

Hard times arouse an instinctive desire  
for authenticity.

— Coco Chanel

# SKYLINE

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

[insideonline.com](http://insideonline.com)

## Four arrested on Mag Mile, may be linked to robbery sprees

BY CWBCHICAGO

Four people, including two juveniles, who were arrested March 19 on the Magnificent Mile may be responsible for a series of robberies, including three at Rivers Casino earlier this month, according to a law enforcement source.

With the help of a CPD helicopter, Chicago police and other law enforcement agencies followed a white Jeep Compass that was involved in a robbery in Park Ridge on Sunday night. Officers eventually stopped the car in the 700 block of N. Michigan around 10:20 p.m., and they arrested four people who allegedly ran from it, according to police.

The Jeep was used in an armed robbery about 20 minutes earlier in the parking lot of Mariano's, 1900 S. Cumberland Ave., in Park Ridge, according to a law enforcement source. Two masked men displayed guns and robbed the victim before escaping in the

SUV, Arlington Cardinal reported.

Chicago police recovered at least one handgun and two phones, possibly ditched by the suspects, were found in Lake Shore Park after the foot pursuits ended.

On March 10, Des Plaines police said armed men robbed four people in three separate holdups in the Rivers Casino parking lot just before 8 p.m. Two of the victims were pistol-whipped during the crimes.

Ten minutes later, the same group robbed another victim on the same Mariano's parking lot where last night's holdup occurred, officials said.

About 30 minutes after the March 10 robberies ended in the suburbs, eight men were robbed during two holdups in the West Loop by a group of armed men who escaped in a red SUV similar to the one used in the Des Plaines and Park Ridge crimes.

Charges against the four people are still pending.

## Lincoln Park aldermanic candidates debate ... both say to stay off the Blue Line

BY RONALD ROENIGK

Perhaps the most stark moment of the March 20, 43rd Ward debate between Ald. Timmy Knudsen and Brian Comer at Lincoln Park High School was when moderator Mary Ann Ahern asked the two if they would recommend to a visiting friend that "they take the CTA's Blue Line into the city from O'Hare?"

Both Knudsen and Comer, who will face off in the April 4 runoff, said "no."

Both candidates also commended mayoral candidate Paul Vallas' public safety plan, while critiquing each other's bonafides as a crime fighter.

Both also ignored the reality that the biggest part of Chicago's current crime problem does not necessarily reside in City Council, as much as it arose from the incompetence and malfeasance of Mayor Lori Lightfoot, and from the woke, cop-hating culture within Cook County governance. It is a culture that has earned Chicago a nation-wide reputation for zero-accountability, a lack of spine to push back, and a dazed expectation by citizens that

rampant criminal behavior will not be punished.

Crime and punishment shows up at the top of every list of campaign polls, and with an election on the horizon, everyone is suddenly eager to come across as a crime fighter.



Ald. Timmy Knudsen



Brian Comer

But there is a perception by voters that those now in power see the criminal class as the real victims in Chicago. This perception is a big part of why Lightfoot lost the primary election, and why so many residents have lost faith in our elected leaders to make good law-and-order decisions.

And while crime is a problem in Lincoln Park, as it is in every

community in Chicago, the 43rd Ward is a community where residents have the resources to hire their own private security, as some residents have already done.

As for the failing CTA train and bus service, Knudsen and Comer both agreed public transportation would be safer with police patrols. Some in Chicago may remember that not long ago CTA police officers traveled and patrolled with police K9's.

Knudsen has served as alderman since August, when he was appointed by Mayor Lightfoot to replace former Ald. Michele Smith, who retired early after representing the 43rd Ward for 11 years. And that selection by Lightfoot may now be an anchor in a city that has broadly rejected Lightfoot's judgement. Comer must have mentioned that connection a half dozen times during the debate. Comer also implied that Knudsen sees the alderman's post as a stepping stone to higher office, and suggested he would not be in the job today had he not befriended

DEBATE see p. 12

## No selfies in the voting booth

Posting voting photos  
on social media is a felony

BY DYLAN SHARKEY

Voters wanting to show their Election Day pride should be careful, sharing a voting-booth selfie on social media is a felony in Illinois.

April 4 is Election Day across Illinois, but be careful not to take a self-portrait in the voting booth unless you are ready to potentially face a felony charge.

Sharing your filled-in ballot on social media is technically a Class 4 felony in Illinois, which comes with a prison sentence of one to three years and a maximum fine of \$25,000. According to the Illinois Election Code, anyone who "knowingly" casts his or her ballot in a way that "can be observed by another person" is breaking the law.

The intent of the law is to deter vote buying by showing the photo of a cast ballot in exchange for cash. But vote buying itself is outlawed, so a felony for photos may be overkill. And there can be First Amendment issues with outlaw-

ing this kind of political speech.

In 2016, a federal judge struck down New Hampshire's ballot selfie ban, deciding in response to vote-buying concerns that the ban was "burning down the house to roast the pig."

From 2015 to 2019, Utah, Nebraska, Colorado, Oklahoma, Oregon, Hawaii and California all passed legislation allowing voters to photograph their ballots, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Sharing ballot pictures can be a motivational tool to get social media users registered for their civic duty.

Illinois came close to overturning its ban in 2017. Before he became Illinois House speaker, Emanuel "Chris" Welch filed a bill that allowed voters to take photos of their ballot as long as they didn't accept any money in exchange. The House passed it overwhelmingly, but the Senate never took a vote.

Until the law changes, Illinoisans who want to express their civic pride are better off sporting an "I Voted" sticker or taking a photo outside their polling place.

## Schemers held liable for \$27 million in failed high-rise investment

Was merely "investing"  
father's money

BY PETER VON BUOL

An attorney representing a group of Chinese investors who had invested \$27 million in a project which had sought to build a 60-story high-rise on the Near North Side, but which had been rejected by the city, filed paperwork March 15 in federal court demanding his clients have immediate access to the non-exempt assets of the defendants, Jeffrey Laytin and Jason Ding.

Assets owned by Laytin and Ding include ReEnergize USA, which owns land and a warehouse in northern Indiana which generates monthly rental income for its property owners.

"It makes consistent monthly distributions to the TD Bank [bank] account of Symmetry Property Development II LLC, which then sends the money to Defendant Laytin and Defendant Ding in the name of his father (Ding is the sole beneficiary and controller of his [Chinese-based] father's account)," wrote Doug Litowitz, one of the attorneys representing the group of Chinese investors.

At one time, Laytin and Ding owned significant parcels of property in Chicago and Hawai'i. While some of these have been lost to foreclosure, during their

recent depositions, the two continue to insist they still hold interests in properties in Hawai'i and Chicago.

"Plaintiffs cannot find any law or fact that vests the defendants with any right to any real estate in Chicago or Hawai'i. Regardless, Ding and Laytin insisted in their depositions that they [still] hold real estate interests in these parcels, and that the equity exceeds their debt. If this is true, then the land does have some value," wrote Litowitz.

Laytin and Ding had paid a \$600,000 fee to a third-party loan facilitator for services which were never rendered. Should that fee be returned, as ordered, Litowitz wrote that his clients are entitled to that money.

The Defendants told the Court that they paid over \$600,000 to facilitate a supposed Middle East loan, which the Special Master found to be a fraud. "As the victims of fraud the Defendants have a claim against the person whom they paid but [who] did not perform. The claims against such third persons are a shoes in action that must be assigned to the Plaintiffs," wrote Litowitz.

Additionally, Litowitz said his clients are entitled to the hundreds of thousands of dollars generated as annual income by the law practice of Jeffrey Laytin, who is a successful intellectual property rights attorney. His clients include

major league sports teams.

"He uses multiple entities to collect these fees, practicing as an LLC, a C-Corporation, and a sole practitioner with a home office and [office] space in Midtown Manhattan," wrote Litowitz, who urged the court to require Laytin to transfer all income from his practice to the Plaintiff Class.

During his deposition, Ding revealed he lives in an office, earns no income in annual salary and only has \$700 in liquid assets.

"Everything he owns, all his leases, cars, and other assets are held in the name of his father [who is an electrical engineer based in China] pursuant to a supposed power of attorney."

Ding's income and property statement show his residence as 1925 N. Fairfield Ave., but the title in that two-flat is held in the name of Ding's mother, Zhiling Pang and it will be sold by a foreclosure auction on March 27. Ding's mother is an 80-year-old woman who lives outside Tianjin, China.

"While the foreclosure sale is expected to wipe out an equity to Ding and his mother, the Plaintiff Class should be assigned any residual rights that remain after senior lenders are paid," wrote Litowitz.

For nearly two years, Laytin and Ding have told Senior U.S.

SCHEMERS see p. 12

## Street sweeping begins April 3

Pay not attention to the snow storm that just passed by, it is finally starting to feel like spring in Chicago. And that means that the Dept. of Streets and Sanitation will soon start cleaning the streets. Sweeping season begins this year on Monday, April 3 and runs through late-November.

The official schedule is not yet available on the Streets and Sanitation website; however, you should keep your eyes open for posted notices on your block to keep from getting ticketed. As always, all areas and times for sweeping are subject to change.

