

Do all home-purchase contracts need a 'COVID-clause'?

BY DON DEBAT
The Home Front

The world of real estate buying and selling may never be the same after the year of the virus.

Virtually all purchasers now rely on digital photos and videos to tour for-sale properties, both buyers and sellers are required to wear masks during face-to-face negotiations, and closings have become a drive-by affair.

Many brokers are utilizing "curbside closings" which are held at satellite offices and in parking lots of title companies. The home buyer or seller (or both) stays in his or her automobile and a title company messenger carries the closing papers from the office to the car. The party has about 10 minutes to sign the papers and the messenger returns to pick them up and deliver them to the closer.

However, when it comes to signing a contract in the era of COVID-19, many real estate agents now are responding to un-



Related Midwest has secured City Council approval to build these two residential towers at 400 N. Lake Shore Dr. on a site that has sat vacant for 14 years after a 2000'-tall building designed by Santiago Calatrava's failed to be built.

certainly by adding a "COVID clause" to home purchase contracts.

Officially known as a "coronavirus addendum," the clause adds extra security by protecting both sides of the transaction in the event they are impacted by the pandemic.

For example, what happens if

one party loses their job and has to exit the contract before closing? How will the buyer and seller be protected?

A COVID clause also allows for timeline flexibility. A real estate transaction is a complex process that involves many parties,

COVID-CLAUSE see p. 8

Aon Center observatory construction postponed

Property owner 601W Cos. and their partners on a proposed new observatory in the Aon Center, 200 E. Randolph St., have withdrawn plans to move forward with the plan. The \$185 million project may not get underway now until sometime in 2021, hoping to be open sometime in 2023.

The plan called for a glass exterior elevator that would take people to the top of Chicago's third-tallest skyscraper (1,136 feet

tall). The work was previously set to commence this Fall.

Key in the decision to postpone the work was the fact that the appeal of downtown Chicago has been badly damaged due to the riots and looting of May 30-June 1. The twin calamities of the riots and pandemic have further retarded Chicago's tourism and convention business. Local tourism had virtually shut down since March because of city and state

restrictions put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposed Aon Center observatory overlooking the lakefront, downtown and Millennium Park was a big part of the 601W Cos. decision to acquire Aon for \$712 million in 2015. They estimated that the observatory would create \$30 million to \$40 million in annual revenue.

Shared streets bring out families, games and bikers

BY JIM VAIL

Riding my bike east on Leland Ave. toward the lake, I saw families and their children playing in the street.

It had the feel of an everyday block party where little cyclists and children throwing baseballs were the norm, while cars took a back seat.

It is part of the city's new Shared Streets concept which closes the road to through traffic and lets pedestrians and cyclists - of all ages - share the pavement with slow-moving vehicles.

The Chicago Dept. of Transportation [CDOT] implemented the shared street of Leland Ave. in the Lincoln Square/Ravenswood neighborhood after other cities responded to the pandemic with their own traffic-calming meth-

ods. The mayor has encouraged more cafes and restaurants to serve customers outside on sidewalks and closed off some streets temporarily for dining.

The shared section of Leland stretches from the Lincoln Square shopping district to Clark St. There are barriers and orange drums in the middle of the street, similar to what you would see during a block party, that indicate the road is open only to local traffic where people need to park.

The neighborhood greenways are optimized for bicycle and pedestrian travel. Because they employ vehicle traffic calming and/or diversion methods, the city hopes that vehicle traffic will be limited to local traffic only, and are not used for long-distance or direct travel for cars and trucks.

The city has also put up signs

to remind people to adhere to six feet apart social distancing and wear a mask.

"It's not a block party - it's a public health benefit," the sign reads.

People appear to like the arrangement. One said it is easier to social distance because you don't have to only share the sidewalk.

I even had to slow down as I realized I was not sharing the street on my bike with other cars, but people running and playing. So far the alderman's office has reported no injuries from children running and playing in the street.

One way residents have slowed down traffic on neighborhood streets was petitioning their aldermen to put in speed bumps. You see them all over the city, an

STREETS see p. 8



Signs of life are slowly returning to the Lakefront. Photo by James Matusik

City offers new fund for rioting, C-19 damages

The City is now taking applications for "Together Now" funds which will help small businesses and not-for-profits that experienced damages, economic distress and operational losses due to both COVID-19 and damages from the riots and looting that occurred May 29-June 1 and beyond.

Businesses will be eligible for infrastructure grants of up to \$10,000 to repair physical infrastructure damage. Businesses that have experienced at least a 25% revenue loss due to COVID-19 will be eligible for grants of up to \$4,000 to cover operating costs that arose as a result of economic losses experienced due to the pandemic.

The online application will be open to any eligible establishment throughout the City, and it will stay open until Monday, June 29, with grants distributed after the application deadline through a lottery system. The fund is primarily comprised of multiple city-backed funding sources including money from the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund, Adopt-a-Landmark and CARES Act funding, as well as corporate and individual donations.

The fund directly targets small businesses that otherwise may not be able to reopen quickly or at all without additional funding, given the loss of revenue due to the rioting and COVID-19.

