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— Lewis Carroll

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VOL. 116, NO. 8

NEWS OF THE LOOP, STREETERVILLE, RIVER NORTH, NEAR NORTH, GOLD COAST & OLD TOWN

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FREE

FEBRUARY 19 - FEBRUARY 25, 2020

City's new congestion tax puts burden on Uber and Lyft drivers

BY KARI MCMAHON
Medill News Service

On a recent journey downtown local Uber driver Matt collected a fare of \$10 but said he only made \$4 from it. The city, which began imposing a new congestion tax a month ago, made \$3.

Matt, who typically drives eight hours a night, said that working as a ride-hail driver was not an easy job. He said the congestion tax is just another challenge he has to deal with on top of ride-hail companies taking a significant cut of his fares and having to compete with thousands of other drivers for those fares.

"It really is just a cash grab for the city, cloaked under the guise of congestion reduction," said Matt, who did not want to share his second name for fear of losing his job. "Now you just have the same number of cars looking for potentially fewer riders."

In January, the City of Chicago implemented a new congestion tax on ride-hail providers to encourage riders to either use public transport or shared trips in the downtown area. The thinking behind the tax was that it would encourage residents to use public transportation, thereby lowering the number of vehicles in the city center and reducing congestion.

What they're not saying is that

North Side areas that suffer from Chicago's new congestion tax include the downtown area north to North Ave., and west to the Chicago River.

ride-hail services have also decimated CTA bus travel numbers, and even CTA train travel is softening too. So the city needed to replace lost revenue, and raising taxes was the way to do it.

The use of ride-hailing services — such as Uber, Lyft and Via — has grown by 271% since 2015 and continues to steadily increase. According to the law, ride-hail drivers would experience a tax surge between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. if a journey begins or ends downtown. During this time, solo journeys would be taxed \$3, increasing to \$8 if pick-up or drop-off occurs at a particularly congested

locations such as O'Hare International Airport or Navy Pier.

The city decided to implement the tax after a congestion report released in Oct. 2019, found that the number of ride-hailing trips have almost tripled since 2015 with half of the trips either starting or ending downtown. Those who lost the rides were taxicab companies and the CTA. So the trips not only contributed to congestion but to a decline in CTA ridership and slower bus speeds, which created challenges for individuals commuting downtown.

CONGESTION see p. 8

Pot now the hot topic in River North

While River North is already having trouble with bad bars like el Hefe and Bottled Blonde, it seems that everyone these days now wants to find a spot to sell recreation weed, because there apparently isn't enough substance abuse already going on in their community.

Over the past two weeks the River North Residents Assoc. [RNRA] has hosted several community meetings to discuss proposed cannabis dispensary locations.

Meetings were held recently on proposed applications by Sunny-side* (MedMar Lakeview, LLC)

on Jan. 28 to discuss their location at 436 N. Clark St.; Modern Cannabis (MOCA, LLC) held a meeting on Jan. 29 to discuss their location at 216 W. Ohio St.; Verilife (Pharmacann) held a meeting on Feb. 6 to discuss their location at 444 N. LaSalle St.; Greenhouse Group held a meeting on Feb. 7 to discuss their location at 612 N. Wells St., and Greenhouse Group held a meeting on Feb. 12 to discuss their location at 414 N. Orleans St.

These meetings were held to gather community feedback, as a requirement of the Special Use application necessary to open a

dispensary in Chicago. The next step in the process is for the Zoning Board of Appeals [ZBA] to consider the Special Use applications at a public hearing.

The ZBA hearing will take place 9 a.m. Friday, March 6, at City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St., City Council Chambers, 2nd floor.

RNRA will summarize community feedback and share it with ZBA in advance of the hearing. any Chicago resident is welcome to forward feedback to the ZBA regarding these pending applications. Objections can

HOT TOPIC see p. 8

Chief judge promises bond reform transparency — then stonewalls when errors are found

BY CWBCHICAGO

In the weeks leading up to Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans' successful re-election on Sept. 12, his office received some potentially bad news from the crime news site CWBChicago.

Their team had identified some apparent errors in the court database that Evans used when making claims about the success rate of his affordable bail program. Some felons who were arrested for new felonies while out on affordable bail were listed in the database as having not re-offended.

The apparent errors, if verified, could be problematic for the judge, who widely claimed that the affordable bail "re-offend" rate was very low.

Evans' office said the errors we identified were innocent and his representative promised to provide an updated database for new analysis.

One week before election day for Evans, his staff severed all communications with our reporters. And the promised "corrected" dataset never came.

Evans won re-election handily.

Tribune report

Our experience with Evans' office regarding bail data takes on new importance today as the Chicago Tribune, working independently, found major errors in the court's data — and problems with Evans' claims about affordable bail.

The Tribune also won something from Evans that he refused to provide to us: A dataset that includes defendants' names for every case.

On July 23, 2019, this reporter asked Evans' office to release the database that the chief judge uses to form his claims about affordable bail, such as the number of accused criminals who re-offend while on bond.

The court system is not subject to Illinois' Freedom Of Information Act laws, so Evans wasn't required to provide us with anything. And, if he did, his office

Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans

could bill us for the costs of collecting our information. We are not a money-flush operation.