# Postcards from the past remind us of better times, stronger efforts



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

My pal, the erudite attorney Paul Hansen, is a keeper of family history. He monitors the comings and goings of his assorted ancestors and relations. You know, who was who, who wed who, who contributed what to the multi-connected assembly of ancestors. Family by family. Generation after generation. A real Sherlock Holmes of family antiquity. I love his method of keeping track of them all.

His people have been in Chicago for awhile. He knows where they all lived and worked and worshiped. Even at the start of the 20th century they were already well-educated, elegant professional Chicagoans.

Even the Irish. Among the treasured keepsakes he has shared with me are some antique postcards from his collection of family memorabilia. From a huge assortment sent by family members from trips abroad. Especially those who visited Ireland back in the early 1900s. Postage and postscripts included.

I love seeing my favorite Dublin historic haunts back more than 120 years ago. The charming

messages they carry are priceless. The addresses of the receivers are a rich saga themselves. For they tell a tale not just of a family, but the story of the world. The British Empire. And the well-to-do Irish of the West Side of Chicago.

This is history filled with drama and grace. An exact glimpse of Chicago past. Its urban way of everyday life.

Reviewing these postcards recently, I find it is a glimpse I need to see as we face the upcoming mayoral election.

I need reminders of Chicago's ability to survive the unfolding of lost history, and the confidence of our achievements over the unpredictability of time. I need the energy that flows from the positive effects of everyday living in Chicago even in the darkest of times in the past.

We all need to be reminded that no matter how gloomy things may have appeared in our urban struggles, the strength and goodness of Chicagoans always endured.

That's critical whether you are a Paul Vallas follower or a Brandon Johnson fan. Whether you cheered for Princeton or Missouri.

We know how very serious this mayoral election is. We know we must break from the cycle of disasters of our last four years under Calamity Jane Lightfoot, or be further ransacked financially and culturally.

We have endured the frightening realization that we have become the crime center of the nation, and a failing financial urban enterprise. We have watched our city's ruin approach with broken hearts and spirits. Chicago has been scuttled with determination and incompetence. Our out-of-town friends and family saying of their own hometown woes, "at least we're not as bad as Chicago."

I've been political all my life. I grew up thinking everyone was. My grandmother, Nora O'Connor, was a lot like Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, JFK's mother. She turned her children's dinner table into a school for politics and government. You were expected to do your homework and develop

real knowledge about who was who in our nation's government. And how government functioned. Her own father was, after all, the mayor of Boston.

In our house, at the dinner table, we could name all members of the Supreme Court. The leaders of Congress. Both political parties. And who served in each president's cabinet. We had a sturdy knowledge of the political lay of the land. But that was just a start.

Both Mrs. Kennedy and my grandmother expected that all Americans, even children, should be capable of a reasonable awareness of how government functioned in our nation and city.

Sadly that awareness has not been cultivated in younger generations today. Which is why political loyalties are often not shaped and formed by accurate understandings of who presents the most reasoned awareness of solving political dilemmas. Or any intelligent efforts to resolve social conflicts and economic disparities.

Instead we see politics reduced to single issue struggles. Based on race. Or gender. Or sexual orientation. Or the unresolved political anomalies of the past.

Nowhere is that more dangerous than in local municipal elections. There, politics often breeds familiar grudges. And the eternal conflicts of ancient resentments and personal feuds where little room is ever left for reason. Endangering adequate solutions to issues of everyday living.

After exhaustive battles with the outgoing administration, Chicago now needs time to heal and restore itself to strategies to repair the damage that has been done.

Chicago needs a strong executive to heal and lead. A mayor that can hit the ground running with a clear understanding of how our urban government must function and who needs to share in the task.

For me that's Paul Vallas. He is a proven healer. A person of true executive abilities who understands the issues and people.

The mayor must be a proven catalyst for effective change. Free

to implement the tasks to build a secure financial future for Chicago. The mayor must be a person of proven ability to work well with others and inspire a team of effective secondary leadership.

The bitter battles that have been so much a part of the past four years can no longer be allowed to continue. We need more skill and less scowling.

The mayor's office can no longer be a bunker of failed leadership and foul language. Fresh air must be allowed to fill the offices of government with talent and intelligence.

Brandon Johnson's Cook County connections continue to frighten me. His role in Cook County affairs makes me skeptical of his abilities to lead with intelligence and integrity. Cook County government has never been an acceptable proving ground for municipal government. It has never bred effective leaders for Chicago's government. It is too high a risk to contemplate. Those insider ties to Cook County politics make him thoroughly unfit for the freedom he would need to lead as mayor free from the influence of President Preckwinkle and her crowd of snatch and grabbers.

So is his relationship to the Chicago's Teachers Union that now feels its group strength is enough to be the tail wagging the dog. He would be a disaster shackled to that mob. And their newfound greed.

Chicago desperately needs the vision and talents of Vallas. We need his ability to lead effectively from top to bottom. We need his challenge. We need his creative ability for judgment when some-

thing is working and when it is not.

Like postcards from the past we need him to remind us of better times. Stronger efforts. More intelligent actions to show how we can restore the capitol of the American heartland to its creative opportunities for fresh achievement. Deepening trust. Lifting hope. Like a postcard from the edge.

**LAETARE AWARD:** The Univ. of Notre Dame has announced that they will bestow its Laetare Award on Chicagoan **Sister Rosemary Connelly, RSM**, the retired founder



Sister Rosemary Connelly, RSM

of Misericordia Home in West Ridge, a community of care that maximizes potential for persons with mild to profound developmental disabilities. The award is among the most prestigious in the Roman Catholic Church and includes some of the most famous Catholics whose lives have given extraordinary witness to faith.

**LAWDRAGON:** Congratulations to prestigious attorney **Thomas Demetrio**, founding partner at Corboy & Demetrio, on his admission into the Lawdragon Hall of Fame. His



Thomas Demetrio

achievements lift him high in the legal community in true Chicago style.

**ENVISION AWARD:** Chicago

**POSTCARDS** see p. 8

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11 a.m. Solemn Mass  
3:30 p.m. Organ Recital  
4 p.m. Evensong/Benediction
- **Maundy Thursday, April 6**  
7 p.m. Solemn Liturgy
- **Good Friday, April 7**  
Noon Stations of the Cross  
7 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy
- **Holy Saturday, April 8**  
8 p.m. Great Vigil and First Mass of Easter
- **Easter Day, April 9**  
9 a.m. Sung Mass  
11 a.m. Solemn Mass

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# Johnson's Mayoral Campaign accepted \$2,500 donation from Chicago Cultural Center

BY PETER VON BUOL

Mayoral candidate Brandon Johnson on March 23 accepted what seems to be an improper \$2,500 campaign donation from the Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington St. which is a part of the administration of Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot.

No specific name was attached to the donation, however, the landmark Chicago Cultural Center is operated by the city of Chicago's Dept. of Cultural Affairs

and Special Events [DCASE]. If the submitted paperwork is to be believed, that means the donation to Johnson's campaign was paid for by city taxpayers.

Johnson's campaign has been contacted by this newspaper but has not yet responded to questions about the actual source of the campaign contribution and why Johnson's campaign accepted the check.

According to the Illinois Board of Elections, public funds are not to be used to influence anything

on an election ballot. This is covered in the election interference section of the Illinois Election

proposition, or be appropriated for political or campaign purposes to any candidate or political

**According to the Illinois Board of Elections, public funds are not to be used to influence anything on an election ballot. This is covered in the election interference section of the Illinois Election Code [10 ILCS 5/9-25.1].**

Code [10 ILCS 5/9-25.1]. It states that "No public funds shall be used to urge any elector to vote for or against any candidate or

organization."

The Board of Elections representative we talked to cautioned that there is the possibility that

the contribution was recorded inaccurately. That the contributor's employer could be the Chicago Cultural Center, and it was just entered incorrectly. So it's possible such a mistake was made. If that's the case, then the candidate can correct it by filing an amended report.

If the contribution did in fact come from a city agency using public tax dollars, it would be up to the Cook County State's At-

**DONATION** see p. 4

## The Horner Park cash cow

**School, park crashes up in 2022 despite \$84.5M in Chicago speed camera tickets**

BY PATRICK ANDRIESEN AND JON JOSKO  
*Illinois Policy*

Get out those foam #1 hands with the index finger raise high, North Siders, we're number one! The city's speed camera at Horner Park is the number one most profitable in all of Chicago, hauling in over \$4 million in speed camera cash in 2022.

Each Chicago Speed camera averaged \$534,791 in fines last year, but 21 cameras issued over \$1 million in tickets and five topped \$2 million. The top gun was a camera placed at Horner Park, that raised a stunning \$4.14 million in ticket cash for City Hall.

In total, the cameras collected \$84.5 million last year.

Chicago speed cameras were supposed to make parks and schools safer, but crash injuries in school zones more than quadrupled last year as collisions near parks increased around half of monitored sites.

Chicago speed cameras issued 2.56 million tickets to earn that \$84.5 million, sending out more than two citations for each household in America's third-largest city.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot said the cameras were about ensuring safety at parks and schools – not about revenue. But an Illinois Policy Institute investigation showed school zone injuries quadrupled in 2022, while crashes increased at half the park sites with speed cams.