Community meeting June 29 for proposed W. Superior pot shop

A public meeting to discuss a proposed Special Use permit for PharmaCann for an Adult-Use Cannabis Dispensary, at 60 W. Superior St. will be held 6 p.m. Monday, June 29. It will be held at Hotel Sofitel, 20 E Chestnut St.

Interested parties can also view the meeting on Zoom or via phone. The Zoom meeting ID is 936 0552 7955; and the password is 171593. The River North Residents Assoc. will co-host the meeting as all applicants for Adult-Use Cannabis Dispensaries are required to hold a community

meeting for the purpose of explaining the proposal and soliciting community input.

Those who wish to attend the meeting in-person must email an RSVP to Katriina McGuire at kmcguire@thompsoncoburn.com. The in-person meeting will conform to social distancing practices.

Phone participants should call 312-626-6799 and entering the meeting ID and password listed above. For more information call 312-580-2326.

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No plans to sample flapjacks in Dubrovnik or Lake Geneva



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

Few pleasures exist on our planet that are as grand or as exhilarating as ice cream. We can all remember the very first moment we tasted it. For me, Harry Truman was president.

In the foggy mix of visions from the past, it is the cooling, sweet flavor of pistachios that make my mind see 20/20. Green and fresh and exotic and unlike all other vittles I had sampled. Ice cream was first and foremost a sensory experience. Not an intellectual concept.

At our house my mother Eileen was devoted to the exotic flavor for which I had no words at first.

My infant body clock measured the intervals between the cool, chilling tastes.

When I sampled my very first Rainbow Cone, I was quick to smack my childish lips at finding the familiar inclusion of pistachio. I understood, early on, my mother's gentle compulsion, asking wherever we were, "Do you have pistachio?" It's why Howard Johnson's was so popular for my family on cross-country drives.

From those early delights to the present, I set my cap for ice cream. It always delights. Never disappoints. Instantly soothing and calming whether after a visit to the dentist, a roller skate collision, home in bed with a cold, or post tonsillectomy. Ice cream has the power to heal. Mend and make whole. It's a realization no one had to explain, we just knew it in our bones. Ice cream always makes life better.

It's essential to connect ourselves to something sweet in life.

Perhaps we have a high tolerance for hard work and duty. We don't always succeed here, but we try. That's the important thing. Trying.

But we try harder when there is something sweet involved. Doesn't always have to be a donut or a cotton candy. Maybe it's a bowl of berries, a new bow tie, a Barbara Pym novel or plate of cheesy scrambled eggs. Or a crunchy croissant. A good reward always makes us try harder, I believe.

I hope that's not just because we're Baby Boomers?

For people long ago, for our parents and grandparents generation, they gave up a lot, as the greatest generation, by their unapologetic patriotism and extravagant self-giving to make the war survivable. Redeemable. Making the world a safe place from fascism.

Their treats were chocolate bars, a piece of gum. Or a Coca-Cola. It's not just because they're sugary. They make good symbols of common values. Shared ways of life. Can we say that about the pandemic? Are there symbols for our common purpose?

We have been separated from almost all important people, unless we are quarantined with our family. We are isolated from the b-side of life. The other sides. Our office, our work site, the place where we are not related to everyone we see.

On the b-side we are often at home with like-minded colleagues. People who look to us to substantiate what's really important. Choosing what ideas work, what plans thrive. No wonder we are at the door in our running shoes, waiting for the happy news that the worst of the pandemic is over. Everyone wants to race to the lakefront. Gather at the parks. Hit back a few at our favorite saloon. Find ourselves a Gibson's steak, a \$1 taco or some chow mien without MSG. Our favorite Chardonnay is calling. That Grey Goose martini already has your name on it. They're dusting off your pew at



A good reward always makes us try harder.

church and you just want to walk down ol' Boul Mich.

But many think this rush to flee the Lockdown is pre-mature. People who trust neither Trump or Boris Johnson. People who know that the crisis at hand is social. But the lesson, in the end, is science.

We all saw the photos from bars and parties across the nation. No masks in sight, no appropriate social distancing in force, no one from the Center for Disease Control on hand. Just folks shoulder to shoulder needing a cold one to tell them they are alive. We don't dispute their restlessness, just their solution to the problem.

Perhaps this is like the second half of "Jaws." You know, when Mayor Larry Vaughan gets everyone to the beaches, without acknowledging the truthfulness of the Great White shark and the righteous fears of Sheriff Martin Brody.

I have no interest in repeating the goings on at Amity Island. But once again, maybe it will take a second tsunami in the pandemic to thin the crowds who ache for a suntan and a brewski in the land of yellow cheese.

Along those lines the European Union is thinking about establishing a "travel bubble" for those from countries with low level Coronavirus deaths. Their tourists would be able to skip the 14-day travel quarantine currently on the books. So they could fill up the outdoor cafés in Slovenia and Slovakia during the second half

of summer. By then there may be sufficient body bags to accommodate all tourists. No one has resolved the issue of travel health insurance, should you fall ill in another country while on holiday.