On Aug. 9, after receiving no response to three inquiries, we sent Evans' office a final email: We would be writing a story about his unwillingness to provide his data unless we heard from them by the end of the day.

Twelve hours later, we received (at no charge) a spreadsheet that details every criminal case filed since Evan's affordable bail program began in Sept. 2017.

The Excel file is massive: 39,000 cases. More than 2 million data points.

But not many names.

Evans' office removed the names from all pending cases because, they claimed, Illinois Supreme Court rules bar the release of such information.

Discrepancies in data

The lack of names for pending cases made verifying Evans' claims about affordable bail success almost impossible for our team of reporters.

JUDGE see p. 8

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Box of Fannie Mae or Frango Mints - always fit for king or nun



By Thomas J. O’Gorman

Do you have a sweet tooth, are you a candy lover? What fills your sugar craves? Do you hide chocolate in your home? Do you keep Raisinettes in your car?

As a real Chicagoan my “candy-palette” was shaped by the twin local resources of Fannie Mae and Frango Mints. Two of America’s most delicious and essential delicacies.

Growing up in Chicago meant access to candy excellence, and a childhood of high-end chocolate thanks to the family’s passion for refined handmade delights. A childhood extravagance that usually came two pounds at a time wrapped in Fannie Mae’s distinctive tartan paper. It was “caramel” colored and we could

spot the presence of a box at any distance.

Visitors who often brought a box of Fannie Mae’s to us were family favorites. And my mother, Eileen, was forever bestowing such treats in abundance on our local Dominican nuns who relished her generosity, sharing them with their convent pals. Nothing said “Thanks for teaching my son” better than a hand-picked assortment. Their candy kitchen was on Jackson Blvd.

Frango Mints were Marshall Field & Co’s. contribution to the chocolate mayhem of Chicago. These weren’t your typical ‘after dinner mints.’ They were small chocolate cubes of smooth chocolate elegance flavored with a distinctive reviving mint flavor. Sometimes a citrus flavor additive was blended in. Only made at the department store’s State St. kitchen, they were a sophisticated candy.

We always imagined the Field Family munching on them at their Lake Forest estate. Frango Mints on silver trays passed around by the long-serving butler.

In our house there wasn’t much competition between Fannie Mae

and Frango. Like a Chicago mayoral election, there was only one possible outcome. Fannie Mae. Hands down winner.

Don’t get me wrong, Frangos were tasty. But they had little variety and some folk thought them a bit ‘girlie.’

Fannie Mae, on the other hand, had varietal chocolates and flavors. More he-man.

Our favorites were the dark chocolate butter creams. Then the milk chocolate maple creams. My mom loved these. I could take them or leave them. I wasn’t a nut fan. Couldn’t get enough of the mints, light and dark. The lemon creams. The raspberry, Trinidads (truffles), coconuts, pixie’s (caramel nut clusters), not to mention the fudge, the toffee and the French nougats.

My Grandmother O’Connor used to receive so many boxes of chocolates throughout the year that she would just hide them around the house in drawers. Or under a mattress. Sometimes forgetting where she put them. So we might discover a box of Christmas Fannie Mae creams in the middle of Lent. Or January birthday treats around the 4th of July. Hilarity and hysteria always ensued. We were rarely without.

Early in life, around the time I started adding fractions, I could identify the various chocolates in a box of Fannie Mae by the swirl of markings fashioned by the chocolate coating on each piece. This may have looked like nothing more than a box of chocolates to some, but to me, and my family, they were a box of genuine confectionary treasures, deserving our respect and allegiance. And if you were fluent in the alphabet of its signs and symbols, you could make your way through a hand-picked box without the uncouth need to poke a hole with you finger into each piece.

In Chicago, your taste in choc-



Visitors who often brought a box of Fannie Mae’s to us were family favorites.

olate defined your local loyalties and established your sense of Prairie identity. After-all, we are what we eat. That’s why it seemed like there was a Fannie Mae on every downtown street. They were like Starbucks in the 1950s.

Years later in adulthood, whenever I visited my family in Ireland, my Chicago-born and raised aunt, Anna Marie, would only ask I bring her one gift from Chicago: A two pound box of Fannie Mae. Quickly hid.

To this day, the memory of its taste and aroma puts a smile on everyone’s sugar addiction.

Chicago’s a lucky candy locale. In addition to Fannie Mae and Frango Mints, there has always been a tradition of small, independent chocolate makers across the neighborhoods. Often attached to old-fashioned soda fountains and malt shops. Cupid Candies, Andy’s Candies and Dove Candies were all popular and competitive sweet emporiums in the 1950s. Most owned and operated by Greek immigrants. Today Margie’s Candies, a full-service ice cream parlor, is still operating since it was first opened by George Poulos in 1921 at Western and Milwaukee Ave. Still carrying the ironic sobriquet of its history, “Al Capone’s favorite.”

Newer international “chocolatiers” have opened in the monied spots of the high rent district in

more recent times. And independent gourmet candy shops still dot the city street maps. But none of it is cheap.

Chicago’s big city personality isn’t just the product of our politics or potholes. It’s our chocolate. It’s more than the sum of home runs and errors on the signage of Wrigley Field or Guaranteed Rate Field. It’s our chocolate, too. Our quirky character is larger than our civil service pension debt or costly police litigation payouts. It’s our chocolate, I’m telling you. Open your eyes.