Good for city coffers. Bad for people at parks and schools these cameras were promised to protect.

Lightfoot started issuing \$35



In total, Chicago's speeding cameras collected \$84.5 million last year.

*Image courtesy WLS*

tickets for speeding 6-10 mph over the limit March 1, 2021.

The cameras issued 2.8 million tickets fining drivers \$89 million that year, so both tickets and revenue were down slightly in 2022.

But crashes were up in categories related to the park and school safety issue.

Analysis of Chicago crash data shows traffic fatalities declined from 165 in 2021 to 153 in 2022. But fatalities for both years were higher than before Lightfoot lowered the ticketing threshold and started sending over three times more tickets to drivers. Crashes citywide were down by less than 0.004%.

Vehicle collisions in school zones? They nearly tripled last year. School zone injuries more than quadrupled from the year before.

Crashes near parks also increased or remained unchanged at over half the speed camera locations. Total crashes within 350' of a speed camera near Chicago parks increased in 2022, although there were fewer injuries.

Nebyou Tilahun is a professor of Urban Planning and Policy at the Univ. of Illinois Chicago. He was one of two researchers commissioned by the city to study the equity and efficacy of city traffic cameras – before Lightfoot lowered the speeding threshold.

crashes have markedly increased around cameras."

"In cases where you can see that the cameras are not having the desired effect, the city needs to have some flexibility to review these locations and move cameras. Our report recommended the city conduct crash and speed studies at intersections where the number of collisions increased."

A Freedom of Information Act request to the Chicago Dept. of Transportation showed the city has moved or taken down just six

**Vehicle collisions in school zones? They nearly tripled last year. School zone injuries more than quadrupled from the year before.**

of these 16 ineffective cameras since the report was published.

Tilahun said the report also advised Chicago leaders to conduct speed and crash studies to justify camera placements. He said city leaders were unable to explain how they decided where cameras were to be placed.

"We also recommended an on-

going review of existing cameras, as well as undertaking a closer study to see if speed is an issue prior to deployment of new cameras," Tilahun said.

Total collisions increased around speed camera sites in 2022 as they issued a citation nearly ev-

**CASH** see p. 9

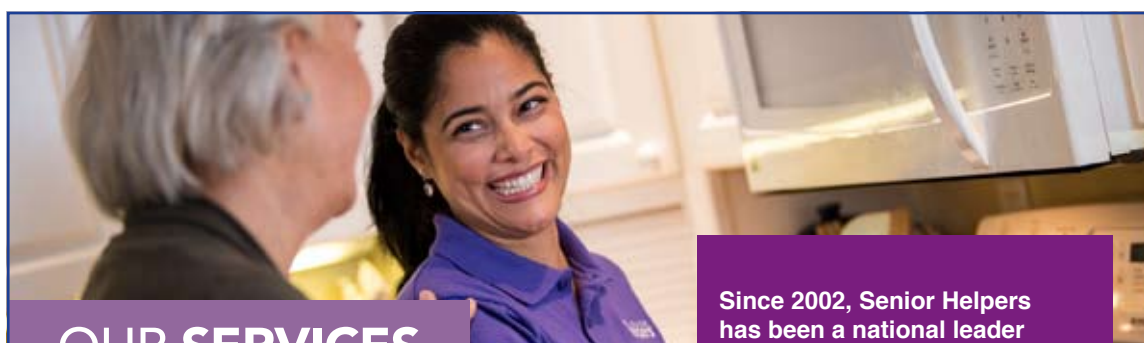
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# Will lakefront experience a revival?

## Video shows potential shoreline protection measures

BY MATT MEDINA

Chicago's North DuSable Lake-shore Drive [NDLSD] is our city's pride and joy. With its multitude of beaches, and magnificent scenic views riding down the historic road, it also comes with much planning and maintenance to keep Chicagons and tourists coming back year after year. Through the city's "Redefine the Drive" Initiative, the NDLSD Shoreline Protection team comes into place, not only looking to preserve the lakefront, but to improve it for future generations.

The NDLSD tests and adds innovative technologies, such as "Revetment Walls" or "Long Beaches," using data and testing that can improve infrastructure against ever-changing climate conditions, while offering an immersive experience for Chicagons looking to enjoy the Lakefront.

The protection team has just re-



(L) The N. Lake Shore Dr. Shoreline Protection team's video helps present ideas on how to enhance Chicago's North Lakefront, and illustrate the potential changes they're considering for the North Lakefront. (R) Revetment Walls create a modern "step by step" off the shore, offering a gradual barrier to guard against water and waves crashing.



leased a video hoping to explain and illustrate some of the options they may suggest along the North Lakefront. The video offers over 20 new visualizations they've created out of their Summer 2022 survey.

As part of the "Redefine the Drive" initiative, the team is looking to add innovative technologies, such as "Revetment Walls" or "Long Beaches," using data and testing that can improve infrastructure against rising and falling lake levels and ever-changing climate conditions, while offering an immersive experience for Chicagons looking to enjoy the Lakefront.

Historically, Chicago's shoreline has faced a plethora of battering over its history. Wind speeds cause waves to overlap directly not only onto the shoreline, but also driving lanes hugging the lake itself. With most of the water intruding between Ohio St. and North Ave. Beaches. This causes

not only a delay hindrance, but a potential safety hazard for joggers, bikers, cars, and maintenance vehicles commonly using the pathways and N. Lake Shore Dr.

Prior to the development of Chicago as a metropolis, Mother Nature provided the shoreline protection with her dunes, wetlands and swamps. Those natural barriers have been replaced by concrete and giant limestone blocks.

Luckily, through the Illinois and Chicago departments of transportation, initiatives have taken hold to improve safety and infrastructure deficiencies along the shoreline many enjoy. Doing so by studying computer physical modeling that can replicate our expected Lake Michigan weather dynamics and lake level cycles. The N. Lake Shore Dr. Project studies data on water depths/levels, weather patterns, and wave frequency/height in order to replicate on a smaller scale for testing.

A Water Basin Study Center was created to duplicate our exact shoreline, with mechanics that can cultivate water conditions against our shore. Gathering data from historic Chicago weather storms, the Water Basin creates actual wave calibrations that simulate the waves and forces of those conditions. The goal is to make sure that their physical model can handle what is expected in terms

of Chicago weather.

Once the conditions are in full simulation, the N. Lake Shore Dr. team can adapt new innovations that can handle the dynamics. The most commonly used innovations include Revetment Walls or Long Beaches. Revetment Walls create a modern "step by step" off the shore, offering a gradual barrier to guard against water and waves crashing. Not only does this idea work to protect the shoreline, but creates a space for people to prop up and relax on the structure when weather permits.

Long Beaches serve two purposes as well, providing much needed leverage against water overlap, while giving beachgoers a convenient place to utilize the lakefront. These ideas have been implemented in Chicago already. With an expanded Oak Street Beach, improvements to North Ave Beach, and a new Revetment Wall and additional parking space near Chicago Ave. The proposed plans also look to further enhance pathways, by intertwining more greenery, park activity, and connectivity and transit. Taking steps to make N. Lake Shore Dr. more sustainable, while adding to its natural beauty with nature and attractions.

The N. Lake Shore Dr. Project is currently in "Level 3" Safety Screening, for 5 different Corridor Building Alternatives at the moment. Cultivating ideas to better the environment and utility

of North Lakefront communities. The project team has held over 70 meetings so far, with individuals, organizations, government agencies, etc. The next public meeting will take place this Fall. That meeting will show the newest Level 3 projects progress in the pipeline, while also gathering input and ideas from the communities they serve for future projects.

For more information visit <https://northdusablelakeshore-drive.org>.

### DONATION from p. 3

torney, the Attorney General or other law enforcement entity to decide whether it is a violation of the statute above that warrants prosecution. The first time any person violates any provision of this Section, that person shall be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor. Upon the second or any subsequent violation of any provision of this Section, the person violating any provision of this Section shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

First opened in 1897 to serve as Chicago's first central library, the Chicago Cultural Center has been described as the "people's palace" due to the uses of rare imported marbles, polished brass, fine hardwoods and mosaics. It is also home to two glass domes, including the world's largest stained glass Tiffany Dome, fully restored in 2008.

After nearly a century as the city's central library, in 1991, it became the Chicago Cultural Center to serve as a comprehensive free cultural venue (the nation's first). It also serves as the city's official reception venue where Chicago mayors have hosted presidents and visiting dignitaries.

Each year, the center presents hundreds of free international, national, regional and local artists, musicians and performers, providing a showcase where the public can enjoy and learn about the arts, a spokesperson from the city's DCASE said.

Campaign finance records indicate the Chicago Cultural Center also "donated" a total of \$3,400 to the campaign of Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. However, those "contributions" were actually refunded deposits for the use of the cultural center as an event venue.

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# Mayors election a classic 'haves vs have-nots'



**The Home Front**  
by Don DeBat

The upcoming mayoral election is likely one of the most important trips to the polls Chicagoans will make in our city's history.

While only 40% or less of the registered voters are expected to vote, some analysts say the April 4 runoff election between Paul Vallas and Brandon Johnson is a classic encounter of the "haves" versus the "have nots."

