



The Nicholas J. Melas Centennial Fountain at 400 N. McClurg Ct.

Nicholas J. Melas Centennial Fountain turned on May 15

The Nicholas J. Melas Centennial Fountain on the North Banks of the Chicago River will be turned on 2 p.m. Thursday, May 15 by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District [MWRD].

The District will host a brief ceremony to commemorate the season opening of the Fountain at 400 N. McClurg Ct.

Every hour from 10 a.m. to midnight the fountain sends a powerful arc of water over the Chicago

River, which is visible from near and far. Set against a backdrop of boats, a bustling Riverwalk, and the city's skyline, the fountain celebrates more than a century of leadership in protecting public health, enhancing waterway ecology, and supporting economic growth through the management of water.

The fountain is named in honor

FOUNTAIN *see p. 12*

Jewelry thief may have been caught on security camera at John Hancock Center

A luxury jewelry heist valued at over \$40,000 may have unfolded in the John Hancock Center, with potential surveillance evidence of the suspect seen on the unit owner's security camera. Police have made no arrests yet.

BY STEVEN DAHLMAN
Loop North News



A woman wearing a Chanel brooch. Photo courtesy Alberto Grosescu

Jewelry and designer leather goods valued at \$40,300 were taken from a condominium unit at John Hancock Center in March, according to a police report, but the thief may have been caught on the unit owner's security cameras.

The incident happened sometime between March 16 and March 29, according to the report, while the owner was away. When the 32-year-old woman returned home, six items were missing from a box kept in a bedroom and from a bedside table drawer. They included a platinum diamond ring worth \$15,000, a serpent-style bracelet worth \$10,000, a three-carat platinum diamond stud worth \$5,000, and a Chanel dia-

mond brooch worth \$2,500.

Also missing were a Louis Vuitton leather bag worth \$7,000 and a Louis Vuitton leather wallet worth \$800.

The woman told police on March 31 that her security cameras caught the image of someone in her apartment while she was away. That person was described as a Black male, 30-40 years old, wearing a light blue uniform with short-sleeve shirt and dark blue pants.

According to the report, the man "appeared to spot her security camera, looking straight at

THIEF *see p. 12*

Extended Outdoor Dining has returned to Clark St.

Extended Outdoor Dining [EOD] has returned to Clark St. in River North, running now through Oct. 31. Restaurants along Clark St. between Grand Ave. and Kinzie St. have again built dining platforms in the curb lanes, while keeping all lanes of traffic open.

The program allows restaurants to extend their dining areas into the streets, adding more space for

outdoor seating.

As opposed to the full street closure model used in previous years, this modified format—first introduced in 2024—proved effective in supporting local businesses while maintaining traffic flow, and will be repeated this season. Changes to the design this year include the addition of concrete jersey barriers installed to close gaps between platforms.

City struggles with debate on Curfew Ordinance hoping to clamp down on wildings

On Wednesday, April 30, Aldermen Brian Hopkins [2nd] and Brendan Reilly [42nd] debated their curfew ordinance before the City Council Committee on Public Safety.

As warm weather approaches, city officials are again concerned about public wildings. The term "wilding" refers to teenage gang violence directed against randomly chosen victims, impulsive mugging or rape, and similar terrorizing.

If enacted, the measure would allow the Chicago police Superintendent to impose a curfew within 30 minutes of notification to local

residents and authorities if it is determined that a mass gathering wilding could result in substantial harm to people, property, public health, or safety.

Presently Chicago has a 10 p.m. curfew ordinance for minors on weekdays and 11 p.m. on weekends. For minors younger than 12 years of age, the curfew is 9 p.m. on any Friday or Saturday and until 6 a.m. of the following day.

These proposed changes would allow for "snap curfews" to be implemented at the discretion of the police and Deputy Mayor in the face of civil unrest by 20 or more people.

The debate around the ordinance lasted several hours, and the committee's discussion was ultimately paused until Monday, May 5, after this newspaper's deadline. The Aldermen hope the ordinance will pass out of committee on May 5 to advance to a vote by the full City Council on Wednesday, May 7.

Other North Side Aldermen who are in support of the legislation, and co-sponsoring, include Scott Waguespack [32nd], Bill Conway [34th], Timmy Knudsen [43rd], Bennett Lawson [44th] and Debra Silverstein, [50th].

Near North Side Historic District building on market after foreclosure

Previous owner mysteriously "lost" \$50M in investors' money

BY PETER VON BUOL

New York City-based lender Madison Realty Capital, current property owner of three 1880s-era row houses at 42 E. Superior St. (the George A. Tripp House), 44 E. Superior St. and 46 E. Superior St. (the Hennessey Houses) on May 1 listed the landmark properties for sale through Jones

Lang Lasalle, a global real estate and investment management services firm.

Seized by Madison Realty in foreclosure, the three row houses are now part of the City of Chicago's Near North Side Historic Property District and have been part of a decade-long saga.

Prior owners Jeffrey Laytin and Jason Ding, and their firm Symmetry Property Development, had been foreclosed upon after they had failed in their scheme to build a 60-story high-rise. They subsequently defaulted on a loan

of more than \$20 million.

The property at 42 E. Superior St. is a 12,478 square foot land site which includes a paved parking lot and three mixed-use buildings. The property is currently zoned DX-12, which indicates a downtown mixed use district.

Jones Lang LaSalle is also marketing the adjacent 50 E. Superior St. building, which is a 15,879 square foot land site currently improved with a seven story 113,300 sq. foot office building. That

FORECLOSURE *see p. 12*

Micro-apartments may be downtown's salvation

Contemporary SRO's may return to Chicago

BY BOB ZULEY

Converting existing, vacant office buildings in the central business district into residential independent co-living units — resembling dormitory-style housing — would help solve a trio of pressing real estate problems plaguing Chicago and other cities as they face the question of how to revitalize downtown corridors that are failing to draw people.



A rendering of microapartments in a co-op living building.

Image courtesy of Gensler

MICRO *see p. 12*

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Humiliation for AIC but justice for Holocaust victim

*Not just good
schadenfreude,
but righteous living*



By Thomas J. O’Gorman

This column must admit to feeling a little schadenfreude... OK, maybe a lot of it.

Schadenfreude, it’s a good word for something so many of us enjoy at times in our lives.

No, it’s not ESP, but we saw the downfall of Art Institute of Chicago [AIC] president James Rondeau coming three years ago after he fired all the beloved volunteer docents. We wrote about it, several times, and other transgressions, like losing \$1 billion in art pieces when Chicago chased Illinois’ wealthiest man, Kenneth Griffin, out of town. He took all his masterpieces with him down to Palm Beach.

This column asked the AIC Board to step in. And boy did we make enemies. We got dropped off of several Christmas card lists.

But look who’s laughing last. We never dreamed that his fall would be over something so ... well schadenfreude-ish.

Who knew that those docents could give James a roofie at 35,000 feet, a cold plate of revenge

served up from smart ladies with spare time.

Rondeau allegedly disrobed in the middle of a flight from Chicago to Germany on April 18.

Rondeau, who ran the AIC for nearly a decade, allegedly drank alcohol and took prescription medication, then removed his clothing while on United Airlines flight 953. Police were called, and a career crashed.

Oh that schadenfreude... that reminds us that one of Rondeau’s other failings is also now in the news.

A story we’ve covered before. About Egon Schiele an Austrian painter that has long been a companion of mine for decades. He, like Pablo Picasso, has been a source of deep study for me.

The style, texture, subjects and images Schiele created were revolutionary. They seized my creative intuition and imagination as a painter long ago.

So did the tragic brevity of his living.

Born in 1890, his 1918 death during the Great Influenza following World War I cut short a stunning, budding career.

While in Vienna some years ago, I was promised the opportunity to see and study a vast array of Schiele’s works across that city of fine wine, snow and hot chocolate. Museums proved abundant with his work.

Schiele was a dynamic artist, born with the great gift of creative effectiveness, seamlessly woven into his modernist technique and 20th century asceticism.

Despite his artistic naughtiness that often sliced through many of his works, his true style, proportion mixed with canvas and palette control, lifted him high above ordinary painters. All done before turning 30-years of age. One can only imagine the heights he could have achieved had he been able to escape young death. A most worthy contemporary of Picasso, I would insist.

But here in Chicago, thanks to the confused, conflicting moral compass of the AIC, he is remembered for more.

You may recall that the AIC

has been embattled because of the Schiele in their possession, a watercolor image of a wartime Russian prisoner in a German military jail. Schiele was actually a guard there during the Great War.

When the family of the painting’s original owner brought suit in New York against the AIC, an on-going courtroom battle ensued. Until now, it failed to budge the watercolor loose from the grip of the AIC.

The issue, that we have written of several times before, involves the painting being a piece of confiscated wartime stolen property by the Nazis. The work was originally owned by a Jewish cabaret star, Fritz Grünbaum. The subsequent courtroom drama unfolding in NYC attempted to obtain the piece from the AIC, but to no avail.

Rondeau and his staff have used every trick in the book to obfuscate returning the work to its rightful owners, the Grünbaum Family. The AIC cited any number of reasons why the painting is their legal possession.

But, now, finally there seems to be some justice for these victims of the Holocaust. Do the dead get to enjoy schadenfreude? Grünbaum, himself, was murdered in 1941 at the Dachau concentration camp.

New York Supreme Court Judge Althea Drysdale has determined that the painting, “Russian War Prisoner,” was stolen from Grünbaum by the Nazis before the start of World War II. According to the judge’s ruling, the AIC must now return the painting. She also ruled that the AIC did not meet its standards for verifying the work’s provenance.

AIC spokesmen continue to dispute those claims by saying Grünbaum’s sister sold the work in 1956 to Swiss art dealer Eberhard Kornfeld. But the judge disputes such a claim, standing by investigators who say Kornfeld participated in schemes to forge documents and launder stolen art by the Nazis.

The AIC purchased the work in 1966.

Ever since this issue first raised its ugly head, this column has

been attempting to resolve the ethical maintenance of the issues involved. This is not 1955. Over the passage of time ordinary men and women, as well as institutions across the world have reexamined the moral cost of not responding appropriately to Holocaust thefts. They remain disgraced and dehumanizing contours in the cultural and religious ransacking of artifacts and possessions during wartime. These robberies of the soul shatter the human spirit in addition to the issues of justice and the rule of law.

