



Signs of life, pedestrian activity up slightly in Loop

With pedestrian activity off by 65% compared to last year, Chicago Loop Alliance continues to coax more people to return to work – safely, of course.

BY STEVEN DAHLMAN
Loop North News

Slightly more people were walking around in the Loop in late September, but pedestrian activity is still off by 65% compared to last year, according to the organization working to attract people and investment to the Loop.

Chicago Loop Alliance [CLA] says pedestrian activity on State St. during the week of Sept. 20 was up five percent from the week before. Office occupancy and hotel occupancy in the Loop, says the organization, is not getting any worse.

Trying to coax more people to return to work in the Loop, CLA created a “back to work toolkit” intended as a guide for a “smooth and safe return to work.” It includes advice on getting to the Loop, information about businesses that are open, and a business operations report for September.



Pedestrians and vehicles on State St.

Photo by Adam Alexander

“Workers are the lifeblood of the Loop’s storefront economy,” said CLA President/CEO Michael Edwards. “The Loop has 20,000 residents and 370,000 workers during normal times. And what we’re hearing is that people actually really miss the Loop, and they miss the office. For some, coming back downtown to work, even just part of the week, isn’t an option that occurred to them.”

“So we created this toolkit as a way of saying, ‘The Loop is here, companies and building manag-

ers are going above and beyond, and there are safe ways to get downtown.’ We hope to see activity in the Loop continue to trend upward,” Edwards said.

Of its member businesses surveyed, CLA says eight percent are open with all of their employees working onsite, eight percent are open with employees working offsite, and 50% are open with a mix of onsite and offsite staff. Twelve percent of businesses surveyed are temporarily closed.

Even more cases emerge of violent crimes committed by men freed on “affordable bail”

BY CWBCHICAGO

Nearly a year after Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans declared “We haven’t had any horrible incidents occur” under his affordable bail initiative, this newspaper continues to find plenty of cases to dispute his claim.

As Chicago’s homicide rate soared this year, Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx tweeted in July, “the excessive violence of the past two months has been an anomaly.” The following month, August, was among the worst for homicides in Chicago since the 1950s, and subsequent months have also shown substantial increases compared to previous years.

Here are a few more recent examples of people accused of committing violent crimes while free on “affordable bail” for felonies.

Murder on an I-Bond

On July 25, Jazon Stewart-Overall was charged with two felony narcotics counts and carrying a BB gun in the Austin neighborhood. Police said he threw his hands in the air and said, “I just have a BB gun on me,” as they approached him on the street.

He also had three baggies of suspected crack cocaine and 12 baggies of heroin, prosecutors said. Judge Charles Beach released him on his own recognition the next day.

Two months later, on September 30, Stewart-Overall used a real gun to fatally shoot Dalon Russell in the 200 block of North Central, prosecutors said. According to allegations in court records, a woman with Russell “jump[ed] out of the way of the gunfire” to avoid being shot.

Stewart-Overall, 19, is now charged with first-degree murder and attempted murder. He’s being held without bail.

Murder on monitoring

Henry Hughes, 26, was charged with felony aggravated battery of a child causing great bodily harm and felony domestic battery causing harm with prior convictions on January 28. Prosecutors said he beat a 7-year-old girl in her face and body with a belt. Judge Arthur Willis set bail at \$2,000 and released him on GPS electronic monitoring.

He was still on electronic monitoring three months later when he shot and killed 25-year-old Mi-

chael Upshaw in the 2100 block of S. Central Park, prosecutors said. He’s now being held without bail.

When Cook County Chief Judge Timothy Evans calculates the number of people who commit violent crimes while on bail for earlier violent crimes, he does not include domestic violence cases in the math.

Two shot

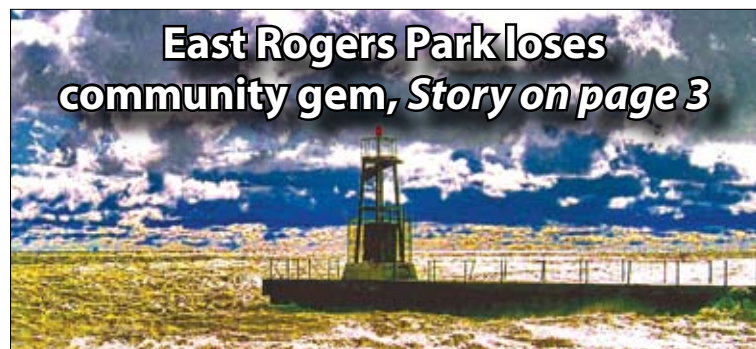
Jamal Sharrieff, 28, was on parole when police allegedly found him carrying a loaded firearm in his hoodie as officers broke up a street party in July 2019. Sharrieff, who cops say is a Mickey Cobra gang member, was charged with unlawful use of a weapon by a felon on parole.

The Illinois Dept. of Corrections revoked his parole, and he headed back to prison for a few weeks. According to court records, when he got out in mid-October, Cook County Judge Dennis Porter allowed him to post just \$300 to go home while awaiting trial in the pending gun case.

On July 25, 2020, Sharrieff lured 19-year-old Annette McKay to a South Side motel where he

BAIL see p. 8

East Rogers Park loses community gem, Story on page 3



Taken June 17, the late John Lamping said of his photo: “The Farwell Beacon at the end of our pier never fails to protect and to warn no matter how stormy and difficult the day or night. Steadfast and reliable it plays no favorites. Always there for every one of us. The Impartial Protector. Though lacking a voice and silent, it is symbolic of what we value and I will keep those thoughts in mind as we move through the year facing one decision after another.”

Property taxes rising thrice the rate of inflation

**Treasurer’s study shows
bills doubling
to \$15.58 billion since 2001**

BY SHEILA SWANN

Cook County Treasurer Maria Pappas released an unprecedented study of property taxes Monday that shows the county’s tax bills virtually doubling over 20 years, an increase that is nearly triple the rise in the cost of living index.

“The Pappas Study” is a painstaking examination of tax bills on Cook County’s 1.7 million parcels of property that shows the increase of total taxes over the past 20 years, and allows taxpayers to see the increases in bills on their homes, businesses and land.

