

Doing nothing
is better than
being busy
doing nothing.
— Lao Tzu

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

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Lane Tech's Conor Sullivan round third after his first inning home run.

Lane Tech survives Von Steuben 6-4

*The Champions can be
champion again*

BY JACK LYDON

Lane Tech is on a roll. Winning 11 out of the last 12 games. They have given up only seven runs in 12 games. Far and away leader of the Chicago Public Leagues' Jackie Robinson North Division.

The Champions (23-9, 14-1) survived a challenge from the Von Steuben (15-13-3, 6-9) Panthers 6-4 May 15 at Kerry Wood

Cubs Field.

"It's been a little wild. The last time we lost was to Maine South in extra innings. That was a couple weeks ago. It's been a nice little run," said Lane's skipper Sean Freeman.

"Our pitching has been great recently. Defense has been good. We took batting practice on the field today. I wanted to get a fast start. We've got to do a better job of sustaining. The bats [have been

LANE see p. 16

Alderman remembers, honors Kevin Patel, page 5

Future of Western Ave. bus-only lanes subject of May 29 meeting

Those who are concerned about the future of public transit on Western Ave. may want to join in on a town hall meeting 6 p.m. Thursday, May 29 when CTA, City Hall and Equiticity are hosting a public event. Under discussion will be the implementation of more bus-only lanes on Western Ave.

This event is part of a collaborative project developed by the CTA and the City to lobby community members around improving accessibility, reliability, and safety for pedestrians, drivers, cyclists, and transit riders along Western Ave.

The Western Ave. bus corridor runs from 79th St. north to Howard St., with buses that are served by the #49 Western Ave., the #X49 Western Ave. Express, and the #49B N. Western bus routes.

The plan calls for a variety of street treatments that give an increased degree of priority to bus riders and buses over private vehicles in order to improve travel time, reliability, and comfort.

Western Ave. is the longest continuous street in the City, and it provides a direct connection to nearly every CTA rail line and most diagonal city streets.

Western is also consistently among the top five highest ridership corridors in the CTA bus

system. The CTA and City studied the corridor for potential implementation of Bus-only Rapid Transit zones in 2012, and have implemented several Bus-only Priority Zones along it which remove street parking to allow a lane for the exclusive use of CTA buses.

These include stretches of peak-hour bus lanes at chokepoints near the Western Blue Line Station, near Logan Boulevard and the entrance to I-90/94, and also for the area around the Western Brown Line CTA Station.

In addition to the Bus-only Priority Zone, Western was one of the first corridors to receive installation of Transit Signal Priority infrastructure, with traffic signal upgrades between 79th and Howard streets.

In 2022, the City published a Western Avenue Corridor Study focusing on land uses on the northern portion of the corridor, which included recommendations for the addition of bus-only priority lanes.

Food, childcare, and interpretation services will be provided. The meeting will take place both in person and virtually on Zoom. To register or for more information call 888-968-7282 or 773-654-1867.

City moving forward with changes on Clark St.

The city hosted a community meeting May 13 at Chase Park Field House, 4701 N. Ashland Ave., to review the changes that are coming to Clark St. including the expansion of privileged bike lanes on Clark St. between Montrose and Winnemac, and the loss of over half of the areas' commercial street parking.

The meeting drew well over 100 people and was hosted by the Chicago Dept. of Transportation [CDOT] and the two adjacent ward offices - 46th and 47th. During their monologue, CDOT shared preliminary plans for expanding the bike lanes and curb extensions between Montrose and Winnemac.

Construction on this segment of Clark St. is targeted to begin this year.

As has occurred at many other CDOT meetings, CDOT officials took no questions from the audience during the public portion of the presentation, and only city officials were allowed to speak before the assembled crowd.

Individual conversations were held with concerned citizens after

the public portion of the meeting concluded.

The city hopes these changes will make Clark St. more comfortable for pedestrians, bikers and scooter riders - to the detriment of disabled people, drivers of private vehicles, commercial delivery vehicles, CTA buses and emergency response vehicles, whose drivers all know that navigating through areas constricted by concrete barriers makes egress more difficult.

These changes will also hurt local businesses by severely limiting commercial parking and making it more difficult for customers to access local businesses.

Clark St. connects the Andersonville, Ravenswood, and Uptown communities in this area and over the past two years, the city worked to create a new vision for Clark St. they call "Clark Street Crossroad."

This process is part of a global plan created by the World Economic Forum [WEF] called the "15-Minute City." That plan calls for making urban areas more walkable, hoping that local resi-

dents would do all their work, shopping, schooling and socializing within a 15-minute proximity of their homes.

While Chicago hasn't adopted a formal 15-Minute City Plan, it's actively considering the concept as part of its broader efforts to fight climate change and create more equitable and sustainable communities.

A major goal of the plan is to reduce reliance on private vehicles. Only the plan runs up against America's 100-year love affair with their cars, car culture and the freedoms private car ownership provides to expand mobility and economic and educational opportunities.

The concept is a form of new systemic segregation which envisions using urban planning to create barriers to vehicle travel between communities. The WEF plan demands essential needs like shops, schools, and workplaces should be accessible within a 15-minute walk or bike ride of one's home. Only the reality on the

CLARK ST. see p. 16

Old Town bar sues concealed carry holder whose gun fired, putting liquor license in jeopardy

BY COOK COUNTY
RECORD

An Old Town bar is suing a concealed carry holder, saying they spent tens of thousands of dollars on legal fees to protect their liquor license after he unintentionally fired his gun inside the establishment.

The recent legal complaint filed by the bar and restaurant against an individual has caught the attention of many due to its dramatic circumstances.

The VIG Chicago, LLC lodged a lawsuit in the Circuit Court of

Cook County, Illinois on April 29, accusing Michael M. Davis of negligence after a concealed firearm discharged at their establishment.

According to the complaint, the incident occurred in the early hours of July 3, 2022, when Davis allegedly brought a concealed firearm into The VIG, 1527 N. Wells St., despite clear signage prohibiting firearms on the premises as per Section 65(d) of the Illinois Firearm Concealed Carry Act.

The firearm accidentally discharged from Davis' pants pocket

while he was adjusting his clothing, causing a bullet to ricochet off the floor and injure another patron. This incident led to administrative proceedings against The VIG by the City of Chicago, resulting in thousands of dollars in legal expenses.

The VIG's legal team argues that Davis violated several duties under Illinois law. As an Illinois Concealed Carry License holder, Davis was required to comply with all provisions of the Firearm Concealed Carry Act (430 ILCS

SUES see p. 16

Four new speed cameras on North Side

*Issuing warnings now
through June 15*

The city has announced the activation of four new automated speed enforcement cameras at locations on the North Side. Warning notices (without fines) are issued for the first 30 days after each new camera is activated.

The new automated ticket-writing machines are at 2640 W. Peterson Ave. adjacent to Green Briar Park; 6614 N. Central Ave. at Edgebrook Park, and at 6146 N. Sheridan Rd. near Park 559. These three locations will begin issuing cash citations on June 15.

An automated speed enforcement camera began issuing warn-

ings on May 15 at 1635 N. LaSalle Dr., in Lincoln Park, with enforcement to begin on June 30.

Following the warning period and a blackout period, citations will be issued to the registered owners of vehicles exceeding the speed limit by six miles per hour (mph) or more. Vehicles traveling 6-10 mph over the speed limit will be fined \$35, while those traveling 11 mph or more over the limit will be fined \$100.

Chicago's speed camera program is one of several tools used to support the City's efforts to collect money. In 2023, Chicago's speed cameras generated over \$102 million in revenue, with fines and late fees totaling

\$102,249,758.

In the first nine months of 2024, as local drivers got wise to their locations, Chicago's speed cameras collected only \$54 million in fines, a significant decrease from the \$82 million generated during the same period in 2023.

As Chicago is now facing a severe budget crisis, additional locations will be added to the network throughout the year. Critics argue that the speed camera system acts as a regressive tax, disproportionately harming those who can least afford it, while wealthier drivers can absorb the costs with less impact.

CAMERAS see p. 16

There is little accuracy in this mayoral self-praise



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

Papa Chicago XIV has sparked on the Chair of St. Peter for Chitown zip-coders like a Subway World Series between the Cubs and the Sox.

As the new Pontiff traverses his Roman diocese he's speaking elegant Italian from morning Mass to Evening Prayer. I love watching his papal modernity. Dropping a few American phrases here and there. He has the gait of a young man and a familial character that is probably his greatest asset.

Being comfortable in your family is always a profound expression of honest humanity. That's not always easy.

Seeing high-end leadership that is so well-accomplished sends an electricity through the air. Even in sleepy-town Rome.

So too is imagining all of the Pontiff's feet-on-the-ground Chicago knowledge. That's what you get when you really are the smartest guy in the room. But filled with humility. And possessed of gratitude and memory for all the events of the lucky life you have fashioned by your openness and compassion for others. That's what is revealed to you when you don't need the biggest car, the gaudiest of cuff-links, the biggest house, the latest fashions or

the loudest of voices in the room. Sometimes the softest voice is the best to use. Or the smallest apartment is really the coziest.

It's kind of like our current sad state of Chicago affairs demonstrated daily on City Hall's 5th Floor.

Mayor "Fumble All the Money Away" Johnson boldly states that despite the nightmare currently unfolding with the shortfall in the city's budget, he has already saved the tax-payer \$200 million.

It's not his fault if the city squanders all that cash.

He admits his "career" of running for office and organizing makes him an expert on spending. The projected debt next year for the city budget will be \$1 billion, maybe more. Hence the rationale behind what the mayor calls his drastic steps attempting to repair damages from this year's \$225 million shortfall.

Sadly there is little accuracy in this mayoral self-praise.

The mayor's Budget Office is already defining the budgetary restrictions that are soon to go into effect, including a hiring freeze. So as the workers on his team resign or just "disappear," will their positions be filled or will replacements be mysteriously forthcoming?

Johnson also says there will be limits on "non essential" travel by city employees. Glad they also included that money saver. I'd love to get a look at the travel expense forms.

He also promises to end any kind of overtime for city employees in areas outside of public safety. I would also delight in seeing how his people describe their past uses of overtime.

The tightrope-walking mayor also acknowledges what bad decisions in the past have meant for the city. But he does not accept any of the blame for such decisions or embrace the financial failures as personal errors in his own judgement. He says it's time for the city to be prudent and fiscally responsible. He has a better chance of outlawing U-turns on Chicago streets.

But, of course, as the puppet of the Chicago Teachers Union

[CTU], Mayor "Teachers Pet" Johnson stresses the importance of seeing to it that no essential support for Chicago Public Schools should be trimmed.

He only spoke for roughly two minutes when addressing the mindless leadership that exacerbated the out of control rise in the city's debt for the past two years. I'm not sure the geography trod by the CTU is the right place to pursue substantive answers to this financial disaster. But this is why the CTU was so financially supportive of Johnson's run for mayor two years ago. Financial hysteria and budget implosion deeply mark the halfway mark of Johnson's tenure in office.

When this mayoral administration could not reach the mid-point in Johnson's term in office without being surrounded by disaster, the predictable handwriting was already on the wall. There's no way that this will end in any kind of reasonable harmony. The crazy spending that the mayor avoids discussing, and has been so visible in his first 18 months in office, was unrivaled by the strange team he assembled, fired and then refilled.

He seems to have received no competent advice on how to manage the out-of-control finances. I can't believe he was very focused on his people, especially those on whom he bestowed big fat salaries, hired at the suggestion of the CTU.

From where has his real financial advice come forth? I fear he is doing the "Cook County Stumble," a popular dance move in which "Preckwinklers" demonstrate little regard for the realities of spending more than they take in. Have responsible people of finance actually admitted that they have advised the mayor?