The AIC is not just a private institution. They are a public entity. An institution of public investment and urban pride. The AIC was established to enhance the growth and development of a public consciousness about the aesthetics and soulfulness of transformative art. They were fashioned to be about the wider understanding and refinement of the human spirit.

Make no mistake about it, the AIC is centered around the self understanding of a Chicago sense of self. There is no place for dodging the moral or artistic high ground.

At this point in 2025 there really has been a sea change in the institutional understanding of cultural ownership and the moral awareness of possessions and ownership of treasure. Every day we read of what was once “unthinkable” - the return of possessions and restoration of cultural treasures to their rightful place and owners.

That’s not just goodwill, but righteous living.

The return of treasures stolen by colonial and imperial domination of one nation or population by another has finally come to an end.

Museums more frequently give up things once confiscated by foreign invaders, like the Nazis. The false protection of cruel regimes has no place in our modern world.

The ownership of nations and individuals is sacrosanct. Artworks, statuary, rare cultural refinements and stolen works of human achievements have a right

to be returned to their place of origin and meaning. This is true for religious relics, architectural ornamentations, crown jewels, sculptures and artworks of various movements and schools, as well as manuscripts pilfered from libraries, monasteries and public trusts.

While the return of such possessions has been on the upswing, the sad activities at the AIC are a civic disgrace to Chicago. They have been unbending.

It remains an affront to people like the Grünbaums, people of Jewish faith, slaughtered without thought, of less value than their possessions.

That’s why the rigidity of AIC’s president and staff appears such an anomaly. That’s not how Chicago works. The final decision of the New York court forces the issue of compliance. And should raise the issue of moral compliance for all members of the AIC board.

Where’s the outrage that such a piece of Nazi stolen loot has been lifted high by the AIC for our Chicago veneration and enjoyment? Have they no shame?

Do all the generous Chicagoans who remember the AIC in their wills embrace the looting of Nazi art rightfully belonging to the Grünbaums? More shame, Chicago.

The clutching of a watercolor of limited value by Schiele has substantially brought about the sad departure of some very generous AIC donors. Their funds are now creating large scale growth for fresh new art venues elsewhere in the nation.

Is President Rondeau ready to embrace the consequences of his decisions?

Before the New York Supreme Court these half-truths and falsehoods don’t stand a chance.

JUSTICE see p. 8

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After celebrating pay raise CPS faces \$529 million budget gap, may cut 1,500 staffers

BY BOB ZULEY

Putting Mayor Brandon Johnson to the test of ‘getting blood from a turnip,’ he may have met his match in the lucrative new teachers contract he just agreed to.

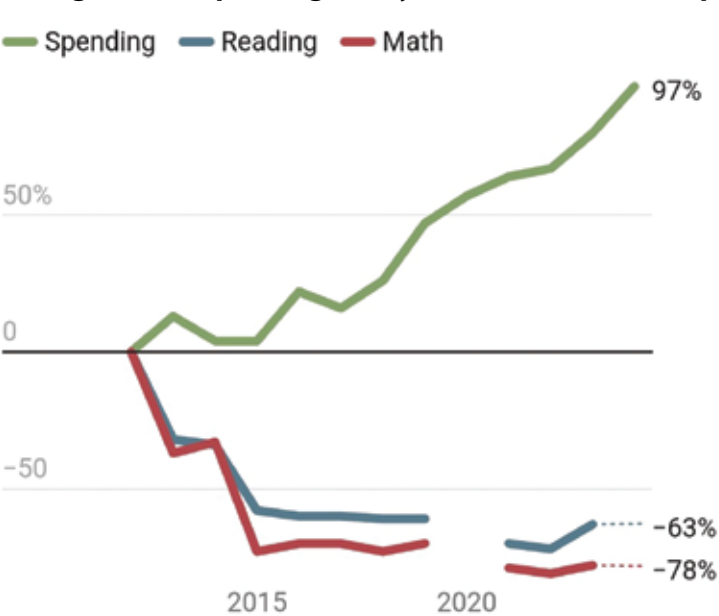
Mere days after celebrating ratification of a new Chicago Teachers Union [CTU] contract that would give substantial pay raises and could add hundreds of new staff members - even as enrollment declines - Chicago Public Schools [CPS] is considering laying off between 1,600 and 1,700 positions inside schools, Chalkbeat Chicago reported on April 25.

While some of the belt-tightening could include vacant positions, it would “overwhelmingly” involve layoffs, according to a CPS source.

The potential cuts are not yet final. The layoffs may be partially averted by getting more state funding or city money than is already expected by raiding Tax Increment Financing Districts, property taxes collected which are meant to spur economic development in blighted areas, not to pad teacher contracts.

The CPS budget for the next school year, which would begin July 1, must still go through a public hearing process and be formally adopted by CPS. By state

Chicago school spending nearly doubles as scores drop



Cumulative percent change in student proficiency in math and reading compared to Chicago Public Schools spending from state and local sources, FY 2012-2024

In 2015, Illinois adopted common core standards for testing. Proficiency data unavailable for 2020 and 2024. Chart: @illinoispolicy • Source: CPS budgets, Illinois State Board of Education • Get the Data • Created with Datawrapper

law, the district’s budget must be balanced.

CPS benefited from federal COVID-19 pandemic relief bailout amounting to \$3 billion over the past four years eliminating deep school-based cuts. But that money is now gone.

Ironically, while the student population continues to drop, the

new contract potentially increased new positions by up to 900 new staffers over four years including 300 counselors, 215 special case managers, 90 librarians, 68 tech coordinators, 24 fine art teachers, 30 bilingual teacher assistants, and an unknown number of “gen-

CPS see p. 10

CCPSA seeks to remove reasons for police traffic stops

The Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability [CCPSA] is lobbying to add more rules to prohibit some traffic stops by Chicago police.

Their proposals would become part of the federal Consent Decree oversight that was officially instituted on March 1, 2019.

The CPD has a lengthy set of general orders for traffic stops and the proposed new directives would be incorporated into new rules for stops. The CCPSA proposed traffic stops policies have been submitted to the Office of Attorney General.

The CCPSA is now seeking feedback from the general public on the following recommendations on ending stops for some violations such as an improper license plate fastening or positioning, missing or improperly displayed front license plate, a displayed registration sticker that has expired within one year, improper rear-license-plate illumination; one non-functioning headlight, tail light or brake light, during daylight hours, as long as the vehicle has at least one functioning headlight, tail light, and brake light; failure of a driver or passenger over the age of 16 to wear a seatbelt, or for a vehicle that does not signal a turn or lane change, and for operating a vehicle with a loud sound system.

Chicagoans can take the survey at www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/ccpsa.html.

The CCPSA itself has profited mightily off the federal Consent Decrees, as through Aug. 2024 the monitoring team has billed Chicago taxpayers for more than \$15 million. Originally expected to be completed within five years, the consent decree will remain in effect for at least another two years, until 2027.

The CCPSA itself has profited mightily off the federal Consent Decrees, as through Aug. 2024 the monitoring team has billed Chicago taxpayers for more than \$15 million.

The U.S. Dept. of Justice and Attorney General Jeff Sessions had originally opposed the proposed consent decree for police reform in Chicago, arguing it would undermine proactive policing and potentially increase crime, yet the City of Chicago proceeded with a consent decree. Those predictions of the decree undermining police efforts and increasing quality of life crimes have now shown to be accurate.

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Are Chicago's landmark districts threatened by high-rises?



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

Back in the 1970s, creating historic landmark architectural districts was the rage in Chicago.

The idea was based on the premise that historic landmark districts promoted gentrification which solidified neighborhoods, increased property values and stopped, or at least slowed urban blight.

In Chicago during the 1950s- and-1960s era of racial change, block-busting, red-lining and panic-peddling was pushed by unscrupulous realty agents, and many white homeowners fled the city for the suburbs.

However, the pendulum started swinging back in the 1970s. The "Back to the Cities Movement"

lured young, restoration-minded families back to the inner city, especially in Urban Renewal neighborhoods such as Old Town and Lincoln Park. Hundreds of vintage historic 1880s buildings were preserved, and an architectural treasure-trove gradually developed.

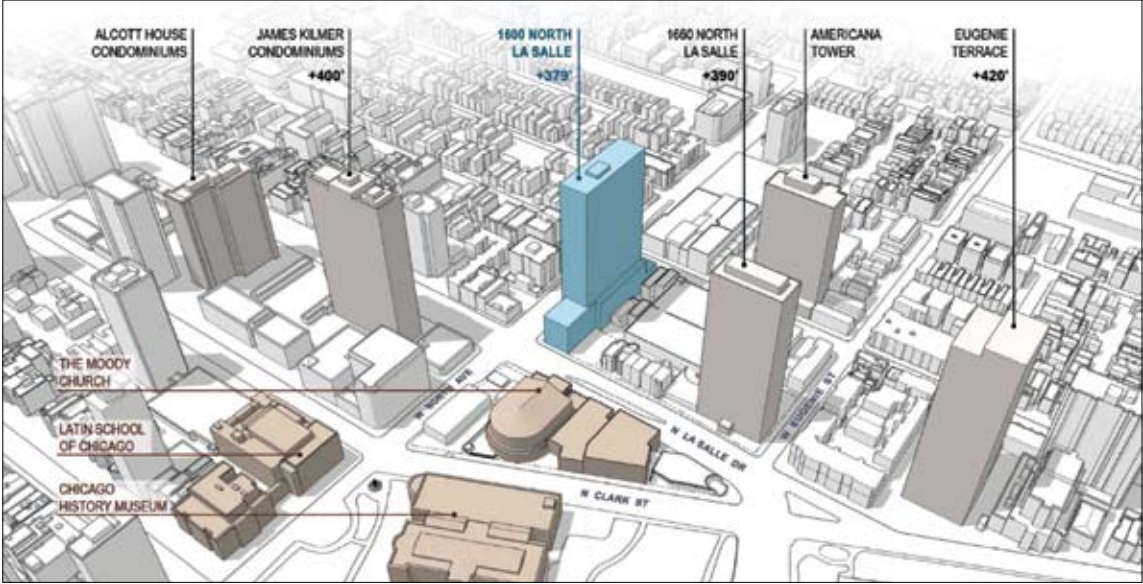
The charming, Old Town Historic District with 523 magnificently restored Victorian buildings—some museum quality—was born in 1977.