The study is posted on cook-countytreasurer.com with a research tool allowing owners to see “how local governments taxed property and people have paid the tax bill” over two decades, Pappas said.

“This is a sobering reminder of what [property owners] have paid every year going back 20 years,” she said. “In the midst of the pandemic and a recession, local governments should take their foot off the gas pedal and stop raising property taxes.”

While the cost of living has risen just 36% over 20 years, the study finds total taxes billed increased 99%, from \$7.85 billion to \$15.58 billion.

And the study shows that properties located inside city limits are being hit hardest of all. In Chicago, total taxes on residential properties skyrocketed 164%, from \$1.33 billion to \$3.51 billion, whereas Suburban Cook County shows an 87% increase. Total property taxes on commercial properties inside city limits rose 81%, from \$1.92 billion to \$3.48 billion.

“Because the study lets us see what government has done in the past, we might be able to chart a better, less costly future,” Pappas said. “Government cannot just raise taxes and hope for the best.”

Cook County has 2,200 local government agencies, such as school districts, townships, parks, libraries, public health and safety agencies.

The study shows that to a large extent the dramatic rise in property taxes in the last two decades is due to the extremely high cost of government pensions and Chicago Public Schools.

The study shows that to a large extent the dramatic rise in property taxes in the last two decades is due to the extremely high cost of government pensions, and also that Chicago Public Schools are almost entirely dependent on property taxes for their revenue.

The study analyzes total property taxes billed in the county’s 135 cities and villages by those 2,200 agencies.

To see your property tax payment history over 20 years, visit cook-countytreasurer.com.

“Has it been worth it?” Pappas said. “There’s no longer any ignoring that question in a pandemic, not from homeowners who pay the taxes and not from the local officials who raise the taxes.”

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All of us in the same boat and want city saved from crumbling environment



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

WOW! I felt like big-shot syndicated columnist Walter Winchell when I was asked to be the “celebrity” moderator of the Gold Coast Neighborhood Association’s [GCNA] annual meeting.

Total Zoom operation. I needed my columnist’s fedora.

My job was to ask the questions to the alderman, state representatives and senators who represent the Gold Coast neighborhood. For more than 10 years I used to be a Gold Coast resident. On Astor St., that’s pretty swanky.

The present governor was my across-the-street neighbor. He’s still there, I think.

Oprah used to jog down the street.

I lived in what used to be the drawing room and billiard room of the Walter Ossley Mansion. Walnut paneling as far as the eye could see. A stately and elegant time in my life. Many neighbors were household Chicago names. Some neighbors were the descendants of pioneer Chicagoans, with streets and landmarks named for them. Hot and cold running McCormicks, Blairs, Ryersons and Swifts.

The neighborhood was created by Potter Palmer, the hotel king. He built his wife, Bertha, the queen of Chicago society, a Rhine Castle along Lake Shore Dr. Potter put the sand along the water and built the beaches. They may have arrived in Chicago in a covered wagon, but they soon got used to their chauffeured limo.

They enjoyed life in the most

opulent and refined manner. Mrs. Palmer started to collect French Impressionist paintings on her trips to Europe back in the late 1890s. She was at Monet’s home in Giverny.

Most people back in Chicago thought the paintings looked blurry and out of focus. But Mrs. Palmer was the city’s most famous lady and her taste really meant something.

She later donated those paintings to the Art Institute. Her Monet’s are currently the rage at the special exhibition there.

Astor St., the Gold Coast’s most celebrated avenue, has been one of Chicago’s fanciest streets for more than a century. People dressed for dinner there. They had butlers, maids galore, and ate off gold plates.

But it has also always been a neighborhood for quiet, high philanthropy, and civic social responsibility. Potter Palmer V is their great, great grandson. He’s a friend. Quite a chap. Can you even imagine having such a Chicago pedigree?

So the GCNA’s meeting is a big deal. A community organization on steroids. That’s what happens when your neighbors are all CEOs, big time lawyers, hedge fund managers, trust fund debutante’s and influential personalities. And the Cardinal archbishops of Chicago. There’s really no one to impress.

But events of the past year have kind of placed all of us in the same boat. The pedigreed and the less landed gentry. We’ve all been caught between the pandemic and a hard place. Between the looting and pillaging and the local mayhem of Chicago politics. That’s why the GCNA meeting was so important this year. (The group meets just once a year.) President Vern Broder does a great job.

Three separate city wards comprise the area of the Gold Coast, the 2nd, 42nd and 43rd. And in



No one is going to tolerate making a shambles out of the neighborhood any more.

Springfield there are three senate districts and three state districts for the General Assembly. That’s a lot of human bureaucracy. Gathering the elected officials together was no small project.

I was fascinated at the questions that local residents had prepared for me to posit to the elected officials in two half-hour segments of the get together. Locals witnessed in horror, not too long ago, as rioters, on two separate occasions, stormed the high-end shops of Michigan Ave. and Oak St. You know, Gucci, Chanel, Saks Fifth Avenue, Tiffany, Ralph Lauren, Hermes and the rest. With many shops still boarded up, the emotional experience remains alive in this ‘hood. That was the human context for our meeting.

Most questions centered on the practical realities of restoring a sense of well-being to an important residential and commercial neighborhood. No one wanted philosophical or political answers. They demanded pragmatic solutions.

Could this violence return?

Could we see more looting?

Why wasn’t the city prepared for what happened?

We had the police. But no one seemed to know how to responsibly use them. Were their hands tied?

When the mayor and the police are at odds with each other no one wins. Many speculated that election night, Nov. 3, could see violence unleashed, again. And they’re right to be concerned.

Others wondered how the rise in crime across the city, and in the Gold Coast in particular, was being addressed.

Shootings on the upswing on Lake Shore Dr. convenience stores across the neighborhood robbed repeatedly. Citizens attacked and robbed on the street. Carjackings everywhere. All raising alarms for residents.

A lack of protection appeared common to all. And an invasion of the public criminals working their trade in broad daylight seems to be out of control.

It was queried, “Is this the new normal?” (No one wanted to admit that could be true.)

Aldermen Michele Smith [43rd] and Brian Hopkins [2nd] did their best in trying to acknowledge where the city was at with these issues. They certainly shared that they were on the same page as local residents.