The mayoral leadership team does not appear to have ever been in balance since Team Johnson took over. Is he receiving heavy-handed advice from potentates in Cook County government? Perhaps those stories we hear are true. Perhaps the smash and grab politics of the "Preckwinklers" are closer than we think.

Is this any way to treat the birthplace of Pope Leo XIV?

Perhaps his Holiness might have some healthy advice for the operators of Chicago's sinking ship. Seems to me that the Chicago Pope might have a pretty clear understanding about what is really unfolding in City Hall and the ease with which our elected officials get out of focus handling financial matters. I'd bet he has run up against the financial mismanagement of needed funds so necessary for survival somewhere along the way. He certainly might have some suggestions for resolving the Gompers Park tent city that the mayor tossed so much cash at but produced no real solution.

For two years the great promise that Mayor Johnson offered Chicagoans has not been seen. There's been no urban pay-off for Chicago voters. And don't forget, it was North Side voters who pushed him across the finish line.

Failure, despite the mayor's skewed ability to dodgeball reality, has raised its head at every juncture. The Chicago voter has been short-changed.

How many construction cranes do you see downtown? The Loop has emptied out, The 78 and Lincoln Yards remain vacant lots. Chicago traffic has us choked like the White Sox, with the streets clogged after being narrowed by those annoying privileged bike lanes. Hotel rooms, theater seats and restaurant tables are empty. Speeding cameras proliferate while the "L" trains are rolling danger-filled with thugs and bums while going broke. The Bears are about to leave for the suburbs, legal pot sales are down while gas taxes are about to go up again.

I hope the Chicago Pope is praying for Chicago. We need it now more than ever. Otherwise we'd better start building an ark.

CHICAGO'S REPORTER: Hard to imagine that the great **Walter Jacobson** is retiring from the reportage of bread and butter events, as well as the scandals, political malarkey, back room secrets, and unfolding deals by

which he informed, safeguarded and enflamed the hidden newsworthy elements of Chicago life. There was never anyone quite like the polished, sleeves-rolled-up stories, editorials and clue finding efforts of Walter. He lit up newsrooms and wore out shoe leather on those high polished brogues. A true newsmen.

TOP HONOR: Lettuce President and CEO **R.J. Melman** was awarded the "Richard Daley Police Medal of Honor" May 6. This prestigious recognition is a testament to RJ's unwavering commitment to our community and his dedication to making a positive impact.

PAX TIBI: Former Reader editor and columnist **Michael Miner** passed away May 1. He was truly a journeyman of Chicago journalism. We never missed

one of his columns.

LUCK OF THE IRISH: Pope Leo's grandmother, **Hannah O'Keeffe**, was born in the village of Cullen, North Cork, and emigrated to America in 1910. She must have been a mighty woman, as most Corkonians demonstrate.

THIN CRUST OR DEEP DISH?: Pope Leo, then Cardinal Robert Prevost visited the flagship Aurelio's Pizza location in Homewood last August with a large group of friends and family. We hear they ordered thin crust.

HOME PLATE: The Cubs **Pete Crow-Armstrong** reportedly purchased a new home near Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs. A long-term commitment?

BUTCH MCGUIRE'S: After 64 years on Division St., word on the street is that Butch McGuire's is looking to open a second location in Lincoln Park. You go, **Bobby** and **Rachel McGuire**.

SELF-PRAISE see p. 12

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NORTHSIDE HOUSING FAIR 2025

In collaboration with IL State Senator Mike Simmons & Alderperson Angela Clay



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This event is sponsored by NCR's Fair Housing Program, which is supported by US Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)



Architecture Center topic of Levy meeting May 28

The NE Levy Center Village at Damen and Lawrence avenues will be holding their next virtual meeting 9 a.m. Wednesday, May 28, when Michael Wood, a Senior Curator at the Chicago Architecture Center [CAC], will be their guest speaker, presenting on "Chicago: City of Architecture."

Perhaps no organization has done more to promote architectural appreciation and the wonders of modern city building than the CAC. With the group's 60th anniversary coming up next year, it is a fitting to

learn more about how this institution came into being, as well as some of its landmark projects over the years—like establishing the city's first architectural river cruise—that have contributed so much to our city's vitality.

The presentation also includes a review of several current issues facing Chicago where the architecture community is poised to lend a hand.

Wood joined the CAC in 2010 to help establish a fledgling network of architecture organizations across the US. The resulting

Association of Architecture Organizations is now a wholly independent organization that has grown from 16 founding members to 110 members that operate (entities similar to CAC) in 42 cities across the United States and seven countries.

The Association hosts networking and professional development opportunities, publishes a job board, promotes traveling exhibitions and design education.

As Senior Curator, Wood cultivates institutional relationships with the city's de-

sign industry. He also contributes to the organization's public lectures, exhibitions, festivals, and adult education courses, especially the implementation of new programming initiatives. He was a core member of the creative team that developed and launched the all-new Chicago Architecture Center in 2018.

Zoom meeting ID is 886 8091 2480, and the passcode is 142325. The call-in phone number is 312-626-6799 with the same passcode and ID.

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INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

Apartment renters and landlords battle over move-in fees



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

There's a donnybrook developing between landlords and tenants in Chicago's highly competitive North Side apartment-rental market.

Some Chicago apartment renters are grumbling that they are being charged non-refundable move-in fees that provide them little or no transparency about why the fees are being assessed.

Until about a decade ago, most Chicago landlords charged a traditional security deposit, typically equal to one month's rent. Security deposits are usually refundable at the end of a lease, depending on the condition of the apartment when the lease expires. However, a flat move-in fee, which typically ranges from \$350 to \$500, is different than a security deposit, because it is non-refundable.

On May 16 Illinois Sen. Michael Simmons [7th] introduced a bill in the Senate Executive Committee—an amendment to HB3564, which outlawed or capped various fees that housing providers could charge tenants.

The newly amended HB3564, called the "Rental Fee Transparency and Fairness Act," provides for the following consumer protection:

- All fees, whether they are one-time fees or recurring fees, must be disclosed on the first page of the lease agreement. Otherwise, the tenant is not liable for the fees.
- Any listing for a unit must disclose "in a clear and conspicuous manner" the non-optional fees included with the total amount for rent.
- In the lease disclosure or the listing, the housing provider must disclose whether utilities are included in the rent.

The following so-called "junk fees," or fines are prohibited:

A fee ancillary to the application fee. Also, fee for modification or renewal of a lease agreement. A fee for an eviction-notice or the filing of an eviction action. Also, fee for after-hours requests for maintenance service. A fee for contacting the building owner or manager. Also, a fee for travel required to complete needed maintenance work, or safety repairs. A fee for a maintenance hotline or a call to a maintenance hotline. Also, a fee for routine maintenance and upkeep of the unit. A fee for restoring access if a tenant is locked out. Also, a fee or fine to set up an online account or online portal to pay rent or utility costs, and a fee or fine for pest abatement or removal. Also, a fee for an in-person walk-through of the unit.

The amendment to HB3564 ex-



Until about a decade ago, most Chicago landlords charged a traditional security deposit.

pressly notes that a housing provider may not charge a tenant both a security deposit and a move-in or move-out fee. Here are other provisions of the amended bill:

- The security deposit may not exceed the amount of the first full month's rent.
- If the housing provider charges a move-in or move-out fee, the housing provider must provide an itemized list of the cost of the services, including "bundled services."

The total amount of the move-in or move-out fees may not exceed 20% of the first full month's rent. A tenant may pay a one-time fee in six monthly installments that begin at the inception of the tenancy.

The amendment states that the housing provider cannot impose a fee or charge interest if the tenant opts for an installment plan. However, the tenant may propose an alternative installment schedule. If the housing provider agrees to the alternative schedule, the schedule must be described in the rental agreement.



Michael Glasser

not exceed 25% of the first full month's rent, and payment of the last month's rent is not required in the lease.

A violation of the amended Act constitutes an unlawful practice under the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Practices Act. Any person alleging a violation of this Act may bring a civil action. The court may order injunctive relief, monetary relief, attorney's fees and costs.

- A housing provider may not rename a fee or charge to avoid application of this Act. A final note on preemption. The amended bill states as follows: A home-rule governmental unit, such as Cook County and the city of Chicago, may not regulate transparency for rental fees in a manner inconsistent with the provisions of this Act.

Critics of the amendment to HB3564 ask that since the pro-

posed act regulates security deposits, does this mean that the stricter Chicago Landlord-Tenant Ordinance [LTO] requirements regarding security deposits and violations thereof no longer apply?

"The amendment raises more questions than it answers," notes



Sen. Michael Simmons

Joe Moore, president of Joe Moore Strategies, LLC, and a former 49th Ward alderman from 1991 to 2019.

Another critic, Michael Glasser, president of the Neighborhood Building Owners Alliance [NBOA], noted that the LTO's strict language leaves judges with no discretion.

"Any proven infraction, no matter how small or unintentional 'shall' result in damages of double the security deposit plus attorney's fees," said Glasser. NBOA represents 11 real estate builders and investors groups.

"It's no wonder why housing providers in Chicago almost universally opt for non-refundable move-in fees instead of security deposits," he said.

"Usually, these move-in fees require tenants to provide a significantly lower upfront payment than a security deposit," Glasser said. "Ideally, housing providers should be able to offer their tenants a choice: a refundable security deposit, or a considerably smaller, non-refundable move-in fee."

"The latter allows us to create a reserve for damages and cleaning without the high risk associated with LTO compliance, Glasser said. "These funds also help to offset the rising costs of tenant screening (especially with increased identity fraud) and apartment preparation.

"Without the ability to collect move-in fees, we might be forced to increase the rent for all tenants, which would unfairly affect our long-term, responsible residents," Glasser said.

"Additionally, eliminating the requirement to pay interest on security deposits—which has been negligible for well over a decade and creates considerable administrative burdens—would be beneficial."

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.

How Cook County’s Tax Appeals System rewards businesses at homeowners’ expense

BY COOK COUNTY TREASURER
MARIA PAPPAS

After analyzing over 2 million Cook County property tax appeals filed between 2021 and 2023, researchers in our office uncovered a troubling trend: the system shifted nearly \$2 billion in taxes from businesses onto the backs of homeowners, hitting low-income minority homeowners the hardest.

This study exposed a stark imbalance in how property tax appeals impact businesses versus homeowners. Over the three-year period, businesses shaved more than \$3 billion off their tax bills through appeals, shifting nearly \$2 billion of that amount onto homeowners. This wealth transfer led to a 7% hike in overall property tax bills for homeowners while businesses enjoyed

a double digit drop in their collective tax bill.

Simply put, for homeowners the numbers are ugly.

- Businesses collectively reduced their tax bills by \$3.26 billion through appeals, while residential property owners saw their tax bills rise by \$1.91 billion.

- This \$3 billion reduction in business property taxes represents a 12.47% drop in their overall tax burden, which was partly offset by a 6.88% increase in residential property tax bills.

- Nearly 64% of business owners filed property tax appeals, compared to just 27% of homeowners.



Maria Pappas

And when we broke out the numbers based on income and race, the trends were similarly troubling.

- In communities where the median income is below \$50,000, property tax bills jumped by 9.76%, compared to a 5.22% increase in neighborhoods with incomes exceeding \$150,000.

- Nearly 46% of households in high-income areas appealed their assessments, compared to just 10.95% of those in low-income neighborhoods. In Black and Latino communities, it's

clear the system isn't working properly.

- Only 10.85% of Black homeowners and 14.06% of Latino homeowners appealed their taxes compared to 35.5% of White

homeowners.