In his 40 years of government service, Vallas, 69, was director of the Illinois Economic Fiscal Commission, Chicago Revenue Director and Budget Director, so he may be the best Windy City bean counter on the ticket.

From the real-estate, crime and educational points of view, there are strong planks in Vallas' platform to turn around the "City of Big Shoulders" on several fronts:

- In the assessment of the Chicago Tribune, which endorsed Vallas, he is "the candidate best positioned to tackle the city's existential problem of violent crime."

Vallas is endorsed by the Fraternal Order of Police and major building-trade unions. And he recently received the endorsement of Arne Duncan, former U.S. Education Secretary.

- Vallas proposes a "fast-track" plan to "cap" soaring real estate taxes to stop the exodus of homeowners to the suburbs and other cities and states. He out-right rejects Johnson's proposal of a "Mansion Tax" on the sale of homes priced at \$1-million or more. The tax revenue to make the "ultra-rich pay their fair share" would be used to house the homeless, said Johnson, who notes that 35% of North Side families earn \$100,000 a year or more, while half of the West Siders and South Siders make less than \$25,000 a year.

- "The proposed 2023 NASCAR race is offensive," said Vallas. "The event would

close off Grant Park to city residents and a major section of the lakefront thoroughfare. [It] would prohibit traditional recreational purposes for weeks on end in the heart of summer." While NASCAR may be hard to stop in 2023, if elected Vallas says he would cancel the event for 2024 and 2025.

In the area of education—Vallas' great focus and life-long expertise—would:

- Decentralize the board of education, cut bureaucracy, and direct more funds to schools and classrooms. Currently, only 60% of the money homeowners pay for schools actually get to the classrooms. In Cook County, 57.5% of property taxes go to fund public schools.

- Vallas, who served as CPS CEO from 1995 to 2001, argues that CPS test scores have "plummeted" with a mere 6% of Black students meeting state standards in math, and only 11% measuring up in reading. Vallas would extend the school day and year, and give parents 100% choice to send kids to any school of their choosing—public, private or parochial.

He also plans to open schools after hours for community programs and services.

However, both candidates agree the biggest campaign issue is public safety. "Black Chicagoans are far more likely to be the victims of crime, which is why so many voted for Vallas or businessman Willie Wilson, who ran far to Vallas' right on the issue," noted the Tribune in its endorsement.

Thousands of lakefront North Siders voted for Vallas, and so did residents of the Far Northwest and Far Southwest sides. Many of these voters are long-time Chicagoans who are over the age of 45. Constituents that are shocked by Gold Coast riots, looting and city-wide carjackings, want to see expanded and improved police protection.

"Fear of crime is about more than the murder rate in a particular neighborhood. It is about the basic human need for safety and security," noted the Tribune.

Vallas emphasizes that Cook County States Attorney Kim Foxx has not been aggressive in keeping dangerous repeat

criminals off of the streets.

He promises to bring back hundreds of retired police officers to fill staffing shortfalls, plans to move more cops to local beats, and wants to graduate two classes a year from the Police Academy to help fill 1,700 job openings.



(L-R) Brandon Johnson and Paul Vallas.

Vallas also would create a dedicated Transit Unit to provide security on the CTA, replacing the current private security forces.

While Johnson, a self-described Democratic Socialist who is endorsed and primarily funded by the Chicago Teachers Union [CTU], says he will not raise property taxes if elected.

Johnson is proposing a stream of new revenues—mostly new taxes on big business, including a "big business head tax" and higher hotel taxes.

Vallas said Johnson's close ties to the CTU as a paid organizer presents a conflict of interest. He says the city needs fiscal experience, not Socialist rhetoric.

Johnson, 46, is best known as part of

the CTU, who believe that schools will improve when they're fully funded and in neighborhoods with resources. He didn't start teaching until age 31. Later, he landed jobs with the state legislature and the New City YMCA. Within only four years, he traded teaching for CTU organizing.

Johnson, a Cook County Commissioner, wants to invest \$1-billion in social programs bankrolled in part by an \$800-million increase in taxes.

Four business groups—the Chicago-Land Chamber of Commerce, the Illinois Manufacturing Assn., the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Assn. and the Illinois Retail Merchants Assn., oppose tax hikes and back Vallas.

No matter who wins the election, this writer believes hiring more cops and rebuilding the Chicago Police Dept. brick-by-brick is essential.

As for education and employment, who says every kid needs a college degree? Everyone shouldn't aspire to be a computer programmer, or a newspaper reporter. There is a palpable shortage of skilled blue-collar workers in the building and essential trades, such as mechanics and service technicians.

For example, if an inner-city high-school graduate signs up with the 6,000-member Plumbers Local 130's five-year apprenticeship program, here is an outline of wages and benefits:

- In years one through three apprentices work four days as helpers on the job and spend one day in the classroom. The begin-

**ELECTION** see p. 9



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# Police Beat...

**Men who robbed four victims in River North have extensive juvenile backgrounds**



(L) Terrion Jackson, (R) Marques Williams

Two men accused of robbing four victims at gunpoint in River North on March 19 have extensive juvenile records, including allegations of carjacking and gun possession, prosecutors said during a March 21 bond hearing.

Judge Kelly McCarthy ordered Marques Williams and Terrion Jackson, both 18, held without bail at the state's request. Two unidentified 17-year-old boys are also charged with the crimes.

A little after 10 p.m., Chicago police and other law enforcement agencies were tracking a stolen Jeep Compass that Park Ridge police believed was used by a group of robbers who mugged two people outside a Mariano's in their town, officials said. Des Plaines police also believe the Jeep's occupants robbed two men in the parking lot of Rivers Casino the same evening.

Even though police were tracking the Jeep as it traveled through River North, the occupants managed to get out and rob four more people, according to prosecutor Sarah Dale-Schmidt.

When the Jeep reached the 500 block of W. Chicago Ave., its driver made a wide turn and pulled up between four men who were about to enter a parked car, Dale-Schmidt said. Four people hopped out of the Jeep, and each pointed a gun at one of the victims and took their valuables.

The victims noted the Jeep's license plate number as the crew drove away.

Moments later, police stopped the Jeep in the 700 block of N. Michigan Ave. Four people ran from the SUV, and all were caught nearby, according to Dale-Schmidt. Williams allegedly tossed a firearm before cops arrested him, and Jackson dumped some phones, she said. A second gun was found inside the Jeep, which had been stolen earlier Sunday from the 400 block of N. State.

Around the same time, the robbery victims pulled up to a Chicago police officer to report what had happened to them, and they provided the cop with the license plate number they had written down. It matched the Jeep that Williams, Jackson, and the two juveniles ran from, according to Dale-Schmidt.

While neither Jackson nor Wil-

liams has any adult criminal convictions, they do have significant juvenile backgrounds, according to Dale-Schmidt.

Jackson has three pending juvenile cases: one for carjacking and two for illegal gun possession, one from 2022 and the other from 2021.

Williams had an outstanding juvenile arrest warrant from McHenry County and had a pending carjacking case in Chicago. Dale-Schmidt said he was adjudicated delinquent as a juvenile for illegal gun possession in 2019 and again in 2020. He was also found guilty of criminal trespass to a vehicle in 2019.

Assistant Public Defender Catherine Stockslager said both men are expecting children with their girlfriends. They are both unemployed. She said Williams regularly attends church and plans to re-enroll in high school. Jackson is taking GED classes, mentoring youth basketball, and attending church twice a week at St. Sabina Catholic Church, Stockslager said.

Park Ridge and Des Plaines authorities continue to investigate the robberies in their towns. No charges had been filed against Williams or Jackson in connection with those holdups as of March 21.

Both men are charged with four counts of armed robbery with a firearm and criminal trespass to a vehicle. Williams is also charged with aggravated unlawful use of a weapon.

## Lakeview carjacker unwisely drove into law 'n' order Will County, smacked with 22-years

The man who carjacked an Uber driver in Lakeview last year, then told cops who arrested him in Will County that he would "be out by Sunday" will, in fact, not be out for many, many years.

Will County Judge Amy Bertani-Tomczak found Jordan Henry guilty on all 13 counts brought against him, including three counts of aggravated vehicular hijacking, two counts of armed robbery, and more. She handed him a 22-year sentence on March 22.



Jordan Henry

"Henry told detectives he would 'be out by Sunday,'" Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow said in a press release after the sentencing. "He found out that here in Will County, we prosecute crime and take the public's safety seriously. This violent offender will finally be off the streets and in prison where he belongs."

Henry's greatest miscalculation during his Feb. 2022 crime spree may have been to drive the Uber driver's car across the county line into Glasgow's jurisdiction. We were the first to report last year that Glasgow's office had taken the unusual step of prosecuting Henry for crimes that occurred in a different county.

At the time, a spokesperson for the Will County state's attorney's office declined to comment about Henry's matter specifically but did say, "we aggressively charge cases in our jurisdiction and seek appropriate bond. Prosecutors in the Cook County state's attorney's office were not consulted

before Henry was charged with the Lakeview and Lincoln Park crimes in Will County, according to Will County law enforcement source.

The source said last year that Will County officials wanted "to make sure it gets done right," adding, "we like high bails and low crime out here."