I wish everyone well. Safe travels and all that. I have no wish to sample flapjacks in Dubrovnik

or Lake Geneva. Or worship with President Trump. I have no plans to make a break. Maybe that's white privilege talking, but I plan to stick it out at home making lobster risotto and homemade potato salad. Remembering that first taste of ice cream, long ago, still sweetening my life. Grateful now for the abundance of fresh gelato now at one of our nearby shops. Mascarpone and berries is one I now cherish. I will attempt more Lockdown in my mask, removing it only for the milk chocolate gelato. Best I ever spooned.

CPD SCUTTLEBUTT: It's on! Just the beginning of a mass exiting of officers, country-wide, from police departments that offer little in return. Your next call to 911 will start with "Your call is very important to us, all operators are busy now..."

SAD NOTE: The recent death of the glorious musician, **James Cebastien**, has left musical Chicago brokenhearted. In declining health, this best friend to

the great voices of Chi-town has gone to God and the angels in the peace and harmony that he always brought to others. Long ago James captured the hearts of entertainers and the entertained. Resident pianist at the Ritz Carlton for 18 years, he enjoyed a very high-profile following there and enjoyed celebrity by his heavy work and musical grace as musical director for such favorites as our divas, **Denise Tomasello** and **Barb Bailey**, whom he cherished, as well as longtime crooner **Russ Goeltenbodd**. This column sends its love and sympathies to each of them on their grief. Chicago is less lyrical in his passing.

BYE BYE TO FAVORITES: Sadly many of Chicago's favorite restaurants, joints and watering holes will not reopen after quarantine. Gold Coast neighbor-



James Cebastien

hood pub Pippin's Tavern is permanently closed, and is stripped of its signage and fixtures at its Rush St. location. The bar first opened in the early 1970s. The Loop's downtown Italian favorite, Trattoria No. 10, is permanently closed after 30 years. Water Tower's Let Us

Entertain You exits after 27 years with the Mag Mile's shopping center's Mity Nice Bar & Grill and Foodlife not reopening. Bucktown's celebrated chef **Mindy Segal** announced April 29 that she'd permanently closed her popular restaurant Mindy's Hot Chocolate on Damen after 15 years. **Bren-**

NO PLANS see p. 6

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A superhero among us at EDGE of Orion



Heart of the 'Hood By Felicia Dechter

East Rogers Park resident Orion Couling is a superhero in more ways than one. Perhaps you've seen him walking around the neighborhood, looking oh-so-cool as Batman, or Spiderman, and picking up trash. "I'm just trying to make people smile," said Couling. "Everyone has been so down during the pandemic."

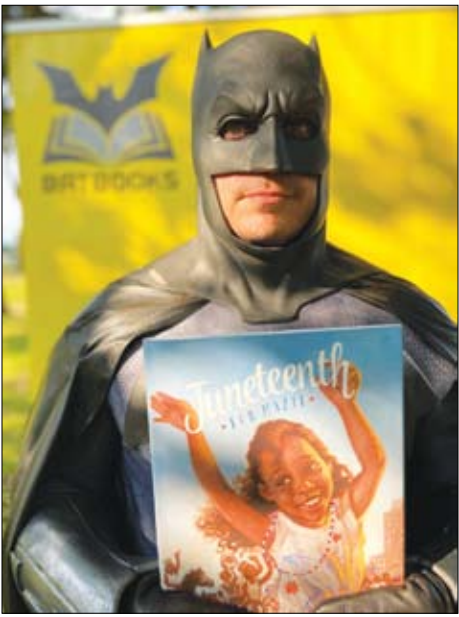
Even though we appreciate that Couling is cleaning up the 'hood in costume, that's only part of what makes him a superhero in our eyes. What really does the trick are his actions through his nonprofit, EDGE of Orion.

EDGE of Orion's acronym stands for "Esteem Development Through Greater Expectations," and using the theatre arts, the organization educates and entertains to foster the tools of social change. Its main goal is developing theatre for differently-abled people and to bring a message of civic and social change through exploration of the theatre arts and project-based learning.

It's through the Constellation Project arm of the nonprofit that Couling, who has a degree in theater, helps put on about 10 "big, huge," productions a year, all across the area, using about 35 actors. The goal is to get neuro-typical and neuro-diverse (Down Syndrome, cognitive disabilities) folks to work side-by-side as peers. Trained staffers create a support system for the performers.

"Physical disability is not the primary focus but we have all sorts, even staff," said Couling, who is an inclusion theater specialist who holds workshops across the country. "We started out with Down Syndrome and really expanded.

"It's just a kick butt thing to see all the different folks working together," added



East Rogers Park resident Orion Couling, aka Batman, reads to kids every Friday night at 5 p.m. on the Facebook page of his Windy City Wondertainment.

Couling, also a choreographer for the Special Olympics. "That's what makes my world go round."

On June 27 and 28, the Constellation Project will live stream "High School Musical," on the Edge of Orion's website. "If you've never seen somebody who is differently-abled lead, you haven't had life," said Couling.

