted for trying to sexually abuse a woman in the West Loop on April 14.

The man who pulled a woman into a West Loop alley in an apparent sex crime ran away after the victim bit his finger during the attack, Chicago police said. Now, CPD is asking the public to help them track the man down.

Police said the 35-year-old victim was walking north on Carpenter St. from Randolph St. when the man approached her from behind around 5:24 a.m. April 14.

He grabbed the woman by the waist and put his hands over her mouth as he dragged her into an alley, police said in a newly released bulletin. Once they were in the alley, the woman bit his index finger, prompting him to throw the woman to the ground and run away.

He was last seen heading east on Randolph St. Police describe him as a 30- to 35-year-old Hispanic man with short hair. His jacket is white and green.

Information about the case can be shared with Area Three detectives at 312-744-8200. The case number is JH-224931.

Man charged with burglarizing five residential buildings in Lakeview, Lincoln Park

Prosecutors have charged a Lakeview man with burglarizing five North Side residential buildings since February. All of the break-ins were caught on video, according to Chicago police.

Armsstead Doggett, 44, was arrested around 8:50 a.m. Sunday in the 400 block of W. Melrose when he returned to a building he had previously burglarized and someone recognized him, according to his arrest report.



Armsstead Doggett

Prosecutors said Doggett broke into that building on April 1 and took a mountain bike from the storage area.

On Feb. 24, he entered a building in the 500 block of W. Barry, searching unlocked rooms and entering the mailroom, the report said. He allegedly opened unclaimed packages to steal their contents.

He's accused of stealing three packages from a building in the 3100 block of N. Lincoln on Feb. 22.

On March 10, he allegedly burglarized buildings in the 1600 block of W. Belmont and the 500 block of W. Wrightwood. He pried his way into the Belmont location and burglarized cars in the condo building parking garage, prosecutors claim. He's accused of forcing his way into the Wrightwood location to steal packages.

Doggett, of the 3100 block of N. Oakley, is charged with five counts

of burglary. He also faces a felony charge of unauthorized possession of a debit card because, according to his arrest report, he had a woman's bank card when they arrested him.

Judge Mary Marubio released Doggett with a nighttime curfew.

Shots fired, at least 11 robbed as armed holdup crew sweeps across downtown

A group of armed robbers fired shots and dragged a 66-year-old woman to the ground in Streeterville April 25. The attack was part of a 45-minute robbery spree that started near the Univ. of Illinois Chicago. At least nine people were robbed.

The robberies all involved a group of men who traveled in a silver or gray sedan that had one black door, according to witnesses.

First, around 12:15 a.m. near the corner of Racine and Harrison, two men wearing hoodies displayed guns and took the phones and other valuables from three men who were walking on the sidewalk, according to police.

A few minutes later, around 12:25 a.m., the group was in Streeterville. Two men targeted a 66-year-old woman as she stood in the 600 block of N. Fairbanks, according to Chicago police. One of the men fired shots while the other dragged the woman into the street until she let go of her property, police said.

No one was shot, but the woman was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital for treatment of other injuries. CPD said she is in good condition.

Within a few minutes, robberies started popping up in the Loop, beginning in the 700 block of S. Clark. Two robbers displayed guns and demanded money from a man, police said, but a 46-year-old woman intervened.

The robbers struck her in the head with a firearm and escaped in the silver sedan without getting anything from the victims.

Around 12:30 a.m., robbers targeted two more victims in the 200 block of E. Randolph, near Millennium Park. Once again, the men pistol-whipped one of the victims before fleeing in a gray sedan.

Finally, three people were robbed outside the Hyatt Regency, 151 E. Wacker Dr., around 12:53 a.m. The group was walking when the two gunmen pulled up in a silver sedan.

During the robbery, the offenders pistol-whipped a 28-year-old woman, and a 25-year-old man in the group suffered cuts to his knee and hand. Both were taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in good condition, police said. The third victim, a 28-year-old man, was not injured.

The exact number of robbers involved in the crimes is not clear. CPD described the robbers as Black males between 15 and 20 years old wearing dark hoodies and black ski masks. Some victims said one of the robbers wore a white hoodie.

Suburban man brought gun to city because 'Chicago is crazy,'

A suburban man arrested for carrying a gun in Old Town told police he decided to bring his wife's firearm with him on a trip to the city because "Chicago is crazy," according to the cops who arrested him.