- Majority Black and Latino neighborhoods represented the 10 areas with the lowest appeal rates.

Businesses collectively reduced their tax bills by \$3.26 billion through appeals, while residential property owners saw their tax bills rise by \$1.91 billion.

That's a problem because our study shows one of the best ways to lower your property tax bill is by appealing to the Assessor's Office, The Cook County Board of Review or both. The study revealed that tax bills for residential property owners who

EXPENSE see p. 6

Alderman remembers, honors Kevin Patel

BY ALD. TIMMY KNUDSEN [43RD]

It has been a month since the shooting on Lill St. that tragically took the life of Lincoln Park resident Kevin Patel.

This senseless crime proves that aggressive work needs to be continued to get guns off of the streets and to prosecute offenders. This requires partnership from all levels of government, and at the local level. Our office is committed to continuing to push City Hall towards public safety solutions and getting the Chicago Police Dept. the resources they need.

A few weeks ago, CPD arrested an individual in connection with the shooting, charging her with three felony counts, including murder in the first Degree.

I will continue to advocate directly to the office of Cook County State's Attorney, Eileen O'Neil Burke, in hopes that full pros-



Kevin Patel

ecution is accomplished to the maximum extent.

To support this effort, our office is partnering with CPD and the Community Justice Center to facilitate a court advocate program made up of 43rd Ward community members who will follow Kevin's case

through the judicial process, both monitoring and providing support. Court advocacy volunteers send a strong message to the defendant, the judge and all other interested parties in the criminal justice system: the community cares about the outcome of these cases.

Those who may have interest in becoming a court advocate for this case, email us at yourvoice@ward43.org and we will send information on an introductory meeting with our partners.

Kevin's brother, Neil, has been an inspiration and partner to our office during the aftermath of such a grave loss. The way Neil speaks about his brother's memory is filled with love and action; accordingly, we asked him to write something directly to

the community to help others understand the amazing person that Kevin was. He was willing, and in memory of Kevin Patel, his brother Neil writes as follows:

§

Kevin was a kind, generous, and intelligent man with a bright future that was tragically cut short on April 16. His sudden departure has left an immeasurable void in the hearts of everyone who knew and loved him.

Kevin had the spirit to put smiles on everyone's face. He was affectionate and caring to those he encountered, whether it was someone he knew or a stranger he met

PATEL see p. 12

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Northside
Community
Resources returns
to North Side
for 13th annual
housing fair

Everyone is concerned about housing now, particularly on the North Side. While many fret, others are doing something about it.

Northside Community Resources [NCR] and its housing counseling subsidiary Northside Community Development Corporation [NCDC], in collaboration with Illinois State Sen. Mike Simmons [7th] and Ald. Angela Clay [46th], have announce their 13th Annual Northside Housing Fair, a housing resource event that is free and open to the public.

The event will take place 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, June 14, at Truman College, 1145 W. Wilson.

The Fair is an annual event where numerous government, nonprofit and private housing-related organizations come together under one roof to provide information and resources on “all things housing.” The event offers access to an array of resources and insights into housing opportunities and free housing counseling services available to tenants, future homebuyers and homeowners in the city of Chicago and beyond.

Attendees can speak with HUD approved housing counselors, mortgage lenders, realtors, home inspectors, and even local government agencies to learn more about housing resources. Attendees can also participate in workshops and find access to vital information about diverse housing resources and assistance programs available to the public.

Key fair highlights include:

- Over 32 exhibitors comprising of real estate agents, mortgage lenders, non-profit housing and pro bono legal organizations, as well as local and state government agencies.
- Attendees can participate in workshops covering essential topics such as “Credit & Home-buying 101” and “Tenant’s Rights & Fair Housing.”
- The event will offer translation services in multiple languages besides English, including Spanish, Arabic, Polish, Arabic, Hindi, Gujarati and American Sign Language.
- Guests will enjoy free admission to the fair along with complimentary parking in Truman’s parking garage. Truman College is located next to the Wilson Redline CTA stop, and there are bus stops located in front of the college, which make it convenient and accessible for all attendees.
- Attendees can schedule one-on-one

FAIR see p. 14

City’s contrived screen
of fraudulent consultation,
monologues sold as “public input”

BY BRYN MORGAN

Living on Clark St. near the intersection with Lawrence, I have followed the plans to “improve” the Montrose to Foster corridor since they were first announced in 2019. I attended several zoom meetings in the COVID years and on May 13 I attended an in-person public meeting at Chase Park where the Chicago Dept. of Transportation [CDOT] presented what may be a final version of its plan.

This meeting was in no sense a genuine consultation between the fashioners of the plan and the public who live in and near the corridor. You could glean some information from the presentation but there was no opportunity for an open exchange of opinions. It was a carefully curated presentation by CDOT.

The listeners were not given any chance to publicly query or challenge any of the assertions made by CDOT. The public heard a large number of claims that were meant to support a plan whose shape CDOT has already decided. Endless charts and statistics were mentioned and then rapidly passed over as the next slide came up.

This was a slick performance masquerading as a genuine consultation. CDOT has decided that cars are the enemy and their mobility must be curtailed.

What started allegedly as a project to encourage economic renewal in the corridor has morphed into a project to protect cyclists and deter car usage.

The claim was made that studies showed that cyclists and pedestrians found the corridor an unpleasant and threatening place. The solution to this problem was basically to privilege bike space and drastically curtail parking spaces on Clark St.

We were told that “studies” showed that increasing cycling access was good for business. If you make cycling access safer and nicer on Clark St., businesses will flourish.

This explains how a project that started as one of economic renewal has ended up under the control of CDOT, not a city agency normally associated with economic development issues.

Yet none of this is convincing. On the contrary it seems to be a solution in search of a problem.

Where is the evidence for any of these assumptions? Were business owners on Clark complaining that they were in trouble because potential customers on bikes could not reach them safely? There is no such evidence – only CDOT assertions on this and a number of other claims.

For example, what were we supposed to make of a cited statistic that “only” about

50% of residents in the corridor owned 0 – 1 car? Clearly the intent was to show that cars were not that important to residents. But cited in this way it is a bizarre statistic. Which was it? Zero or one vehicle per resident?

There were other things missing at the May 13 meeting. One was any mention of public transport. There was no input from the CTA. Yet we know that the single most effective way to limit car usage is to

Commentary

prioritize public transport. For that to happen it needs to be reliable, cheap and safe. The chances of that happening in Chicago at the moment are slim, given the CTA’s looming budget deficit of \$700 million and users’ security concerns.

Those who have the ability to find other ways of transport will increasingly turn to cars rather than to bikes.

Another noticeable absence was any input from the emergency services. What do ambulance and fire services think of the new protected bike paths? Clark St., as anyone who lives along it knows, has a constant movement of emergency service vehicles day and night.

Protected bike lanes would prohibit pulling over to the side of the road in order to allow emergency vehicles to pass. What is the human cost of emergency responders being stuck in traffic? CDOT doesn’t say.

A meeting to give information about a major public investment in drastically altering the transportation patterns would offer some assessment of costs. But there was no mention of costs.

This is not a surprise. From the beginning there has been no transparency about how much CDOT’s bike utopia would cost the public. Initially there was mention of \$7 million in Tax Increment Financing money, but efforts since then to access information on costs have been met with the city’s usual hostility to freedom of information for its citizens. Neither of the two alder people present on Wednesday seemed perturbed by this. But it is a vital question. Systemic opacity is always on display with CDOT spending.

It is not simply a matter of how much it will cost to physically construct the new system (or how much it has already cost in other areas). There is also the issue of taxpayers compensating the parking meter company for the loss of parking spaces in the corridor. (See commentary page 7) The city is set to seize 40% to 50% of their spaces. By the terms of the 2008 contract that the city signed, it has to pay a defined amount of compensation for each parking space for the balance of the 58 years left on the lease or receive a parking space of equal value somewhere else.

In other words, the CDOT Montrose –

Foster corridor scheme is almost certain to cost many tens of millions of dollars in compensation to Chicago Parking Meters, LLC, the firm that owns the rights to run the city’s parking spaces.

Also, no numbers were mentioned for lost opportunity costs for our local small businesses when customers give up and leave the area after seeing there is no commercial parking.

So, an essentially bankrupt city is going to be spending millions of dollars to construct privileged bike lanes that constrict streets by adding concrete barriers that will benefit only a significantly small minority of road users.

And they are a minority despite the increase in the number of cyclists.

In 2023, 2.5% of all trips made in Chicago were by bike. Cyclists accounted for 8% of commuter trips.

The zeal of CDOT and the plan’s promoters seem motivated by something other than good public policy. It makes little sense in strictly local pragmatic terms.

There was a brief moment during the CDOT presentation when other more ideological motives peaked through. The CDOT spokesman mentioned how the plan for the corridor was in line with the City’s green agenda to limit emissions. Hostility to motorists would be consistent with this. Fifteen-minute cities have become a controversial part of the green agenda in Europe. This might also explain the emphasis that the presenter gave to another “study” that showed that only 50% of cars that use the Clark corridor are local.

The rest, he assured us, were from outside the neighborhood. Interlopers using it to simply move through to other parts of the city. He clearly thought that this statistic was important because he cited it twice. And the implication was that the CDOT plan would put a stop to these outside incursions in the neighborhood.

A fear of outsiders? How dare “non-hyper-locals” from Lincoln Park, Rogers Park and Lake View drive through our Uptown and Andersonville neighborhoods! Neighborhoods that in CDOT’s utopian imagination will be a dominated by cyclists, scooters, pedestrians... where cars will be strictly limited in their mobility along one of the city’s main North-South arteries.

I personally think that this would be a disaster. But if it is the animating drive behind the various local plans like the Montrose-Foster corridor then its proponents should have the courage of their convictions and be transparent about it. They should not be afraid to engage in serious debate about it, not hide behind a contrived screen of fraudulent consultation and monologues sold as “public input.”

EXPENSE from p. 5

appealed went up by about half as much as bills for those who didn’t appeal.

So, if you receive a reassessment notice in the mail this year and believe it’s too high, you have 30 days to appeal to the Assessor’s Office. The last date to file is printed on your notice. If a property owner doesn’t appeal to the Assessor, or doesn’t agree with the Assessor’s appeal decision, the owner then has 30 days to appeal to the Board of Review.

What’s also clear from our study is the need for reform. The tax burden transfer from commercial to residential properties widens the wealth gap. It highlights what right now is a regressive property tax appeals system that often punishes homeowners, particularly in lower-income

and minority communities.

That’s why we must strive to fix Cook County’s tax appeals system before it causes even more harm to those who can least afford it. Ultimately, the solution lies in lessening the business valuation reductions that have fueled the inequities.

A county commissioned analysis recommended that the Assessor’s Office and Board of Review work to share data and standardize their methodology and valuation practices. Rightly so, because collaborating would eliminate the massive business reductions, and reform a property tax appeals system that’s working for the “haves” but isn’t working for the “have nots.”



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Gregory J. Lindeman
Founder/Director

The latest in the parking meter debacle

The perils of rushed, non-transparent deals by elected officials

BY
ALD. SCOTT WAGUESPACK
[32ND]

This week City Council will be voting on a \$15 million settlement with Chicago parking meter owners Chicago Parking Meters, LLC [CPM]. This settlement came about when the City tried to make changes to the 75-year parking meter deal during the deadly COVID pandemic.

The settlement confirms just how ironclad this parking meter privatization deal is and will be for another 58 years.

In 2008, Wicker Park and Bucktown [WPB] had a parking problem around the six corners. Parking meters were set at 25¢ per hour, allowing people to park in spaces for an entire day and take the train downtown.