Today, the Old Town Triangle, bounded roughly by North Ave., Wells St., Lincoln Ave., Clark St. and a string of side streets on the west, is home to the annual Old Town Art Fair and Garden Walk, and guided architectural tours.

Another classic example of preservation can be found on the 1500 block of W. Jackson Blvd., which was designated as a landmark district in the late 1970s. The Victorian row-house block was guided through the landmark process by urbanologist Phillip Krone and rehab preservationist William Lavicka. It still stands as a monument to urban preservation on the Near West Side.

Today, this writer proudly owns a Victorian building in the Old Town Historic District, and once resided in a historic rowhouse on the 1500 block of W. Jackson Blvd. As an urban-pioneer and bungalow owner in the mid-1970s, I also was deeply involved in the planning and landmarking of the Irving Park Villa neighborhood, a triangle bounded by Addison St., Avondale and Pulaski Rd. on the Northwest Side.

Unfortunately, in late 2024 the



The charming, Old Town Historic District with 523 magnificently restored low density Victorian buildings—some museum quality—was born in 1977. Today, the Old Town neighborhood is the target of high-rise developers.

battle against high-rises in Old Town was lost. Residents and building owners in the historic district couldn't prevent approval of a giant rental tower at North Ave. and Wells St.

The Chicago City Council recently approved the Old Town Canvas, a 36-story, 349-apartment high-rise at 1600 N. LaSalle Dr. after the developer, Chicago-based Fern Hill Co., reduced the height of the building, while widening the footprint.

Earlier, opponents of the Old Town Canvas formed a coalition, citing concerns about its size, public safety, and probable impact on traffic.

The Old Town Friends for Responsible Development [OTFRD], a grassroots coalition comprising more than 1,500 residents of Old Town, the Gold Coast, and Lincoln Park, including condo boards and businesses, argued that the proposed building, with its large number of rental apartment units, is excessive for the neighborhood.

The OTFRD says the massive multifamily project would be too large and disruptive. In addition, they sought assurances regarding mitigated traffic and disruption to local businesses during construction.

What is more worrisome is the project also includes the rezoning of Piper's Alley, Moody Church, and its neighboring gas stations. Those properties allegedly would not be allowed to have residential

units. However, there is no prohibition on Fern Hill or any other developer from changing the later phases of the planned development in the future.

"A total of 84% of all OTTA survey respondents expressed opposition to the Fern Hill's high-rise project density and rezoning application," noted Raymond Clark, president of the Old Town Triangle Assn. [OTTA]. Visit: www.oldtowntriangle.com.

Launched in 1948, the respected neighborhood organization fought in 1977 for Old Town to be designated as a city Historic Landmark District, and in 1984 it was listed on the National Register of Historic District places.

"It is the unique architectural characteristic of our neighborhood, resulting in small lots of low density, that we believe drove many OTTA members' strong opposition to the Fern Hill proposal," Clark said.

"We sent our survey results along with 37 pages of historical Old Town zoning and development data to the alderman and all relevant city planning and zoning departments. To date, we have received no response," Clark said.

Diane Gonzalas, a preservationist and architectural historian, who was involved in the landmarking of the Old Town Triangle, said: "We don't want Old Town to become Sandburg Village."

As a Victorian building property owner, who annually dis-

plays his garden on the Old Town Garden Walk, this writer worries about more mammoth high-rises casting shadows over his flowering crabapple trees, gurgling water fall and reflecting pool crowned by the statue of "Rebecca at the Well." In protest, for the first time in two decades, my garden will not be on the 2025 walk.

Other North Side lakefront landmark districts soon may also be threatened by nearby rezoning that usher in high-rise encroachment. Let's hope property owners in such landmark areas, such as Arlington-Deming, Armitage-Halsted, Burling Row-House, McCormick Row House and the Mid-North District, which borders Lincoln Park, remain on full-time high-rise alert.

Further north, the upzoning of Broadway Ave. between Montrose and Devon avenues in Edgewater and Uptown also needs a high-rise watch, as the city's Dept. of Planning and Development is forcing a massive upzoning on the two communities to bring in more high-density affordable housing to these areas.

John Holden, president of the Edgewater Historical Society, noted that the zoning proposal contradicts the downzoning of the west side of Broadway that Edgewater neighbors fought for about 25 years ago. The west side of Broadway backs up to two-flats and three-flats and single-family homes, Holden said.

And, landmark historic Dover Street District, and the Uptown Square District are not far away.

But our current batch of aldermen and city planners just don't care what residents think. With 65% of the city's population choosing to live in only 35% of the city's space (mostly on the North and Northwest Sides), they need more density and they need it quick. There is plenty of open space for development on the West and South Sides, but educated young people leaving college and moving into Chicago are not choosing to live in those areas.

So North Siders need get ready for a massive increase in new density being forced onto their communities.

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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The \$2 billion wealth transfer

County's property tax appeals system rewards businesses at the expense of homeowners

Nearly \$2 billion in property taxes shifted onto homeowners from businesses over just three years, with a disproportionate share of the added burden falling on lower-income Black and Latino homeowners, a first-of-its-kind analysis by the Treasurer's Office found.

The shift largely resulted from the wide-ranging success of businesses appealing property valuations, called assessments, that determine their tax bills.

From 2021 to 2023, which covers a complete three-year assessment cycle, business appeals shaved nearly \$3.3 billion off the total amount billed to businesses across the county. More than \$1.9 billion of that shifted onto homeowners.

Although previous studies have documented how assessment appeals shift tax burdens, the Treasurer's Office study is the first to determine the resulting changes to the amounts billed to property owners.

That analysis revealed that the percentage increases in tax amounts billed to homeowners were far greater in areas with lower-income minority populations.

"This study helps explain why many homeowners have experienced sticker shock when opening their property tax bills in recent years," Treasurer Maria Pappas said. "We hope our findings help guide policy makers in their ongoing efforts to make the appeals system more equitable."

Key Findings:

- Successful appeals by businesses caused their collective tax bills to drop by \$3.3 billion, or 12.5%, while residential tax bills jumped by \$1.9 billion, or 6.9%.
- Business owners appealed their assessments nearly 64% of the time, while homeowners appealed 27% of the time — with businesses winning far larger assessed value reductions.
- Business' assessed value reductions surged to a total of \$25.5 billion from 2021 to 2023 compared to \$9.9 billion from 2015 to 2017. The difference is due mostly

to larger reductions granted by the Board of Review. While business reductions rose, assessed value reductions for homeowners declined to \$2.8 billion from \$3.2 billion from 2021 to 2023.

Income & Race Disparities:

Homeowners in the highest-income areas appealed their assessments 46% of the time, while those in the lowest-income areas appealed just 11% of the time. Property owners in majority Black and Latino neighborhoods appeal at far lower rates. The appeal rate for white homeowners was 35.5% compared to 10.85% in Black neighborhoods and 14.06% in Latino neighborhoods.

The added tax burden caused by appeals did not fall equally on homeowners, with bills increasing by about 5% in high-income areas and about 10% in low-income areas, most of which had predominantly minority populations.

A Tale of Two Neighborhoods:

Two examples from the study of the tax

appeals system show how the system tends to benefit homeowners in wealthier white Chicago neighborhoods, where taxes rose 13.5% after appeals. By comparison, homeowners in lower-income minority neighborhoods, where appeal rates were far lower, saw their tax bills jump by 19.8% after the appeals process was completed during reassessment years.

- In one Census tract in Gage Park, a low-income majority Latino community area on the Southwest Side where only 5.2% percent of homeowners contested their assessments, tax bills rose nearly 23% after appeals.

- In one Census tract in North Center, a high-income majority white community area where 60% of homeowners appealed their assessment, tax bills rose less than 15%.

"I'm heartened that the Assessor and Board of Review are already addressing some of the underlying issues that cause this unequal shift in the tax burden, because the Cook County residents earning the least shouldn't be shouldering the most, when it comes to taxes," Pappas said.

When it comes to voting on property tax referendums, the few decide for the many

BY MARIA PAPPAS

If you've ever voted, you've probably seen one. It's a referendum, a ballot measure that may affect your property taxes.

Simply put, referendums are direct votes where the electorate has the chance to weigh in on a particular issue such as a proposed law, a tax increase, a bond issuance or some other major political or social decision.

There are two types of referendums -- binding and advisory. The government is legally required to act on binding referendum results. Advisory

referendums aren't legally binding and are often used to measure public opinion before making a governmental decision. That makes the binding referendum one of the purest forms of democracy, as that takes the decision-making power away from elected officials and gives it directly to the people. While voters make their choices for government offices in a primary or general election, they also may vote on a bond issue for a new public pool, school library or other project. It's a lot of power.

But it's power that's often not used because many people don't vote in referendums, apparently feeling they've done their duty when they choose whom they want for president, governor, mayor or county offices.

Our recent study noted that eight different property tax related referendums

were placed on ballots during the April 1, election in Cook County. All sought to raise taxes. Five of eight passed, meaning more than \$200 million in bond issuances and tax increases will have to be paid for by taxpayers in the coming years.



Maria Pappas

Despite the costly financial stakes, just 18.4% of eligible voters turned out during the election on April Fool's Day.

In the municipalities that were voting on specific tax increases, turnout was low, ranging from 5.6% to 33.8% according to the latest results.

The study also looked at election returns from 2024 and found that average property tax-related turnout was just 45.9%, even though it was a presidential election year.

When we dug deeper into the data, we spotted troubling trends:

- Wealthier residents are more likely to vote. In the county's wealthiest taxing districts, average turnout topped 60% but was only 34% in districts where median household income fell below the county median of \$81,797.
- White residents are more likely to vote in referendums. On average, turnout in majority-white districts was more than 20% points higher than in Black, Latino and majority-minority districts.
- Homeowners are more likely to vote. In taxing districts where 80% or more of residents own their homes, average turnout exceeded 55%. Turnout, on average, was just 30% in districts where over 20% of

Despite the costly financial stakes, just 18.4% of eligible voters turned out during the election on April Fool's Day.

residents rent.