Legislators from Springfield, Reps. Yoni Pizer, Lamont Robinson and Kam Buckner, acknowledged that many of these issues are quality of life issues that are best resolved on the local level.

Senators Mattie Hunter and Robert Peters said they are challenged by Chicagoans who want to save the city. Save it from a crumbling environment. Save it from crime. And save it from taxes.

There’s no magic fix. There’s no perfect legislation that can restore order. Only the effective enforcement of existing laws.

Sen. Sara Feigenholtz was demonstrative in her explanation of Illinois’ proposed “Fair Tax,” a result that could assist Chicago at the current critical time of deep financial problems. But all were optimistic for the city and the Gold Coast neighborhood.

Does any of this change anything for the city or the neighborhood? If nothing else its people are forewarned. No one is going to tolerate making a shambles out of the neighborhood any more. People are frightened, angered and expecting solutions.

The ruin of so many local businesses is no longer acceptable. Our city and our state have been served notice that its citizens expect some heavy efforts at reducing the terror and also assistance in sustaining all the restaurants, saloons and hotels that employ so many.

With our meeting and convention business now in shambles that’s a heavy ask.

On the eve of the presidential election many voters are casting their ballots with a view to change and restore confidence on the local level. In the neighborhood. On our streets. At the shops we pa-

SAME BOAT see p. 6

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East Rogers Park loses community gem

John Lamping dead at 78



**Heart
of the
'Hood**

by Felicia Dechter

John Lamping was a man who wore a lot of hats. Not only did he literally have a collection of all types of chapeaux, but he was also a wonderful steward of Loyola Park, a vocal activist in East Rogers Park, an amazing photographer, and someone who truly gave a hoot about the community.

He was also my neighbor for 35 years. Sadly, on Oct. 17, it was discovered that John, 78, had passed away in the lakefront townhouse he'd lived in for decades. The cause of death is still being determined and there will be a memorial in the Spring at the lake or in Loyola Park, said his cousin, Debbie Soriano.

Johnny was an only child, adored by his parents John and Antoinette, said Soriano. He was also "the most educated man in our family," she said.

"He was someone that his fam-

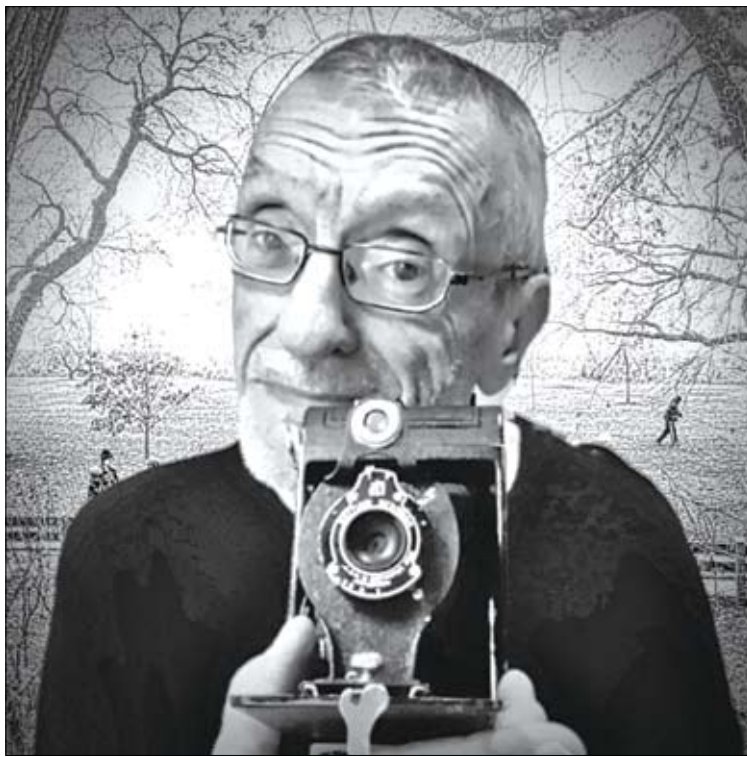
ily was very, very proud of," said Soriano. "He will be missed. It's going to be a lonely planet without him."

Soriano called John's death a "huge shock," and community members and friends felt the same way. The news sent ripples of sadness throughout the neighborhood, and beyond.

"John was brilliant -- probably the only polymath I've ever known," said his friend, Rogers Parker Helen Carlock. "At the same time, he was witty and playful and loved to have fun. When he dined out with friends, he usually brought everyone beads or silly hats or one time it was paste-on mustaches -- twice it was wings for the women. The wings brought quite a few stares at Broadway Cellars."

"John loved hats; he had a collection of more than 100 of all sorts," added Carlock. "John so loved Rogers Park and his beloved Loyola Park, the dunes, and the pier."

John was the historian of Rogers Park, a conservationist of the neighborhood parks and beaches and an activist who tried to keep the politicians and police honest and looking out for the interest of the people and businesses of Rogers Park, said Tom Heineman, a founder of the Greater Eastlake Terrace Park Advisory Council.



John Lamping, who loved being behind the camera. This was taken in May and per John's words: "My favorite 1926 Kodak No. 2 Folding Cartridge Hawkeye - Model C camera. Still takes perfect 'snapshots' and needs no stinkin' batteries. Even after 94 years film is still easily available."

"He was the epitome of a 'Renaissance man,'" said Heineman. "He was an engineer by trade, but knew a lot about the arts, nature and politics."

John was truly a brainy guy and usually -- 99% of the time -- we agreed on neighborhood issues. He graduated from Lane Tech and the Univ. of Chicago

and held master's and law degrees from DePaul Univ. and a Ph.D in Biological Sciences from Northwestern Univ. He spent his entire career at Standard Oil/Amoco and retired not long after Amoco was acquired by BP.

"He was an intellect and wit extraordinaire who could bring out the sunshine on the gray-

est of days," said Mark Radford, a neighbor whose family was a dear friend of John's for almost 40 years.

So many folks wanted to share their tales of John and I apologize for having to cut parts of people's memories. Longtime friend Dr. David Rubin called him, "truly one of the most remarkable individuals I ever met," and recalled John's "wry and silly sense of humor," as well as his knowledge.