Donovan Martin

The incident began when a Lake County man called police after getting punched in the face while walking in the 200 block of W. North Ave. around 3 a.m. April 14. He told police that a stranger walked up to him and his companions, asked what they were doing in the area, and then began punching him in the face, the cops' report said.

Officers searched the area and found 34-year-old Donovan Martin

of Woodridge and a 21-year-old woman matching the suspects' descriptions. Both were arrested after the man identified them as the people who punched him, the report said.

Cops asked Martin if he had any weapons, to which he allegedly replied that he "ain't gonna lie" and that he had a gun on his waist. The officers recovered a pistol from his waist and three loose bullets from his pocket, according to the report.

That's when Martin revealed that the gun belongs to his wife, but he brought it with him "since Chicago is crazy," the report said.

Prosecutors charged him with unlawful use of a weapon and misdemeanor battery. Judge Kelly McCarthy released him to await trial.

Man sexually attacks two women in Boystown

Two women were sexually assaulted as they walked in Boystown on April 22. Police say the same man is responsible for both attacks.

Chicago police said one woman was attacked in the 700 block of W. Brompton just before 9 p.m. Area Three detectives issued a community alert, saying the woman was walking eastbound when a man grabbed her from behind, claimed to have a gun, and ordered her not to turn back.

The man tried to sexually assault the woman, but her screams brought nearby residents to the scene and they intervened, the alert said.

Then, around 9:10 p.m., a 23-year-old woman was attacked as she walked in the 800 block of W. Buckingham, just east of Clark St. She told the police she heard someone walking quickly behind her before being grabbed and taken to the ground. The man climbed on top of her and made sexually explicit statements, according to CPD.

He ran away after the woman raked his eyes.

According to police, the man is Black, 20 to 30 years old, 5'-6" to 5'-8" tall, and heavyset. He is either bald or has a short haircut, and he was last seen wearing white clothing. He may have injuries to his eye area.

Anyone with information can contact Area Three detectives at 312-744-8261. The case numbers are JH-235419 and JH-235428.

Jury convicts woman of killing her landlord, dismembering the body



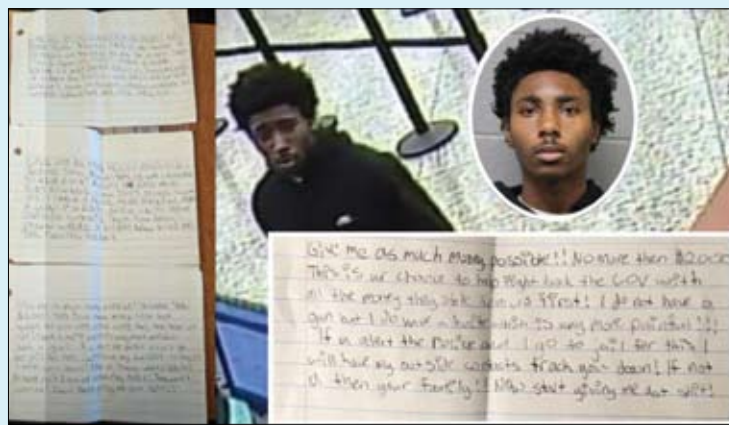
Mugshot of Sandra Kotalou (left) in January 2022, and Frances Walker (right).

On April 22 a jury found a Chicago woman guilty of murdering her landlord, dismembering the woman's body, and stealing her identity. Sandra Kotalou, 37, has maintained her innocence and pressed the state for a quick trial since prosecutors filed charges in Oct. 2022.

Officials said Kotalou's landlord, 69-year-old Frances Walker, regularly rented rooms in her home in the 5900 block of N. Washtenaw, and Kotalou was one of her tenants.

Other tenants heard a scream in the home around 2:30 a.m. Oct. 10, 2022, and they grew concerned when they did not see Walker the next morning. Some residents checked in on Walker via text, and they received responses—responses that Chicago police accused Kotalou of sending after murdering Walker.

In announcing the charges, police and prosecutors said Walker had recently served Kotalou with eviction papers. They believed Kotalou killed Walker in Walker's bedroom and then dismembered her, possibly using



Kendall Jones, inset, is seen with a surveillance image of the robber, the hold-up note, and three rough drafts.