If you'd like to see the level of participation and results in your county, city, town, village, ward, township or precinct you can view the data and use our interactive mapping tool by clicking on the following link or by clicking on referendums in the

Pappas Studies box at cookcountytreasurer.com.

I would encourage you to do so, because informed citizens are more likely to get off the political sidelines and vote rather than allowing the few to decide for the many. Because what's clear to me is that when less than half of all voters turn out for property tax referendums that's not good for our politics or your pocketbook.





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Police Beat...

Man charged with shooting Roscoe Village resident

A Naperville man has been charged with shooting a 53-year-old Roscoe Village resident inside the victim's home two months ago. Chicago police said Saifullah Diab, 35, was arrested at his suburban residence on May 2.

Around 8:18 a.m. March 8, someone entered the victim's home in the 1900 block of W. Roscoe and shot him in the shoulder, police said.

A 911 caller reported that the shooter was her ex-boyfriend and that he came to the house and shot her roommate, according to police radio traffic. The gunmen fled on foot.

As we shortly after the shooting, officers at the scene said the shooter was Middle Eastern, 35 years old, 5'8" tall and 145 lbs.

The shooting was the first in Roscoe Village since Dec. 2021.

More details about the allegations against Diab were revealed when he appears for a detention hearing at 26th and California on May 3. He is charged with aggravated battery by discharging a firearm and home invasion causing great bodily harm.

Busted! Crash-and-grab burglars leave teammate behind as Chicago cops move in

"Leave no man behind." It's a concept almost as old as warfare itself. But it apparently does not apply to Chicago's crash-and-grab burglary teams. Because that's exactly what happened May 2 in Rogers Park, and the man who got left behind is now in custody.

A bystander caught the hapless burglar being abandoned by not one but two carloads of accomplices outside GameStop, 1751 W. Howard, around 6:15 a.m.

A video shows a silver Jeep has just rammed the storefront, and five burglars are seen bolting from the smashed storefront with merchandise. Off-camera, Chicago police are closing in.

Two burglars run for an SUV, but it takes off before the second thief gets inside. He throws his arms in a panicked run toward the other getaway car, which also leaves without him.

"They left him," says the man recording the scene. "Look! They left him!"

The only option he had left? Run for it. But that didn't go well, either. Before the abandoned burglar could get away, two Chicago cops forced him to the ground at gunpoint.



Saifullah Diab



Elijah Henry

"Got his a**! Caught, man!" rejoices the cameraman. "Got his a** caught!"

According to a Chicago police spokesperson, the man with the caught a** is 18-year-old Elijah Henry of Riverdale. He's charged with burglary, retail theft, and criminal damage to property, all felonies. Henry appeared in court for a detention hearing on May 3.

Charges filed in stabbing that left man badly injured in the Loop

Prosecutors have charged a man with repeatedly stabbing another man in the Loop on May 1. Jamari Bryant, 26, appeared for a detention hearing at the Leighton Criminal Courthouse on May 3.

A CTA worker at the Clark-Lake train station called 911 after they encountered the victim around 7:34 a.m.

Chicago police said the 37-year-old got into an argument with Bryant, who pulled out a sharp object and stabbed the man in the face, neck, and wrist. EMS took the victim to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in fair condition.

Officers found Bryant on the L platform and took him into custody. CPD said he also had a cut on his arm, so EMS took him to Northwestern, too.

Prosecutors charged him with aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, aggravated battery causing great bodily harm, and aggravated battery in a public place.

Mag Mile mail thief had 52 credit cards, was on pretrial release for the same thing

Mail theft continues to be a big problem in Chicago, with culprits robbing postal workers and stealing items from residential mailboxes, all to fuel massive identity theft operations.

There are a couple of new developments to report.

First, two people robbed a U.S. Postal Service mail carrier as she worked in Old Town on May 2. The postal worker told police two people confronted her in the 1300 block of N. Sedgwick and took mail from her work truck and



Dalvin Lockhart

her keys, according to preliminary information. Both thieves fled in a vehicle, but no other details, including whether they were male or female, were immediately available.

Mail theft rings use stolen postal service master keys, known as "arrow keys," to access apartment buildings and open banks of residential mailboxes.

In somewhat better news, a man is facing mail theft and burglary charges after Chicago cops and a postal inspector arrested him near the Magnificent Mile last week. Unfortunately, Dalvin Lockhart, 30, already has another active mail theft and burglary case pending, and a warrant was out for his arrest because he stopped showing up for court, records show.

Last October, the doorman for a residential building in the first block

of E. Elm detained Lockhart for burglarizing the building's mailroom, according to a CPD report. Lockhart had two fake IDs, multiple pieces of mail addressed to different people, a collection of credit cards with separate names, and three counterfeit arrow keys, the report said.

The mail and credit cards allegedly belonged to people living in Lincoln Park, the Loop, and the building where he was arrested.

Prosecutors charged him with residential burglary, burglary, possession of burglary tools, possession of a fraudulent ID, and nine counts of possessing lost or mislaid property.

Judge Shauna Boliker released him two days later to await trial.

Media reports indicate he was arrested in February for allegedly trying to buy a car with a fake driver's license in DuPage County.

He was released to await trial in that case, too.

Records show he didn't show up for his Chicago burglary case on April 8, so Judge Aleksandra Gillespie signed an arrest warrant. It was still active when Chicago cops and a postal inspector arrested him on April 29.

Around 3:30 that afternoon, Lockhart escaped from a U.S. Postal Inspector who tried to arrest him in the 800 block of N. Dewitt for failing to appear in court in Cook and DuPage counties, a CPD report said. Chicago cops responded to assist the inspector.

They had no trouble identifying Lockhart when they saw him near the Mag Mile because he had handcuffs dangling from one wrist.

Once again, Lockhart allegedly gave the police a fake ID and the cops said he had 52 credit cards, two counterfeit arrow keys, mail, financial statements, bank checks, and counterfeit currency.

He is now charged with possessing burglary tools, illegal possession of bank cards, forgery, and more.

Judge Luciano Panici, Jr. detained Lockhart on the outstanding warrants.

Concealed carry holder released by police because firing a gun over someone's head isn't detainable under SAFE-T Act

A concealed carry holder accused of pistol-whipping and firing a gun over the head of a woman in Wrigleyville April 26 was not taken to court to see a judge because her alleged behavior did not qualify for detention under the SAFE-T Act, according to Chicago police.

Officers assigned to patrol the Wrigleyville bar strip heard a gunshot and then saw people running from a parked minivan near the corner of Clark and Newport around 2:15 a.m. Saturday, April 26.

They rushed over to the van and found concealed carry holder Zulzly Sotelo, 25, standing next to the open van with a bullet and a spent shell casing lying on the sidewalk, a CPD report said.

Witnesses identified Sotelo as the person who used a gun to strike a 26-year-old woman in the face and body before firing the weapon above the woman's head, according to the report. The police said they found a 9-mm handgun on the van's floorboard.

Sotelo "displayed significant signs of intoxication," according to the report, and allegedly had a blood alcohol concentration of .140, well above the legal limit for driving.

The report also said paramedics advised the injured woman to seek medical attention for a broken nose.

Officers took Sotelo into custody on a felony count of reckless discharge of a firearm and misdemeanor counts of battery and carrying a concealed firearm while under the influence.



Zulzly Sotelo

But the police released her from the Town Hall 19th District station rather than sending her for a court hearing "due to not fitting the criteria of the Pretrial Fairness Act," according to the report.

Arsonist firebombing cannabis dispensaries

Arson investigators are hunting for a firebug who has tossed Molotov cocktails into two cannabis dispensaries on the North and Northwest Sides. They say he's started two fires since April 19, both during the over-night hours.

Video footage shows the man breaking the front windows of the businesses with a hammer. He proceeded to throw lighted Molotov cocktails into both businesses, police said.

He targeted a dispensary in the 4700 block of N. Milwaukee around 3:13 a.m. April 19 and followed that with the second fire in the 4000 block of N. Damen around 3:49 a.m. April 27.

CPD said the man has worn a face mask with a black hoodie and a black fanny pack over his shoulder and across his chest. The man is about 5'9" tall and 190 to 240 lbs.

Investigators are asking anyone with information to call them at 312-746-7618 about crime pattern #25-CWP-018.

Medical Examiner: Man found fatally shot in Edgewater accidentally killed himself

A man who died after being found shot near an Edgewater condo building last month accidentally shot himself in the leg, the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office says.

The condo building doorman called 911 around 2:17 a.m. April 22 after another employee heard a gunshot in the 6000 block of N. Sheridan and found blood and other items in a hallway.

Chicago cops searched the area and found Darvis Dennis, 37, outside, suffering from a gunshot wound to his right thigh. While officers said he was responsive when they arrived, he succumbed to his injuries at St. Francis Hospital less than an hour later.

The medical examiner conducted an autopsy, but the case remained open while officials investigated how the shooting occurred. In a newly released update, the medical examiner ruled Dennis' death an accident by a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the right thigh.

Jussie Smollett and Chicago have settled civil suit, court doc says

Chicago, our long citywide nightmare may soon be over.

According to a federal court docket entry, the city has reached settlement terms with Jussie Smollett, the actor who staged a hate crime in Streeter-ville more than six years ago.

Shortly after prosecutors charged Smollett with filing a false report, the city sued him to recover the cost of the CPD's investigation into the hoax.



Jussie Smollett

The city brought the lawsuit under its False Statements Ordinance, which prohibits anyone from making a "false statement of material fact to the city in connection with any application, report, affidavit, oath, or attestation," and the Cost Recovery Ordinance, which makes individuals responsible for expenses incurred by the city based on a false claim.

Smollett's lawyers have argued, among other things, that the city failed to prove that Smollett's statements caused the city to incur overtime costs.

On Monday, representatives of the city and Smollett appeared in a federal courtroom downtown for a regu-

larly scheduled status hearing. The clerk for U.S. District Judge Virginia Kendall recorded a docket entry noting that both parties "contacted the courtroom deputy to advise they have settled but need more time to finalize documentation."

No other information about the settlement is available. The hearing was rescheduled for May 29.