WPB business owners often complained that the lack of turn-over created parking problems. Additionally, dozens of loading zones contributed to the clogged up parking, freezing out customers parking for local businesses. I made the decision to consolidate loading zones and double the rates of the meters with other adjustments to infrastructure that helped businesses in the WPB

area. The overnight changes in parking behavior had an immediate positive benefit to the area businesses and residents.

Not long after the meter deal was negotiated in 2008, we received notice that the Daley Administration was going to sign off on a parking meter deal for 75 years and we had just a couple of days to review it and vote.

At the time, the annual revenue for citywide meters was roughly \$20-plus million per year. Simply doubling the rates throughout the city would have put an additional \$20 million dollars a year into City coffers.

Coupling that with infrastructure changes throughout the city could have mitigated some of our financial woes while allowing us to modify and improve the parking meter system by ourselves.

At the time the deal was presented by Mayor Daley, we were given two business days to review the deal. Over the weekend my staff and I drafted a counter argument to the deal. We noted that the city could simply raise rates and do consolidation of zones as we had already done.

We also reviewed the finances being proposed by the consultants, city lawyers and finance team. Our estimate of the parking meter deal showed the parking

meters were worth at minimum \$5 billion, instead of the lower \$1.15 billion pushed by the consultants.

The vote to sell off Chicago's parking meters flew threw council after a hearing and we ended up with our meters in the hands of foreign interests almost overnight, in a 40 to 5 vote.

The background on the meter deal was thoroughly well covered by Ben Jarovsky and Mick Dumke from the Chicago Reader, and Dan Mihalopolous of the Chicago Tribune. They covered stories like how we found out the meter system profits ended up in the hands of a group in Abu Dhabi. Additional fine reporting was done by Clint Krislov and Tom Geoghegan.

When the vote comes up to give CPM another \$15 million, I will vote to pass the settlement because the lawyers fighting the complaint did well to reduce the amount. CPM initially demanded \$322 million in compensation for lost revenue during COVID.

The city fought back and won on one of the three issues related to meter enforcement. This lowered settlement has been the first upside for taxpayers on the meter deal since 2008, yet it is still our loss.

The most recent financial audit of the parking meters shows that the company has made about \$2 billion.

The stories that have come out of the parking meter deal are endless and they will continue well beyond the end of the deal structure. Over the past few years, I have spoken about the perils of rushed or non-transparent deals with elected officials from around the world, in classrooms and with infrastructure and watchdog experts.

While the city council did eventually pass legislation that slowed down some of these deals, good governance requires more.

These deals require city council to scrutinize each deal. We have to demand transparency and accountability as good governance and sometimes vote against bad deals for you the taxpayer.

Editors note: The five members of City Council to vote against the deal in 2008 included Toni Preckwinkle, Rey Colon, Leslie Hairston, Billy Ocasio, and the author of this commentary, Scott Waguespack.

Chicago has also made "true-up" payments to CPM to compensate for lost revenue when meters are taken offline for reasons like festivals, the Chicago Marathon or NASCAR road races, CTA bus-only lanes, road construction or the conversion of commercial parking into privileged bike lanes. The "true-up" payments, which have totaled \$78.8 million in the first 12 years of the deal, are separate from the more recent pandemic settlement.

Commentary

Science social at Cork Lounge May 28

Scientists and friends of science can hang out with other science fans for drinks and casual conversation with the Illinois Science Council [ISC] at 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 28 at Cork Lounge, 1822 W. Addison St.

Whether you work in science or just are interested in science discoveries and research, ISC would like to hear your thoughts on all things science -- outreach, funding, communication, publications, research, and more.

Even if you just want to rant about the cuts to NIH, NSF, EPA then join the fun.

No reservations are required, the event is free but you're responsible for your own drinks. Cork Lounge serves minimal food but you're free to bring/order in.

The ISC is an independent 501c3 nonprofit with a mission to engage, educate, and entertain the adult public about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) topics.

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State officials call public meeting on dire 2026 transit budget

Four public officials who are concerned about funding for public transit are partnering to host a Chicagoland transit town hall webinar where they plan to discuss the dire state of public transit budgets in Chicagoland.

The public is invited to join State Senators Sara Feigenholtz and Ram Vilivalam, and State Representatives Margaret Croke and Ann Williams for a virtual public transit town hall at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, May 22.

To sign up for the meeting, or submit questions, visit bit.ly/transittownhall6.

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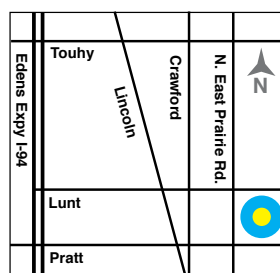


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Letters to the Editor

Run for the hills!

When someone tells you they are an urban planner working for the city of Chicago, run for the hills. Why? Because you can be assured that their analyses and recommendations are totally devoid of any substantive, quantitative components, thereby rendering their recommendations essentially worthless and without merit.

A prime case in point: installation of the bike lanes on Clark St., and the attendant traffic jam causing lane elimination. Several substantive evaluations which a normal study would include are missing:

- A count of bikes by time of day from Ridge to Devon. I as-

sume this wasn't measured because of the low numbers which would suggest that dedicated lanes were not warranted.

- Increased travel times for cars as a result of the two-to-one lane convergence.

- Increased emissions as a result of the increased idling time mandated by the removal of one lane of traffic

- The number of cars impacted per hour and per day, along with the imputed value of time for drivers so impacted

- Traffic simulations showing the increased travel times for fire and police vehicles responding to calls from the public

I could go on and on. Bottom

And furthermore...

Alexander Gillon's letter to the editor of May 7 calls for a rebuttal.

Mr. Gillon claims that the residents attending the April 26 rally at Patio Beef opposing the proposed upzoning of Broadway "misunderstand the core problem that the Broadway rezoning is trying to solve." The reality is that they understand the argument; it is just that they don't agree with it.

Various arguments have presented in favor of the upzoning. The one that Mr. Gillon advances is that there is a problem and it is that "demand to live in Edgewater is increasing, and prospective residents need somewhere to go."

First there is no evidence that demand is increasing beyond the number of residential units available to meet that demand. If that were the case there would be a near zero vacancy rate in Edge-

water, and there isn't, at least not overall.

Getting reliable up-to-date vacancy rate data is difficult, but the statistic most often found by an internet search is a vacancy rate of around 10%. That's for Edgewater as a whole, but obviously, vacancy rates vary by area and by type of apartment. But let us assume for the sake of argument that Mr. Gillon is correct and there aren't enough residential units for all those who would like to live here. Why is that a crisis or a tragedy?

It is not that there are no places in Chicago or the nearby suburbs for them to live. People rarely get everything they want in life. That you can't rent an apartment exactly where you want to live and at a price that you want to pay may be a personal disappointment, but it isn't a civic tragedy; nor is it a crisis.

line is that we can be sure that a study professionally undertaken dealing with the points enumerated above would conclude that what the "professional city of Chicago planners" are imposing on us, the residents of this area, is not only without merit, but a waste of scarce taxpayer monies, has a low benefit to cost ratio and is a danger to the community.

It's high time that the community demand some professionalism and justifiable rationale for the public works projects a bunch of nincompoops are foisting on us. Enough is enough.

Philip Bernstein
Edgewater

He also claims that "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." There are several errors of logic here. One is the claim regarding Broadway. What about other streets? Why is more buildings on Broadway the only solution? The other is the claim that the upzoning of Broadway will enable everyone who wants to live in Edgewater to do so. Nothing in new construction will help everyone.

The main error however is to claim "it will keep our local businesses." This defies logic. Excluding the very few vacant lots not already approved for new construction and parking lots that serve existing business, something has to be destroyed in order to build something new. That something is likely to be one-story buildings that house small businesses. So by incentivizing new construction by upzoning, one is also incentivizing eliminating existing businesses.

It is one thing to argue that creating new residential units trumps the loss of any existing business, but to deny that there would be that loss is being either illogical or intellectually dishonest.

There are few win-wins as a product of most public policy decisions. In most cases there are winners and losers, though in some cases the differences are minor. In the case of this proposed upzoning, the differences are not minor. Some could lose badly, and except for certain property owners, others will not gain greatly.

LeRoy Blommaert
Edgewater

Where's the money?

So the big construction project at Lincoln Square has stopped. Where are the construction workers? They don't work if they don't get paid.

Did the City stop paying the contractors?

Do nothing, inexperienced project managers like Mayor Brandon Johnson and Aldermen Matt Martin and Andre Vasquez have to answer.

They gave away the parking lot on Western Ave. Then they closed the parking lot on Leland Ave. They closed the 4700 N. block of Lincoln Ave. (reopened after three weeks), they closed the 4600 N. block of Lincoln Ave. to parking and they closed the 4700 N. block of Western Ave. to parking. They removed the parking at Ainslie Plaza (4900 N.) and replaced it with a giant dirt hole.

Where the heck are shoppers supposed to park? Nowhere? So the little shops and small businesses will suffer, as shoppers head to Skokie, Lincolnwood and Niles.

Next up? The mayor and aldermen Martin and Vasquez want to remove half the commercial street parking on Clark St. in Uptown and Andersonville for more

privileged bike lanes.

No parking equals no shoppers. No shoppers equal no sales tax. No sales tax equals no sales tax revenue. No sales tax revenue equals higher property taxes. Higher property taxes equals higher rents, equals less affordable housing.

Are they trying to destroy Chicago? They can't be that stupid, can they?

How long until metered parking is added around Welles and Winnemac Parks to pay off LAZ Parking for all their lost parking meter revenue? We've already seen parking meters added to Montrose Point.

You think City Haul cares about the North Side? Then how come four North Side police districts are short Commanders and two have unfilled Captain vacancies?

I'm sure they'll find money for that just as soon as they find money to finish the road construction.

But they have plenty of money for privileged bike lanes and to support illegal aliens.

Mike Sullivan
Avondale

Don't blame camera, reckless driving the culprit

I agree that right now, speed cameras are often being used as a revenue generating tool to plug city budget gaps and that is not acceptable. But the solution isn't to get rid of them—it's to reform the system so safety, not revenue, is the primary goal.

Week after week, Inside Publications runs pieces blaming speed cameras while ignoring the real threat: reckless driving. Speeding is deadly. It's the single biggest factor in whether a pedestrian or cyclist survives a crash. Yet across Chicago, drivers regularly blow red lights, speed down residential streets, and crash into storefronts—endangering lives and livelihoods. That rarely makes headlines.

The U.S. has some of the deadliest roads in the developed world. In 2024 alone, an estimated 39,345 people died in traffic crashes—nearly as many as from shootings. Pedestrian deaths have surged nearly 50% over the past decade.

Cameras alone won't fix this, but they can help—if used correctly.

Chicago Dept. of Transportation data shows that from 2012–2013 to 2022–2023 total crashes rose 28% citywide but only 2% near speed cameras; Injury and fatal crashes increased 19% citywide but dropped 11% near cameras; Bike and pedestrian crashes fell 14% citywide, and 46% near

cameras; Speed-related crashes rose 9% citywide but fell 24% near cameras, and youth-involved crashes rose 28% citywide, but only 15% near cameras.

This isn't speculation—it's evidence that cameras work when implemented in the right way.

The real problem is how we use them. Right now, Illinois law restricts placement to within 1/8 of a mile of schools or parks. That's outdated. Cameras should be allowed wherever data shows a speeding problem—and they should operate 24/7, because traffic violence doesn't stop at 7 p.m.

But most critically the money raised from these cameras should be legally required to go toward safety improvements—raised crosswalks, curb extensions, protected bike lanes—not into the general budget. That's how we redesign streets to prevent crashes before they happen.