Sure, our urban character is also shaped by the fragrance of our zoo along the lakefront or a lion’s growl in the middle of the night. Much like the nighttime thunder of the “L” echoing past overhead, reassuring and defining our sense of belonging. Like the hypnotic aroma of Garrett’s popcorn before you’ve eaten lunch. Or the sizzled flavor of a White Castle slider, sometimes more enticing than a slab of prime rib. It’s the chocolate, as well. But sadly, Chicago’s personality is also shaped by our hungers for greed, easy money and the out-of-date influence from controlling institutions and organizations mired in the muck of history and the shambles of pick-pocket government.

Perhaps the prescription for better balance ascending the moral high ground in Chicago is just what it has always been since the beginning. The real thing. You

FANNIE MAE see p. 4

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Rogers Park business program continues to GROW

Plus, go see
the sizzling hot "Summer!"



Heart of the 'Hood

by Felicia Dechter

Once upon a time, Clark St. in Rogers Park was filled with quaint little antique shops, where you could find small baubles or miscellaneous unique items or tchotchkes, as they say in Yiddish. Today, Clark St. is a much different place, still vibrant but filled with many Latino businesses.

And lucky for those newer entrepreneurs, a new program not only aims to help them, but also other Spanish-speakers who may be interested in starting a business or helping theirs grow.

That's because the nonprofit Rogers Park Business Alliance [RPBA], is expanding its GROW entrepreneurial training program to include Spanish-language business education. It has recently remodeled a storefront at 7056 N. Clark St., and you can see the new place for yourself at the grand opening being held from 10 to 11 a.m., Feb. 27. The event will include refreshments from past GROW participants, information on GROW/PROGRESANDO programs and remarks from RPBA executive director Sandi Price.

It's open to everybody, young and old, said Rebeca Fernández, who was recently named bilingual program manager for the new Spanish-language programming.

"Clark St. is the largest business corridor in this area -- we want to introduce business owners to Clark St.," said Fernández, who has been walking the street talking to business owners about their concerns, complaints, etc. "They've been here a while, but they need support to grow. This will provide assistance to Latino community business owners.

"It's unique," added Fernández, a trained architect from Mexico City who has a master's degree in Historic Preservation from the School of the Art Institute. "There's not too many like that here on the North Side of Chicago."

The location of the new education center aligns with RPBA's Vision Clark Street Master Plan, a multi-year strategic plan for the Clark St. business corridor spanning from Devon Ave. north to Howard St. The plan includes storefront improvements, new landscaping and the addition of vibrant public art. The effort has been a labor of love for RPBA.

To make the new center happen, RPBA received a \$114,000

grant from the Coleman Foundation to expand its GROW training to include Spanish-language education and renovate the Clark St. storefront to better serve the diverse Rogers Park neighborhood— where more than 70% of businesses are small start-ups and nearly a quarter of residents identify as Latinx. In case you're wondering, "Latinx" means every ethnicity within the Spanish language. "We are inclusive here," said Fernández.

The hope is that the center will help to break the language barrier and overcome obstacles and allow more Latin-owned businesses to open their doors here. There's space for one-on-one service, training, presentations, meetings, and a spot in back is waiting to be converted into an area for child-care, which will be provided free for those enrolled in programs, said Fernández.

Curriculum is highly interactive and includes basic business knowledge, specialty subject education, and technical and specialty assistance consultations. Attendees will receive expert business support, create connections, and get aid in all stages of business development.

"We're not just adding Spanish curriculum," said Fernández, who is currently working on a book about historic Mexican murals in Pilsen. "We're translating a lot of their materials. We're working with them to try to do marketing in English and Spanish.

"We need to communicate with the Spanish community as well," she added. "We want to have them feel comfortable, feel trust, and come to us to ask for help or improve or expand the business they already have."

"I want to see this center like the genesis for the North Side La-

tino community," continued Fernández. "We hope this is a place they feel comfortable for speaking Spanish and to keep growing.

"Maybe I can't solve everything, but I want to be the bridge that helps them connect," she said.

Programs are free for RPBA members but there are fees for non-members. Scholarships are available. Classes start Feb. 27. For more info go to www.grow-progresando.org.

Hot stuff... is, "Summer: The Donna Summer Musical," running through Sunday at the Nederlander Theatre, 24 W. Randolph St. If you're a fan of the disco queen, catch this magical and top-notch trip down Memory Lane.

One thing you might not know about me is that I met my husband at a disco. It was a hot summer night in July of 1977, and there I was sitting with a friend at the bar at Bananas, a popular dance club located back then on Broadway, just north of Foster Ave. In walked a little hottie -- the man I would eventually marry. I noticed him immediately.

Within a few minutes, he came up and asked me to dance. "Maybe later," I responded, trying to play it cool. Well, later did come, and we danced all night. Dancing became our passion, and Donna Summer became my queen.

Fast forward to a few summers later, when we broke up for about four months and my hubby took off to Colorado. Donna's, "On the Radio," which remains my fave tune of her's today, became my feeling sorry for myself song, the one I listened to constantly and sang my heart out and drowned my sorrows to.