But there's more to this story about what makes Couling a real-life superhero. Besides his garbage picking up, and his nonprofit, he also runs a costume/event company where he hires professional actors and even teachers, Windy City Wondertainment (WCW). WCW specializes in characters from Star Wars, Marvel, DC, Transformers, Harry Potter and more.

For the last 16 weeks, every Friday at 5 p.m. on WCW's Facebook page, Couling has put on Batbooks, a 30-minute program where, dressed as Batman, he reads children's stories for four-to-seven-year-olds. After a brief, dramatic and humorous intro from his "bat cave," Couling begins.

Last Friday's book was called, "June-teenth," a lesson about the day celebrating the emancipation of slaves. Couling also brought up pride month in his introduction and mentioned upcoming readings from a book called "Queer Heroes," while talking about famed gay dancer Alvin Ailey. And even furthering Couling's socially-conscious mission is the fact that if you donate to four social justice charities, WCW will make a private video for your kids.

"We've got to use every tool we have in every way possible," said Couling. "I've got these costumes and I'm going to use them."

He said that after the death of George Floyd, he wanted a hero type character to address what happened. "My Batman persona wanted to address this," Couling said. "I'm dedicated to keeping this dialogue going."

"We try to be a place where kids can feel empowered and ask questions," said Couling. "We can show them we don't have all the answers. But we gotta talk about it and we gotta have a place for kids to screw up asking. I think it's important to have a superhero talk about this."

Superheroes are the reason he named the company Wonder, said Couling. It's the doorway to learning when one is in a state of wonder, he said. "A kid looks out and sees Batman or Spiderman picking up garbage and says, 'Hey, maybe I could do that,'" explained Couling. "Wonder, what a powerful tool that is."

Honor, he said, is also powerful. "I grew up with honor extremely important in my life," said Couling. "We're honor bound by our actions...Go past our words, and do

something with our actions.

"I want to be part of a change," he said. "I want to make a difference."

A taste of Honey... finally I was able to land a table at a restaurant I've wanted to check out since it opened just before the coronavirus hit, Honeybear Café, 7036 N. Clark St. A couple of times last week, family members and I sat outside in the transformed parking lot, which is now a lovely patio with gigantic, sun-shielding umbrellas. The food was excellent both visits, once for breakfast (delish pancakes) and on the second trip the carrot soup was especially yummy. Highly recommended.



After being snatched off of Jarvis Beach and missing for three days, Kevin is now back home safe and sound.

Tongues -- and tails -- are wagging happily... Kevin, a five-pound, sandy-blond Morkie who was stolen last week from Jarvis Beach, was returned. Details of his return are sketchy but rest assured that Kevin is now home, safe and sound.

Talk about a neighborhood coming together! Just about everyone in East Rogers Park had been on the lookout for him. We're so glad that Kevin is back in his owner's arms.



Housing Discrimination is against the law!

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NCR's Fair Housing Program offers outreach and education to all and legal representation to people experiencing discrimination. It investigates possible housing discrimination and assists clients in filing and resolving discrimination complaints to address violations and prevent future discrimination.

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Police Beat...

Parolee charged with firing gun into River North hotel hallway

A man who's on parole for home invasion is now charged with firing a gun into a River North hotel hallway June 19.

Prosecutors charged Kemani Hoskins, 29, with felony armed habitual criminal and felony reckless discharge of a firearm in connection with the incident at the Godfrey Hotel, 127 W. Huron.

During a bond hearing on Sunday, prosecutors said Hoskins and a friend rented two rooms on the hotel's seventh floor to have sex with multiple women and do drugs, including ecstasy.



Kemani Hoskins

Police initially responded to reports of an assault in progress at the hotel around 10 a.m. When officers arrived, they encountered several people running from the building who said there was a shooter on the seventh floor, according to a CPD spokesperson.

Officers went to the floor and found multiple bullet holes in the hallway and two shell casings lying outside room 702, which was allegedly rented to Hoskins.

Cops said they also saw women running between two rooms on the floor and Hoskins walking down the hall with a bag that contained a handgun.

Prosecutors said Hoskins told police he had been inside room 702 when he heard someone drilling on the door. He retrieved a gun and began shooting through the door into the hallway to stop the drilling, according to allegations made in court Sunday.

Officers also found several IDs and "large amounts of drugs" in his room, according to Chicago police.

Hoskins was paroled in Oct. 2018 after serving part of a 10-year sentence he received for home invasion with a dangerous weapon, according to state records. He was also serving a concurrent 10-year term for armed robbery, and another concurrent three-year sentence for aggravated battery of a peace officer.

He previously served time for narcotics distribution and aggravated robbery, records show.

Judge Charles Beach set bail for Hoskins at \$50,000 and ordered him to go onto electronic monitoring if he can post a 10% deposit bond. Beach also ordered Hoskins held without bail on a warrant from the Illinois Department of Corrections, which is considering revocation of his parole.

Lincoln Square convenience store robbed

Police are investigating after a man with a knife robbed a convenience store near the Western Brown Line June 18. No one was injured.

The robber reportedly got away with cash and food items during the hold-up at 7-Eleven, 4631 N. Western in Lincoln Square.