I don't want people to get tickets. But if someone gets one, it means they were speeding—and that's dangerous for all road and sidewalk users. The goal should be safer streets, not more fines. Let's fix the policy, not scrap the tool.

Neville Hemming
Edgewater

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Safety reforms could be coming for Chicagoland transit, but funding still up in the air

BY ANDREW ADAMS
Capital News Illinois

With about two weeks to go before their spring adjournment, lawmakers in Springfield are facing a tight deadline to pass major reforms to Chicagoland’s transit system — but officials have released few concrete details of the plan they say is taking shape.

Influential lawmakers said one major element will be addressed: safety.

“We need to make sure that there are safety mechanisms that are implemented by transit security, that there are transit ambassadors for customer service and nonviolent situations, and there are social services for those that are in need of mental and behavioral health services,” Senate Transportation Committee Chair Ram Villivalam of Chicago, said at a May 15 news conference.

Villivalam said transit safety reform should be rooted in data and “law enforcement expertise.” He cited the Los Angeles transit system, which he said has a similar number of riders as Chicago-area transit.

“We can look at their system and say these are how many officers they have, these are how many transit ambassadors they have and so forth,” Villivalam said.

Villivalam made the announcement alongside Rep. Marcus Evans of Chicago, a high-ranking House Democrat. Earlier this year, the two sponsored a transit reform proposal backed by more than 30 labor organizations. That bill outlined the creation of a new police force overseen by the Regional Transportation Authority.

“There’s no police presence. It makes no sense,” Evans said of the current Chicago transit landscape. “Across the world, not just this country: New York City? Dedicated police. Washington, D.C.? Dedicated police. Boston? Dedicated police presence. London? Dedicated police presence. Germany? Dedicated police presence.”

No final agreement has been reached for the expected reform bill. A spokesperson from the Illinois Clean Jobs Coalition, one of the advocacy groups involved in the transit negotiations, said that discussions dealing with public safety were scheduled for Thursday.

Late last month, two other lawmakers involved in the transit reform negotiations said Springfield insiders were nearing a deal that would resemble the labor-backed bill.

But that proposal doesn’t include a plan for funding the beleaguered Chicago-area agencies. While lawmakers have repeatedly stressed they are going to pass reforms before providing transit agencies new funding, agency heads and activists have consistently asked for financial support.

House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch of Hillside, speaking to media on May 15, didn’t commit to any details of the reform package, but did echo the need for safety reforms



Passengers ride a Red Line “L” train in Chicago. Photo by Andrew Adams

“We have to have reforms before we even talk about revenue. We have to improve the ridership experience,” Welch said. “We have to improve rider safety. We have to improve safety for the employees on these trains and on these buses.”

Welch also pointed to a group of House lawmakers he convened who are “getting close on agreements.”

Chicagoland transit agencies

— Chicago Transit Authority, Pace Suburban Bus, Metra commuter rail service and the RTA oversight agency — face a collective \$770 million budget shortfall beginning this summer.

The RTA says that unless the state steps in with funding help, that budget gap will grow even as the transit agencies will have to make massive cuts to service in the region.

But that funding might not

Crime on Chicago transit outpaces pre-pandemic levels

After a spike in the number of reported crimes relative to the number of total Chicago Transit Authority trips in the early days of the pandemic, the crime rate on CTA buses, trains and at system stations settled at a rate slightly higher than the pre-pandemic peak.

Capital News analysis of data

from the National Transit Database, and Chicago Data Portal Chicago crime data does not include crimes committed on the CTA outside of Chicago city limits. The crime rate reported by authorities therefore is bound to be a lower estimate for the CTA system overall.



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Gunmen rob couple, pistol-whip woman in Wrigleyville

Armed men pistol-whipped a woman during a robbery as she sat in a car with a man in Wrigleyville on May 16, police said.

According to a Chicago police spokesperson, a 22-year-old man and a 35-year-old woman were seated in a car on Roscoe St. just west of Sheffield Ave. when two men approached them around 1:07 a.m. The men threatened the victims with weapons and asked for their belongings.

But the robbery took an even more violent turn when one of the masked men struck the woman in the head and face, reportedly with a handgun.

Both robbers then climbed into a white vehicle, possibly a Nissan sedan, and drove away. The woman drove to the 1800 block of W. Belmont and called for help. She declined medical attention.

CPD has issued two warnings this year about robbery crews targeting Wrigleyville and Gold Coast bargoers as they wait for rideshares at closing time. Three of the five Wrigleyville robberies occurred in the 3500 block of N. Clark, about a block from the May 16 robbery.

The known crime pattern usually involves three or four robbers who approach victims and either display a gun or use force to get control of their valuables. The robbers have even accessed some of the victims' bank accounts through phones taken during the hold-ups, police said.

In Wrigleyville, the robberies occurred in the 3500 block of N. Clark at 1:30 a.m. and 2:30 a.m. Jan. 5; in the 3500 block of N. Clark at 1:10 a.m. Jan. 11; in the 1000 block of W. Newport at 2 a.m. Feb. 9; in the 3500 block of N. Clark at 1:55 a.m. Feb. 23, and in the 3600 block of N. Clark at 3:45 a.m. Feb. 23.

While the Wrigleyville robbers have been problematic, robbery reports across the rest of the Lakeview-based Town Hall 19th District are down 38% this year, with 90 cases reported as of last May 11.

Bank robber has struck three times in a week; FBI offers \$1,000 for info that brings him in

Need a little summertime spending cash? The FBI is ready to help. All you need to do is help them find and convict this serial bank robber.

The agency says he has robbed three banks in the past week, one each in Andersonville, Edgewater, and Logan Square. Now, they're offering up to \$1,000 for "information leading to the arrest and conviction" of the bandit.

His first target was the Fifth Third Bank at 5918 N. Broadway. The FBI says he presented a note to a teller around 9:51 a.m. on May 9 but didn't get anything.

He tried again on Wednesday. Around 9:27 a.m., he handed a note to a teller at U.S. Bank, 5340 North Clark. Once again, he left empty-handed, according to the FBI.



The FBI is offering a reward of "up to" \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of this serial bank robber.

But the third time was the charm. Around 9:29 a.m. May 15, he successfully robbed the Fifth Third Bank at 2973 N. Milwaukee, the FBI said.

The agency described him as White and 5'-4" or 5'-5" tall with a "slight" build. He fled on foot after each robbery and implied he had a weapon, according to a reward bulletin issued May 16.

Anyone with information about the guy can contact the FBI at 312-421-6700 or tips.fbi.gov.

Two detained after robberies reported in Lakeview, Wrigleyville

Good news to report: Two suspects are in custody after people were robbed near Wrigley Field, in the Southport Corridor, and in Bridgeport May 18. The suspects are believed to be responsible for all three holdups.

The crimes began shortly after 1 a.m. near Clifton and Grace in Wrigleyville. A woman who lives in the neighborhood said two men, one wearing a ski mask, took her phone and other items, made her unlock her phone, and then fled in a white car.

Just minutes later, a couple was robbed at gunpoint a few blocks away near Southport and Roscoe. They told police two men took their valuables at gunpoint and drove away in a white car. The victims hid in a gangway until police arrived.

Then, around 1:43 a.m., a 27-year-old woman was robbed in the 3000 block of S. Wentworth. She reported that two men got out of a white Volkswagen sedan and demanded her property at gunpoint, a Chicago police spokesperson said.

They battered the woman in her face and leg, then took her property by force, according to CPD. She declined medical treatment.

Yet another robbery was reported in the West Loop around 2:25 p.m. A group of friends were near Aberdeen and Washington when two or three men in a white vehicle robbed them at gunpoint of their jewelry, according to their 911 call. But the victims did not wait for police to stick around, and no report was filed.

Using CPD's network of cameras and license plate readers, cops began tracking a Volkswagen with Massachusetts plates as it traveled around the city, wandering from Andersonville to the South Side.

Along the way, state troopers intercepted the vehicle and ultimately arrested two suspects at 79th and State St., according to a source.

Detectives will also be looking to see if the suspects are responsible for robbing two other people in Wrigleyville on May 16. In that case, a 22-year-old man and a 35-year-old woman were seated in a car on Roscoe St. just west of Sheffield Ave. when two men approached them around 1:07 a.m. The men threatened the victims with weapons and asked for their belongings.

But the robbery took an even more violent turn when one of the masked men struck the woman in the head and face, reportedly with a handgun.

Both robbers climbed into a white vehicle, possibly a Nissan sedan, and drove away.

Scamming tow truck driver stole cars from crash scenes in River North, Lakeview, South Loop



Maximilian Gasienica

ecutors and a Chicago police report.

Maximilian Gasienica, 26, of Oak Lawn, is accused of stealing three cars from crash scenes in Lakeview, River North, and the South Loop this year.

A CPD report said three victims identified Gasienica in photo lineups as the tow truck driver who solicited them at crash scenes, even though they did not call him or flag him down.

Gasienica "falsely presented himself" to get the vehicles' owners to sign for his services and he then provided them with a form that listed a fake tow company and an address where no cars are stored, according to the report. The report stated that neither the state nor the city has authorized "BTA Towing," the company Gasienica claimed to work for, to tow vehicles.

All three victims reported their cars stolen after their repeated attempts to locate and recover their vehicles failed, police said.

Gasienica is accused of stealing cars from scenes in the 600 block of W. Roosevelt on Feb. 25, the 3700 block of N. Lake Shore Dr. on March 13, and the first block of East Grand on April 16.

Prosecutors charged him with three counts of theft by deception and three counts of soliciting tows at the scene.

You may remember that CPD issued a warning in March about a rogue tow truck driver who stole cars from two drivers who were involved in traffic crashes in the South Loop. Gasienica is not charged with those incidents.

CPD said those victims were involved in traffic crashes when the thief showed up with a tow truck and took their vehicles without permission. The tow driver, operating under a fake company name, took the cars to unknown locations.

One victim was targeted after crashing in the 1900 block of S. Lake Shore Dr. around midnight on Feb. 26. The other had their car stolen following an accident in the 1800 block of S. Clark at 7:40 a.m. on March 8.

CPD's alert described the tow driver only as a man between 25 and 30 years old.

Police are warning drivers to avoid unsolicited tows and to be wary of "chaser" trucks that show up at crash scenes. The department also recommends contacting your insurance company before hiring a tow or roadside assistant. Additionally, CPD said drivers should not give in to high-pressure tactics, check and verify a tow operator's municipal license number, and keep a copy of their license plate and vehicle identification number in a safe place so they have it handy if their car is stolen.

Man shot, critically injured inside Rogers Park apartment building

Police are investigating after a man was shot and critically injured inside a Rogers Park apartment building May 12. The victim knows the gunman, who remains at large.

CPD and fire personnel responded to an apartment building in the 6700 block of N. Sheridan around 12:42 a.m. to handle a "person shot" call. They found a 51-year-old man lying on the fourth floor with a gunshot wound to his back.

The man had been involved in an argument with another man before the shooting, police said. A witness reported hearing a "loud noise" before finding the victim on the floor, according to a CPD statement. Officers found one shell casing at the scene.

Police searched the residential building and a garage for the suspect, a Black man with a gray beard who is about 50 years old, but they came up empty-handed.

This victim is the 11th person shot in Rogers Park this year.

Andersonville burglary

On Thursday, May 15, 20th District Police reported an overnight break-in and burglary at La Baguette, 5712 N. Clark St.

They say that a broken glass door was also reported at Primo Pizza at 5600 N. Clark St., but there's been no confirmation of items having been taken at this time.