Around 11:20 p.m. Feb. 23, 2022, a Henry ordered a 69-year-old Uber driver to get out of his Volkswagen Jetta in the 1800 block of W. Diversey. Illinois State Police troopers spotted the hijacked car in traffic near the Dan Ryan Expy. and 75th St. about an hour later. Henry led troopers on a mile-long pursuit that ended when he crashed into a ditch at I-55 and I-80 in Will County, according to ISP. He got out of the car and ran, but state police dogs ran faster.

ISP canines bit Henry several times before troopers took him into custody, authorities said.

In addition to carjacking the Uber driver, Henry was convicted of trying to carjack and successfully robbing another driver on the 2100 block of N. Clybourn minutes earlier. Bertani-Tomczak also found him guilty of punching Hades, one of the police dogs that brought him into custody.

"Henry had sought to dismiss the action in Will County, arguing that it should be tried in Chicago where the carjacking occurred," Glasgow's press release said. "Judge Bertani-Tomczak denied the motion after the prosecution argued that Henry continued to exert unauthorized control over the stolen Volkswagen Jetta in Will County."

"Henry is a dangerous, violent criminal with a laundry list of prior convictions and current outstanding charges, including a violent aggravated criminal sexual assault that took place while he was out on bond for other charges. In fact, he committed the crimes in this case while out on bond in Cook County in yet another case, involving the possession of a stolen vehicle," Glasgow said.

Henry's parole date has not been determined.

## Five victims robbed at gunpoint, two pistol-whipped

Five people were targeted in three separate armed robberies March 23, according to Chicago police, with incidents reported in Uptown, Lincoln Park, and Noble Square. While the crimes have similar elements, it is unclear if the same group of men is responsible for them.

In Uptown, a 28-year-old man told police he was walking in the 4500 block of N. Hazel when three men approached him around 1 a.m.

They displayed a gun and demanded his property, but the victim tried to slap the gun away, and one of the offenders hit him in the face with the firearm and knocked him to the ground, a police spokesperson said. The group collected the man's cash and phone, then fled the area.

EMS transported the victim to Weiss Hospital in fair condition, the spokesperson said.

About 45 minutes later, three people were robbed as they stood together in the 2600 block of N. Halsted in Lincoln Park. The police spokesperson said a gray sedan, possibly a Ford Focus, pulled up, and four or five men stepped out with guns.

One of the robbers hit a 32-year-old woman in the head with a handgun, according to the police spokesperson, and the group, which also included a 34-year-old man and a 25-year-old woman, handed over their valuables. The crew fled north on Halsted St. in the sedan.

The Chicago Fire Dept. transported the injured woman to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center in good condition, according to police.

Finally, around 4 a.m., a 23-year-old woman was robbed in the 1100 block of N. Milwaukee. She told police a white SUV pulled up near her, and three men got out with handguns. One of them struck her in the hand as they took her valuables. She declined medical attention.

Police did not release suspect descriptions for any of the crimes.

Robbery reports this year are at their highest level since at least 2019, according to the latest Chicago Police Department statistical report. Holdup cases have increased 13% year-over-year and are up 28% compared to 2019.

## Six years for man who robbed CTA passenger of their phone



Nick George

### so he could watch porn

A Chicago man who allegedly robbed a Red Line CTA passenger of their phone so he could watch porn, just two days after being arrested for pleasuring himself while watching schoolchildren arrive for class, has been sentenced to six years.

Nick George, 51, pleaded guilty to robbery, attempted armed robbery, and burglary before Judge James Obbish, according to court records. Obbish sentenced him to six years on each count, to be served concurrently. George also pleaded guilty to misdemeanor public indecency, which was reduced from felony public indecency on school grounds. For that, Obbish gave him a 364-day sentence, with time considered served.

During George's initial bail hearing in Oct. 2021, prosecutor Patrick Ferrell said George rode a bike into an alley on the 200 block of W. Scott and watched students arrive at Franklin Fine Arts Academy about 300 yards away. Video showed George pulling down his pants to fully expose his private areas, and he appeared to masturbate for "several seconds" before pulling his pants up, Ferrell said.

The next day, George allegedly pulled out a box cutter and swung it at a security guard who was escorting him out of the Ritz Carlton Hotel, 160 E. Pearson, because he was eating and drinking merchandise in the gift shop. The guard stepped out of the way and was not injured.

Later, George allegedly snatched a man's phone on the Clark-Division Red Line CTA platform, causing the victim to stumble and fall. When police arrested George a short time later, he admitted to taking the phone to watch porn, according to Ferrell.

George, who was on probation for possessing a stolen motor vehicle in Wisconsin at the time, has two previous convictions for indecent exposure in Pennsylvania.

His six-year sentence will be reduced by 50% for good behavior, and he received credits for 721 days that will be applied toward prison time. His parole date is set for Feb. 21, 2024.

## Man convicted of raping woman he met at Lakeview nightclub; three other cases still pending

A Lakeview man accused of sexually assaulting four women between

2002 and 2017, including three women he met at Chicago bars, has been convicted in one case, court records show.



Gabriel Dathey

sexual assault during the commission of another felony, which carried potentially stiffer sentences. The other cases are still pending, and Dathey's attorney is appealing the conviction.

Dathey was convicted of sexually assaulting a 22-year-old woman in her Roscoe Village apartment after meeting her at Berlin nightclub, 954 W. Belmont, on Feb. 24, 2012.

The woman told police she accepted a couple of drinks from Dathey and recalled receiving a ride home from him, but she remembered little else about what transpired after that—except waking up in her bedroom with Dathey on top of her.

"She told him to stop and said she was sick and vomiting," police officers wrote in a report. "She felt she had been drugged."

Prosecutors charged Dathey in 2017 after receiving the results of sexual assault evidence kits that Chicago police submitted to the state crime lab for analysis years earlier. At the time, officials said he worked as a cab driver.

Days after the assault in Roscoe Village, on March 4, 2012, Dathey met a Finnish au pair at the now-defunct Visions Nightclub at 632 Dearborn, according to police records. The woman reported feeling disoriented but remembered being in a house with three men and having sex with one of them.

"She reported she started crying and said 'no' when he entered the room wanting to have sex," officers wrote.

Cops caught up with Dathey within days of that attack and secured a DNA sample. Prosecutors did not say why the test results took nearly six years to come back.

Another woman allegedly met Dathey outside Berlin nightclub on Aug. 10, 2014. She admitted to being very intoxicated and said she accepted a ride home from Dathey, according to police records. Then 30 years old, she told officers that she was disoriented but believed Dathey sexually assaulted her in his car behind her home in the 2100 block of W. Cortland.

The oldest attack to result in charges against Dathey occurred on the Loyola Univ. campus Sept. 29, 2002.

An 18-year-old woman was walking on school grounds when Dathey approached her and asked her to go with him, police reported at the time. He pulled her to the ground, pulled her jeans and underwear down, and proceeded to assault the woman, police said.

After police arrested Dathey in 2017, prosecutors said he was unable to have sex with the woman, but his DNA was found in a discarded condom.

Even though Dathey was arrested more than five years ago, he only accrued 313 days credit toward his prison sentence because he spent most of that time on bail without electronic monitoring, according to court records. He is scheduled to be paroled on April 28, 2025.

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# Gunmen rob mail carriers in West Rogers Park

BY CWBCHICAGO

Robberies of U.S. Postal Service mail carriers continue to be a problem in Chicago, with at least two more cases reported since March 16. And, like countless postal workers before them, the victims were targeted not for their money or phones but for their work keys.

The latest holdup occurred in West Rogers Park around 2:39 p.m. March 20. Chicago police said a mail carrier had just walked out of a building in the 6400 block of N. Hoyne when a masked gunman confronted him

at the mouth of an alley.

The robber pointed a gun at the mail carrier, demanded his postal service master keys, and then fled in a white Toyota Camry, a CPD spokesperson said.

The “arrow” master key is a US Postal Service universal master key that opens collection boxes, parcel lockers, mailbox panels, and apartment building mailroom boxes.

“Checks, credit cards, PPP loans, and identity theft are the new hustle in urban America,” a law enforcement source told this reporter earlier this year.

The source said that mail

thieves are “part of a larger operation that uses stolen mail to open checking accounts and launder stolen checks,” among other crimes. Stolen mail fuels a massive national identity theft operation, the source said.

Recent incidents across the city provide a glimpse of the scale and complexity of the fraud operation:

Last month, Chicago police and postal inspectors found checks, money orders, stacks of mail, computers, piles of fake identification cards, stolen ID cards, DNA tests, and key-cutting equipment inside a hotel room in the Loop, a CPD

report said.

Two weeks ago, CPD officers allegedly found two forged Postal Service master keys and a trove of W2 forms, checks, and other financial information during a traffic stop in Albany Park. The car’s driver is charged with felonies. And a man who allegedly worked as a “jogger” (the slang term for people who collect bulk mail in theft scams), was charged last month with burglarizing the mailboxes of a Lakeview high-rise 14 times in nine weeks.

## Letters to the Editor

### Voter translation guide

I know many of you have already voted, but for those waiting to cast a ballot on election day, here are some translations of popular campaign slogans and statements, and what they really mean:

If your candidate says, “We will reform the Police”... it means “I will not hire new police officers to replace the ones who retire.”