*"Don't it kinda strike you sad
when you hear our song
Things are not the same since
we broke up last June
The only thing that I want to
hear is that you love me still
And that you think you'll be
comin' home real soon."*



(Left) Alex Hairston belts out the tunes amazingly as the young, Disco Donna. (Right) The immensely talented Dan'yelle Williamson gives it her all as the older, Diva Donna. Photos © Matthew Murphy forMurphyMade

Ok enough corny stuff about me. Anyway, Donna was a girl from Boston with a voice from heaven. She started singing the gospel in a church choir and ended up a dance floor diva. Her

first mega-hits, "I Feel Love," and "Love to Love You Baby," crossed all the race and gender lines. It didn't matter if you were

GROW see p. 6

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FANNIE MAE from p. 2

know, before we needed the feds to police our long-serving elected officials who may have perfect attendance at official meetings, but act with the moral turpitude of Tammany Hall or the Kray Brothers, or the 'Dead End Kids.' Maybe we need more of the real thing. Chocolates, as it were, of depth and structure, just sweet enough, naturally scented and hand-packed. A gift box of Fannie Mae or Frango Mints.

Two layers deep. Worthy of a nun. Fit for a king, or an alderman in jail. Enough to make your sweet tooth ache.

ACADEMY AWARD: Congratulations to Northwest Side Chicago native **Matthew A. Cherry** upon receiving his Oscar for his short film, 'Hair Love,' a most imaginative work that seeks to empower Black youth about their hair.

BAD NEWS: **Greg Kot** left the Chicago Tribune last week where he built a career as a superb critic. He wasn't the first to go under their new hedge fund owners, and he won't be the last.



Matthew A. Cherry

His exit is a terrible loss for readers. It is also a frightening loss for those who are predicting an end to the venerable newspaper given the current financial complexities of the business. Love 'em or hate 'em, Chicago without the daily Tribune is a nightmare scenario. Don't let Google and Facebook destroy our local newspapers.

PAX ET BONUM: **Kimberly Hastings White** was a woman of elegance and intelligence. Her recent death from cancer is

deeply felt. Educated in Switzerland and at Stanford U. with the manners and tastes of nobility, she carried herself simply and gracefully. Her life was social service to the world. She served as president of the Boys and Girls Club of Chicago, president of the Field Museum Women's Board and at the Joffrey Ballet. Her leadership was superbly organizational and highly literary, producing the splendid book on the Joffrey that so richly details their achievement in the arts. In addition, Kim opened Crocodile Pie, a children's bookstore in Libertyville. During the store's nearly 20-year run, she established a coveted literary reputation. This column sends its deep sympathies to her family, especially her husband **Miles White**, her Stanford sweetheart whom she married 43 years ago. Requiem.

TIDBIT: The Chicago Irish Film Festival's closing movie 3 p.m. March 1, is the Midwest Premier of "Gaza." Gallery Theatre and The Logan Theatre, 1112 N.

INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

Milwaukee Ave.

MORE THAN JIGS AND REELS: **Mark Howard**, founding artistic director of the Trinity Dance Company says: "At first I thought it was cool that Trinity and Chicago were chosen to be one of the most important places to be in February to catch important dance. Then I was told that they didn't merely mean in the United States. They're talking about the entire world." Trinity Dance will perform twice on Saturday, Feb. 29. 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Auditorium Theatre.

WGN RADIO: **William Kresse** on the air and talking about fraud with **Anna Davelantes** on WGN Radio. Remember, he said, "Fraud never sleeps" and knowledge is the best way to combat fraud!

CHICAGO SYMPHONY:

J. Lawrie Bloom, the CSO's bass clarinetist since 1980, takes the stage as a soloist with the orchestra in the world premiere of **Nicolas Bacri's** "Ophelia's Tears" on Feb 20-23.

TIDBIT: After 17 years **Stuart Strahl**, Brookfield Zoo chief, to retire; search for new leadership begins.

NEITHER RAIN NOR SNOW:

Is U.S. Mail service once again getting pitiful for our readers? Our newspaper office now gets mail, maybe, three times a week. And reports are that our local office isn't even one of the five worst on the North Side based on recent complaints.

DRURY LANE: **Dame Charlene Seaman** was front and center at Drury Lane for the opening of **George Gershwin's** "An American in Paris." Among those in her theatre party at Drury Lane was **Bobbi Panter**, **John** and **Myra Reilly**, **Kimberly Gleason**, **Lyza Risher Schlenker** and **Vonita Reescer**. Was quite a nite.

MIX 'EM WITH WHISKEY:

Up-and-coming musician **Larry Fleet**, from Chattanooga, TN, played a hot set on the coldest

night of the year at Carol's Pub, 4659 N. Clark St.

TALLY-HO BABY: Chanteuse **Barb Bailey** will perform at Le Piano, 6970 N. Glenwood St., 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26. With the **Chad Willetts Trio**. Dinner available after the show. Reservations 773-209-7631, \$25 cover. Le Piano is perhaps the heart of Chicago's newest hot nightlife. They've brought Montmartre to Chicago.

WHAT A WOMAN: An exciting new musical adventure will make its Chicago premiere this Spring with the opening of "Me...Jane: The Dreams and Ad-



Tom Cavanagh, Lauren Lein and Vonita Reescer.

ventures of **Young Jane Goodall**," an original musical about the world renowned humanitarian, conservationist, and animal activist. Catch its debut at Chicago Children's Theatre, 100 S. Racine. Public performances are April 4-26, call 312-374-8835.