Police said the man entered the store around 1:25 a.m. and demanded money from the cashier while presenting a knife. The clerk opened the register and the robber took the cash before fleeing, according to a CPD statement.

A witness told police the robber walked south on Western and then east on Wilson Ave. The suspect was described as a black male who stands about 5'-4" tall. He wore a hat and a dark hoodie that has letters on the back. Area 3 detectives are investigating.

Tense moments as bloody, allegedly violent shoplifter wanders Lakeview streets

Chicago police defused a tense situation June 17 as an alleged shoplifter, bleeding profusely from knife wounds and cuts from glass, walked through Boystown's Halsted St. nightlife district while refusing to speak with officers.

The incident ended safely as officers kept their distance and the man walked himself into Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center for treatment.

It all began at 9:37 p.m. when the man allegedly tried to steal merchandise from Jewel-Osco, 3531 N. Broadway, according to Chicago police.

The man became agitated and aggressively approached a store employee who stopped him near the grocery store's exit, according to CPD spokesperson Kellie Bartoli. He shoved a 20-year-old woman who tried to intervene and then struck a 42-year-old man in the mouth, Bartoli said.

Police said the male victim then pulled out a pocket knife to defend himself and subsequently cut the alleged shoplifter during a physical altercation. The alleged thief exited the store, broke a plate glass window, climbed back inside the store, and chased several people, according to Bartoli.

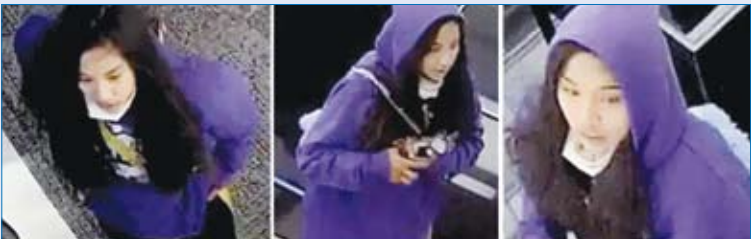
He then punched a 44-year-old man and climbed back out through the broken window.

Police officers found the man, shirtless and bleeding heavily, as he walked south on Halsted from Addison a few minutes later. He repeatedly ignored offers of help from police, who grew concerned that the incident may escalate since police would need to detain the man after a victim at the store decided to pursue charges.

Cops trailed the man for almost a mile before he turned west on Wellington Ave. That's when officers realized that he might be walking himself to Masonic for treatment.

"This gentleman is walking to Masonic," an officer said on police radio. "Notify their security."

Outside the hospital emergency bay, the man turned and walked through a crowd of onlookers, many of whom were recording the incident with their phones.



Police seeking to identify looting suspect

Talk about bad luck. Out of all of the people who looted and burglarized stores along Chicago's retail corridors during last month's uprising, police are now asking for the public's help in identifying exactly one of them.

Area 3 detectives overnight released surveillance images of a woman who allegedly entered an Oak St. boutique early on May 31 and stole merchandise from inside.

Some of the world's priciest retailers have locations on Oak St., including Buccellati, Tom Ford, Armani, and Dolce & Gabbana.

Police said the woman entered a store on the first block of E. Oak St. at 1:11 a.m. and passed merchandise to

people who were waiting outside.

Oak St. shops were ripped by throngs of looters on the night of May 30 and 31. Cameras captured video of one theft crew crashing a U-Haul truck through the front door of a shop so looters could get inside.

The woman unlucky enough to be singled out for identification by CPD was wearing a purple jacket with black Vans gym shoes that have orange shoelaces, according to CPD's "seeking to identify" bulletin.

Anyone with information about the woman can contact Area 3 detectives at 312-744-8263 regarding case JD-251060.

"Cops handled it very well," said Michael Nixon, who was in the crowd of about 20 people. Police encouraged the bystanders to direct the man into the hospital, Nixon said.

"He was walking around us and we all encouraged him to help himself by going into the hospital."

The man, chest covered with blood, then approached a group of officers across the street and raised his hands. As he got closer, officers backed away and a sergeant raised his own hands.

"We don't want any problems," the sergeant is heard saying on video recorded by Nixon. "We just wanna get you some help."

The man eventually walked up the ramp to an emergency entrance where a hospital worker coaxed him inside.

A few minutes later, the 19th District's watch commander hopped on the radio.

"I want to thank all the units that responded to the call with the individual who is in distress and also an offender," she said. "Excellent display of professionalism... So glad that all the officers are safe and also that our subject is seeking treatment."

Bartoli said the man was treated for multiple lacerations that police believe were sustained when he entered and exited the grocery store through its broken window. He is now in police custody and charges are pending.

Woman mugged while walking in Gold Coast

A woman reported being robbed on Lake Shore Dr. in the Gold Coast June 16, police said. No one is in custody.

The victim, age 29, said a man came up behind her and tried to pull her purse as she crossed the street on the 1400 block of N. Lake Shore Dr. around 10:15 p.m., according to a CPD spokesperson.