Bank robber, hunted down by security guard, had three rough drafts of holdup note in his pocket

A man faces federal bank robbery charges after the bank security guard chased him down and allegedly found him carrying three rough drafts of the holdup note he handed to a teller.

The robbery occurred around 10:15 a.m. Tuesday at Chase Bank, 10 S. Dearborn, in the Loop.

According to a federal complaint filed by an FBI agent, the robber asked a teller about opening an account and then passed a note to the teller, asking if it would suffice as identification.

"Give me as much money possible!! No more then \$2000. This is ur chance to help fight back the Gov with all the money they stole from us first!" the note read. "I do not have a gun but I do have a knife which is way more painful!!! If u alert the police and I go to jail for this I will have my outside contacts track you down! If not u then

your family!! Now start giving me dat shit!"

The teller handed over \$500: two \$100 bills, four \$50 bills, four \$20 bills, and a \$10 bill, the complaint said.

A bank security guard chased the robber into a nearby high-rise and brought him out in handcuffs, according to the complaint, which identified the robber as Kendall Jones.

The complaint said Jones, wearing the same clothes as the robber, had three different versions of the holdup note in his possession, along with two \$100 bills, four \$50 bills, four \$20 bills, and a \$10 bill.

Photojournalist Keith Yearman was at the scene as Chicago police took custody of Jones.

large butcher knives. Her body parts were later found inside a freezer at her home.

Kotalou's attorneys said in court filings this month that she planned to present an alibi that she was at a hotel party in Warrenville and, later, asleep in her room at Walker's home during the hours that prosecutors said Walker was killed. She would claim that she logged in to work remotely from home on the morning after the murder, the lawyers said.

Prosecutors went to trial on four charges: two counts of murder, aggravated identity theft of a person older than 60, and dismembering a human body. On April 22, the jury returned guilty verdicts on all counts. Kotalou is expected to be sentenced this summer.

Man sexually attacked two Lakeview women less than two months after getting out of prison for sexual attacks on woman, teen

A man paroled last month for sex-related crimes against a woman and a teenager is now accused of sexually attacking two more women in Lakeview on April 22.

As infuriating as those developments are, there is also this: Jeremy Mack has been accused multiple times of trying to abduct or restrain women and girls he did not know, but the cases only resulted in misdemeanor charges.



Jeremy Mack

Just before 9 p.m. April 22, a 25-year-old woman heard someone walking behind her in the 700 block of W. Brompton in Boystown.

Prosecutors say it was Mack. He passed the woman and then bent down to tie his shoe.

As the woman passed Mack, he attacked her from behind, wrapping his arms around her chest and threatening to shoot her if she screamed, prosecutors said. Mack grabbed the woman's breasts and tried to put his hand down her pants, according to a detention petition. She told the police she could feel Mack's erection against her back as he thrust his pelvis. Mack ran away when the woman screamed,

prosecutors said.

About 15 minutes later, Mack allegedly attacked a second woman in the 800 block of W. Buckingham. He grabbed the 25-year-old from behind and threw her to the ground, causing her to suffer a minor concussion, the detention petition said.

As he climbed on top of the woman, she repeatedly scratched his face and chest while screaming for help. He ran away.

Mack still had scratches on his face when police arrested him, Judge Ankur Srivastava said as he granted the detention petition. Surveillance cameras recorded Mack in the area of both attacks, and both women identified him in photo line-ups, according to the judge's order.

He is charged with two counts of aggravated battery in a public place, aggravated criminal sexual abuse, and attempted aggravated criminal sexual abuse.

Srivastava also pointed to Mack's history of similar crimes, attacking women from behind or in their homes.

A review of Mack's arrest history indicates that authorities have had multiple opportunities to pursue serious charges against Mack since 2014, but they frequently settled for misdemeanors.

In Jan. 2014, prosecutors charged Mack with criminal sexual abuse of a victim between 13 and 17 years old near his Lower West Side home, but they dropped the case two weeks later. Details about that case were not immediately available.

But there are plenty of details about other attacks, all occurring within blocks of the 2014 case.

On June 11, 2021, Mack was accused of entering a 45-year-old woman's home in the 2200 block of W. 21st St. at 4 a.m. The woman, who said she had never seen Mack before, told police he grabbed her wrists and tried to force her into her bedroom, a CPD report says. He ran when she screamed for help.