WHO'S WHERE: **Kipper Lance Hendrick** is with **Colleen Joyce Lance** and **John Lance** in Palm Beach, FL, getting sun on Worth Ave... **Myra Reilly** and the ladies of Bunky's Bunch remembering Ralph Lauren's **Bunky Cushing** near Valentine's Day when his famous "Tea" was always the talk of the town... Blimey, **Brian Relph** still motor-

ing across South America, now at Camden Passage in Cordoba, Argentina...Yes, that was **Dame Charlene Seaman** with **Kristine Farra** and **Eleni Bousis** at the Lyric Opera, crying their eyes out at **Puccini's** Madame Butterfly... **Mark Olley** has been walking the beaches in Naples, FL... and reporting in from the Florida Everglades is **Lucia Adams** in Arcadia... **Brian White** and **Jim Kinney** are in their blazers and straw boaters at the International Polo Club in Palm Beach FL, along with **Edmund Lester**. The trio are attending the "Warriors" conference there...Writer **Sherill Bodine** to convene the first day of the Service Club of Chicago's Philanthropic Committee - working with charities all across the city to make Chicago a better place with **Kimberly Gleeson**, **Myra Leilly**, **Marcia Northrop** and **Paula Borg**... **Mark Schimelpennig** ministering to veterans at the Rush Medical Center and easing pain... **Sean Eshaghy** and **Dennis Healy** on the town... The **Dan Lawlor Family** elegant at the Auto Show... Chicago artist **Adam Umbach** in Brooklyn, released a three-minute video on his life and paintings.

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE: Does all that political support for the newbie not contain a lot of old romance, as well, from another time when the ladies were involved?

SILVER LINING FOUNDATION: **Micah Materre**, anchor of the WGN Evening News, will emcee "Glitz and Glamour" - the sixth annual fundraiser for A Silver Lining Foundation (ASLF). The luncheon and fashion show will be held on Wednesday, March 4 at The Peninsula Hotel Grand Ballroom, 108 E. Superior. **Dr. Sandy Goldberg** founded ASLF in 2002 when as a breast cancer patient, she realized that not all women have access to mammograms; she and her husband set up the foundation because "we all deserve a chance to survive ... no matter our financial situation, race, or documentation status."

TIDBIT: **Tommy Smith**, Dublin's greatest publican (barman) of Grogan's Castle Lounge, has died. A man who devoted his life to the art-filled pub, Tommy passed away peacefully surrounded by his loved ones. A solid friend of potentates and paupers. "Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam." (We'll never see his like again.)

IRISH FELLOWSHIP CLUB DINNER: Friday evening, March 13, 6:30 p.m., the Irish Fellowship Club of Chicago will host its annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner at the Chicago Hilton and Towers. Gathering Chicago's Irish celebrities, politicians, saints, scholars, potentates and poets. Representatives of the Irish government as well. Join them for cocktails dinner and dancing. Call **Kathy Taylor** (Ex. Dir.) for reservations 773-858-0628. **Marcy O'Keefe Twardak** (Dinner Chair) and **Rose Doherty** (President).

Believe those who are seeking the truth. Doubt those who find it. -- **Andre Gide**

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WED

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SUN

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Police Beat...

Armed carjacking at Oak and Rush

Police are investigating an armed carjacking that reportedly unfolded Feb. 10 just steps from the Magnificent Mile, on one of the city's poshest retail corners.

A 40-year-old Albany Park man told police that he was driving on the corner of Rush and Oak streets when a masked man displayed a handgun with an extended magazine and demanded his vehicle around 2:40 p.m.

He surrendered his car and the offender sped away eastbound on Oak Street. Police surveillance cameras captured images of the 2019 Jeep Trail Hawk speeding across Michigan Ave. and then south on Inner Lake Shore Dr.

The victim flagged down a passing police officer and at least one witness also called 911 to report the crime.

Monday's carjacking took place at the foot of Oak St., where high-end retailers Prada and Hermes anchor two corners. Area Central detectives are investigating the case.

Gunman robs Lincoln Park woman on her porch, steals her Range Rover

A masked man robbed a woman at gunpoint on the front steps of her Lincoln Park home Feb. 13 and then sped away with the victim's Range Rover. No one is in custody.

The victim told police that she was getting ready to enter her home on the 2600 block of N. Wilton around 5:45 p.m. when the offender confronted her with a handgun, then took her keys and purse. He then walked to the woman's luxury SUV and sped away.

Taken was a black 2017 Range Rover bearing a license plate that begins with Z313. It was last seen heading eastbound on Diversey, according to a witness.

According to the victim, the offender is a black male who wore a ski mask.

Police found the woman's phone discarded on the 900 block of W. Diversey and returned it to the victim.

Suburban man charged in North Side robberies

A Palatine resident is charged with trying to rob two men in Albany Park while holding a vodka bottle under his coat as if it were a gun, according to court records.

Police said a 44-year-old man flagged them down near Montrose and Kedzie as officers responded to a call of a person with a gun around 11:30 p.m. on Feb. 7. The man told officers that a stranger approached him with an object under his jacket and ordered him to get down. But the man did not comply and the stranger, who walked away, was still visible across the street, police said.