“We will enforce the Consent Decree”= “The police still can’t chase violent criminals.”

“We will continue to encourage neighborhood development” = “My friends want to open a Marijuana dispensary across the street from your kids school.”

“We will hire more mental health professionals” = “SEIU has thousands of lazy bums to add to the city payrolls.”

“We will continue to protect a woman’s right to choose” = “Unless she wants an education voucher to rescue her family from an under performing, gang infested public school.”

“Housing is a basic human right” = “My contributors want \$50 million in government subsidies to build cookie-cutter high density subsidized housing in your neighborhood.”

“We will provide equity in all the neighborhoods, not just downtown” = “Remember the riots and looting? We’re sending violent crime north.”

“We are moving Chicago forward” = “Buckle up. It’s gonna get a lot worse.”

“I will not raise taxes” = “Taxes are going higher than a Chinese spy balloon.”

“We are gonna invest in public education” = “I’m gonna raise property taxes every year and cut spending on Special Education and give the Chicago Teachers Union another 20% raise.”

Now you know, so go be an informed voter.

Mike Sullivan  
Avondale

Have something on your mind about your community? Write a Letter To The Editor at [insidepublicationschicago@gmail.com](mailto:insidepublicationschicago@gmail.com)

### Radical ideas lack substance

Brandon Johnson presents radical ideas that have little substance behind them. These are initiatives of an activist seeking a populist agenda. Activism does have its place in society but not in the office of the Mayor of Chicago. The position requires experience and knowledge that understands the complexities and operations of large municipal government. Brandon Johnson simply does not have this experience. He previously worked as a teacher, as an organizer for Chicago Teachers Union strikes, and more recently as a Cook County Commissioner.

A Mayor with such a lack of experience would create serious issues. We are at a critical juncture and if we misstep there will be dire circumstances for all stakeholders. Johnson is vague in addressing the funding mechanisms he will use to cover the additional cost of the programs, services and increased school funding he glosses over.

This is a dangerous approach for any political agenda but especially one with minimal experience. Such strategies will have implications that create domino effects in the provision of vital services and capital planning. As these initiatives and funding mechanisms do not take root, the subsequent consequences will be financial setbacks, widespread cuts in programs and services, failing infrastructure, general exodus and government instability.

Johnson takes a page out of the Trump playbook with his finger pointing and “Us versus Them” mindset. We are all in this together and Chicago needs to embrace all ethnic groups, all income levels, and all businesses alike. Johnson’s radical attack on successful individuals, businesses and corporations will force these groups out of the City. There will be a loss in property tax revenue, sales tax revenue, TIF stability, employment and talent. Economic development and investment will become stagnant. Millions in charitable contributions and subsidies that these groups provide to local schools, institutions, cultural activities and other worthwhile causes will diminish. These financial burdens will be passed onto those that remain in the City.

### Math is hard

I read your [March 22] article on the mansion tax, and agree with most of it, particularly the effect it would have on apartment construction.

Obviously it shouldn’t apply to multi-family rental dwellings - the added cost will just serve to jack rents up more.

But your argument is really hurt by the glaring mathematical errors in the article. “The current transfer rate is 10.5% per \$1,000

in sales price, or \$10,500 per \$1 million.”

No, 10.5% would be \$105,000 per \$1 million, which is obviously wrong. Similarly, it says “Under Johnson’s plan, that rate would rise to nearly 13% per \$1,000 of sales price.” The correct figure under Johnson’s plan would be 1.3%, vs. the current 1.05%.

Mark Robbins

### Get off bike and walk around obstruction

I drive and bike in this city. I also recognize the fact that sometimes there is a necessity for a car or truck to pull over in the bike lane for delivery or pick-up if no other parking is available.

Our streets were designed for cars and the late-comer bicyclists who feel they deserve special treatment with their private lanes should put themselves behind the wheel and see the situation from the other side. Where are these vehicles supposed to go? Do they block the entire lane of traffic/alley to make a delivery?

Why is it so difficult to cautiously go around a car/truck that is double parked? It might even require getting off your bike to walk around an obstruction.

What plans do our aldermen Vasquez and Martin have for the drivers and truckers and the di-

minished income of businesses that will be effected by the new legislation and cameras? Where are the responsibilities of the bikers who run lights and stop signs and see little need for helmets?

The city needs to license bikers who ride the streets and require an in-person rules of the road course before a license can be acquired and a license plate prominently displayed on the bike. Then, perhaps, those cameras could also photograph the bike riders who flagrantly break the rules and endanger drivers and pedestrians. Losing someone in a bike accident must be heartbreaking but also heartbreaking is being behind the wheel and never even having seen the person on the bike.

Lorraine Klabunde

Even if tax rates do not increase the current tax revenue received and other financial burdens will remain. This will create an increase in taxpayer liabilities.

Paul Vallas is a much better choice. He has experience and knowledge in all aspects of large municipal government. He amassed these skills in his work as Chicago Budget Director, Superintendent of three of the largest school systems in the nation, special consultant in crisis management situations and as a general consultant in multiple settings. He has the leadership skills to stabilize where we are now, troubleshoot and resolve problems, and incorporate enhancements and long term strategies to move Chicago ahead as a world class city.

Be sure to vote!!

Pat Ryan  
North Center

## 46th Ward aldermanic candidate has \$18,450K IRS lien against her



Angela Clay

Angela Clay, the 46th Ward aldermanic candidate who failed to disclose she operated a company that received nearly \$42,000 in federal COVID-relief funds, has more hiding in her financial record, according to Crain’s Chicago reporter Greg Hinz. She hasn’t informed voters about: an outstanding \$18,450 Internal Revenue Service lien against her.

According to an IRS lien that’s filed with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds’ office, in Sept. 2018 Clay was assessed \$18,450 for unpaid taxes, penalties and interest.

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THE DEAD ONE COMPLICATES

## POSTCARDS from p. 2

goan **Dorothy O'Malley** will be awarded the Envision Unlimited Humanitarian Awards at the Envision Unlimited Bright Futures Ball at the Union League Club of Chicago on April 1. O'Malley is being recognized for decades of work and commitment to improving lives of people with disabilities.

**IRISH FIDDLE:** After playing for **President Joe Biden** at the White House St. Patrick's Party, Irish violinist **Patricia Treacey** (Mrs. **Mark O'Malley**) travelled to New York to meet up with her pal, former President **Bill Clinton**, at a party in his honor thrown by hotelier **John Fitzpatrick**. Clinton is getting ready to go to Ireland for the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Accords.

**THE REAL BOSS:** Was **Bruce Springsteen** playing second fiddle with the warm-up band to Lincoln Park's **Fred Eychaner**, longtime patron of the arts, as the president bestowed 12 honorees with the 2021 National Medal of Arts at the White House?

**AIC VOLUNTEER FOUNDER:** **Josephine Newberger Strauss** has died at 100. The seal of a century. A span of Chicago time in which she exercised the great gifts and values she discovered in a Hyde Park childhood in a gilded family of advantage and enterprising commerce.

Her father **Herman Newberger** founded the Royal Mills that provided lives of careful education and thoughtful generosity. A young World War II nurses aid in Chicago, in 1946 she married **Dr. Jerome Strauss**, following his war work, making the Gold Coast their home.

Josephine Newberger Strauss became a life-member of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1959. And in the early 1960s she and **Evie Barringer** and **Olga Balch** created the AIC's volunteer program launching a dynamic corps of well-educated generous workers that transformed the art museum during its golden growth years.



Patricia Treacey with Bill Clinton.



Ald. Bennett Lawson



Paula Fasseas, Suzie Glickman and Candace Jordan.



Jeff and Stephanie Leese Emrich



Patrick and Dorothy O'Malley.



Barb Bailey, Paul Vallas and Irene Mohica.

The number of volunteers and docents grew to some 800. For more than half a century AIC's volunteers provided the face of sophisticated reference and sturdy art knowledge guiding millions of students, children and adults through one of America's grandest collections. Especially the gold mine of French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists grander than anything outside of Paris. The soulful love of art and civic compassion to share the knowledge gathered over a lifetime is the epitaph of Mrs. Strauss that reaches far beyond the foolishness of AIC to bring such a program to its end in 2022.

**POISON TONGUE:** Who is the caustic lady spreading so much anger and resentment among the social set? Unrest has been brewing over her high school like behavior and cruelty to some of Chicago's finest folk. It's said she's like a jilted cheerleader

trying to ruin the reputations of those of whom she is jealous. Is she heading for a social catastrophe?

**ERIE CAFE:** Word is that **Ron Lenzi's** son, **E.J. Lenzi** will be assuming a larger role in running the Erie St. establishment in the aftermath of his father's death. It's really a family affair and brother's **Larry** and **Ron Jr.**, have their own portion of the farm to work.

**SMARTIES:** Chicago's Whitney Young High School wins 20th straight State Academic Decathlon Title, and are now headed to the national competition.

**BOOKSMART:** Welcome The Understudy Coffee and Books to the neighborhood, finally open at 5531 N. Clark St. Owned and operated by **Adam Todd Crawford** and **Danny Fender**, two passionate theatre artists. Both graduates of the Theatre School at DePaul Univ., the shop is dedicated to fostering discovery, community, and collaboration every day, and stocking books mostly revolving around theater.