Cops found him at a nearby bus stop, but prosecutors only charged him with misdemeanor counts of criminal trespass to a residence and battery. Then they dropped the case

Man who set CTA van on fire in the Loop during 2020 riots gets 45 months

BY CWBCHICAGO

Nearly four years after he helped set a CTA work van on fire in the Loop during the George Floyd riots, Darion Lindsey pleaded guilty to federal charges on Thursday.

U.S. District Judge John Blakey sentenced Darion Lindsey to 45 months in prison, but Lindsey has already served enough time to offset nearly all of the sentence.

Lindsey, Denzel Stewart, and Lamar Taylor worked together to set the CTA van on fire as it sat abandoned in the middle of State St. on May 30, 2020. According to court records, Stewart and Taylor had already pleaded guilty, receiving sentences of 45 months and 26 months, respectively.

Lindsey "was determined to set a fire that day," prosecutors said in a sentencing memorandum, claiming Lindsey tried to set a bag on fire in a trash bin at Pritzker Park before turning his attention to the van.

He tossed bottles and fireworks at firefighters who arrived to extinguish the fire "until they had to run off," the memo said. The fire,



Darion Lindsey is seen throwing a bottle toward firefighters and setting a box on fire before igniting the CTA van.

said prosecutors, "served as some of the images and stories that tarnished this city."

Prosecutors asked for a sentence of 57 to 71 months, pointing to Lindsey's history of assault, battery, and robbery as well as his status as "a proud member of the Black Disciples gang."

Defense attorneys asked for time served along with the government's suggested restitution of \$20,987.

"He has learned to regulate his emotions and will not recidivate," one of Lindsey's lawyers wrote in

the defense sentencing memo.

Cook County court records show police and prosecutors filed 14 separate criminal cases against Lindsey between March and July 2020, mostly for misdemeanors. That does not include the federal arson conspiracy case. Local prosecutors dropped most of the cases.

A felony aggravated battery case filed against him in July 2020 is still pending, according to Cook County records.

Letters to the Editor

Ignorance is bliss, swiping money is theft

Can anyone at City Haul (not a misspelling) read the laws concerning Tax Increment Financing?

Regarding your TIF borrowing story [April 24], money raised in TIF zones must stay in the districts where it was collected from those property tax payers within the defined TIF boundaries.

If it is used for other areas, it first must be declared surplus.

Surplus funds are paid by the municipal treasurer to the county collector, the Illinois Dept. of Revenue and to the municipality in direct proportion to the incremental tax revenue received. The county treasurer is then required to make distributions to the respective taxing districts such as Cook County, the Water Recla-

mation District, the Library, the Board of Education, the School Finance Authority and the Park District.

The City will only get to keep about 20% of the \$1.5 billion they're salivating over. That's \$300 million not \$1.5 billion.

Taking money that belong to others is theft.

You don't think some parent with a special needs child or a senior experiencing home insecurity is going to ignore that their special ed program or housing needs are not being met and not file a class action lawsuit?

Good luck.

Mike Sullivan
Avondale

No more plastic grass

The Bears unveiled their big idea for another monstrosity on our lakefront to inexplicable cheers from Chicago's mayor, no doubt due to the jobs estimations. We heard no-one ask what they plan to put on the ground.

The news cycle informing everyone with lungs that they have plastic micro-and nanobits therein was not even cold when the imaginary flags at this new stadium (and the other monstrosity wanted by the White Sox) got zealously flown, yet it is the plastic attacks we should be alarmed by.

Half the NFL teams, including in Soldier Field, have fake grass. Astro turf and its ilk are made of slips and shards of plastic dummied up to look like blades of grass. Fake grass never biodegrades, as real grass does; it must now universally be viewed dimly and understood as part of the world's problems.

When people play on fake grass, sooner or later it will wear out, breaking into smaller and smaller pieces, which wash into rivers, oceans, and our Great Lakes; they float about, and we cannot avoid inhaling them.

Chicago could be a world leader in eliminating the man-made hazard of humans inhaling and drinking in plastics. We should mitigate the threat, rather than encouraging known pollutants. Mayor Johnson should stop cheering for the base evil of plastics.

Maja Ramirez
Avondale

Have something on your mind about your community? Write a Letter To The Editor at insidepublicationschicago@gmail.com

Chicago man participated in \$210,000 Louis Vuitton raid while on parole for \$46,000 Prada raid

BY CWBCHICAGO

A man charged this week with participating in a \$210,000 shoplifting mob raid on a Louis Vuitton store in River North is on parole for carrying out a similar \$46,000 raid at the nearby Prada store.