Chicago Police remain short-handed even through North Side corridors continue to be targeted by burglars during overnight hours.

Shooting in River North nightlife district leaves man critically injured

For the second weekend in a row, Chicago police are investigating a shooting in the River North nightlife district.

CPD said the latest victim, a 39-year-old man, was in the 300 block of W. Ontario when someone shot him multiple times around 12:39 a.m. May 18. Bullets struck the man in his mouth, back, and side, leaving him in critical condition.

Cops found shell casings in a nearby lot and inside a vehicle on the lot.

CPD said the victim could not provide details about the incident due to his condition. They also said their preliminary investigation "indicates that the victim was shot at by an offender in a vehicle."

On May 11, a 25-year-old man was shot during an argument outside a nightclub in the 100 block of W. Ontario, less than two blocks from the latest incident.

Today's victim is the tenth person shot on the Near North Side this year. That includes a man who was shot by the police after he allegedly threatened officers with a knife. At this point last year, the Near North Side had seen eight people shot, including a Chicago police officer and the man who allegedly shot the officer.

Mother stabbed 7-year-old son in Rogers Park

A woman is in custody after she apparently stabbed her 7-year-old son in Rogers Park on May 17.

Chicago police issued a statement saying, "a 7-year-old male victim inside a residence was approached by a 26-year-old female offender who produced a sharp object and stabbed the victim" around 8 a.m.

Investigators learned about the stabbing after the boy was taken to Evanston Hospital, where staff members notified police.

Evanston and Chicago officers responded to the hospital and learned that the stabbing occurred in an apartment in the 1700 block of W. Touhy. The child's mother was arrested at the hospital, according to a source.

Meanwhile, the boy was transferred to Lurie Children's Hospital, where he underwent surgery. CPD said he was in fair condition.

Second man charged with brutal 2021 rape of woman in River North hotel room

Nearly four years after three men brutally raped a Texas woman in a River North hotel room, newly-completed DNA test results have identified one of the assailants, prosecutors say. Last fall, another man, Frederick Djirackor, was sentenced to 15 years

in prison after a jury convicted him of sexual assault charges in connection with the case.

The victim was 24 years old when she joined friends and classmates for drinks at a Loop hotel and then headed to a nightclub near Hubbard and State St. on July 3, 2021.

She was the only member of the group still at the club when, around 2 a.m., she met Djirackor, who identified himself as "Billy." The woman ordered an Uber, but someone canceled it, and she ended up in a hotel with Djirackor, prosecutors alleged. They were kissing when two men she had never met entered the room, and one of them said, "I want to get in on that."

Prosecutors now say one of those two men was 40-year-old Juan Sivels.



Juan Sivels

One of the men forced the woman face-down on the bed, pressing her head and back with his hands, and two of the men raped her. In pain and crying, the woman pleaded with the men to stop and promised not to tell anyone if the men let her go. One of them told her he knew people in Texas, where she was from, and threatened to have them hurt her if she told anyone.

She escaped the room with her phone and a shirt she grabbed. Officials said she immediately cried out to a friend via FaceTime and went via ambulance to Northwestern Memorial Hospital for treatment.

Lab testing on the shirt she took from the hotel room and evidence collected at the hospital showed that three people contributed genetic material recovered from the shirt, and two men contributed genetic material recovered from the victim's private areas.

Earlier this year, DNA matching linked Sivels to genetic material recovered from the woman's private area and a shirt she took from the hotel room, prosecutors said during a recent detention hearing.

Judge Rivanda Doss Beal ordered Sivels detained while he awaits trial for the "heinous offense," calling him a "danger to women and the community."

While the DNA test results were still pending in December 2023, Sivels was arrested and charged with shooting at an Amazon driver in Logan Square. Surveillance video allegedly showed him taking out a gun and opening fire as he walked toward the Amazon truck in the 3300 block of W. Armitage around 7:30 p.m. Dec. 6, 2023, prosecutors said.

The 22-year-old Amazon courier told police he "felt the pressure of the bullet in the back of his seat," the report said. Another bullet was found lodged in a copy of the book *Sitting in the Darkness* that was awaiting delivery in the back of the truck. Yet another bullet hit an unoccupied parked car. No injuries were reported.

Police found 11 shell casings at the scene. They discovered bullet holes on both sides of the Amazon van's side doors and in the back of the driver's seat, according to Sivels' arrest report. Police found Sivels nearby and recovered a 9-mm handgun from a porch. Sivels, who was off-duty from his job as a security guard, allegedly told the officers he did it because he was drunk.

He pleaded guilty to reckless discharge of a firearm and unlawful use of a weapon last August in exchange for a three-year sentence from Judge Aleksandra Gillespie. He was released from prison on Jan. 8 after serving less than half of the time.

— Compiled by CWBChicago.com

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City shutter's Edgewater's Pork Chop after alleged gang-leaders slain

Mayor's effort to eliminate 'racist' gang database hobbles police, Hookah Lounge blasts alders, mayor, CPD for closure

BY BOB ZULEY

City officials issued a summary closure for Pork Chop Restaurant and Bar, LLC, and Meet and Whiskey, two city-licensed liquor serving businesses located at 6341 N. Broadway in the Edgewater following a fatal shooting incident 1:20 a.m. May 10.

Rapper and alleged gang leader of the violent O Block gang faction, Rachaun S. "Munna Duke" Vance, 31, and Derrell "YoungginFromDaJetz" Givens, 28, were slain in the fusillade of lead as they departed Pork Chop Restaurant. At least 50 shots were fired, according to the police.

Vance was struck in his chest and taken to Weiss Memorial Hospital by private vehicle where he died. Givens was shot multiple times and transported by CFD ambulance to St. Francis Hospital in Evanston where he was pronounced dead. A 36-year-old man was wounded and treated at Evanston Hospital.

The targeted murder of alleged O-Block leader "Munna Duke" Vance has been allegedly linked to an on-going dispute between two gang factions, Tookaville and Smashville, according to online source Sportskeeda.

Vance's O-Block faction is reportedly feuding with Tookaville. Tookaville takes its name from 15-year old Shondale Gregory, known to his friends as "Tooka." He was fatally shot Jan. 12, 2011 at 63rd St. and St. Lawrence. The street was home to famous rappers including FGB Duck and Lil Jay, and is known locally as "Tookaville."

"Tooka" Gregory's name still figures prominently in rap music.

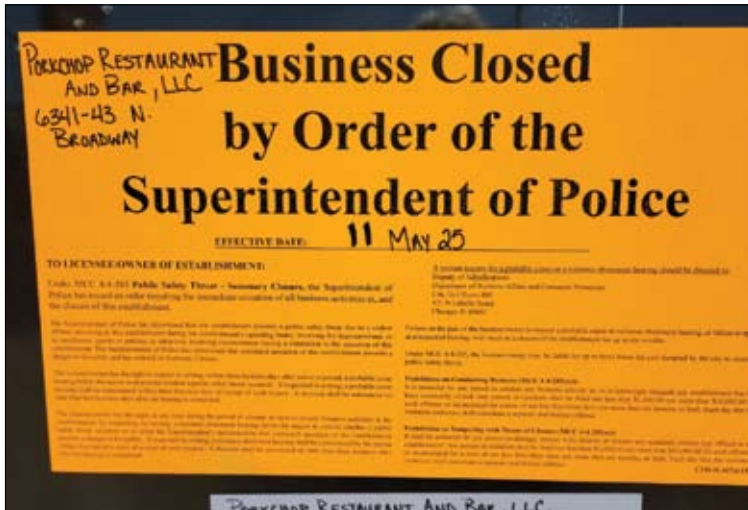
Vance was an associate of superstar rapper Dayvon "King Von" Bennett who was killed in 2020. Vance may be musically recognized as the artist behind, "Pain in My Eyes" and "10 TO DA O."

Vance was identified by his nickname as a leader of the O Block criminal enterprise during a months long racketeering trial at Chicago's Dirksen Federal Building that ended in Jan. 2024.

The three men were wounded when gunmen jumped out of a vehicle and fired at least 50 shots at the men in a targeted attack. The stolen Infiniti Q50 was found abandoned and afire in the 600 block of East 134th Place by police less than two hours after the shooting, according to CWB-Chicago.

Vance obtained a significant legal victory just one month ago when prosecutors dropped a Class X Armed Habitual Criminal gun case. Law enforcement had identified him as one of the highest ranking members of the O Block street gang.

"O-Block" refers to the 6400 block of S. King Dr. in the Parkway Gardens apartment complex in Chicago, which received high levels of gang-related violence



(Top) Pork Chop Restaurant and Bar, 6341 N. Broadway. Inset: Rachaun "Munna Duke" Vance and Derrell "YoungginFromDaJetz" Givens. Images courtesy Facebook. (Bottom) Business Closed by Order of the Superintendent of Police notice on Pork Chop's storefront.

in the early 2010s. The name O-Block originated after the 2011 murder of Odee Perry, a resident and member of the Black Disciples street gang.

The violence in Parkway Gardens was largely attributed to gang rivalries between the Black Disciples and the Gangster Disciples gangs. It became nationally recognized due to associations with rappers like Chief Keef, Lil Durk, King Von, and Fredo Santana, who often referenced the area in their music.

A message of graffiti left in marked stickers on the window of Pork Chop stated, "RIP MUNNA DUKE. INSHALLAH MAY YOU RIP."

Staff removed it shortly after they were affixed. For Muslims, the term, inshallah, translates to "If God wills [it]."

"FatFat Banks," the mother of Vance's child, responded to the murder on Instagram, saying "TO MUCH PRESSURE HAD THEM NIGGAS HATING ON U WE TALKED ABOUT EVERYTHING BUT THIS WASNT ONE IN A MILLION YEARS I WOULDVE THOUGHT THESE WOULD BE OUR LAST DAYS..."

Following the stickers being affixed to the Pork Chop business windows May 11, a Face-

PORK CHOP see p. 14

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(L-R) Benjamin F. Wilkins, Rocky.

Man indicted for felony torture of dog

"Rocky" rescued from Berger Park; finds new home

BY BOB ZULEY

In April, Chicago Police arrested Benjamin F. Wilkins, 29, of Chicago, on a felony warrant for animal torture and aggravated cruelty to animals related to the alleged abuse and abandonment of a dog in the lakeshore rocks of Berger Park in the Edgewater community.

The saga began on the morning of June 10, 2024, when Edgewater resident Brianne Coleman was walking her dog, Zeus, at their favorite haunt, Berger Park, located at Sheridan Rd. and Granville Ave.

Zeus became insistently curious about something in the rocks when Coleman looked down and found a young labrador pup curled up in the rocks. The dog, later named "Rocky" for his unfortunate site of abandonment, was found with shattered hips, back knees and rear legs. He was malnourished and likely had been dragged, according to two veterinarians that Coleman had sought out for help.

Coleman reached out to the Edgewater community and started a GoFundMe page which ultimately reached \$21,000 to cover Rocky's medical and rehabilitative costs before she found him a forever home with a Chicago couple, as reported by ABC7 News. Leftover funds were donated to

local dog organizations.

Coleman and her neighbors tracked down surveillance video of Rocky with Wilkins exiting a building service elevator and returning a few minutes later without him.

Wilkins was subsequently arrested at 2:15 a.m. at 4000 S. Lake Shore Dr. He was given a pre-trial release on April 15 however court records indicate he is demanding a trial.

Wilkins is alleged to torture Rocky "which caused extreme physical pain motivated by the intent to increase or prolong the pain, suffering, or agony of the animal," the criminal complaint reads according to WGN News.