**BOOK TALK:** The book "South Side Venus: The Legacy of Margaret Burroughs" depicts the biography and accomplishments of Chicago resident and artist **Margaret Taylor-Burroughs**. In addition to being involved in the influential South Shore Cultural Center, she founded the Ebony Museum of Chicago, which later became the DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center. Books will be available at the first floor circulation desk. This program is in partnership with the Edgewater Branch. It will be the topic of an author talk by **Mary Ann Cain** at 10 a.m. April 10 at the Edgewater Library, 6000 N. Broadway. Margaret founded the Ebony Museum of Chicago, which later became the DuSable Black History Museum and Education Center.

**DREAM AWARD:** Congratulations to Chicago Star Media Associate Publisher, "**Candid**" **Candice Jordan**, who will be the recipient of the "2023 Excellence in Media" award. She will

be honored at the Dream Awards on Saturday, June 10, at the Center for Performing Arts Theater at Governor State Univ.

**GREEK:** The National Hellenic Museum, 333 S. Halsted St., will debut its new works by **HRH Prince Nikolaos** at this year's EXPO Chicago international art fair, April 13-16, at Navy Pier's Festival Hall, 600 E. Grand Ave. Prince Nikolaos will exhibit a collection of photographs printed on Greek marble, combining the beauty of antiquity with the modernity of digital printing in a new method uniquely his own.

**FLORIDALEPRACHAUNS:** **Ken Norgan** spent St. Patrick's Day in sunny Palm Beach with Candace and **Chuck Jordan** and **Jose Conforme** with tasty dinner and drinks at La Goulue, (one of my favorites) and transport on the high speed Brightline train (possibly the best in the U.S.) taking only 70 quick minutes from downtown Miami to West Palm Beach.

**WHO'S WHERE:** Great to see criminal attorney **Hershal J. Rush** with his fabulous children at Erie Cafe for dinner, where they were the best behaved and cutest tiny tots... **Peggy Snorf** to Fort Meyers, FL... **Robert Paddor**, and twin, **Richard Paddor**, at Dolphin Barn, in Jerusalem, for Bread and Spread, tomato salsa, tahini, garlic mousse, olive melange, homemade taramasalata and Tunisian harissa and green schug... **Hector Gustavo Cardenas** and **Marius Morkvenus** in NYC for some birthday cheers... **Jeff and Stephanie Leese Emrich** watching the world pass by in the Empire of Japan... **Todd S. Davies** at O'Hare picking up a wee pooch named "**Cosimo**"... **Joaquin and Jennifer Sutton Brieva** relieved that the "Doc" is now home after being hospitalized for COVID, but keep up prayers for his health... **Corrie Thompson, Lois Dal Santo Harring, Michael Harring and Victoria Harring** on the Grand Canyon's edge... **Peter von Buol** recovering from shoulder surgery, and making his three kids

do the dishes... Maestro **Rich** and **Kathy Daniels** squeezed the family around the St. Joseph table... **Jolanta Ruege** in Scottsdale, AZ... **Bennett Lawson**, new alderman, having a Guinness at Wilde in Andersonville... **Paul Hansen** and **Barb Bailey** treated this columnist to fabulous lunch at Ralph Lauren Bar & Grille... **Cynthia Olson** has returned from San Miguel Allende... **Irene Mohica** and Barb Bailey ran into **Paul Vallas** on the campaign trail at **Joe Perillo's** bash... **Sandy** and **Jack Goggins** doing the Steamboat Spring slopes with grandchildren **Ev, Jack** and **James Gallios**, the Miller's Pub family gang... **Christopher Clinton Conway** in Washington, D.C. running into his pal **Joseph P. Kennedy III**, President Biden's Special Envoy to Northern Ireland... **Whitney Reynolds** to be featured as the April Cover of Lakeshore PBS magazine... Buddy Guy's **Annie Lawlor** with **Windy Lawlor Augustine** at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, catching **Buddy's** show... **Eamonn Cummins, Pennie Taylor**, actor **Mark Moses** and **BJ Murray** brought St. Patrick's festivities to a close in New York City... Congrats to Queen guitarist **Sir Brian May** who has recently been knighted... **Shelley Howard** with longtime friend **Fredda Carol** at table 77, his standby at Luxbar... Christie's man, **Steven Zick** is Worth Avenuing it in Palm Beach... Barb Bailey is going on tour in May, first stop - LA, May 3 at **Herb Alpert's** Vibrato Grill Jazz... **Paula Fasseas, Suzie Glickman** discovering pal Candace Jordan in Palm Beach.

**PALM BEACH:** Palm Beach's Worth Ave. staple Ta-boó facing eviction after 80 years. New owner has new tenant who wants to redo it.

Every individual wants to leave a legacy; to be remembered for something positive they have done for their community.

—Margaret Taylor Burroughs

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**ELECTION** from p. 5

ning wage is \$17.95 an hour for the first six months, and \$19.55 an hour in the second six months. In year two, the apprentice earns \$23.25 an hour, and that wage rises to \$39.60 an hour in year five, plus benefits.

• A journeyman plumber earns \$52.80 an hour, plus benefits, which include health insurance, a comprehensive pension plan, set work hours and overtime rates.

Plumbing-contractor companies currently charge a whopping

\$198 per hour for a service call, including the first 30 minutes of labor, and travel time. After that they bill at \$192 per hour. After hours charges are \$297 for the first 30 minutes of labor, plus travel time, and then \$288 per hour. That's \$72 per every 15 minutes.

In Illinois, plumbers earn more than in any other state in the nation. The average journeyman plumber's annual salary is \$86,120, reports Fieldpulse.com. The average Illinois college professor with a master's degree earns \$61,537, notes Indeed.com.

INSIDE PUBLICATIONS

"As in all union building-trade jobs, you have to pass drug tests and be willing to work really hard," said a recently retired union electrician. "However, at retirement, you can live a comfortable life."

For more housing news, visit [www.dondebat.biz](http://www.dondebat.biz). Don DeBat is co-author of "Escaping Condo Jail," the ultimate survival guide for condominium living. Visit [www.escapingcondojail.com](http://www.escapingcondojail.com).

**CASH** from p. 3

ery 12 seconds.

The data suggests many of these speed cameras either failed to increase safety or made it worse near Chicago's parks and schools. In addition, they disproportionately impacted the city's low-income and minority communities.

The investigation examined Chicago Dept. of Finance data and found 38% of the city's most lucrative speed cameras were on Chicago's South Side. That included two of the \$2 million-plus cameras.

Other studies show similar results.

Tilahun and Sutton's research found speed cameras harmed more low-income and minority residents. Their report concluded the economic burden followed a stark racial pattern, with majority Black and Latino areas receiving a disproportionate number of tickets.

The same conclusion was reached by ProPublica. It found Black and Latino residents historically receive speed and red-light camera tickets at about twice the rate of white residents.

Tilahun and Sutton also found nearly half of tickets received by low-income residents incur late fees and penalties before they are paid, compared to just 17% for upper-income drivers. City data shows 536,136 speed camera tickets, or one-in-five issued last year, incurred a late fee.

These penalties turn a \$35 speeding citation into an \$85 fine. A \$100 speeding violation can cost \$244 if the payment is late.

Tilahun said his main recom-

**A 2017 speed camera study in Great Britain found safety was highly localized around intersections with speed cameras, but the number of collisions away from monitored zones increased.**

mendation to the city was to lower the cost of late fees on camera fines for all Chicagoans.

"Many of the people who are receiving fines tend to be in lower-income areas, so there's more difficulty paying off tickets to begin with," Tilahun said. "If you couldn't pay the first \$100 fine, you're less likely to be able to pay the late fee and that's part of the issue. But if you are a higher-income person you could just pay the fine and not have to worry about the fee."

"When people don't adhere to the rules, they have to pay, and that's fine," Tilahun said. "But we need to adjust the fees so people are able to pay these tickets and not have the financial impact spill over into other parts of their lives."

Chicago's Clear Path Relief program introduced by Lightfoot reduced speed camera fines by half for low-income Chicagoans for one year after enrolling in the program – if paid on time. Lightfoot also delayed the accrual of late fees for enrolled drivers until Dec. 31, 2023, when the temporary relief expires.

But few residents are using the program: just 0.52% of speed

camera fines in 2022.

Even as Lightfoot touted her stricter standards as imperative to "keep communities safe," the city has failed to produce any reports specifically studying her lower limit that show the lucrative policy is improving safety.

A 2017 speed camera study in Great Britain found safety was highly localized around intersections with speed cameras, but the number of collisions away from monitored zones increased. Drivers abruptly slowed down to avoid fines, then quickly sped up after passing the surveilled intersections.

An Arizona study found no effect on collisions from the cameras.

Lightfoot campaigned for mayor on the promise of reforming Chicago's addiction to nickel-and-diming low-income and minority residents. But she repeatedly discussed the money when talk of her 6-10 mph ticket policy surfaced: Lightfoot told the Chicago Sun-Times in July 2022 she was confident aldermen would keep her policy rather than create an \$80-million budget hole. She said repealing the policy would lead to a property tax hike.