Migrant arrested 16x in Chicago is finally scooped up by ICE



Ten separate mugshots of Josue Vargas Rodriguez.

A Venezuelan migrant arrested 16 times since arriving in Chicago in Oct. 2023 is now in ICE custody, records show.

Back in February, after his 13th arrest, we reported that a Cook County judge warned Josue Vargas Rodriguez, 20, that he would be eligible for deportation because he pleaded guilty to trying to rob a woman in Streeter-ville. Incredibly, Rodriguez was subsequently released from custody after that court hearing and he managed to get arrested three more times before the feds finally scooped him up, records show.

Rodriguez, also known as Santos Vargas, Santiago Bargas Rodriguez, Santiago Jose Vargas Rodriguez, and Ramon Vargas, is now cooling his heels at the Clay County Justice Center in Indiana.

Last November, Chicago cops arrested Rodriguez 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 in Streeter-ville.

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

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."

He pleaded guilty to attempted robbery in the case on Feb. 6, earning him a two-year probation sentence from Judge Shelley Sutker-Dermer, according to court records. She also sentenced him to six months in jail, offset by 112 days he had already spent behind bars since being arrested in Streeter-ville.

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

Sutker-Dermer took a moment during the Feb. 6 hearing to advise Rodriguez that he could be deported in light of his robbery conviction, according to an individual who was in court during sentencing.

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."

Remarkably, CPD records show he managed to get arrested again on Feb. 27, just three weeks after the judge sentenced him to probation and warned him about the potential for deportation. This time he was charged with misdemeanor as-

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Public asked to call 911 as street takeovers gather

BY ALD. SCOTT WAGUESPACK [32ND]

The street takeover that occurred two weeks ago at Ashland and Diversey is one of several that have happened on the North Side over the past year. My office has been in communication with the 19th Police District on this. They will be increasing their presence and also will be working with the Crime Prevention and Information Center [CPIC] to try and prevent these events from occurring.

CPIC is tracking social media and watching camera footage to let the police know if cars are heading their way. Unfortunately, it is hard to know where these will take place until the street takeover starts. Be on the lookout for cars gathering at spots such as gas stations and parking lots and call 911 if you see this activity.

Additionally, the offenders remove their license plates making it hard to track vehicles, although CPD does try to track them through the City camera system.

The police have created a unit that tries to track incidents and have a rapid response, but it is hard to infiltrate ever changing apps and technology that different groups use to notify their friends and spectators where they are going next. Many of them are

Commentary

from the suburbs and have been coming to Chicago and other cities across the US for years. Every city has tried new methods and new laws to combat the problem.

The recent ordinance passed by City Council allows police to impound cars with up to \$10K in fines, if they can catch them during or after the fact. Spectators following the drivers have also caused significant problems and will often disperse at high speeds endangering even more people in surrounding areas.

When police arrive at the incidents, they have to have a larger group response to try to put a stop

to the sometimes violent groups. While some have been arrested, they often scatter at high speed which often prohibits safe police pursuit. New police pursuit policies also all but prohibit chases during these incidents.

Any additional technology measures we would like to see would have to pass all sorts of legal tests before CPD could use them since the City is under scrutiny for any traffic stops or countermeasures to the violent activity.

The police are not allowed to give immediate chase and the drivers typically continue the dangerous driving onto sidewalks, and the intersections they are taking over, so it is both dangerous and difficult for police to stop the cars and crowds.

In order to prevent the illegal activity, we are exploring alternatives with the department to use other technologies that could tag or immobilize the vehicles of the owners participating in street takeover and committing the illegal acts.

Convicted burglar charged with three residential break-ins after Lakeview couple conducts their own investigation



Cacey Williams, inset, and a surveillance image of one of the burglars working on April 4.

BY CWBCHICAGO

Less than a month after this reporter profiled a couple of active burglars who've been breaking into Lakeview homes, Chicago police have arrested a suspect.

Cacey Williams, a 34-year-old who went to prison in 2013 and again in 2015 for burglary charges, is now accused of committing three residential burglaries since 2022, including the one featured in our recent story.

Prosecutors said Williams was one of the men who broke into the home in the 1600 block of W. Byron April 4, getting away with an estimated \$5,860 in proceeds. The two-man burglary team that broke into the home around 10:45 that morning took purses, jewelry, perfume, an Xbox controller, AirPods, backpacks, and wine, according to a criminal complaint.

DNA testing linked Williams to burglaries in the 1900 block of W. Byron on Nov. 16, 2023, and the 4300 block of N. Ashland on Dec. 9, 2022, officials said. The victims on Ashland suffered loss-

es estimated at \$18,000.

Prosecutors told Judge James Costello that Williams entered homes by breaking through back windows. Costello ordered Williams detained, saying he had "destroyed [the] sense of safety" victims enjoyed in their homes.

The most recent victim shared surveillance video of the burglars casing their home on April 4.

"They can be seen attempting to gain entry by checking windows and trying to scale a fence into our neighbor's yard," one of the homeowners told us. The couple asked to remain anonymous for this story. "They gained entry into our unit by standing on the HVAC unit and entering through our kitchen window, which had been closed."

"They chose the exact 45-minute window when my fiancé,

who typically works from home, stepped out for a brief period," one of the victims said. "This suggests they may have been monitoring our routine before deciding to break in."

The victims told us that CPD made "no effort" to gather camera footage from neighbors, so they launched their own investigation.

As we reported last month, the couple had done so much legwork, they believed they had identified one of the burglars by name. We can now reveal that the name they provided was ... Cacey Williams.

The second man seen in the surveillance video has not been found.

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Adults arrested during downtown 'teen trend' failed to appear in court

BY CWBCHICAGO

Two adults arrested on minor charges during a "teen takeover" in Streeterville late last month failed to show up for their court dates, Ald. Brian Hopkins [2nd] said April 28. A judge has now issued warrants for their arrests.

Swarms of people filled the streets near Columbus and Illinois on the evening of March 28. It wasn't long before a 15-year-old boy got shot in front of the NBC tower. An 18-year-old was stabbed during a takeover-related fight in the Loop, too.

Among those arrested as the situation boiled over were 18-year-old Evan Jackson and Trinity Barret, 20. They were both charged with misdemeanor reckless conduct after CPD arrested them about a block apart around 9:40 p.m., according to court records.

Barrett was released from the Near North 18th District station with instructions to appear in court on April 24. According to Hopkins and court records, she no-showed.

Jackson was also released from the station. He was given a court date for April 25. And, like Barrett, records show he didn't show



(L-R) Mugshots of Trinity Barret and Evan Jackson.

up, either.

Judge Donald Panarese, Jr. signed failure to appear warrants for both of them.

"I want to take this time to thank the 18th District Court Advocates for their dedicated work in showing up for court and following these cases," Hopkins said Monday. "Their work is so important and truly makes a difference in combating crime and holding offenders accountable for their reckless actions. My public safety liaison staff member attended court in person on behalf of the 2nd Ward."

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Art Institute of Chicago presents anchor-themed sculptures by H.C. Westermann



H.C. Westermann

BY CHICAGO CITY WIRE

The Art Institute of Chicago [AIC] will display an extensive collection of sculptures by American artist H.C. Westermann from May 17, to May 17, 2026. The exhibition, titled “H. C. Westermann: Anchor Clanker,” is the largest presentation of Westermann’s work in Chicago in over two decades. It will showcase the artist’s diverse material usage, focusing notably on his woodworking skills.

Westermann, who pursued artistic endeavors from an early age, was also known for his other interests. Born in 1922 in Los Angeles, he attended Los Angeles City College for two years before enlisting in

the U.S. Marine Corps in 1942, serving aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise during World War II in the Pacific.

Following the war, Westermann enrolled at the AIC, before reenlisting for a tour of duty in the Korean War. Upon his return, Westermann reenrolled at the AIC, and staged his debut solo exhibition at the Allan Frumkin Gallery in 1958.

His career was significantly shaped by his time in the Marines and his war experiences deeply influenced his artistic vision. His artworks often feature the symbol of an anchor, reflecting his maritime experiences.

“Westermann combined his mastery of materials—especially wood—philosophizing, wit, and wordplay to communicate a worldview that resonated with many Americans in the post-war era,” explained Giampaolo Bianconi, Dittmer Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. “I hope visitors also appreciate that his depth of experience, rambunctious sense of humor, and dedication to craft truly influenced a generation of artists from Chicago to Los Angeles and beyond.”

Regarded as one of the 20th century’s most influential artists, Westermann demonstrated artistic independence by navigating various historical contexts. His participation in New York exhibitions focused on New Realism, Assemblage, and Surrealism.

The exhibition coincides with the donation of 17 Westermann sculptures to the museum by the Estate of Alan and Dorothy Press. The couple’s philanthropy over 40 years, including more than 50 art acquisitions for the museum, culminated in this substantial gift in 2023.

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BY YASMINA REZA

TRANSLATED BY CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON

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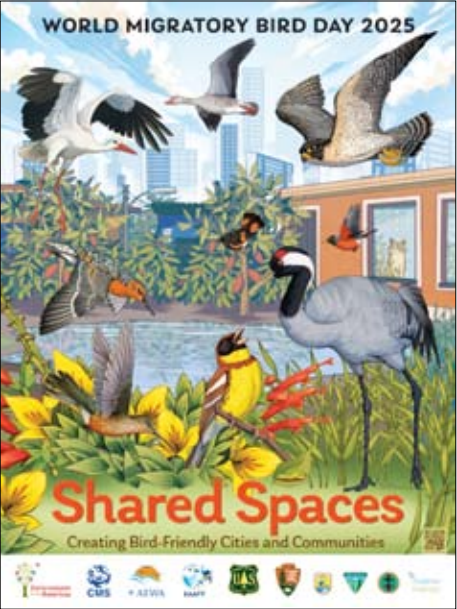
World Migratory Bird Day will be celebrated this year on May 10, and again Oct. 11 in fall. The conservation theme this year is “Shared Spaces: Creating Bird-Friendly Cities and Communities.” This year’s theme promotes the importance of a healthy coexistence between people and birds by focusing on creating bird-friendly cities and communities.

Bird friendly practices include creating healthy habitats, reducing bird collisions with buildings and glass, reducing pollution, and providing ample food sources for birds. No matter what type of community you live in, you can help birds.