"I used to refer to him as the 'University of Lamping,' as he had both the breadth and depth of knowledge on so many topics that astounded me," said Dr. Rubin. "...He would enrich my life with hours of discussions on topics that ranged from the humanities to the sciences."

John was gay, and a devoted supporter of the LGBT community. When I first met him, he was living in his townhouse with his partner, the late Craig Spencer.

Good friend Michael Bjordal recalled how John helped him when his partner -- also named Michael -- was spiraling downward with a fatal cancer brought on by the after effects of the HIV/AIDS drug AZT.

"John raced to my rescue when my Michael was beset by hallucinations and extreme behavior,"

GEM see p. 8



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Police Beat...

Mob viciously beats, robs Red Line passenger who tried to help homeless man



Lijah Graham Jason Jordan

A good Samaritan who tried to help a homeless man who was being harassed by a group of people on the Red Line wound up being viciously beaten and robbed when the pack turned on him during a train ride last week, authorities said.

On Oct. 19, prosecutors presented felony charges against two men who were tracked down by police — both have criminal records, and one has 12 felony and 15 misdemeanor convictions in his background.

Around 11:50 p.m. Oct. 12, a man boarded a northbound Red Line train at 47th Street and saw a group of people “messing with” a homeless man who was sleeping on the other end of the car, prosecutors said. Some of the people were going through the homeless man’s pockets. Others were trying to take off his shoes.

The soon-to-be victim screamed across the car for the group to leave the man alone. He then approached the train’s security call button to summon help.

At that point, prosecutors say Lijah Graham, 43, punched him in the face, causing the victim to fall onto a seat. Jason Jordan, 29, then joined the attack by punching the victim in his head and face repeatedly, authorities said.

The rest of the group then joined in the attack. One of them kicked the victim in his face. The entire crew then surrounded the man and dragged him all the way down the car to where the homeless man was sitting. There, Jordan and Graham began beating the victim repeatedly, striking him all over his body, according to prosecutors.

While the man was being beaten, someone took control of his shoulder bag, which contained a laptop and cash. CTA surveillance cameras at the Roosevelt station allegedly captured footage of Jordan leaving the train with the victim’s bag. Another camera showed Graham walking out of the station with it, the state alleged.

Cameras aboard the train recorded the entire attack, according to prosecutors.

An ambulance transported the victim to Northwestern Memorial Hospital with bruises to his face and head, chipped teeth, and multiple lacerations.

CPD transit officers recognized Jordan and Graham from previous incidents on the train system, and investigators tracked them down. Police said both men admitted to being on the train, punching the victim, and possessing his bag.

Prosecutors charged both men with felony robbery.

Jordan, who has two felony and five misdemeanor convictions, was ordered held without bail on an unrelated warrant. Judge Charles Beach set his bail in the robbery case at \$100,000. If Jordan becomes eligible for release, he’ll need to post a \$10,000 deposit bond and go onto electronic monitoring to get out of jail before trial.

Graham, a 12-time convicted felon with 15 misdemeanor convictions in his past, was ordered held without bail for violating the terms of his release on pending domestic battery and trespassing cases. If he becomes eligible for bail, he’ll need to post \$25,000 of the \$250,000 bail that Beach ordered in the robbery case. Graham will also be required to go onto electronic monitoring, Beach said.

Uptown man stung by sheriff’s Grindr investigation

An Uptown man faces multiple felony charges after allegedly soliciting an undercover Cook County Sheriff’s Police officer who was posing as a 15-year-old boy on Grindr, the gay dating app.

Matthew Baldwin, 51, is charged with attempted aggravated criminal sexual abuse, indecent solicitation of a minor, traveling to meet a minor, and grooming a minor. According to the sheriff’s office, he is being placed on electronic monitoring Saturday after posting a \$15,000 bail bond.

On Sept. 10, Baldwin struck up a conversation with an undercover officer who posed as a boy named “Juan” on Grindr, prosecutors said. After taking their conversation to WhatsApp, the cop allegedly told Baldwin, “I’m 15, not 18.”

“Aw that’s ok Juan,” Baldwin allegedly replied. “I don’t mind that at all. I like younger guys. LOL.”

The officer then sent Baldwin a photo of an approximately 15-year-old boy. Baldwin sent back a photo of himself in a swimsuit, Assistant State’s Attorney James Murphy said during a bond hearing Friday.

Baldwin “sent explicit messages describing sexual activity he wished to engage in with [Juan], suggested that the two meet, and agreed not to tell the boy’s mother,” according to a sheriff’s office statement.

Baldwin and the undercover officer subsequently made several arrangements to meet, but none of them took place.

On Oct. 7, the undercover cop messaged Baldwin, “when I turn 16 I wanna get a car.” One week later, on Wednesday, the two agreed to meet outside the Wilson Red Line station. Baldwin was arrested when he arrived.

rived.

After being advised of his Miranda rights, Baldwin told investigators that he believed “Juan” was a 15-year-old boy, that he knew he shouldn’t be talking with a minor, and that he intended to engage in sexual relations with “Juan” after they met, the sheriff’s office said.

While setting bail conditions for Baldwin, Judge John Lyke ordered him to have no contact with anyone under 18 and to stay off the internet, except to make periodic unemployment filings.

Baldwin has no previous arrests, Murphy said.

River North man sentenced to 54-months, accused of trying to kill girlfriend

A River North man who faced attempted murder charges after prosecutors said he tried to kill his girlfriend by forcing her to consume a large amount of Tylenol has reached a plea deal with prosecutors.

According to court records, Shane Limbacher, 47, agreed to plead guilty to one count of aggravated domestic battery by strangling in exchange for a 54-month sentence. In turn, prosecutors dropped two attempted murder counts along with multiple kidnapping and aggravated battery charges.

Limbacher was accused of grabbing the woman by her throat, tying her to a chair in his downtown apartment, cutting her hair with a knife, and telling her he was going to kill her before he “poured a handful of Tylenol down her throat” in April 2017.

The woman later told investigators that Limbacher may have shoved over 70 pills down her throat, according to court records.

When Limbacher’s attorney tried to secure a reduced bail during the case’s pendency, prosecutors revealed that police arrested Limbacher at O’Hare as he boarded a plane to Kyiv, Ukraine, with a TLC film crew at his side. Deemed a flight risk by the judge, his bail reduction efforts failed.