Police said the man then struck the woman three times in the back of her head, gained control of her purse, and ran west on Schiller St. The woman, who declined medical attention, ran into a nearby building.

She told police the robber was a black male who stands 5'-5" to 5'-6" tall with short hair who wore a white t-shirt.

Tuesday's mugging is similar to another case that was reported in the neighborhood on June 5.

In the earlier incident, a woman told police that she was robbed by a man who approached her as she walked on the first block of E. Scott at 2:40 p.m. The offender got away with the victim's fanny pack that contained her wallet and other items.

garage's lower level and raped her, Bown said.

An ambulance transported the woman to Northwestern Memorial Hospital for treatment. There, Bown said, the woman again related that the man was armed with a gun, when he physically beat her, and then raped her.

Area 3 detectives are reviewing security video, Bown said.

Some footage showed a man running in the area at the time of the incident. He was wearing a baseball cap, a light blue hoodie, dark blue jeans with rips on the front, and white gym shoes.

Man shot at party in Lincoln Park apartment building

A man is in good condition after being shot three times at a party in a Lincoln Park apartment building June 20, police said. No one is in custody.

Police responded to the mid-rise building at 2738 N. Pine Grove to help the fire department with people trapped on an elevator at the top floor around 2:20 a.m., according to dispatch records.

Everyone was out of the elevator by the time police arrived, but cops found a handgun and soon encountered a 24-year-old man who had gunshot wounds to his cheek, right arm, and right leg.

Another party-goer drove the victim to nearby St. Joseph Hospital. He was later transferred to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center.

Family members told officers that the man was shot while on the building's rooftop deck, according to a police report. Officially, CPD said only that the victim was attending a party when an unknown man approached him and began shooting. Investigators found nine shell casings spread between the 14th floor and an area that leads from that floor to the roof.

The victim has had previous contact with police, according to the department. Area 3 detectives are investigating.

This shooting is not the first gun-related incident on the building's rooftop. In Feb. 2016, a man was arrested after he fired a handgun from the top of the building. Video from a rooftop camera helped police identify 27-year-old Peter Vitale, who later pleaded guilty to aggravated discharge of a firearm.

Woman stabbed in Loop hotel lobby

A woman is in fair condition with multiple stab wounds following a fight inside a Loop hotel lobby June 22, police said. No one is in custody.

The victim, age 30, was stabbed repeatedly by another woman during a fight around 2:13 a.m. Monday inside the Swissotel, 323 E. Wacker, according to a CPD statement. The offender left the scene on foot.

Witnesses reported seeing a group of about 20 people outside the hotel and more inside the lobby around the time of the incident.

Police said the victim suffered cuts to her head and arm as well as multiple stab wounds to her back. The woman does not have any history of contact with Chicago police, officials said.

An ambulance transported the victim to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in fair condition.

Area 3 detectives are investigating.

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Shutdown fallout spreads for local theater industry

The local live theater and entertainment industry continues to struggle due to the economic shutdown caused by the Coronavirus pandemic and changing trends.

Just about every theater in Chicagoland has cancelled or postponed their shows in response to virus concerns and the economic lockdown. How many can survive and return to the stage once the lockdown is over is a mystery.

Chicago has lost three local theater groups in the last week, and gained one drive-in movie location.

Nationwide, arts and culture organizations have lost an estimated \$4.5 billion, according to a survey of some 11,500 organizations by the group Americans for the Arts.

In Chicago, the biggest of the bunch - Broadway in Chicago - has gone dark for the year, pushing most of their upcoming programming into 2021.

Bye-o iO

Last week Lincoln Park's iO Theater, 1501 N. Kingsbury St., announced they will shut down. Theater owner Charna Halpern told the Chicago Tribune the theater will be put up for sale. Halpern said she has no official closing date yet. The iO has been closed since late March due to the pandemic.

She says that the reasons for the closing are financial; not the recent online cancel campaign aimed at her over alleged racial tensions. Halpern said a looming property tax bill of close to \$100,000 was the immediate burden to remaining viable. She said even if they were able to open, being at half capacity was not going to work.

Halpern claims she had an interested buyer for the building before the pandemic broke out. She told the Tribune that "If it were not for the pandemic I would not be closing. I would be meeting with the protesters."

Mercury not rising

Further north in Lakeview, L. Walter Stearns and his partner Eugene Dizon announced the permanent closure of Mercury Theater, 3745 N. Southport Ave., due to the loss of revenue following the COVID-19 shutdown.

Most recently, Mercury's productions of Shear Madness and Priscilla Queen of the Desert were forced to close prematurely in March due to the pandemic. The theater has maintained an online presence over the past 16 weeks, with video content featuring past performers, the cast of Priscilla Queen of the Desert, and more. Due to the uncertain future in the performing arts and beyond caused by the pandemic, and the incredible financial hardship that has come as a result, the theater will be closing its doors permanently at the end of June.

"A theater is more than bricks and mortar; it is the people, the artists and the audience who call

it home," said Stearns. "Until people are safe, there is no theater."

"We cannot plan for an imaginary future," said Dizon, Mercury's Business Manager, "Closing is painful but necessary."