Officers approached the alleged offender Zacharia Farhan, 24, and ordered him to show his hands. When he did, Farhan pulled a bottle of New Amsterdam vodka out from under his coat, police said.

Meanwhile, other officers met with a victim at the original "man with a gun" call. The 49-year-old subsequently identified Farhan as the man who implied that he had a gun, said "don't make me pull the trigger," and ordered the victim to put his hands in the air.

As cops were driving Farhan to

the police station, yet another 911 caller reported that a man approached him on the street, and said "stick 'em up" while implying that he had a gun under his clothing. That victim also identified Farhan as the offender, police said.



Zacharia Farhan

Prosecutors charged Farhan with two felony counts of attempted aggravated robbery and misdemeanor aggravated assault. He is being held without bail.

Reward offered for Andersonville bank robber

The FBI is trying to find the man who robbed an Andersonville bank Feb. 8.

A man walked into the First Third Bank at 5501 N. Ashland and handed a note to a teller at 11:12 a.m. He fled after collecting an undetermined amount of cash.

The robber is a black male in his mid-20's with a goatee who stands 5'-5" to 5'-7" tall and weighs about 190 lbs., according to the FBI. He wore a black hat, black hoodie, jeans, and black gloves.

A reward of up to \$1,000 is being offered by the FBI for information that leads directly to the man's arrest. Tips can be shared with the bureau's Chicago office at 312-421-6700.

CPD beefs up CTA police presence

The Chicago Police Dept. is preparing to deploy a temporary task force to address crime on the CTA's elevated train system.

News of the plan emerged hours after we reported that CPD and CTA leaders were preparing significant changes in the way the two agencies address rail safety.

"I want to put cops on dots," CTA Vice President of Security Kevin Ryan told this reporter, referring to "L" stations that are represented by dots on the transit system's maps.

The police department seems to be moving in Ryan's direction with the patrol surge, which will run from March 5 to Memorial Day.

Two or three officers will be pulled from each of the city's 22 police districts to staff the mobile patrol unit for about eight hours each evening.

Still not known is how the police department will handle CTA patrols after Memorial Day, during the summer months that typically see a higher number of violent crime incidents.

The police department began a temporary manpower surge Feb. 11

to keep a lid on problems along the downtown transit system and Michigan Ave. leading up to the NBA All-Star Game last weekend.

CPD deployed over 100 recent police academy graduates known as probationary police officers along Michigan Ave. from Oak St. through the Loop and on the Red Line during evening hours over the past weekend, according to an officer with knowledge of the plan.

The police department and CTA are expected to announce significant, long-term changes to the way the two agencies address safety aboard the city's train lines in the coming weeks.

Two "high profile celebrity" guest rooms burglarized at luxury hotel

Chicago police are investigating the forcible burglaries of two "high profile celebrity" guest rooms at a posh downtown hotel on NBA All-Star weekend. No arrests have been made.

A CPD spokesperson confirmed that a man broke into two different rooms and stole "multiple unknown items" at a hotel on the first block of E. Walton sometime before 7:45 p.m. Saturday.

The hotel involved is the Waldorf Astoria, 11 E. Walton, according to a police report. And the victims — described as "high profile celebrities" — were occupying luxury suites on the same floor.

Cash, jewelry, and electronics were reportedly taken in the burglaries.

Police searched the hotel for the offender, but came up empty-handed. He is described as a short black male who wore a black jacket and red ski mask.

Messages seeking comment from the Waldorf Astoria were not immediately returned on Sunday.

Gang-related shooting injures teen

A 16-year-old boy was shot as he rode a bike in the Irving Park neighborhood Feb. 12, police said. Investigators believe the incident may be gang-related.

The victim was riding on the 3000 block of W. Belle Plaine when someone shot at him from a dark vehicle at 8:40 p.m., according to a CPD statement. One round struck the boy in his right leg and he was listed in good condition at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. A second person who was riding with the teen was not injured, police said.

Witnesses reported hearing about 10 shots fired in the area. Some witnesses reported seeing a red SUV speed from the area while others saw

a silver car drive away from the shooting eastbound.

Police found a backpack containing a handgun inside a trash can on the 4000 block of N. Sacramento. It was not immediately known if the recovered handgun is connected to the shooting.

Investigators were working to determine if Wednesday's incident is related to an earlier gang-related shooting in the nearby 14th police district.

Woman carjacked in Old Town

Three men carjacked a woman at gunpoint in Old Town on Feb. 16, police said. No arrests have been made.

The victim, 26, was sitting in her SUV on the 200 block of W. Scott when three men walked up to her car around 10:45 p.m., according to police. One of the men "placed a handgun to her face" and demanded the keys to her car, police said.

She complied and the offenders drove away with her silver 2003 Honda CR-V. The woman was not injured.

She said the carjackers are three black males who are all about 6' tall. One wore a gray hoodie, one wore a black hoodie, and one wore a red hoodie, the woman said. Area Central detectives are investigating.

One dead, two wounded in CTA shooting

Three people were shot, one fatally, in a CTA pedestrian tunnel downtown Feb. 17, police said. No one is in custody.

Just after 2 a.m. Monday, a witness flagged down police to report shots fired in the pedestrian tunnel that connects the Blue Line and Red Line at Jackson.