After receiving the state’s standard 50% sentence reduction for good behavior and credit for time spent in jail while awaiting trial, Limbacher is scheduled to be released from prison on Feb. 24.

Judge Angela Munari Petrone oversaw the case and approved the plea deal.

Weed dealer shot by his own gun during Loop robbery attempt

A pot dealer who’s on parole for carjacking, robbery, and burglary is accused of trying to rob one of his customers of \$100,000 inside a Loop apartment building Oct. 15. As if that’s not bad enough, he wound up getting shot by his own gun.

Prosecutors said a 28-year-old woman and four friends were at her high-rise apartment in the 1000 block of S. State when Fred Clarke, 28, and another woman stopped by to sell some weed around 1:45 p.m.

After making sales to three people in the apartment, Clarke pulled a gun out of his hoodie pocket and pointed it at the woman who lives there while demanding that she give him \$100,000, according to prosecutors.

The woman reportedly began wrestling with Clarke to control the gun as her friends ran out of the apartment to get help. Clarke dragged the woman into her bedroom, where he hit her repeatedly while he held onto the gun and demanded money, prosecutors said.

During the struggle, Clarke’s gun reportedly fired, striking him in his left ring finger. He immediately ran from the building, prosecutors said, but police found him at his Near South

Catalytic converter thieves roll through Lakeview

Chicago’s roving bands of catalytic converter thieves made their way to Lakeview. Most of the witnessed incidents were reported between 4 a.m. and 5:30 a.m., typical prime operating hours for the crews.

Catalytic converter thieves typically use saws to remove the devices from under parked vehicles, then sell them for \$100 to \$200 each at scrapyards. The parts are especially valuable because they contain expensive metals.

This reporter received reports of catalytic converter thefts across Lakeview in the 3800 block of N. Wayne around 5 a.m. on October 8; in the 2000 block of W. Wellington around 5:30 a.m. on Oct. 9; in the 3400 block of N. Racine overnight Oct. 9-10; in the 1200 block of W. School around 4:15 a.m. on Oct. 10, and in the 1400 block of W. Waveland early on Oct. 14.

There is no description available for any of the offenders — but witnesses reported seeing between two and four men operating at each scene.

SUVs are often targeted because their high ground clearance makes it easier to access the undercarriage with a saw. Victims rarely know that their catalytic converter has been stolen until they start their car. That’s when they’ll be startled by a loud, roaring sound of their freshly-unmuffled engine.

Side home a short time later.

Cops summoned an ambulance for Clarke, who was treated and released by doctors at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Prosecutors charged Clarke with attempted robbery, aggravated unlawful restraint, and possession of 100 to 500 grams of cannabis. Judge Susana Ortiz set bail at \$150,000 and ordered Clarke to go onto electronic monitoring if he can post a 10% deposit bond.

But before he can do that, he’ll need to talk with the state parole board. They ordered him held while they consider sending Clarke back to prison for violating the terms of his parole.

State records show he received a 15-year sentence for carjacking in 2011. He was sentenced to concurrent 7-year terms for burglary and robbery at the same time. But, according to the Illinois Dept. of Corrections, Clarke got out of prison on Dec. 2, 2019, after spending 8 years, 7 months behind bars.

More robberies reported in Lakeview, Lincoln Park

Police are investigating at least four more robberies that were reported in Lakeview on Oct. 19-20. A fifth incident in nearby Lincoln Park is also under investigation. The robberies come as hold-ups spike in the area.

Most recently, three offenders knocked a 40-year-old man to the ground, put him in a headlock, and tried to rob him as he walked near his Wrigleyville home. The man was at the intersection of Clifton and Grace streets when the offenders attacked him around 9:40 p.m., according to preliminary information from Chicago police. All three robbers fled in a four-door sedan that may be an Acura.

The crime was reported less than an hour after three men mugged a woman in nearby Boystown. She was close to Cornelia and Fremont streets when three young men robbed her of her purse and then ran toward Addison St. at 8:55 p.m. One of the woman’s credit cards was used at a nearby service station a few minutes later, leading police to believe that the offenders had a car.

Both victims said the robbers were Black males in their mid- to late teens, according to initial CPD information. One of the robbers in the Boystown case stands about 6’-1” tall and weighs about 200 lbs. The other two were described as slimmer and about 5’-7” tall.

Earlier in the day, two women were robbed in under 30 minutes — one in Boystown and the other in Lincoln Park. In both cases, a single offender robbed women of their phones.

Around 11:30 a.m., the offender

ran past a woman and snatched a phone from her hand as she ate at a restaurant’s outdoor dining area in the 2500 block of N. Clark, according to Officer Hector Alfaro, a CPD spokesperson. The woman was not injured.

A short time later, a similarly-described man stole a woman’s phone on the 3400 block of N. Broadway. She also escaped injury.

In those two cases, the suspect was described as a Black male in his 20’s who stands about 6’-2” tall and weighs about 180 pounds. He wore a hoodie that says “BROOKLYN” on the front.

In addition to all of those street robberies, an employee was battered during the robbery of 7-Eleven, 1425 W. Montrose, around 1 a.m. Oct. 20.

North Center bank robbed

A woman robbed the PNC Bank at 4201 N. Lincoln in North Center on Oct. 20. She entered around 5 p.m. and handed a note to the teller in which she demanded money and claimed to have a gun. No weapon was seen, but the note was good enough for her to walk out with an estimated \$2,000 cash.

Police at the bank said the robber is a Black female in her early 20’s who stands about 5’-6” tall. She was wearing a dark green coat with a black face mask.

Auto thief posed as parking lot attendant

A creative auto thief donned a reflective safety vest and posed as a parking lot attendant to steal an unwitting motorist’s car in the Loop on Oct. 21, police said.

Around 8 a.m., a 42-year-old woman drove onto the lot at 901 S. Wabash to park her car. As she entered the lot, a man in a neon reflective vest approached, told her where to park, and instructed her to leave the keys inside her 2008 silver Nissan Armada, CPD spokesperson Kellie Bartoli said.

The woman complied with his instructions and left the lot to conduct some business nearby. You already know what happened when she returned to the lot about an hour later. Her car and the man were long gone.