Chicago sits in the center of one of the greatest animal migration routes on earth with the Mississippi Flyway, a major bird migration route in North America, primarily following the Mississippi, Missouri, and Lower Ohio Rivers up past the Western Great Lakes and into Canada.

An estimated 325 bird species use the flyway each spring... that is, they’re passing through Chicago right now. It’s estimated that between 800,000 and one million birds pass through Chicago each night in the spring.

Birds usually begin to migrate 30 to 45 minutes after sunset, with the greatest number in flight two to three hours later,



until about 6 a.m.

Migrating birds regularly fly up to 10,000 feet above ground, although seasonal timing and weather conditions dramatically impact their distributions.

Typically birds use this route because no mountains or ridges of hills block the path over its entire extent. Good sources of water, food, and cover exist over its entire length. About 40% of all North American migrating shorebirds and waterfowl use this route.

JUSTICE from p. 2

At least not while Judge Drysdale is on the job.

GALA: Steppenwolf Theatre Company’s acclaimed Ensemble and Board of Trustees will host Steppenwolf Gala 2025, an unforgettable evening kicking off the theater’s 50th Anniversary celebration. This year’s Gala takes place 6 p.m. Saturday, May 10, at Steppenwolf HQ, 1646 N. Halsted, call 773-505-1429.

BASQUIAT: This May, a rediscovered early painting by **Jean-Michel Basquiat** will headline Sotheby’s Contemporary Evening Auction in New York with a \$10 million to \$15 million estimate. The untitled 1981 work hasn’t been seen publicly in 36 years. It was acquired in 1989 and has remained tucked away in the same private collection ever since—until now. Painted by the artist when he was 20.

WHAT A GAL: In WWII, Irish **Sister Kate McCarthy** worked in war hospitals across Europe, helping to smuggle Allied soldiers to safety, her role in the French resistance during the war would prove vitally important to the allied war effort and awarded the Médaille de la Résistance by **Charles de Gaulle**. We must not forget.

WHO’S WHERE: **Blase Cardinal Cupich** in Rome and Vatican City for the conclave... **Karin Carlson** says wedding photos are in, and her son’s was a beautiful, joyful evening celebrating **Grant and Caroline**, a magical night... **Doug Van Tress** at Golden Triangle Hangdog, Chiang Mai, Thailand where breakfast is taken outdoors, with cats.... **Diane Abt** with **Michael Zielenziger** in Berlin, Germany where every Thursday the night market in Kreuzberg dishes up street food from Turkey, China, Vietnam, Ukraine, India, Argentina, Mumbai, Italy and Tibet...Happiest Birthday to the greatest star, **Barbra Joan Streisand**, 83... Artist **Tony Frisby** asking the ultimate human questions and unfolding deep poetic response... **Steve Quinlan** at Chapel in the Sky at the Chicago Temple focusing his lens on the untitled **Pablo Picasso**, often known as “Chicago Picasso,” in Daley Plaza... Observing the 79th birthday of the Chicago favorites, the Blue Angels... Irish news reporter, **Brónagh Tumulty**, filled in recently anchoring at WGN 9... Birthday girl **Shelly Zucker** in Palm Springs with **Neal Zucker** and **Marko**, swearing 81 has its perks... It’s official, **Harvey Fierstein** will be honored with the special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre... **Arthur**

“**Art**” **Green**, founding figure of Chicago’s riotous Harry Who?, has died at 83... **Bobbi Panter** with the ultra talented designer **Sarah Burton** in West Hollywood, after just seeing her amazing first collection for Givenchy at Paris Fashion Week... Chicago’s Irish publisher **Cliff Carlson** with the Ryder Cup at stunning Adare Manor in the Old Sod... the great **Tom Skilling** relaxed amid the palm trees... Christie’s **Steven Zick** having a quick trip through the cherry blossoms of Jackson Park... **Mark Olley** at Lake Forest Showhouse and Gardens benefiting the infant welfare society of Chicago... **Rob Kleiman** with **Kristen Kuhns** at the Gulf of Mexico, er... we mean “America”... **Sherrill Bodine** still going around the world, now in Copenhagen, Tivoli and Fairytale Castles of Denmark... **Karen Zupko** and **Mr. Mike** pay timely visit to the Nezu Museum while in Japan where historic silkscreens foreshadowed Impressionism... **Mark Kolasa** tells us over 80 volunteer stewards attended the annual Earth Day celebration at Montrose Beach Dunes Natural Area workday cleanup in partnership with Friends of the Parks...**Lulu Sossun** has joined the Ralph Lauren Bar & Grill team.

STREET ART WORLD: **Dont Fret**, a Chicago local street art legend who championed the Underdog, died at 36 in April. He is remembered as a loving, humorous and helping hand who enjoyed soccer, fishing and sausages — all reflected in his work.

HOT OFF THE PRESS: So when did the Democrats lose the 2025 presidential election? For two of America’s leading political journalists, **Jake Tapper** [CNN] and **Alex Thompson** [Axios] the answer is clear. Find out in their new book, “Original Sin,” when they come to the Vic Theater, 3145 N. Sheffield Avenue., 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 5. NPR Media Correspondent **David Folkenflik** will moderate a no-holds-barred conversation.

TREES: Notre Dame’s tree canopy has a rich history, and after a year of hard work by the Campus Tree Care Plan Committee, they’ve officially been recognized as a Tree Campus USA school. And **Alan Page** strengthens the college’s football tradition of excellence by donating \$21 million to support renovations at Notre Dame Stadium in South Bend.

Art is the signature of civilizations.
— **Beverly Sills**

tog515@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor

Enabling building up on Broadway

Residents of Edgewater recently met at Patio Beef on April 26 [story April 30] to protest the City's plan to upzone Broadway. They expressed concern that the plan would force local businesses like Patio Beef, a part of the neighborhood for decades, to close for new development.

Yet these residents misunderstand the core problem that the Broadway upzoning plan is trying to solve. Demand to live in Edgewater is increasing, and prospective new residents need somewhere to go. The upzoning plan is the only way that Edgewater can adapt to newcomers without displacing residents and small businesses.

If we don't make it easier to build along Broadway, Edgewater won't be able to keep up with the influx of demand. Newcomers will have to compete with long-time residents. Those moving in often have higher incomes and can afford to pay more, driving rents up. And businesses that cater to them can afford to pay higher commercial rents than Patio Beef.

Only by enabling building up on Broadway can we create enough space for everyone to live, work and shop, and keep our local businesses that make Edgewater special around.

Alexander Gillon
Andersonville

It's political battle and business

[In the April 16 newspapers] Don DeBate complained about increased property taxes and encouraged readers to file property tax appeals. It's true that property tax has unfortunately increased for many homeowners in Chicago's southern suburbs, but DeBate's analysis should be taken with skepticism.

DeBate himself is a real estate investor who is directly hurt by increased property taxes and part of his complaint is that "commercial properties, particularly in revitalized neighborhoods and near infrastructure developments" have had their taxes increased. While I have great empathy for homeowners priced out of their homes, it is completely reasonable to increase property taxes for businesses on land which is now worth much more due to development.

DeBate includes several quotes supporting his case from Larry Rogers Jr. who, according to the Chicago Tribune, "rakes in cash from appeals industry." Rogers' campaign contributions and expenditures report for the first quarter of 2025 reveals he has received massive contributions from law firms specializing in real estate tax appeals.

The article goes after Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi who is embroiled in a political battle with Rogers over the latter's acceptance of contributions from property tax lawyers and appraisers.

DeBate's article isn't journalism, it's a business venture.

Jackson Steffens
Edgewater

POLICE BEAT from p. 6

sault in the first block of E. Lake in the Loop. He got out of jail again and got arrested again on April 4 in the 200 block of N. Wells for a felony drug charge, according to CPD records.

Once again, he was put back on the streets and Chicago cops arrested him two days later, on April 7 for turnstile jumping at a CTA station in the Loop.

Unless Rodriguez wins a reprieve, he is expected to be deported, bringing his short but eventful stay in Chicago to a close.

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Bias

Your paper seems to have a very strong pro-car bias, and a bias against bicycles and pedestrians, LOL! I've read story after story trashing bike lanes, and trashing efforts to make neighborhoods more livable. But in reality, these efforts aren't necessarily so bad! Also I'm quite sure that a lot of your readers do not even OWN cars. I wish you would take a more balanced approach.

Kevin Havener
Edgewater

Editors note:

Yes, Mr. Havener is right, this newspaper has a bias. Many of our readers now see this bias. But this bias is not against bikes. Our bias is against the man-made concrete barriers that are expanding across the city. We think these concrete barriers exacerbate congestion, while also removing parking on commercial streets damaging our small locally-owned businesses. These concrete barriers also block egress for emergency vehicles when other vehicles cannot pull to the right to get out of their way, and when commercial and personal vehicles double park in traffic lanes since the curb lane has been blocked off by a concrete barrier. We've asked CTA bus drivers, they say the concrete barriers make operating a bus in the city much more difficult and dangerous. And at times those concrete barriers clearly violate the Americans with Disabilities Act and put our disabled neighbors at greater harm.

Yes, we have a bias, we admit that. This newspaper's view is that the benefits of creating all these concrete barriers do not outweigh the costs.

Obey the rules of the road

Regarding the letter-writer who last week defended bicyclists who do not stop for stop signs and commit other dangerous acts. The defense offered claims the so-called "Idaho stop," in which the bike rider merely pauses at the stop sign rather than doing what the stop sign directs - which is to stop - is permissible.

The stop sign doesn't say "hesitate" or "slow down." It directs all users to come to a full stop. If you're still going 5 mph, you haven't stopped! This isn't complicated.

The state from which the Idaho stop is named is a sparsely populated state without anywhere close to the congestion Chicagoans must endure. Running stop signs is not merely unlawful, it's dangerous. A year ago, I came to a full stop on Fremont St. before entering eastbound Addison St. Before I could enter the four-way stop intersection, a bicyclist shot through the intersection, of course without stopping, and barely missed hitting my car.

Moreover, it wouldn't be so bad if Idaho "stoppers" were the only issue. Many bicyclists go the wrong way on one-way streets, run red lights, fail to signal, dart in and out of traffic and drive on sidewalks.