Officers responded to the scene and found two men unconscious with gunshot wounds, according to initial reports.

Medical personnel pronounced one victim dead at the scene. He was shot in the stomach and chest, according to CPD. The other man is in critical condition at Northwestern Memorial Hospital with gunshots to his head and arm, police said.

Police had no further information about the men or their ages.

Officers later found a 19-year-old woman on a nearby train platform with a gunshot wound to her leg. She is in good condition and CPD said she appeared to be with the two other victims, but she was not an intended target.

Investigators believe the gunman and the two male victims know each other and were involved in a dispute before the shooting, according to a CPD statement.

Cops found about 15 shell casings at the shooting scene.

As of 3:30 a.m., police believe the gunman is a black male who wore a black coat, a gray or black hoodie, khaki pants, and brown Timberland boots. CTA surveillance cameras captured "crisp" images of the shooter, a source said.

Area Central detectives are investigating.

Man charged with having loaded gun while out on bail for carjacking

A West Side man is charged with possessing a loaded handgun in a car recently while free on bail as he awaits trial for a 2017 armed carjacking in the Loop.

We first told you about Savion Canty after prosecutors charged him for his alleged role in an armed carjacking of a Hilton Chicago Hotel employee in April 2017.

In bond court for the carjacking, a pretrial analysis recommended that Canty be placed under "maximum conditions" if the judge decided to release him on bail.

Instead, Judge Stephanie Miller ordered him held without bail. Less than a week later, Canty appeared before now-retired Judge Marvin Luckman, who earned the nickname "Let 'em Go Luckman" due to his defendant-friendly rulings.

Luckman reduced Canty's bail and allowed him to go home the same day by posting a \$2,000 bond.

Now, prosecutors have charged Canty with having a handgun in a car during a traffic stop in West Garfield Park.

Police said Canty, 21, was in the back seat of a vehicle that fled the scene of an accident. When they removed Canty from the back seat, officers allegedly found a loaded handgun with an extended ammunition magazine under the back of the driver's seat at Canty's feet.

Canty is now facing a new charge of felony unlawful use of a weapon in a vehicle. Judge David Navarro set bail in the new case at \$10,000, which would require a \$1,000 deposit to go free. However, Navarro also ordered Canty held without bail for violating the terms of his bail bond in the carjacking case. He is due back in court on March 23.

Three robberies reported downtown Saturday

Police are investigating at least three robberies reported on the Near North Side and in the Loop on

POLICE BEAT see p. 6

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A light dinner will be served.

The program presenter will be Kerry R. Peck, managing partner of the law firm Peck Ritchey, LLC. Peck is the co-author of Alzheimer's and the Law, and Don't Let Dementia Steal Everything, published by the American Bar Association.

He will discuss self-neglect laws and hoarding, mandated reporting, legal issues that can arise from hoarding, ethical considerations with hoarding clients and guardianship versus involuntary commitment.

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CONGESTION from p. 1

Audrey Wennink, director of transportation at the Metropolitan Planning Council a nonprofit organization that helps communities address tough planning and development problems, said she supported the tax and hoped it will encourage a change in behavior because individuals could take a public transit trip for the cost of the solo journey tax.

But drivers of ride-hail services such as Uber and Lyft said the new tax would likely do little to solve the problem it was intended to fix. They expressed frustration that the city was making tax money at their expense.

Chicago's ride-hail tax ranked as the highest in the country, despite only 5% of the projected \$40 million revenue from the tax going toward improving the public transport system according to the City's 2020 budget.

Mark Smithivas, a part-time Uber driver and co-owner of Gig Workers Matter, a nonprofit organization in Chicago supporting workers without contracts, said drivers disliked picking up shared rides because they typically got paid less and they have more problems with unhappy passengers.

"Pooled rides tend to pay less on a per mile rate than a regular ride," Smithivas said, adding that their plight is difficult to understand for those who have never had to drive a pooled ride. "They can be more difficult because you are picking people up at various stops and when you are in the middle of rush-hour or a very congested part of the city, it is very stressful."

Smithivas said congestion from ride-hail cars would decline if the companies provided more incentive for drivers to pick up

Is your car next?

Private car owners should not scoff at the new congestion tax, as there are now transportation activists calling for raising new taxes on all vehicles traveling in and out of busy areas.

A movement is afoot to create a new taxing system by adding express toll lanes in congested areas throughout the Chicago region.

Called "GO TO 2040" groups like Active Transportation Alliance and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning are calling for congestion pricing for private vehicles, with high taxed lanes that will give drivers better choices for getting around - the more you pay the faster you get there.

With congestion pricing, toll rates in express lanes rise at times when more drivers want to use the surface roads and highway; then tolls fall when demand is low. You will hear many of the same arguments too, that higher prices during peak periods may reduce congestion by encouraging travelers to carpool, take transit, or consider alternative routes and times for their trips.

Congestion pricing has existed in the U.S. since 1995, when the SR-91 Express Lanes opened in Orange County, CA. Particularly since the mid-2000s, several other new facilities have opened in cities across the country. And Chicago - always on the hunt for new ways to raise taxes - may be next.

shared rides.

Matt, the Uber driver, agreed that shared rides created more problems. He said pas-

sengers often expected a "private car experience" and tended to be more dissatisfied when using shared rides. This typically resulted in lower ratings for him which could have an impact the number of fares he picks up.