Bartoli said she described the thief as a Black male who stands about 6-feet tall. He was wearing a black jacket, black pants, black shoes, a blue mask, and the neon vest.

— Compiled by CWBChicago.com

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Another historic record low, rates plunge to 2.8%



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

Borrowing money to fund the purchase or refinance of a home this autumn may never again be this affordable, experts say.

On Oct. 22, home-loan interest rates plummeted to a new historic record low of 2.8% nationwide for 30-year fixed-rate loans—the lowest ever recorded by the Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey, which dates back to 1971.

"Mortgage rates today are on average more than one full percentage point lower than rates over the last five years," noted Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's Chief Economist.

"This means that most low- and moderate-income borrowers who purchased during the last few years stand to benefit by exploring refinancing to lower their monthly payment," Khater said.

The interest-rate low also

means Chicago home buyers now may have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lock in the lowest mortgage interest in 50 years, assuming they have a good job, down-payment cash and a solid credit score.

Average benchmark 30-year fixed-rate mortgages fell to 2.8% for the week ending Oct. 22, down from 2.81% a week earlier. A year ago, the 30-year fixed-rate loan average was 3.75%.

Fifteen-year fixed loans averaged 2.33% on Oct. 22, down from 2.35% a week earlier. A year ago, 15-year fixed loans averaged 3.18%.

The comprehensive Freddie Mac survey focuses on conventional, conforming, fully-amortizing home-purchase loans for borrowers who place down payments of 20% and have excellent credit.

On Oct. 23, Mutual of Omaha Mortgage was quoting a rock bottom 2.843% on 30-year fixed rate loans, and 2.625% on 15-year fixed rate loans, reported Rate-Seeker.com.

Under an aggressive loan program involving pledged money-market funds, Huntington Bank, was quoting 2.2% on a seven-year jumbo adjustable-rate mortgage

(ARM) with 25% down payment, according to mortgage broker Brian Bockholdt.

Before 2020's sharp dip in interest charges, mortgage rates last reached a historical rock bottom on Nov. 21, 2012, when the 30-year fixed mortgage average hit 3.31%, according to Freddie Mac's archives.

Then came 2020—the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 16, home-loan interest rates nationwide skidded to 2.98%—what was then a historic record low. It was the first time in 50 years that home-loan rates fell below 3%, reported Freddie Mac.

Since then, rates have held below 3% for benchmark 30-year-fixed home loans. On Aug. 27, the rate averaged 2.91%, down from 2.99% a week earlier.

To support the economy during the pandemic, the Federal Reserve said it plans to keep interest rates near zero even if inflation exceeds its 2% level.

What this means is borrowing rates for home mortgages, auto loans, and business loans likely will remain ultra-low for years to come.

Mortgage-rate history

Archives of the now-defunct Federal Housing Finance Board show long-term mortgage rates in the 1960s were not much higher than the Great Depression, when lenders were charging 5% on five-year balloon loans.

Five decades ago, between 1963 and 1965 you could get a mortgage at 5.81% to 5.94%. Between 1971 and 1977, the now-defunct Illinois Usury Law held rates in the 7.6%-to-9% range.

In the early 1980s, run-away inflation caused home-loan rates to skyrocket over the moon. According to Freddie Mac, benchmark 30-year mortgage rates peaked at a jaw-dropping 18.45% in Oct. 1981 during that Great Recession.

Rates finally fell below 10% in April 1986, and then bounced in the 9%-to-10% range during the balance of the 1980s. Twenty-one years ago—in Aug. 1999—when many of today's Millennial borrowers were in grammar school, lenders were quoting 8.15% on a 30-year fixed mortgage. Back then, that seemed like a good deal.

However, interest rates began falling gradually over the last decade, sliding to 3.31% on a 30-year fixed mortgage in Nov. 2012.

Then came 2020, which likely will go down in the American housing history book as the "Year of Rock Bottom Rates."

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



An anonymous artist has posted "vote" art in Rogers Park.

Letter to the Editor

Our nation needs you

Democracy requires us to participate in our country's lifeline of well-being with leaders we help to hire utilizing constitutional structure. Our founders required our states to provide common education for all youth to learn how to be a citizen in American democracy.

In the 1950s we had to pass tests in American history, the Constitution and civics in order to get elementary and high school diplomas. We learn to care about each other in our communities when we vote in elections. When immigrants seek citizenship they must also pass tests on this learning.

Our children are watching us. Are we being good, decent citizens to model? Maybe we should study up to refresh? What's happening these days will be the written history that children in the future will ask us - "What did you do then?"

We must continue to do better to get - and sometimes be - the leaders we need for America to survive and thrive in the years ahead. Our nation needs you to vote.

Anita Alcantara, Rogers Park

River clean up moved to Nov. 7

The Friends of the Chicago River have changed their river clean up day to Nov. 7.

Those neighbors who would like to volunteer to help clean

the Chicago River will meet at 9 a.m. at the WMS Boathouse at Clark Park, 3400 N Rockwell St. Cleanup supplies will be provided.

\$10K grants for 120 arts venues

After this year's forced economic lockdown decimated arts institution citywide, the City of Chicago, with support from the Walder Foundation and the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund and in partnership with Accion is now funding the Performing Arts Venue Relief Program which will distribute \$10,000 grants to up to 120 for-profit and nonprofit

performing arts venues to cover lost revenue due to the pandemic lockdown.

Grants will be distributed via a lottery system. The application deadline is 5 p.m. Oct. 23. They will only accept one application per organization, even if the organization has multiple venues. For more information call your local alderman's office.

Office of Inspector General seeks input

City Hall is seeking citizen input regarding concerns about the economy, effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity of City programs and priorities for improvement. They say that those opinions will help inform and prioritize which projects appear on their 2021 Audit Plan.

For more information on proposed projects and reports that

were published in 2020, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PYP7LFF>. The survey will take approximately four minutes to complete and will be open through Nov. 15. The draft plan itself is available at <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/OIG-2021-APR-Draft-Audit-Plan.pdf>.