Mercury Theater Chicago was known for its bright, friendly staff, comfortable surroundings, and first-rate productions. Notable shows include the world premiere of The Man Who Murdered Sherlock Holmes, and the long running hits Avenue Q, Spamalot, and Little Shop of Horrors.

In 2018 Mercury unveiled its largest capital improvement, the Venus Cabaret Theater, an adjoining space that once housed Cullen's Bar & Grill.

"A theater is more than bricks and mortar; it is the people, the artists and the audience who call it home," said L. Walter Stearns. "Until people are safe, there is no theater."

The building that houses the Mercury, opened in 1912 as a silent film nickelodeon called the Blaine Theater, is named after former Senator and Secretary of State James G. Blaine. Around 1928 the popularity of "talkies" was on the rise, and the Blaine had become obsolete, so the much larger movie palace, the New Blaine Theater was built, shortly after re-named the Music Box Theater, which is still in operation today a few doors down from the Mercury.

The fate of that building is now in question as it sits in the center of a highly desirable residential and commercial district.

In 1994, veteran Chicago theater producer Michael Cullen organized the purchase and renovation of the building, re-dubbing it the Mercury Theater after Orson Welles' famous troupe of War of the Worlds fame. This four city-lot facility will now go dark until its next incarnation is determined.

Steep drop

Meanwhile in Edgewater, on June 17 Steep Theatre Co. announced it is losing its longtime

home at 1115 W. Berwyn St. The vintage brick building that houses the theater was sold about two weeks ago according to director Kate Piatt-Eckert. The building is expected to be redeveloped.

Steep Theatre Co.'s current lease expires at the end of September and any possible extension would not allow performances to resume, post-coronavirus shutdown. They hope to reopen some day at another Edgewater location.

Steep put on its first show in 2001 and moved to this location in 2008. The theater, which recently went Equity, was a quintessential Chicago storefront theater; the building had previously been a grocery store. Steep had recently made a number of improvements to the space, including in 2018 expanding into a new cabaret space nextdoor in a room they dubbed "The Boxcar."

Steep experienced profound growth since 2008, often selling out quickly and operating at capacity.

No laughs

In February, ComedySportz Chicago, 929 W. Belmont Ave., canceled all their shows for the foreseeable future due to the Illinois stay-at-home policy and the Coronavirus. Without being able to open their doors their income dissolved. They plan to reassess their future at a later date.

Drive-in opens

There is some good news for one theater group this summer. Sterling Bay will be partnering with Lincoln Square-based Davis Theater and the Lincoln Park-based cinema arts non-profit Facets to launch a new drive-in at Lincoln yards.

This movie series will take place at 1684 N. Throop St. along the North Branch of the Chicago River. They will show one modern classic movie every Thursday through Sunday night; starting at 8:30 pm. Audio for the movie will be available through AM radios.

The series starts with a showing of Ferris Bueller's Day Off, followed by a full line-up of summer programming, including the Chicago classic "The Blues Brothers."

Lakeview Township tax appeals open

Lake View Township is now open for property assessment appeals through the Cook County Assessor's Office. The assessment of your home's value is one of the most important factors in determining how much you will pay in property taxes. Appealing your valuation can potentially lower your taxes.

The appeals period is open until Monday, July 20. File an appeal at www.cookcountyassessor.com/online-appeals. For more information or assistance, call Cook

County Commissioner Bridget Gainer at 312-603-4210. Lakeview Township is roughly bounded by Armitage Ave. to the south, Devon Ave. to the north, the lake on the east and Western Ave. and the Chicago River on the west.

Second Installment property tax bills are available online at www.cookcountytreasurer.com. Tax bills are still due on Aug. 3, but due to the coronavirus pandemic, no penalties or interest will accrue until after Oct. 1. Any payments made on or before that date will be considered as paid on time.

If you live north of Devon Ave., call Commissioner Larry Suffredin at 847-864-1209.

Chicago Math & Science seeks students

Chicago Math & Science, 7212 N. Clark St., is now accepting applications for 6th and 8th grade for the 2020-21 school year.

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Lincoln Park Zoo reopening June 29

The Lincoln Park Zoo will reopen to the general public on June 29 with limited capacity and strict safety guidelines in place. Zoo members will be able to return to the zoo earlier with members-only access June 26-28.

All visits to Lincoln Park Zoo will be by reservation. The zoo remains a free admission institution and reservations will not include a fee. Reservations can be made by calling 312-742-2000.

Reservations can be made every hour, on the hour from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Guests are requested to keep their zoo visit to approximately two hours so as

not to exceed capacity.

Guests who are medically able will be required to wear a face covering. There will be restricted access at high touch points, and increased hand-washing stations and sanitation.

The East Gate and West Gate entrances will be open to the public but all other gates will be closed to help with traffic flow.

Guests will be directed through the zoo via one-way paths to facilitate social distancing. Outdoor exhibits will be visible but indoor habitats will remain closed until further notice.



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Parking Pass enforcement begins July 16

Motorists have received a grace period through July 15 to purchase residents-only parking permits, city stickers and renew license plates, but that grace period is over. Permit Parking enforcement begins again on July 16.