While pursuing her failed bid for re-election, Lightfoot also said, "Any candidate for mayor who tells you that they support raising the speed camera ticketing threshold is also telling you that they support raising the number of pedestrian injuries and fatalities near schools and parks."

None of the other eight mayoral primary candidates supported her lower-speed ticketing policy. Neither does the 2022 camera data.



"Funtime Unicorn" comes to Navy Pier

Navy Pier will host artist Derrick Adams' Funtime Unicorn beginning Thursday, April 13, in Polk Bros Park, with four sculptures in the public installation at the Pier.

Presented along with EXPO Chicago, April 13-16, Funtime Unicorn is a continuation of Adams' focus on play and leisure in the Black community. Funtime brings to life the play unicorn imagery Adams is known for, with the real-life experiences his paintings encapsulate. The installation is part of EXPO Chicago's annual program which presents public art installations from artists along the lakefront and throughout Chi-

cago's neighborhoods.

Each unicorn sculpture is an example of Adams' work, recontextualized to depict leisure in an unprecedented way. The series presents people in various states of rest and play. Seated atop colorful unicorn rides or candy-shaped plastic floaties popularized in recent years.

First unveiled to the public at New York's Rockefeller Center in 2022, visitors to the installation were able to play on Funtime Unicorn, embodying the experience of joy evoked by Adams' paintings. Now guests will be offered the same experience at Navy Pier.

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**Chicago Children's Theatre hosts free event April 1**

Break out of your winter cocoons and bring the kids to Chicago Children's Theatre, 100 S. Racine Ave., to hear Chicago author and entrepreneur Vanessa Rodriguez of Babydolls Boutique read from her new children's book "Chicago Loves Me" Saturday, April 1, 11:30 a.m. and noon.

The pop-up will also offer fun activities and a presentation from The Butterfly Company, an online source for butterflies and insects.

Arts and crafts will be offered by The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show, a live stage adaptation of four all-time favorite children's books by Eric Carle. The show is recommended for all ages. Run time is 60 minutes.

For more information and to register visit [chicagochildrenstheatre.org/event/spring-pop-up-event](http://chicagochildrenstheatre.org/event/spring-pop-up-event).

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**DEBATE** from p. 1

Lori Lightfoot some years back.

While Comer bragged about his Tribune endorsement, Knudsen noted he has earned the endorsement of five former 43rd Ward alderman [Smith, Eisendrath, Oberman, Singer and Bernardini], though many longtime 43rd Ward residents might find the Charles Bernardini and Martin Oberman endorsements a negative.

Oberman was perceived as arrogant, anti-business and disrespectful by many ward residents during his time in office, and he decided to not run for reelection after he chose to support a tax increase which the majority of his ward opposed. While Bernardini was mostly a no-show alderman, leaving his chief of staff to do all the 43rd Ward's heavy lifting. That chief of staff was Vi Daley, who took the post when Bernardini quit after one lousy term as a ghost payroller.

Comer, a consultant, was born and raised in Lincoln Park, and has served five terms as president of the Sheffield Neighborhood Assoc. He may have a better grasp of the institutional history of Lincoln Park, and what it took to turn what was once a scary bad, gang-infested failing neighborhood in the 1970s to one of the best neighborhoods in the city in the 1980s, 90s, and beyond.

Comer's lifetime home was also oddly

zoned out of the 43rd Ward in the last re-mapping. He said it was a political act, and that he had a plan for moving back into the ward if elected.

Knudsen, a lawyer, is young, smart, affable and appears highly motivated to make a career in public service.

The debate was sponsored by the Lincoln Park Alliance, which is an amalgamation of the ward's various community groups. Comer and Knudsen answered questions from Ahern for about 90 minutes over public security, policing, housing, development, taxes, and infrastructure.

The proposed new pot shop at Lincoln and Sheffield avenues - adjacent to Jonquil Park - was a debate flash point, with Comer broadly opposing its location, and Knudsen being ambivalent, saying that the deal wasn't sealed or settled yet.

Also debated was the fate of the Dickens St. Greenway, the area's super high property taxes, landmarking of orange-rated buildings, the fate of the property that once held Royal George Theater, the many empty storefronts on commercial strips, the overall lack of affordable housing in the ward, the need for more police and systemic problems with the CTA.

As for the mayor's race, Comer offered a strong endorsement of Paul Vallas, while Knudsen refused to commit to any mayoral endorsements.

Both said they were OK with the city offering school choice and school vouchers.

Comer reminded the nearly 100 attendees and the hundreds of residents viewing the debate online that "issue one, two and three" in the 43rd Ward requires hiring more cops. If elected, he hopes to create a pilot program with DePaul Univ. that would incentivize recent graduates to join the police force by forgiving a portion of

**As for the mayor's race, Comer offered a strong endorsement of Paul Vallas, while Knudsen refused to commit to any mayoral endorsements.**

their student debt. He would also immediately request more beat officers to patrol around North Avenue Beach, which has become a centerpoint of criminal problems during the summer.

Knudsen said he was already working with the police to ensure there are patrols at the beach, particularly officers on foot and on segways. He also wants to boost security during Lincoln Park ZooLights since the event draws large crowds.

The debate started with Knudsen criticizing Comer, claiming he spread misinformation about crimes committed near Armitage and Cleveland avenues, and

Comer accusing Knudsen of not being on-site when the incident happened. It was a tempest in a teapot moment for the two, in light of the broad assaults criminal thugs have foisted on Chicago's citizens and their Midwestern sensibilities over the last three years. To improve public safety throughout the ward, both candidates suggest bringing back retired police officers to the force and to install more security cameras.

Knudsen, who moved to the ward eight years ago, suggested he was a steady, pragmatic leader, while Comer presents himself as the neighborhood guy, who offers a lifetime of experience in being involved in ward issues big and small.

What was left unspoken is the unique nature of being 43rd Ward Alderman... and whether one can even afford to live in Lincoln Park today on a public servant's salary. And secondly, in having people like Gov. JB Pritzker and Penny Pritzker, President Obama's Secretary of Commerce, as ward residents and constituents, how does an alderman lead and manage a community where perhaps a thousand or more residents may have just as much, or more, clout than the sitting alderman does? Lincoln Park is a community filled to the brim with well-connected political royalty.

**SCHEMERS** from p. 1

District Judge Charles P. Kocoras and U.S. Magistrate Judge Young B. Kim of the Northern District of Illinois they need more time to return the money lent to them by the Chinese investors.

The investors had originally lent the pair their money through the federal EB-5 Visa program. Foreigners participate in this program by making a significant financial

investment in U.S.-based projects and are fast-tracked towards permanent resident status, commonly referred to as obtaining Green Card status.

Each lent \$550,000 to fund construction of what would have been known as Carillon Tower. A total of 89 Chinese real estate investors lent Laytin and Ding a total of \$50 million.

For most of those participating in EB-5 projects, their investment is a substantial

portion of their life's savings and were they to stay in China, that country does not have a Social-Security program.

In the court filing, Litowitz questioned the most recent filing. "Defendants are in no position to ask for delays in collection given the history of this case."

"The Defendants defaulted on their promise to pay the \$27 million dollar Class Settlement Agreement [CSA] due on May 7, 2021; they defaulted on their promise to pay the \$1.65 million in penalties under the CSA by Jan. 13; they defaulted on payment of their consent judgment of \$27.5 million; they delayed this court for a year with stories of a fabricated loan from the Middle East and delayed paying the Special Master until Magistrate Kim threatened sanctions; and they currently owe \$200,000 to each of the plaintiffs' lawyers Glen Dunn and Doug Litowitz," wrote Litowitz.

In his filing, Litowitz questioned the stall tactics and said it has been obvious the pair will continue to do everything possible to not return his clients' money. Laytin and Ding seem to have become confused by even their own record-keeping.

"[The two] simply want to delay collection further, and further, again, and again. But if there is any confusion over which Defendants own which assets in whose name, this is their own fault for setting up a byzantine smokescreen, then they cannot use their own failure to keep adequate business records as a shield" to refund the investors, wrote Litowitz.

After having been ordered to do so in

Sept., Laytin and Ding had appeared to have begun the court-ordered process of paying back their investors. However, by Nov. 11, Laytin and Ding failed to make a court-ordered payment of \$100,000 to their investors. That payment was supposed to have been the first of three consecutive monthly payments of \$100,000 each. On Nov. 10, the pair had sent just \$20,000 (and into an incorrect bank account).

That was yet another stall tactic. Because they had paid a portion of the amount due, the defendants were granted an automatic 10-day grace period to pay the remaining \$80,000 balance of that scheduled payment. However, they failed to meet the Nov. 20 deadline and the plaintiffs then resumed their citation to discover the defendants' assets.

Laytin and Ding owe the remaining sum of \$27 million, as well as any additional charges which may now total hundreds of thousands of dollars.

While the failed tower would have been built by Laytin's New York-based Symmetry Property Development Co., the Chinese investors had lent their money to Laytin and Ding as individuals. Upon receipt of their investors' money, both had signed documents stating they would be held personally responsible, not the corporation.

If built, the tower would have replaced a series of historic 19th century rowhouses at 43-46 E. Superior St. which in 2020 were included in the city's Near North Side Multiple Property Landmark District.



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