Rogers Park SBIF funding

Rogers Park business owners will soon be able to apply for funding to improve their facilities. Between Nov. 2 and Dec. 1, the city will accept Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) applications from business owners in Rogers Park. The current round of funding is only available for business owners within the Touhy/Western TIF. Applications will be accepted starting 9 a.m. Monday, Nov. 2, and must be received by 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec.

1. Interested businesses and property owners can visit somerco.com/sbif to find the application and more information. Grants up to \$100,000 are available for eligible work.

The City will be hosting a webinar to provide an overview of the SBIF program and application process 1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 4. Additional questions should be directed to Silvia Orozco at sorozco@somerco.com.

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River North attorney pleads guilty to ripping off elderly clients

A disbarred River North attorney who allegedly embezzled more than \$1 million from at least 20 elderly clients and their estates has reached a plea deal with prosecutors.

Jeffrey Schlapp, 59, represented senior citizens and their estates in lawsuits against nursing homes, but he sometimes reached settlements without telling his clients. Funds from settlements were deposited into Schlapp's bank account but were not dispersed to victims. He then kept the money for himself.

The Illinois Supreme Court disbarred Schlapp in late 2017 after regulators said he misappropriated more than \$600,000 from nine clients that he represented in cases that accused nursing homes of malpractice, negligence, falls, and death, according to the Cook County

Record. The criminal charges grew from the regulators' work.



Jeffrey Schlapp

Schlapp this week pleaded guilty to one count of theft of \$500,000 to \$1 million in a plea agreement with prosecutors. Judge Diana Kenworthy sentenced Schlapp to four years. With 786 days of time served on electronic monitoring, he is not expected to spend any time in prison.

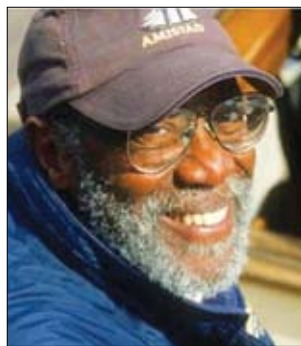
Kenworthy also ordered Schlapp to reimburse the Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission's client protection program for \$823,525 that the group paid out to his victims.



Chef Jean Joho



Paris Alexander Schutz



Capt. Bill Pinkney



Nora Gainer Doherty and Gerry Gainer.



Bobbi Panter, Kathy O'Malley Piccone, Candace Jordan, Tracey Tarantino DiBuono and Contessa Bottega.

to him right away more than 30 years ago at an Irish Fellowship Club event. And it was always thus. I used to think that it was just his impeccable Chicago Irish manners and a good wife at this side. When I learned later that he was Swiss Air's man in town, I guess his naturally kind ways just made perfect sense. Very Irish, sure. But also very Swiss. Pat wasn't born in Chicago. Only came here later in his business life. And in addition to his work for the Swiss, after adopting Chicago as his second hometown, he served for decades on the Board of Directors for the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau. And for more than three dozen years judged Chicago's annual downtown St. Patrick's Day Parade. Pat O'Brien passed away recently, at Holy Family Villa, after a valiant battle with vascular dementia. No event will ever seem as friendly for me, again. Love to Erin. Rest in Peace.



Pat O'Brien

AVAST: Capt. Bill Pinkney, first African-American to sail the world solo, brought his lessons from the sea to life as the keynote at the Chicago Maritime Museum Festival, speaking via video, at the festival. He addressed 10 things he learned at sea that are applicable to life. In June 9, 1992, he set the record when he finished a 22-month journey on "Commitment," via the difficult route around the southern capes.

HALLS OF ALTHORP: Don't miss Chicago writer **Lucia Adams'** insightful entry in Classic Chicago Magazine on the **Earl Spencer**, brother of **Diana, Princess of Wales**. Well done you.

THE PENINSULA: The Lobby has just welcomed back Afternoon Tea, join them every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. A portion of the proceeds from each tea sitting will go towards "A Silver Lining Foundation," a charity helping to ensure equal access to quality cancer services for all. Thank you, **Dr. Sandy Goldberg**. And congrats to her for raising over \$300,000 with the foundation's recent virtual fundraiser.

CAKE AND CANDLES: The

Art Institute's **Nora Gainer Doherty** has turned 50, and dressed for serious COVID battle, traveled to New York with best pal, mom, **Gerry Gainer**, turning 75. Yipes, I first knew Nora when she was in grade school. She remains the dearest of friends. Hubby, Farmhouse restaurateur **Ferdia Doherty**, had the children while the birthday girl took a huge bite out of the Big Apple with mama.

REV UP FOR FASHION: A virtual Rev up CHICAGO. Thursday with emcee **Candace Jordan**. **Tracey Tarantino DiBuono** producing. A virtual fashion show supporting AIBI and the Chicago design community.

AHOY: Gangs all here. **Susie Forstmann Kealy**, **Nancy Kelly**, **Cynthia Olson**, **Stanley Paul**, **Jim Kinney** and **Brian White**. Dinner at the Yacht Club.

WHO'S WHERE: Artist **Rosemary Fanti** and chanteuse **Barb Bailey** lunching at Ralph Lauren Bar & Grill looking pandemic elegant as always... dearest **Dori Wilson**, the PR "maven of maven's," celebrated another year and was lifting the bubbly... Attorney **Dan Balanoff** out at 95th Street and the bridge snarfing up the smoked fish at Calumet fisheries, reminding us "Talk is cheap, voting is free, take it to the polls. There's no such thing as a vote that doesn't matter"... young actor **Nate Buescher** was at PE class when WGN morning TV recently appeared to interview him in situ... **Paris Alexander Schutz** at home on his domestic keyboard paying tribute to **Eddie Van Halen**... **Bobbi Panter** and **Matthew Arnoux** back home resting comfortably after their little pooch **Bebe's** recent scare with bad health. So glad the little sweet is recovering... **Chuck** and **Candace Jordan** really into the Fall with a perfect visit to the Bengston Farms Pumpkin Patch... **Courtney (Daley) Thompson** masking up to visit Greenbush Brewing in Sawyer, MI... **Eamonn Cummins** at the St. Regis in Deer Valley, Park City UT... beautiful and fun birthday celebration for **Lorelei Knutson**

Beaucaire at the Knollwood Club in Lake Forest with **Sherry Lea Fox**, **Karen Schmid**, **Sherrill Bodine**, **Patricia Maxwell**, **Laurie Shanahan**, **Lori Tisinai** and **Lynne Kennedy**... The **Brothers Eshaghy**, **Brian** and **Sean**, at Butch McGuire's... **Rafael Angel Chacon**, papa of newsy **Lilia Chacon**, turning 99 and looking good... **Karin Carlson**, **Wynnis Mackie** and **Meeghan Griffin Kenney** celebrating with birthday boy **Ken Nordlie** at the Ritz Carlton... Heat lamps, jackets, no problem. Courtside for boys night at Tavern on Rush, **Shelley Howard**, **Jim Coston**, **Larry Wright**, **Dennis Donn** and **Jay Barksdale** chilling... **Mary Laskey** and **Sherry Lea Fox** at Oceans 44... real estate broker **Michael Rissman** encouraging pals in the pandemic with his famous Chicago punch.