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Chicago to host 2026 International Jazz Day

The City of Chicago has been selected as the official host city for UNESCO’s International Jazz Day 2026, the world’s largest celebration of jazz and across the globe. The announcement, made by UNESCO and the Herbie Hancock Institute of Jazz, sets the stage for a historic celebration on April 30, 2026, spotlighting Chicago’s legendary contributions to jazz, blues, and global music culture.

Since its inception in 2012, International Jazz Day has traveled the world—from Paris to Havana, Sydney to St. Petersburg—connecting people through the language of music. Chicago’s selection comes at a moment aligning with the 250th anniversary of the United States, and the 100th birthday of Miles Davis.

Spearheaded by the Chicago Jazz Alliance, International Jazz Day 2026 is a citywide collaboration, working in concert with an expansive group of cultural, civic, and educational partners.

Each year on April 30, International Jazz Day brings together countries and commu-

nities worldwide to promote peace and unity, dialogue among cultures and respect for human dignity. International Jazz Day was adopted by the UNESCO Member Nations on the initiative of Hancock, who co-chairs the annual celebration with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

Hancock serves as a UNESCO Ambassador for Intercultural Dialogue and is chairman of the nonprofit group that plans, produces and promotes the annual celebration.

The celebration will culminate in the All-Star Global Concert, led by Chicago native and jazz icon Herbie Hancock, and broadcast in 190 countries. Leading up to the concert, a week of educational programs, community outreach, and youth engagement will take place citywide. Students will be invited to participate in the festival through performances, master classes, and workouts.

For more information visit [www.https://jazzday.com/](https://jazzday.com/).



Marshall's Landing, 222 W. Merchandise Mart Plaza.

Western Brown Line, is Madame Puffs and Thai Bistro serving up authentic Thai food. Stop by for a pastry puff filled with pineapple, chicken basil, black sesame, and other flavors. Or grab a classic favorite like curry or pad thai. **Ald. Matt Martin** helped cut the ribbon. Just watch out, the city closed two public parking lots and parking in the area now is impossible.

SCANDALOUS: Cast was announced for Open Space Arts’ season-closing production of Scandalous Boy, by **David Atfield**. This will be the International Premiere of the play, which had its 2014 world premiere in Atfield’s native Australia. The play is the story of the love between the emperor **Hadrian (Jordan Gleaves)** and the much younger **Antinous (Jose Alexander Martinez)** in pre-Christian Rome but framed in a 21st century setting, with the statue of Antinous coming to life in modern Australia to tell his story. In First Century, AD Rome, young men were often groomed by their mothers to become an “eronemos” (sexual companion) of wealthy male protectors. See ther performance at 1411 W. Wilson, tickets available at <https://openspacearts.org>.

DUBLIN NEWS: After more than 40 years in business, a well-known Dublin chipper is preparing to close its doors. “Munchies” in Bayside, Dublin has announced it will be shutting down.

MERCHANDISE MART: Join a lunch at Marshall’s Landing, inside the Merchandise Mart. This new restaurant and lounge was once occupied by the Sample Room and the M&M Club. Their annual Reunion Luncheon is Monday, June 18, from noon to 3p.m. at Marshall’s Landing.

HIGHLAND PARK: While festivals in the city struggle, a brand new arts festival, “Arts on Sheridan,” is coming to Highland

Park June 14-15. Brought to you by Am-dur Productions, the event will feature art across all mediums, live music, food, drink and live art demos.

HOLOCAUST: Jerzy Lerer was born in 1927 in Krakow, Poland. Lerer was Jewish, the son of unnamed Jewish parents, only 13 years old when the Nazis invaded Poland. Sadly, not very much is known about his life due to the fact that not a single member of his family survived the Holocaust. Their names have been forgotten. Lerer is remembered by a classmate, **Lina Rosenberg**, who survived the war and filled out a page of testimony of his life. She listed him as a close friend and said his cause of death was “murder” at age 17. We will never know any more about Lerer’s life. May his memory be a blessing.

O MON DIEU: Water from a hailstorm leaked into the Musée du Louvre on Saturday, May 3, almost dripping on **Cimabue’s** “Maestà,” arguably the greatest early Western European painting. Dating from 1280-85, it is the centerpiece of the exhibition “A New Look at Cimabue.”

CARTOONING: Ann Telnæs, who resigned from the Washington Post after her **Trump** cartoon was rejected, has won the Pulitzer Prize.

MANGE MANGE: Karen Conti at La Scarola with the Italian American Human Rights Foundation planning committee for Venetian Night 2025. This year, the event will be on the River Walk. Put it on your calendar and if you want to be in the procession, you can rent out a boat for you or your organization. Contact her for details.

If you don’t like change, you’re going to like irrelevance even less.
- Gen. Eric Shinseki

tog515@gmail.com

SELF-PRAISE from p. 2

GRANT PARK: Buckingham Fountain switching on for summer season. Thanks **Kate Buckingham**.

CHICAGO POLICE: Fallen Chicago Police officers were honored at the annual FOP Lodge 7 Memorial Service. Members of the Gold Star Families joined as they paid tribute to their loved ones. During the service, the names of Officer **Luis Huesca**, Officer **James Crowley** and Officer **Enrique Martinez** were added to the memorial wall. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

MISSING: A significant, large-scale work by the late artist **Sol LeWitt** has vanished from the exterior of a federally-owned downtown building—and the government agency in charge of the piece refuses to say why. Lines in Four Directions, a 90-foot-by-72-foot artwork, had been mounted on the west facade of 10 W. Jackson Blvd., an office building owned by the U.S. General Services Administration. Has it been removed—or just covered up?

WHO’S WHERE: Diane Abt and **Michael Zielenzinger** had coffee in

Prenzlauerberg, Germany on the 80th anniversary, marking the end of World War II, a holiday in Berlin, but nowhere else in Germany... **Jane Justic** joined friends in attending the Inauguration Mass of Pope Leo XIV in Rome... **Toni Antonacci** grateful for attending Mr. Sports Radio, **Mike North’s** receiving the prestigious broadcasting industry Lifetime Achievement award... Happy Birthday to the GOAT, speedy **Bill McGuire**... Chicago Cubs star **Ian Happ** bravely rushes in after seeing a house on fire while returning from practice... At La Grande Boucherie Chicago, they’re proud to have the Executive Chef de Cuisine **Michael Taus** at the helm... Nice touch at Wrigley with tribute to the late **Lori Healey** appearing on the stadium’s sign.... Happy Birthday to **Candice Bergen**, 79, a beauty still... **Myra Reilly** celebrated **Elizabeth’s** First Communion and family time... **Jim Kinney** getting things in order at Wrigley Field... **Sherrill Bodine** on to beautiful Bergen, the gateway to the fjords of Norway, then Iceland to meet **Debi Catanacci**.

LINCOLN SQUARE: The newest business in Lincoln Square, near the troubled



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John Holden

Nothing epitomized the grandeur of Chicago in the Jazz Age like the Edgewater Beach Hotel. Part luxury hotel, part country club and part entertainment Mecca, the Edgewater Beach Hotel was one of the world’s great entertainment destinations. Located on the shores of Lake Michigan, the hotel was a place to see and be seen and it played host to a who’s who of the rich and famous. Due to the nationwide Big Band Jazz broadcasts from its Marine Dining Room, the hotel became world famous and was synonymous with the good life.

Join us for a lively look back with author John Holden at one of Chicago’s most legendary institutions.

PATEL from p. 5

during his frequent workouts at the gym.

Those who remember Kevin know he never talked negatively about anyone and tried to see the positive. He made you feel special and could talk about anything with you. Kevin was always supportive, being good at accepting differences and being honest and trustworthy. When you called upon him, he was there in any way he could be. He wouldn’t hesitate to come help.

For the past 6 years, Chicago became Kevin’s second home. He loved to try new restaurants with his girlfriend, hang out with friends, enjoy good weather by the lake (including playing in a beach volleyball league), and of course, get a slice from his favorite, Zazas Pizzeria. The winters never kept him down. Like a true Chicagoan he would say to us east-coasters “you get used to it.”

Kevin was passionate about sports (especially football), had a healthy lifestyle, and truly enjoyed life’s smallest moments. For Kevin, the world never seemed too big or intimidating. He took life day by day, striving for daily progress, and made the little things count. Kevin was a role model, and was a perfect example of how setting personal priorities and being nice can do a lot of good, not only for yourself, but for

others.

Kevin leaves behind so many who will miss him deeply. Kevin’s memory will remain in the hearts of his entire family, friends, and all those who had the privilege of knowing him. His legacy will live on for generations to come, inspiring those around him with his kindness, generosity, and unforgettable spirit. Kevin’s life was a gift. And we are so grateful to have been part of it.

If you would like to honor Kevin, please consider a donation to his GoFundMe page.

While specific charities have not yet been determined, 100% of the proceeds will go to fighting for justice for Kevin and protecting communities against violence. Our mission is to do our part to help avoid other families experiencing the same pain and grief we have felt from this horrific act. Doing so is not simple - it has a vast array of necessary actions, from stricter gun control and prosecution, to supporting community programs to keep future generations from becoming exposed to a life of violence and crime. We strongly feel that using Kevin’s loving mentality can make even the smallest impact in preventing such violence and keeping the ones you loved safe.



Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool pavilion.



Image courtesy Lincoln Park Conservancy

Caldwell Lily Pool restoration nearing completion, reopening in June

BY MAEVE CALLAGHAN
Lincoln Park Conservancy

Reconstruction on Alfred Caldwell's historic pavilion is nearing completion. Work is ongoing, but it is impacted by weather. Given favorable conditions, the lily pool will reopen in tandem with its namesake waterlilies in June.

For those who have never visited, the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool is a three-acre natural area located along the northern edge of Lincoln Park Zoo. Originally built in 1889 for raising tropical water lilies, the Lily Pool was redesigned in the Prairie Style by landscape architect Alfred Caldwell in the 1930s.

As the reopening of the lily pool approaches, the ongoing restoration work in the garden rolls along starting with invasive tree removals.

Many invasive trees, slated for removal a quarter century ago, were instead left standing near the pond in Lincoln Park due to the high cost of dismantling them without causing collateral damage to landscape, fencing, and desirable plants.

As part of the Lincoln Park Conservancy's recommitment to the site and commemoration of 25 years of stewarding the Lily Pool, they are moving forward on the removal of these problematic trees to allow intended plants to thrive.

The primary problem these trees cause is oppressive shade along with extremely dry, root-laden soil— conditions that prevent the establishment of understory plants that would enrich the landscape. The invasive trees stymied others while also offering severely limited aesthetic value in themselves— they have poor form, unremarkable Fall color, and are prone to unsightly foliar diseases, like tar spot.

Tar spot, though not deadly, is fatal to the attractiveness of a maple, and has become more common in the Chicago area in recent years. Norway maples are particularly susceptible to infection and exhibit especially severe symptoms.

While leaving leaves in place is generally beneficial, it can be detrimental in the case of invasive trees. Excessive leaf litter smothers the understory, depriving the groundcover plants of sunlight, causing rot, and negatively altering soil chemistry.

In the Lily Pool, these leaves can cause additional problems for the Pool itself, that ultimately necessitate costly and intrusive dredging.

The reason so many invasive trees grow here is due to their tremendous reproduc-

tive abilities— they grow fast and generate hundreds of saplings each year. The necessity to quickly remove these rapid growers throughout the fragile garden occupies staff time that could otherwise be spent on enhancing rather than defending the space.

The prolonged presence of mature invasive trees caused the disfigurement of many ornamental trees and shrubs long-suffering under the dense shade.

In most cases, rehabilitation of these individuals is a multi-year process, as it takes time for them to grow to balance out their form, and the necessary corrective pruning must be done over several seasons to limit stress on the tree or shrub.