Is it asking too much for bicyclists to obey the rules of the road, as motorists must?

Frank Fisher
Wrigleyville/Lakeview



Kingdom Come photo courtesy of the Music Box Theater.

The Legend of Kingdom Come coming to Music Box Theater

Local Illustrator's film premiere features Q&A

BY JOHN PORUBSKY

Comic book illustrator and Chicagoland resident Alex Ross pitched the concept of 1996's graphic novel Kingdom Come to James Robinson after his success with the Marvel Comic's Marvels just two years before. Ross would get the help of writer Mark Waid, and the four-issue literary opus would be published by DC Comics under their Elseworlds imprint.

The popularity of these two titles helped to usher in a "hyper realistic" illustrative approach to the comic genre that continues to stand the test of time with the likes of legendary classic artists of the past.

A documentary titled The Legend of Kingdom Come has recently been produced to chronicle this achievement following its successful Kickstarter campaign in Oct. 2024. This feature-length documentary is coming to the Music Box, 3733 N. Southport in Lake View for its North American Premiere on Saturday, May 10 for a film screening and Q&A to follow.

The VIP event pre-screening will feature a Q&A with Executive Producer Sal Abbinanti, Director Remsy Atassi, and special guests to be announced.

Each ticket includes an 11x17 film poster and there is a VIP event prior to the screening.

The Legend of Kingdom Come tells the

LEGEND see p. 10

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CPS from p. 3

der support coordinators.”

More contractual money would be provided for sports to pay for uniforms, buses, and supplies to boost coach stipends.

The addition of 30 new “sustainable schools,” three new dual-language and three new world-language programs are also called for.

Cuts could also impact support staff such as custodians, security guards, building engineers, lunch-room staff, and crossing guards paid for under the Safe Passage program.

Cuts may also impact recent increased efforts to restore transportation to general education students who largely attend magnet or selective enrollment schools.

Elimination of CPS security

guards may prove touchy after the Chicago Board of Education voted to remove Chicago Police School Resource Officers from CPS schools as they focus on holistic and restorative practices.

CPS says there could be cuts even if new revenue comes through. For example, if the district received \$300 million in additional funding through either state or city funding, it could mean a \$70 million to \$110 million cut to direct school funding.

The projected budget gap does not include new risks to federal funding under President Donald Trump, such as Title I, which provides funds to about 400 Chicago schools with high shares of students from low-income families.

The cuts could mean cuts to discretionary funding for high needs schools, staff that provide

INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

The increase in teacher spending has not translated into better outcomes for students. Since 2012 spending has increased by 97% but student proficiency in reading has declined by 63% and by 78% in mathematics for grades 3-8.

additional support to struggling students, such as tutors, and social-emotional support.

The new contract increased the average teacher salary from \$86,439 to \$114,429 by the end of the newly approved contract – a nearly \$28,000 raise for a truncated work year of 177 days, which includes 35.4 weeks of instruction.

The increase in teacher spending has not translated into better outcomes for students. Since 2012

LEGEND from p. 9

story of the beloved 90s-era graphic novel Kingdom Come, going behind the scenes, and inside the mind of Ross, its creator. The story of Kingdom Come ruminates a DC Universe in which many of its classic superheroes return from retirement to tame a generation of brutal antiheroes.

This documentary investigates the influence of comics history through the present day, exploring the origins of pop culture’s most broad and multifaceted phenome-

spending has increased by 97% but student proficiency in reading has declined by 63% and by 78% in mathematics for grades 3-8. And after the government-imposed pandemic school shut down, absenteeism has spiraled higher.

Chicago has the worst absenteeism record of any big school system in the nation. In the 2022-2023 school year, CPS saw a significant rise in chronic absenteeism, with roughly 40% of

non in the 21st century. Featuring a wide range of comic legends reflecting on the book and industry, The Legend of Kingdom Come seeks to explore what makes the popularity of superheroes endure to this day and why they’re a prevalent part of modern pop culture.

Ross was born in Portland, OR, and raise in Texas by his minister father, Clark, and his mother, Lynette. The Eisner Award winner attended Chicago’s American Academy of Art where he began painting at age 17. His mother had

students missing at least 18 days of school, the definition of chronic absence in Illinois. This is a substantial increase from the 23% rate in 2018.

As student outcomes and attendance deteriorate, and spending dramatically increases because of rising salaries and benefits, enrollment within CPS continues to decline.

Since before the pandemic, CPS added staff, leading to an increase of 20% staff while student enrollment decreased by 10.5%. The enrollment increase since last year is likely due to an influx of migrant children which saw an overall demographic increase in Latino, White, and Asian students.

studied there as well and became a successful commercial illustrator in her own right.

The famous art school had survived for 101 years on Michigan Ave., when it finally closed its doors in 2024.

Many of Ross’s artistic inspirations include Andrew Loomis, Norman Rockwell, and J.C. Leventecker and he would hope to one day apply those styles to comic book art. Alex’s career includes illustrations for TV Guide covers, opening titles for Spider-Man 2, promotional art for the 2002 Academy Awards, cover art on the Anthrax albums, and have designed action figures based on his art for Kingdom Come. He has created original comic book art for companies DC, Marvel, Eclipse, Image, and Dynamite Entertainment.

For more information about the screening, go to <https://music-boxtheatre.com/.../the-legend-of-kingdom-come>; and Ross and his art go to <https://www.alexrossart.com/>.

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
CIRCUIT COURT,
MILWAUKEE COUNTY

Plaintiff(s):
METROPOLITAN
ASSOCIATES, L.P.
1123 N. Astor St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202
-vs-
Defendant(s):
SHANIQUIA JACKSON
6815 S. Parnell Ave., Apt. 1
Chicago, IL 60621

Publication Summons
and Notice
(Small Claims)
Case No. 25-SC-006503

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 414-278-4120 prior to the scheduled court date. Please note that the court does not provide transportation.

Publication Summons and Notice of Filing

TO THE PERSON(S) NAMED ABOVE AS DEFENDANT(S):
You are being sued by the person(s) named above as Plaintiff(s).
A copy of the claim has been sent to you at your address as stated in the caption above.
The lawsuit will be heard in the following small claims court:
Milwaukee County Courthouse
Telephone Number of clerk of court: 414-278-4120
Courtroom/Room Number: 400
901 N. 9th St.
Milwaukee State WI 53233
Date: 6/6/25 Time: 8:30 a.m.

If you do not attend the hearing, the court may enter a judgment against you in favor of the person(s) suing you. A copy of the claim has been sent to you at your address as stated in the caption above. A judgment may be enforced as provided by law. A judgment awarding money may become a lien against any real estate (property) you own now or in the future, and may also be enforced by garnishment or seizure of property. You may have the option to Answer without appearing in court on the court date by filing a written Answer with the clerk of court before the court date. You must send a copy of your Answer to the Plaintiff(s) named above at their address. You may contact the clerk of court at the telephone number above to determine if there are other methods to answer a Small Claims complaint in that county.

Plaintiff/Attorney Michael A. Sosnay
State Bar Number 1059549
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Lakeview Township Real Estate For Sale

Real Estate For Sale

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
NewRez LLC d/b/a Shellpoint Mortgage Servicing Plaintiff
vs.
Raphael Strzelecki aka Raphael D. Strzelecki; Imperial Towers Condominium Association; United States of America, Department of Treasury; State of Illinois Department of Revenue; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants;
Defendant
24 CH 6259
CALENDAR 62
NOTICE OF SALE
PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercounty Judicial Sales Corporation will on June 9, 2025, at the hour 11:00 a.m., Intercounty's office, 120 West Madison Street, Suite 718A, Chicago, IL 60602, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:
P.I.N. 14-16-301-041-1323.
Commonly known as 4250 North Marine Drive Unit 2812, Chicago, IL 60613.
The real estate is: condominium residence. The purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 of the Condominium Property Act.. Sale terms: At sale, the bidder must have 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection.

Real Estate For Sale

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For information call Sales Department at Plaintiff's Attorney, Diaz Anselmo & Associates P.A., 1771 West Diehl Road, Suite 120, Naperville, IL 60563. (630) 453-6960. 1422-201458
INTERCOUNTY JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
intercountyjudicialsales.com
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070707 -----

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
FIFTH THIRD BANK, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION Plaintiff
vs.
BONNELL J. LANGFORD A/KIA BONNELL LANGFORD; SHORELINE PARK CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS
Defendant
22 CH 5731
CALENDAR 60
NOTICE OF SALE
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Real Estate For Sale

real estate:
P.I.N. 14-08-412-040-1479.
Commonly known as 4950 North Marine Drive, Unit 1505, Chicago, IL 60640.
The real estate is: condominium residence. The purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by subdivisions (g)(1) and (g)(4) of Section 9 of the Condominium Property Act.. Sale terms: At sale, the bidder must have 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.
For information call Sales Department at Plaintiff's Attorney, Diaz Anselmo & Associates P.A., 1771 West Diehl Road, Suite 120, Naperville, IL 60563. (630) 453-6960. 6722-185532
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Rogers Park Township Real Estate For Sale

Real Estate For Sale

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
U.S. Bank Trust National Association, not in its Individual Capacity but solely as Trustee of Greene Street Funding Trust Plaintiff
vs.
Paul A. Solitro; Unknown Owners and Non-Record Claimants;
Defendant
22 CH 8089
CALENDAR 64
NOTICE OF SALE
PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the above entitled cause Intercounty Judicial Sales Corporation will on June 16, 2025, at the hour 11:00 a.m., Intercounty's office, 120 West Madison Street, Suite 718A, Chicago, IL 60602, sell to the highest bidder for cash, the following described mortgaged real estate:
P.I.N. 11-31-226-004-0000.
Commonly known as 1663 W. Farwell Ave., Chicago, IL 60626.
The real estate is: single family residence. If the subject mortgaged real estate is a unit of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by subsection (g-1) of Section 18.5 of the Condominium Property Act. Sale terms: At sale, the bidder must have 10% down by certified funds, balance within 24 hours, by certified funds. No refunds. The property will NOT be open for inspection. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.
For information call Sales Department at Plaintiff's Attorney, Diaz Anselmo & Associates P.A., 1771 West Diehl Road, Suite 120, Naperville, IL 60563. (630) 453-6960. 1491-184765
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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY,

Real Estate For Sale

ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC, Plaintiff,
-v-
UNKNOWN HEIRS AND LEGATEES OF MICHAEL C. MOORE; TAMARA MOORE; PAULETTE SMITH; COLUMBIA ESTATES CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION; JOHN LYDON AS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF MICHAEL C. MOORE; UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS;
Defendants.
2024CH04271
1260 W Columbia Ave, Unit 2,
Chicago, IL 60626
NOTICE OF SALE
PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on 3/5/2025, an agent of Auction.com, LLC will conduct the auction in person at 12:00 PM on 6/11/2025 located at 100 N LaSalle St., Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60606, and will sell at public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate.
Commonly known as 1260 W Columbia Ave, Unit 2, Chicago, IL 60626
Property Index No. 11-32-305-029-1008
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Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a certificate of sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.
The property will NOT be open for inspection and

Real Estate For Sale

plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property, prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by the Condominium property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9 (g)(l) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by the Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).
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Pro Self Storage intends to enforce its lien on certain self service Storage Spaces in default listed below on the 22nd. of May, 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.