Kahdaffie Green, 25, has become somewhat of a regular in our crime blotter. He has also developed a habit of being arrested for new crimes within weeks of getting out of prison.

Less than a week after he was released from the big house in Jan. 2022 for possessing a stolen motor vehicle, Green and three other men robbed the Prada store on Oak St. of \$46,000 worth of merchandise. Prosecutors said Green blocked the store's security guard so his accomplices could get inside.

At one point, the robbers

rammed the guard with a clothing rack, which caused him to fall to the ground and injure his wrist. The thieves escaped in two stolen cars that were waiting outside.

His first appearance was in Jan. 2022, when he blocked a security guard at Prada, 30 E. Oak, and allowed three accomplices to enter the store. They gathered armloads of purses.

Last December, barely five months after he got out of prison for the Prada store heist, prosecutors accused him and three other men of robbing a utility crew of an expensive sewer camera. Those charges are still pending.

He pleaded guilty early last year in exchange for a 42-month sentence, then got released in late July.

Barely four months later, in early December, Chicago police arrested Green and three other men, saying they all jumped out

of a stolen Jeep to rob a utility crew in the 9700 block of South Martin Luther King Drive.

Prosecutors said a utility crew was working in the 9700 block of S. Martin Luther King Dr. when four armed men jumped out of a stolen Jeep and took a SeeSnake sewer camera reel and an accompanying camera.

On Nov. 13, about three weeks before the sewer camera job, Green was part of a 10-person theft mob that stormed the Louis Vuitton

PAROLE see p. 10

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NICKEL from p. 2

fairs and Consumer Protection. If he really wanted to help our small businesses Ken would demand the city stop taking away customer street parking on commercial streets for those awful, elitist, business-killing privileged bike paths.

ZOO: The Women's Board of Lincoln Park Zoo will host the Zoo Ball: Wild Everest, its annual gala supporting animal care and welfare, conservation and community engagement initiatives, to be held July 12.

LYRIC OPERA: British conductor, **Sir Andrew Davis**, who led nearly 700 Lyric performances of 62 operas, died in Chicago recently from leukemia. His stunning ability as Music Director for decades enhanced the Lyric's envied reputation. He was friends with many Chicagoans and brought great art and splendid music to our eyes and ears. Rest in peace.

MAYORAL RECALL: His name is **Dan Boland**, from Lakeview, and he is trying to get 56,464 signatures to get a recall on Mayor "Ham Sandwich" Johnson. I fear it's an insurmountable political goal that does not take Chicago far enough. But I'll sign. We would also need to rid ourselves of the 19 Socialists who serve as aldermen. The crisis is real. What our soldiers and sailors learned back in Vietnam is still true today: never trust a commie.

DREAM AWARDS: The Dream Awards will be held on May 18 to honor legends who have achieved their dreams in music, film, dance, media and journalism. Columnist **Candace Jordan** will receive the Excellence in Media Award. No one deserves it more. The glamorous event will be held at the Kehrein Center For The Arts, 5628 W. Washington Blvd.

911: Lake Shore Dr. is supposedly closing for repairs but the scuttlebutt in some places is that they want to make it a toll-way.



(Left) Ryne Sandberg. (Center) Pam Lombardi Wenzel, Susan L. Regenstein and Myra Reilly. (Right) Tim Foufas and Kelley Decker.

WHAT A DAY: Joe Shanahan was juggling a triple whammy of a day, Record Store Day, the Great Lake Jumper Gman Tavern and a Cub's game with post-game events at the "Friendly Watering Hole Over the Left Field Wall."

PISA PIE: The Village of Niles is all geared up to purchase and demolish the vacant leaning tower YMCA on Touhy Ave. for new development after being empty for years.