Other shrubs, like elderberry, grow remarkably fast but are prone to dieback, leaving thickets of dead, brittle stems without regular rejuvenation pruning.

In years past, budget constraints and other priorities resulted in passive management throughout the site that left views blocked and overgrown. The implementation of an active winter pruning regimen in 2022 has not only resulted in healthier elderberries and other woody plants, but also in restored vistas.

Understory Overhaul

To halt erosion of an overused site, especially one with steep slopes, netting overseeded with aggressive grasses are a common, budget-friendly tactic with lasting consequences.

Erosion is slowed, but the original landscape plan gets sacrificed to the quick fix as more delicate plants are outcompeted and struggle to spread. With the Conservancy's new approach to site management, netting and aggressive grasses are being systematically removed to allow violets, geraniums, and other surviving herbaceous plants to spread. They are also adding plants each season to repopulate barren areas, add diversity and increase resilience, and, when possible, to reintroduce sensitive species that have been lost.

Rate of water inflow determined

The water inflow throttle controls for the lily pond have been broken for several years. The inability to control the flow resulted in repeated flooding that damaged the nearby entry path and the pavilion.

The flowing water is meant to mimic a river formed by a melting glacier's flow of water as it cuts through rock. The stonework and paths have a natural look reminiscent of limestone bluffs, and a waterfall near the north end of the pool represents

the source of this glacial river.

With the need to resolve the flooding in tandem with the pavilion restoration, determining the proper rate of flow became paramount. After a number of consultations, archival research, and some trial and error, the Conservancy was able to understand the inflow and drainage system well enough to craft a solution.

Last year, they were able to collaborate with the Park District's plumbers to throttle the flow from the main line and achieve the trickle Caldwell intended. Repairs to the throttle controls are upcoming.

For years, the discreet, integrated lantern just east of the entry Lilly pool gates sat dark, but for the past year, it has been a beacon of the ongoing work happening inside. The extended closure allowed for exploratory electric work inside the entrance to restore the connection to the lantern, left out of the original build but custom-fabricated based on Caldwell's drawings as part of the Conservancy's original restoration of the site in 2001. Visitors can now enjoy the subtle light that honors Alfred Caldwell's vision.

Uptown literary walking tour



Green Mill exterior, 4802 N. Broadway.

Courtesy of Thomas Hawk

The Uptown Branch of the Chicago Public Library is hosting a Uptown literary walking tour 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 28, starting from the Margate Park Field House, 4921 N. Marine Dr.

Registration is now open for this three-hour walking tour that takes guests to the former residences of notable Chicago writers, as well as institutions and streets with literary associations.

Walkers will learn a bit about authors George R.R. Martin, Margaret Anderson, John D'Emilio, and Studs Terkel, as well as fictional characters Paul Whelan and V.I. Warshawski. Along the way, the tour will visit historic institutions like Preston Bradley Center, Lawrence House, The Aragon Ballroom, Riviera Theater, Green Mill, and Essanay Studio—all which have played a part in Chicago's literary history.

A reading list will be provided well in advance, for those who want to explore this literature more deeply. Registration is required, visit https://chicagoliteraryhof.org/events_entry/uptown-literary-walking-tour.

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—Chris Jones, *Chicago Tribune*

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Auditions and pawditions for Annie

Music Theater Works will hold auditions and "pawditions" for the fourth and final production of its 2025 season, Annie, in the George Van Dusen Theatre at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, 9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie, December 18 - January 4. Annie, with music by Charles Strouse, lyrics by Martin Charnin and book by Thomas Meehan, is directed by Producing Artistic Director Kyle A. Dougan and choreographed by Mollyanne Nunn and music directed by Linda Madonia.

Video auditions may be submitted through Friday, May 30, via this link: <https://forms.gle/FfNRCseQJyKEi2fp9>. Dance and other call backs are scheduled for the week of June 9 at Music Theater Works, 516 4th Street.

For more on available roles and additional audition information visit: <https://www.musictheaterworks.com/2025-season/annie/>. For "pawditions," send an audition video of the pet to casting@musictheaterworks.org.

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Notice of Public Sale

East Bank Storage at 1200 W. 35th St., 773-247-3000, is opening lockers:
3C3237 (Shannon Bonner),
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3F3662 (Brett Lewandowski),
3F3629 (Tiffany McCaskill),
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for public sale of miscellaneous items.
This sale is to be held on
Thursday, May 29, 2025 at 2:00 pm. Cash only.

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Proposal delays road tests for seniors until age 87

Road tests to renew driver's licenses could be a thing of the past for many seniors in Illinois under a bill unanimously approved last month by the Illinois House.

The House voted 114-0 to approve House Bill 1226, which would raise the age that seniors must take a driving exam to renew their licenses from 79 to 87.

Presently, drivers aged 79 and 80 need a road test every four years, and those aged 81 to 86 need them every two years.

People aged 79 and older would still have to go in person to a secretary of state facility to renew their license but wouldn't have to take a driving test with a state employee until they turn 87.

The bill includes a number of safeguards, including that immediate family members can submit reports to the secretary of state if they are concerned a relative has a condition that makes it unsafe for them to drive.

Under the just-introduced proposal, if an immediate family member files a report that a medical review team at the Secretary of State's Office deems credible, the driver may have to undergo a physical, mental or driving exam. Reports could not be filed anonymously, but that name would be kept confidential.

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Junior football at Willye B. White, Clarendon Parks

In a season that runs from August to October, Junior Bear is a tackle football program with two divisions; the 8-10-year-old pee wee division and the 11-13-year-old varsity division. Organizing for this years program is now underway.

The players participate in opening ceremonies, clinics, and league play, along with the championship game and closing ceremonies.

There are two parks and teams on the North Side. The Willye White Park Wolverines pee wee program, 1610 W. Howard (773-262-5051), and Clarendon Park Cardinals Varsity program, 4501 N. Clarendon Ave. (312-742-7512).

Uniforms, transportation, and giveaways are provided. Games are played at several locations throughout the city, usually on Saturdays, with some Tuesday night games.

Families may contact the park supervisor, Richard Faust, to sign up young men and women who are interested. Sign up may also be done online.

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CLARK ST. *from p. 1*

ground in Chicago - and other urban areas - is that not all neighborhoods are equal, and many of Chicago's more disadvantaged communities do not have resources like jobs, commercial and retail enterprises and services to keep people from leaving their own 15-minute neighborhood. Nor does it consider how many residents of any given area actually work in the same neighborhood that they live in.

The plans for Clark St. are already underway, and portions of this plan have already been completed in Lakeview and Edgewater. Those changes narrow streets, shorten pedestrian crossings, lower speed limits, add more congestion and traffic backups, and the newly constructed concrete barriers are used to block egress, making turning vehicles on and off Clark St. more difficult. And of course separate privileged lanes tucked behind concrete barriers reserve roadway for the exclusive use of cycle and scooter users on Clark St.

The changes also include a new greenway bike path on Winnemac Ave. which will convert the street into a one-way street for cars, but two-way for bikes, even though current state law makes it illegal for bikes to travel in counterflow of vehicle traffic

SUES *from p. 1*

66/ et seq.), including not carrying a firearm into establishments serving alcohol and ensuring it was securely fastened and safe from accidental discharge.

The complaint highlights that Davis consumed alcohol while at The VIG and did not have his firearm properly secured or its safety engaged.

In response to this incident, The VIG claims they have suffered extensive damages including financial costs exceeding \$83,260 due to legal defenses against municipal violations related to their liquor

on one-way streets.

On-street parking will remain on only one side of the Clark St., which means the small local businesses will lose over half their commercial parking. Clark St. (and its predecessor Green Bay Trail) has long been used as a commercial thoroughfare even prior to the arrival of European settlers in North America.

Evidence suggests prehistoric man, likely over 7,000 years ago, used a system of trails and waterways for trade and travel, including trading for copper. The Potawatomi Indian tribe is also a trail user, undertaking trading along the path potentially for over 400 years. In the early 1800s, the trail served as a route for early settlers and for mail between Fort Dearborn (Chicago) and Fort Howard (Green Bay).

The Clark Street Crossroads plan kicked off with a Discovery Phase in Fall 2021, and culminated in the publication of a final study, which was approved by the Chicago Plan Commission on March 16, 2023. The study identified privileged bike lanes as the top street priority for the corridor.

Extending privileged bike lanes on Clark St. also aligns with the Chicago Cycling Strategy to connect neighborhoods to one another, and provide access to neighborhood destinations via biking.

license. Additionally, they assert reputational harm as community concerns about safety led to decreased sales and employee turnover. To mitigate future risks, The VIG invested in enhanced security measures such as hiring armed security personnel and purchasing metal detectors.

The plaintiff seeks judgment for damages exceeding \$50,000 along with litigation costs and other associated expenses. They are also requesting pre- and post-judgment interest on these amounts. This case is presided over by Judge Mariyana T. Spyropoulos.

CAMERAS *from p. 1*

The program uses automated speed cameras equipped with 3D tracking radar to enforce speed limits in school zones. Automated enforcement hours for school zone cameras are limited to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. From 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., the speed limit is 20 mph when

LANE *from p. 1*

good] the last month or so. In the beginning part of the season we really struggle in a lot of key spots. It's been a lot more consistent. The kids have worked hard to make adjustments."

The Champions put four runs on the board, (yes, the scoreboard to Kerry Wood Cubs Field was actually working) in the bottom of the first. The big hit was junior outfielder Conor Sullivan's home run into the parking lot beyond left field to give Lane 4-0 lead. Sullivan crushed that ball. Not a lot of balls get out of Kerry Wood with its near professional baseball field dimensions.

The bottom of the first wasn't over yet. Zolan Wyatt singled. Miles Mazanowski doubled. Wyatt scored on Alex Zeigler's ground out. Mazanowski scored on N. Wong's single to center. 6-0 Lane at the end of the first.

Sophomore right hander Charles Lust cruised through the next two innings with a relatively low pitch count--30 pitches, 23 of which were strikes. Still 6-0 Lane.

The top of the fourth was different. "[Charlie Lust] started leaving the ball up. He has four pitches that he can usually locate for strikes. I started seeing everything up in the zone and there wasn't a lot of sharp break. He had done a great job until that point, but with the heat and everything, I just thought it was best to get him out early. We have a lot of pitching depth,"

children are present and reverts to the posted speed limit when no children are present. From 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., the posted speed limit applies. For park zone cameras, enforcement is limited to the hours when each park is open - typically from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week.

Freeman said.

There was no quit in Von Steuben after going down 6-0 in the first inning. Four out of the first five Panther hitters in the top of the fourth singled sharply but only one run scored. A hit batsman forced in a run. Von Steuben catcher Matteo Banuelos had a quality at-bat. With two outs and deep in the count, Banuelos singled sharply to right scoring two. 6-4. Von Steuben was right back in it.

The big comeback was not to be. Lane's relief pitching turned off the Panthers. It would end 6-4 Lane. The Champions can be champion again.

It's been an interesting season for Lane. They struggled early going 3-6 in their first nine games. But those losses were mostly against high quality out-of-state teams on their trip south. This is how Freeman wanted it. He wanted to get them ready for the season and have them playing at a high level, win or lose.

Since that beginning the Champions have been 20-3.

Lane takes on Simeon in the Chicago Public League championship tournament semi-final on May 20 at UIC's Granderson Field.

The IHSA Playoff brackets are out as well. The playoffs start immediately after the City Championship. The Champions are the #2 seed in the 4A Loyola Sectional behind #1 seed New Trier. Lane opens the playoffs on Wednesday, May 28, against the winner of Maine West and Senn.

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