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B122 Javon A. Mathis
1077 Laura Lee Weathers

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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THE LOCK UP SELF STORAGE
at 1930 N. Clybourn Ave., Chicago IL 60614
Will sell the contents of the following units to satisfy a lien to the highest bidder
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Unit 721 Alex Huerta

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East Bank Storage located at 730 West Lake Street, Chicago, IL, 312-876-2000, is opening lockers:
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5300A-Johnson, Timothy
3250G-Gino and Marty's
3355B- Pfeiffer, Lisa
5172X- Townsell, Tami
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for public sale.

This sale is to be held on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, at 2:00PM.
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Under The Skin Exhibition opening May 16

In 'Under the Skin' is a new exhibit by Penny Cagney and Jenny Chernansky opening in Chicago that delves into the connections between our inner states of mind and our physical manifestation in the outer layers of human skin—the critical barrier between our vulnerable interiors and threats from the outside.

The exhibit will open with a 6 p.m. reception Friday, May 16, at the Museum of Surgical Sciences, 1524 N. Lake Shore Dr.

Free opening reception with an RSVP, visit <https://imss.org/>.

Cagney received her BFA magna cum laude from Loyola Univ., a MA from Columbia College, and in 2021, a MFA in studio arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago [SAIC]. She also taught graduate arts administration at Columbia College and SAIC.

Chernansky's work examines the dual nature of the feminine experience, embracing how the past may be re-interpreted to bring a new look at the narrative that has held a long shadow over modern culture. Award winning photographer and painter, Chernansky's work has been shown nationally and internationally.

The Museum is filled with artifacts, as well as paintings, illustrations, and sculptures that interpret the pre-modern and modern healing practices of human civilization.

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May in Motion

The Chicago Park District [CPD] announced year two of its "May in Motion" initiative that encourages Chicagoans to explore wellness and health activities in the parks throughout the month of May.

CPD CEO Carlos Ramirez-Rosa announced the month-long awareness campaign to ensure that Chicagoans from all community areas have access to a multitude of wellness and health programs as the warmer months approach.

"[This is a] call to action to get all Chicagoans moving and to increase access to amenities and spaces that promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle," said Ramirez-Rosa. "As outlined in our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan, we're committed to promoting a thriving community that includes offering opportunities for residents to improve their overall health."

To celebrate "May in Motion," the Park District is encouraging the healthy living and wellness of patrons and employees. Visit your local park to find out more, or visit [visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com).

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FOUNTAIN from p. 1

of Melas, who served as president of the MWRD for nearly two decades. Designed by Chicago architect Dirk Lohan and Associates, the fountain serves as a tribute to Chicago’s ongoing efforts to manage and protect its water resources.

THIEF from p. 1

the camera, before the camera footage just stops filming.”
He is seen in video from a security camera unlocking the door, entering the unit, and looking directly at the camera. How-

FORECLOSURE from p. 1

property is also currently zoned DX-12.
As historic properties within the district, the 19th century row houses are protected from complete demolition. However, a prospective developer may choose to simply incorporate their facades onto an entirely new building.
Despite being located in a designated downtown district, large-scale developments are designated as Planned Developments and the city has more oversight over them than one with a standard development designation.
Laytin and Ding somehow also lost an additional \$50 million that had been lent to them by 89 private individual Chinese investors. Each of these investors had lent the pair \$550,000 as part of a deceptive federal EB-5 visa program in which the investors hoped to secure a coveted American Permanent Resident Card commonly referred to as a “Green Card.”
The EB-5 program has faced severe criticism regarding fraud and mismanagement of funds, leading to allegations of shady practices within the industry. The program was designed to stimulate the U.S. economy through job creation and investment, but it is also ripe with allegations of fraud and misuse of investor funds, as has been alleged in court in this project.
“This [current] situation has been absolutely insane. If this wasn’t fraud, nothing is. [Laytin and Ding] had the money and then, it disappeared,” said Doug Litowitz, the attorney for a group of Chinese investors who had sought to reclaim the money lent to the pair.
Those foreign investors may never see their money again.
Laytin and Ding had filed their demolition permits on Sept. 12, 2018. That application had triggered an emergency 90 day review due to the properties Orange-rated status on the city’s historic resources sur-

The city’s relationship with its waterways has been central to its growth, from the early days of the Illinois & Michigan Canal to the reversal of the Chicago River, which was one of the most ambitious engineering feats of its time.
Also now open is the Buckingham Fountain in Grant Park.
ever, the video then ends, and the man is not seen leaving with any of the missing items.
While residents suspect a building employee who has since been fired, a spokesperson for the Chicago Police Dept. said on April 26 there have been no arrests.

vey. Orange is the second highest designation for a property being considered as a landmark.
On March 20, 2020, the three properties were included in the city of Chicago’s Near North Side Multiple Property Historic District. That district includes a noncontiguous group of 15 buildings which includes single-family homes, row houses and apartment buildings that represent the early redevelopment of the Near North Side after it was largely decimated by fire in 1871, according to information posted by the city’s Dept. of Planning and Development.
Even today, Litowitz does not understand how his clients lost all of their money to Laytin and Ding and yet no effort seems to have been made on the federal or local level to help his clients recover from this scam.
“Nothing has been done. The federal magistrate even recommended to Judge [LaShonda] Hunt that [Laytin and Ding’s] attorney Daniel Hildebrand be sanctioned 20 months ago. Again, nothing happened. The magistrate also recommended prison for Ding and Laytin. That was six months ago - nothing! There is no federal action. It’s crazy.”

MICRO from p. 1

Chicago is among urban centers facing three main real estate issues, according to Alex Horowitz, Pew Housing Director. These include a housing shortage driving up rents, high rates of homelessness, and increasing commercial vacancies.
This is according to a study by architecture firm Gensler and the Pew Charitable Trusts, and recently reported in the Sun-Times. The report looks at the feasibility of flexible co-living spaces in Chicago’s Central Business District. The study looked at 10 U.S. cities over the past 18 months to see how office conversions could solve each city’s housing problems.
High construction costs coupled with the number of units that could be created by conversions led the nonprofit to research cheaper, more productive alternatives for downtown office buildings.
It would be a return of the Single Room Occupancy [SRO] building. It was an industry that Chicago spent a great amount of effort to remove. Chicago started removing SRO buildings, particularly in the areas known as Skid Row, through urban renewal and redevelopment efforts, starting in the mid-20th century. A notable example was the demolition of the Starr Hotel in 1982, which was replaced by the Presidential Towers.
By the mid-1970s Chicago’s SRO housing was in serious decline, as an estimated 81% of the city’s stock was lost between 1960 and 1980. In 1986, the Tribune reported that the city had lost 17,000 SRO units since 1976, including 3,000 alone in the West Loop’s Presidential Towers space.
A little over a decade ago, the 46th Ward had 14 licensed SROs, at least twice as many as any other ward. About one quarter of the city’s SROs back then were located

in four North Side lakefront wards alone: the 44th, 46th, 48th, and 49th.
Gensler and Pew identified about 30 buildings in Chicago that are ripe for conversions into co-op living housing. The majority of these properties were built before 1930 with an average vacancy rate of 44%.
Its co-living model proposes micro-apartments with private bedrooms and personal storage space. After that, it is shared, communal facilities like restrooms and showers, kitchens, living spaces and laundry on each floor.
Property owners may explore partnerships with colleges, medical facilities and local senior advocates to lease out individual floors.
The biggest bar to business-to-residential conversions in Chicago is the requirement for residential projects to have operable windows, Horowitz said. However the City of Chicago launched a pilot program last year to evaluate mechanical-only ventilation, which could eliminate the need to replace windows on older office buildings with new, operable ones.
That might work if the electric grid never goes down.
That system would mean big savings for developers, said Wes LeBlanc, principal and analytics director at Gensler’s Chicago office. Developers can save anywhere from 10% to 15% on total development costs by not adding or replacing windows.
The median rent in Chicago is \$1,663, the study found. And for every 10,000 people, 71 may be homeless. Monthly rent in a co-op building would be \$950 for a standard single room, according to the study. Conversions could also include double units.
As construction costs remain high and are sure to keep going up, the co-living model is a cheaper way to convert office buildings, the study found.
The costs per square foot to convert office buildings into co-op living space is about 25% to 30% lower than traditional office-to-residential conversion, LeBlanc said.
Brian Vitale, the principal and managing director at Gensler, said co-living conversions could be a more cost-effective way to gain residents downtown, where they can enjoy amenities and have closer access to employment opportunities and studies.
As these new SRO-type housing are again under consideration, the city was remiss for allowing the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago to abandon its once formidable portfolio of residential buildings throughout the city without question. Today, only two remain: the Old Irving and Lakeview community areas.

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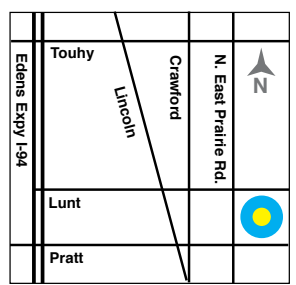


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