WHO'S WHERE? Everyone's champ, **Ryne Sandburg**, made it the Cub's game April 20... The Democrat who should be Mayor of Chicago, **Maria Pappas**, in Braşov, România, doing enchanted orthodox all the way... **Tom Skilling** just returned from his post-eclipse/post-retirement holiday in Hawaii on the United Airlines red eye and had pre-dawn view of Chicago coming in... **Jane Yount** had Passover with the family and their newest member, **Mia** (or baby Bea)... **Carolyn** and **Dave Richter** at the Bulgari Hotel in Rome on the Piazza Augusto Imperatore... **Bobbi Panter** and **Matt Arnoux** at the Peninsula in Beverly Hills, CA... famed restaurateur **Gordon Sinclair** returned from his long voyage in the Caribbean declaring that 14 days is too long to roam those seas... **Cathy Bell Bartholo-**

may blissful in Manasot Key, FL... Lovely birthday lunch for **Lyssa Piette** tossed by **Colonel Paul Malarik III** and **Lynn Graham** at Gibson's Steakhouse... **John Ellis** hosting a BBQ and birthday party at his new Cumberland County home in Eastern Tennessee for all his golf pals... **Ken** and **Mary Claire Scorsone Moll** in sunny Sardegna sipping the primo vino... **Janet Owen** found a **Bob Mackie** vintage dress at Lulu's Vintage for a great party for The Guild of the Chicago History Museum... **Pam Lombardi Wenzel** and sister, **Myra Reilly**, wishing **Susan L. Regenstein** a happy birthday... **Matt Joki** says Chicago Cut is THE OG even if only 15 years old with a big "Thank you" to **David Flom** and **Matt Moore**, "we even saw **Eamonn Cummins** (the real mayor of Chicago)"... There was a fabulous birthday bash for **Jennifer Sutton Brievea** that was only fitting... Antiquer **Bruce Trivette** exhibited a really fine painting by **Jehudith Nobel**... **Sherry Lea Fox** had disco look for the Hinsdale Junior Women's Club annual gala "Disco Dreams"... **Liz Howard**, proud mom at the National College Club Volleyball Tournament with daughter, **Cate**, and her Butler U. Team... **Whitney Reynolds** just got her fabulous new desk for CineCity Studios Chicago, the gift of **Dr. William**

Yates... Maestro **Stanley Paul** is back in town and the Spring Luncheons at Gibson's have begun... Girl talk in the sunshine at the Bellevue, **Lauren Lein Cavanaugh** and **Patti Muvdi Moya**... **Mark O'Malley** and **Patricia Treacy** in La Pause, in the Morocco Desert, Marrakech, at **Tim Foufas** and **Kelley Decker's** exotic wedding.

ROYAL INDIAN ACTRESS: Film maker **Joey Majumdar** hosted a wonderful party at Gibson's Steakhouse in honor of Royal Indian actress beauty and funny chick, **Riya Sen**, visiting the U.S. on her way to NYC and LA. And **Ireen Mohica** sends special hugs to **Barb Bailey**, **Jeanae Paul**, **Rosemary Fanti**, **Jada Campbell**, **Irene Michaels** and **Joyce Selande**, and **Kathy O'Malley Piccone** worked her magic with the desserts.

PARIS BOUND? If you're traveling to the French capitol, don't miss "Paris 1874: Inventing Impressionism," at the Musée d'Orsay on the first Impressionist exhibition, which opened 150 years ago, ushering in what we think of as modern art.

Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds.
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Windy City Science Fair, for adults only

Beat it, you nerdy kids, this one is for mom and pop.

Something to let them feel like a kid again: the Windy City Science Fair - for Adults.

Who's ready for a day filled with mind-blowing presentations, interactive exhibits, and the opportunity to indulge in some adult beverages. The Science Fair will be held 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, May 4, at The Color Club, Tavern room, 4146 N. Elston Ave. Tickets are \$15.

This unique event brings together science enthusiasts to celebrate

the wonders of the world around us. From cutting-edge technology to mind-bending experiments, the Windy City Science Fair has something for everyone. Get your tickets now and let the curiosity take over.

There will be awards and a ceremony at 3 p.m. The science will be accompanied by music from DJ tigermilk; prizes for first, second, and third place, and a prize for audience favorite. For information visit <https://www.illinois-science.org/>.



Columbus Dr. closed May 4 for parade

On May 4, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., the Polish Constitution Day Parade will return to Columbus Dr. During the parade, some nearby streets will be closed to vehicular and pedestrian traffic, including Columbus Dr., from Roosevelt Rd. to Monroe St., and Balbo, from Michigan Ave. to Lake Shore Dr.

The Polish Constitution Day Parade in Chicago is the largest Polish parade outside of Poland, and celebrates the anniversary of the ratification of the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791.

Every year the Parade starts from the location of Buckingham Fountain and ends by the bridge over the Chicago River.