Contact the Chicago City Clerk's office, your local alderman, or visit a currency exchange to order your permit parking and city sticker.

Chicago Women's Caucus supply drive

Those who would like to support other Chicago residents throughout this time can contact the Women's Caucus of City Council which is hosting a supply drive to support families who have limited access to formula, diapers, wipes, and more.

Financial contributions can be made via Paypal: bit.ly/W2WDonate. To request a Care Package at bit.ly/w2wdrive or by texting 312-869-9793.

Orr is guest speaker for next AARP meeting

The guest speaker for the 12:30 p.m. July 7 North Side AARP meeting is David Orr, who will be talking about voter education and the importance of voting.

Orr served as Cook County Clerk from 1990 to 2018.

Pre-registration is required, and those interested in participating in the online meeting may write to northsideaarpcommunitygroup@gmail.com.

COVID-CLAUSE from p. 1

and now, more than ever, delays can occur.

Delays can take place in the lending and appraisal process, during home inspections, while required repairs are made and at the closing, experts say.

So, buyers and sellers need to discuss any addendum with their agent and their real estate lawyer before adding to the contract.

"Every situation is different and needs to be handled as such," warned Hasani Steele, CEO of Chicago-based RE/MAX Premier. "While templates are available, you should not use a cookie-cutter clause."

Mortgage rates hit another record low

On June 18, Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey reported that 30-year fixed-rate mortgages nationwide averaged 3.13%, the lowest level in the survey's history which dates back to 1971.

The benchmark rate plummeted from an average of 3.21% a week earlier. A year ago, the 30-year fixed home loans averaged 3.84%.

This means Chicago home buyers and

families seeking to refinance now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lock in the lowest mortgage interest in nearly five decades.

"While the rebound in the economy is uneven, one segment that is exhibiting strength is the housing market," noted Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's Chief Economist. "Purchase demand activity is up more than 20% from a year ago, the highest since Jan. 2009."

With mortgage rates falling to another record low due to declining inflationary pressures, many would-be home purchasers are in "the buying mood," Khater said.

"However, it likely will be difficult to sustain the momentum in demand," Khater said. "Unsold inventory was at near record lows coming into the pandemic and it has only dropped since then."

Two more projects OK'd

On June 17 the Chicago City Council voted to approve two high density projects on the Near North Side.

Related Midwest has secured City Council approval to build two residential towers on the site that has sat undeveloped for

nearly a decade and a half at 400 N. Lake Shore Dr.

The development will consist of two residential buildings 875' and 765' in height, with approximately 1,100 residential units supported by ground floor commercial and amenity space.

Secondly, the Habitat Co. has secured City Council approval to build a mixed-use tower at 344 N. Canal St. The project will require converting Canal St. vehicular traffic to one-way northbound, and Clinton St. vehicular traffic to one-way southbound.

Rent payments reach 80.8%

On-time apartment rent payments in the U.S. reached 80.8% as of June 6, up from 80.2% a month earlier, reported the National Multifamily Housing Council. The survey covers 11.5 million professionally managed rental units nationwide.

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

STREETS from p. 1

annoyance for cars, as well as emergency crews, but a plus for safety.

The city is planning more shared streets, as well as more bike lanes. The idea that streets are not only for cars hails back to the original concept of an urban city open to all.

CDOT hopes to create at least 14 miles of shared streets on the North and Northwest sides. There are presently no plans to create shared streets on the West or South sides. Other shared streets on the North Side include Argyle St. in Uptown, Glenwood Ave. in Edgewater and Greenview Ave. in Rogers Park.

The city also plans to add 10,000 scooters to the streets, and paint fresh striping on 40 miles of bikeways, compared with the 10 miles that were restriped last year. City Hall says their goal is to make Chicago the

CDOT hopes to create at least 14 miles of shared streets on the North and Northwest sides. Other shared streets on the North Side include Argyle St. in Uptown, Glenwood Ave. in Edgewater and Greenview Ave. in Rogers Park.

most bike-friendly city in America. Their "Streets for Cycling Plan 2020" has identified a 645-mile network of on-street bike-ways that they hope will encourage locals to ride their bikes.

They say they do not plan a third scooter pilot, hoping to get it right this year. One new requirement is that scooters have to be locked to fixed devices at the end of rides, instead of being left in the middle of sidewalks.

Billionaire to the rescue

Billionaire Ken Griffin is giving about \$5 million to help repair storm and water damage along the North Lakefront Trail route. In 2016, Griffin gave \$12 million to create separate paths for pedestrian and bicycle traffic on the busy Lakefront Trail.

The trail, that re-opened on Monday, sustained extensive damage this Spring and Summer due to high lake levels and wave action. The city and Chicago Park District are working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who is also kicking-in \$6 million for protective efforts along the Lakefront Trail to prevent further damage.

Griffin, founder and CEO of the hedge fund Citadel, is giving \$4.75 million. The contribution will go toward repairs and adding further protection measures to battle future storms in the hope that it will strengthen key sections of the shoreline.



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