Some drivers said they actively avoid picking up pooled rides, a mindset which could potentially have an impact on the success of the congestion tax.

However, Kate Lowe, an associate professor for the Univ. of Illinois at Chicago, pointed out, "If financial incentives were more extreme [for drivers] and more people shifted to share, I think the drivers would have to adapt."

JUDGE from p. 1

Almost.

The best our team could do with the provided data was try to verify the accuracy of resolved cases in which we knew the defendant had been arrested for a new felony while on affordable bail for an earlier felony.

We quickly found two errors in which defendants are listed as not re-offending while on bail when, in fact, they had been charged with new crimes: A serial burglar who committed more break-ins while out on a recognizance bond with electronic monitoring and a robbery offender who committed another robbery while on bail.

We contacted Evan's office about the apparent discrepancies after office hours on Aug. 19. A representative from Evans' office contacted us on Aug. 22.

The provided data is accurate, we were told, we just couldn't see it because the data team had made a mistake.

"It's in there," the rep said, "but it's not identifiable." He promised to provide a corrected dataset.

But, he said, the court's data people aren't there all the time and they have a lot going on. They wouldn't be able to start working on the new data set until Sept. 13 — the day after the chief judge's election.

Oh, and the election had absolutely nothing to do with the turn-around time, the chief judge's office said. The data people simply couldn't get to it in a more timely manner.

This is presumably the same data team that turned around the initial, de-identified dataset in about 12 hours.

On Sept. 5, we emailed an idea to Evans' office: Maybe we could post the court's de-identified dataset online. Surely, somewhere out there, a more skilled data

Some transportation experts said they hoped the tax would reduce congestion but supported an increase if a change in behavior doesn't happen.

Samuel Kling, a fellow at the nonpartisan non-profit Chicago Council on Global Affairs, said the tax gives the city a learning opportunity to figure out how to build a congestion system for all vehicles.

For Matt, however, this provided little comfort as ride-hail drivers were the only ones targeted by the tax.

"Guys who are trying to make money or earn a living driving Uber or Lyft, it's just another thing that makes it harder," Matt said.

researcher could filter out the errors for analysis.

A representative from Evans' office soon left a voice mail requesting a callback about the idea. We called. And called. And emailed repeatedly.

But we never heard from Evans' office ever again. About anything. Evans never provided the "corrected" database. And, of course, he won re-election.

On Feb. 13 the Chicago Tribune reported that Evans has agreed to finally release his full bond dataset, including the names of defendants in unresolved cases.

"I am enthusiastic about it. I believe that adds to our commitment to transparency," he said.

Evans' office did not respond to an email request for comment on this story.

HOT TOPIC from p. 1

be addressed to the ZBA chairman, Farzin Parang, Chairman, Zoning Board of Appeals, 121 N. LaSalle St. 10th floor, Chicago, IL 60602.

The ZBA ultimately approves or denies Special Use applications based on the criteria in the Chicago Zoning Code. The ZBA is an independent, quasi-judicial body that will consider all public input and is not obligated to give special consideration to comments from the alderman or Police Commander.

If the ZBA grants approval of the Special Use permit to any of the proposed dispensary locations, the operators will then build out their space and schedule inspections with the State of Illinois. The first dispensary to pass inspection by the State of Illinois will be issued a license. Once one license has been issued, no other dispensary may open within 1,500 feet of that location.

FRANK AVILA
COMMISSIONER
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District

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Frank AVILA

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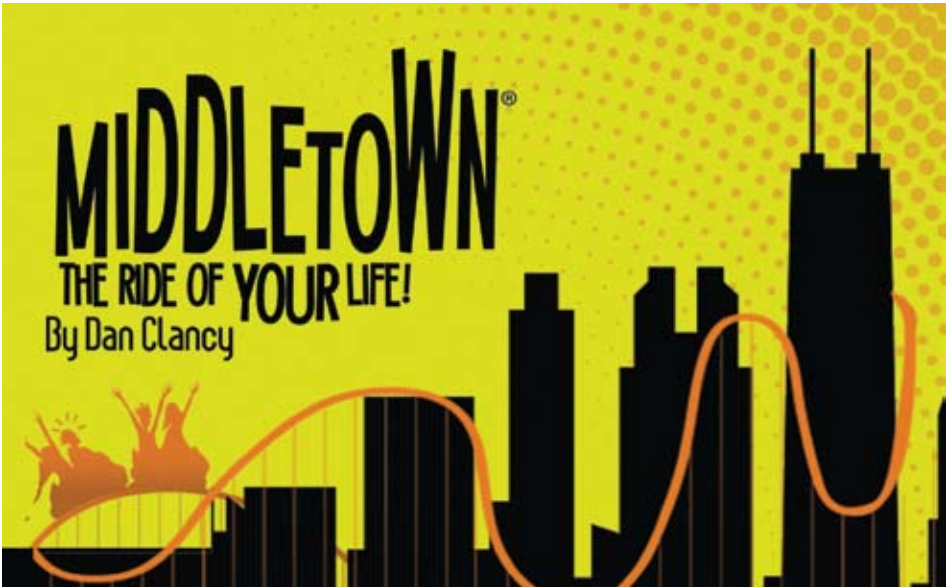


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