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Horse sense is the thing a horse has which keeps it from betting on people.
— W.C. Fields

RAT HOLE from p. 1

tion. CDOT officials later would not confirm plans for the Rat Hole.

The animal impression gained notoriety in early January when a local artist posted his rat sculpture with the Rat Hole. Since then, it has blown up social media and news reports. A wedding is reported to have taken place at the Rat Hole. For a while in February, lines formed in the 1900 block of Roscoe to examine and leave tribute at the Rat Hole. It was regularly filled with coins like a European fountain, only smaller, and with a Chicago flair.

At least one purported expert who studied the Rat Hole believes that the impression is actually that of a squirrel that fell out of an adjacent large tree into wet cement when the sidewalk was first poured some 20 years ago. The impression is consistent with the anatomy of a squirrel rather than that of a rat was his hypothesis.

"This is definitely something we have not encountered before," said Paul Sajovec, Ald. Scott Waguespack's chief of staff. Ald. Waguespack's office has had lots and lots of complaints since January and February when people started visiting the 1900 block of Roscoe to check out the Rat Hole. Sajovec said, "the City's 311 call center had received and forwarded numerous calls to

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the Alderman's office."

Ald. Waguespack contacted CDOT in late January or early February to "raise

SYPHILIS from p. 1

mother with syphilis can pass on the infection to her baby. According to data compiled by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Chicago experienced a dramatic increase in the number of reported cases of babies born with syphilis over the course of the five year period from 2018-2022. When the infection is passed on to developing babies, the result can be fatal or can cause long-term health prob-

lems, including cognitive disabilities. He also discussed the Rat Hole directly with CDOT Cmsr. Tom Karney.

"Some people were very vocal about immediately removing the sidewalk," Sajovec said. The Alderman did not side with people who demanded that it be removed.

"It was CDOT's decision to replace the sidewalk," Sajovec said. It is not known when CDOT decided to remove sidewalk.

After reports of the Rat Hole removal, Waguespack's office received mixed feedback from community members.

"Some people are pleased; some people are very upset [with removal of the Rat Hole]. The reactions are all over the board," Sajovec said.

CDOT had a slightly different take on removing the Rat Hole. "This sidewalk

removal and replacement was in coordination with the Alderman's office and is funded through the 32nd Ward's Aldermanic menu funds," CDOT responded to Inside's inquiry about how the removal came about.

"CDOT surveyed the sidewalk earlier this year and is replacing several other small sections of damaged sidewalk on Roscoe St. through CDOT's 311 hazardous sidewalk program," wrote CDOT's Erica Schroeder, the public information officer.

"[T]he square of concrete containing the 'rat hole' is with CDOT's Division of In-House construction currently. Future plans are not confirmed, but I will certainly keep you posted once those are finalized."

Stay tuned. We will have to see where the Rat Hole ends up.

In 2022, there were 46 reported cases of babies born with the disease, a 254% increase since 2018 in which there were 13 reported cases.

lems, including cognitive disabilities.

In 2022, there were 46 reported cases of babies born with the disease, a 254% increase since 2018 in which there were 13 reported cases.

The increase coincides with the COVID-19 lockdown, a time period in which patients were discouraged from seeing their medical doctors for routine check-ups. While expectant mothers are tested for syphilis, the lockdown and the fear which accompanied it had caused many to skip routine doctor visits. Many only sought medical help for emergencies.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, federal, state and local public health officials had focused nearly all public health efforts

on "stopping the spread" of COVID-19 and ignoring the possibility that a highly-treatable disease such as syphilis could explode.

Unfortunately, the sudden increase reversed the efforts of a 2015-2019 campaign by the CDPH which had sought to eliminate congenital syphilis. Through surveillance and treatment, during this campaign, syphilis cases had steadily decreased throughout Chicago, even while the disease was on the increase nationally.

SHUTTERED from p. 1

more locations by 2025.

Foxtrot was an upscale convenience store and cafe, founded in Chicago in 2015 with their first store located in Fulton Market District. They had 15 Chicago Foxtrot locations in the areas of Lincoln Park, West Loop, Wicker Park, East Lakeview, River North, Southport, Old Town, Gold Coast, Fulton Market, Streeterville, Tribune Tower, Willis Tower, Wrigley Field, Hubbard St., and Milwaukee and Damen avenues.

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