ON STAGE: Sunday, Dec. 6, "What The World Needs Now is Love!" starring **Barb Bailey** at Le Piano, 6970 N. Glenwood Ave. Call for reservations at 773-209-7631.

LIGHTHOUSE HIGH-BEAM: **Bobbi Panter**, **Lauren Lein Kavanaugh** and the gang gathered at Marchesa to watch their fashion triumph supporting The Chicago Lighthouse with the annual Flair fashion show which was virtual this year. Co-Chairs **Sherrill Bodine** and **Sheree Schimmer Valukas** did an amazing job. **Candace Jordan** and **Tracy Tarantino DeBuono** (ZZAZZ Productions) did a great job with the beautiful setting outside Tufanos Vernon Park Tap. With angels **Al Menotti**, **Kevin Sullivan**, **Rhonda J. Liesenfelt**, **Adrienne Squires**, **Melissa Babcock**, **Contessa Bottega**, **Heather Jane Johnston**, **Tina Weller**, **Sally Jo Morris Pfaff**, **Sherry Abrahams**, **Kristina McGrath** and **Liz Teasley**.

Show me a man that gets rich by being a politician, and I'll show you a crook.

-- President Harry S. Truman
tog515@gmail.com

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SAME BOAT from p. 2

tronize and the ground on which we live. We need to be pragmatic in holding elected officials accountable. Quality of life is a viable human expectation. Not a campaign promise but a human endeavor without controversy or compulsion. Our hands might be tied trying to resolve the mystery wrought by the pandemic. But not by the shambles of a once great city being beaten before our eyes. It is time to act with boldness and strength. Unrelenting attention to the details of making Chicago safe. A place of justice. No urban disorder is acceptable for any neighborhood in any part of town. Time we all got in on the Zoom. We can all be Walter Winchell.

CRIME STATS: In the last week through Oct. 23 we had 61 neighbors shot and 13 homicides.

PAPAL WHITE SOX FAN: As predicted in this column last month, **Pope Francis** has just named the South Side-Chicago

born **Archbishop Wilton Gregory** of Washington DC a Cardinal. The first ever African American. A man of faith, intellect and savvy Chicago wisdom, he is a welcomed addition to the group of papal electors.



Cardinal-elect Wilton Gregory, Archbishop of Washington DC.

event or an Irish festivity here in town where, within minutes, one of the friendliest and most charming greetings in the room would come from **(John) Pat O'Brien** and his sweet wife **Erin Clifford O'Brien**. For some reason that's all I needed to settle into the atmosphere of clinking ice cubes and loud talking. Pat had the Irish gift of settling people. Calming them. Putting them at ease. I took

CLOSING: After more than three decades, the great owner **Chef Jean Joho** is calling it quits at Everest and shuttering Chicago's most remarkable four-star dining establishment. Breaks your heart. Final dinner? New Year's Eve.

SMILING EYES: I never entered a room full of swells at a black tie



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Man charged with hit-and-run bus shelter crash that left woman seriously injured

BY CWBCHICAGO

On Oct. 24 prosecutors charged a man with driving a pick-up truck into a Loop bus shelter during the Mexican Independence Day celebration last month and leaving the scene as a 61-year-old woman lay critically wounded at the scene. The victim remains hospitalized.

Allen Espino, 29, was allegedly smoking pot and driving on a suspended license at the time of the crash, but two relatives who were riding with him told police about what happened. And the truck's owner also called cops after he recognized his vehicle in news footage of the crash. Marissa Parra of CBS2 News tweeted a video of the crash moments after it happened. A man who lives near the scene inadvertently captured the crash on video from overhead. He also shared the video on Twitter.

On Sept. 11, Espino borrowed a friend's apple red pick-up truck, but he refused to



Allen Espino

return the vehicle when its owner asked to get it back the next day, prosecutors said. Then, on Sept. 15, Espino drove the truck downtown to celebrate in Mexican Independence Day festivities with his two cousins in the truck bed.

He began driving erratically, making U-turns, speeding, jumping onto curbs and medians several times, and doing donuts in the street, prosecutors said. His two cousins later told police Espino had been drinking and smoking pot during the celebration.

Around 11:45 p.m., the cousins decided to get out of the truck because of Espino's reckless driving, according to prosecutors. The truck was smoking when they hopped out on the 1100 block of S. Michigan. Es-



The stolen red truck involved in the crash.

pino pulled another U-turn, and the truck's back door fell off.

Prosecutors said Espino got out of the truck, smoked a joint, then got back into the vehicle and accelerated down Michigan Ave. Within seconds, the truck veered into

a bus shelter where the victim was seated. He then backed out and fled the scene, prosecutors said.

The woman suffered significant injuries, including a shattered femur. Witnesses used a Mexican flag as an emergency tourniquet to stem her blood loss, a photojournalist for Captured News reported.

Surgeons tried to use skin and muscle from the woman's back to rebuild her legs, but the wounds became infected, and she remains hospitalized, according to prosecutors.

The day after the crash, the truck's owner contacted police after seeing the crash on a TV newscast. Both cousins also contacted authorities. Espino surrendered to police on Oct. 22.

BAIL from p. 1

forced her to perform sex acts at gunpoint before he fatally shot her in the face, prosecutors said. He also allegedly shot a 39-year-old woman who lives near the hotel after she ran away when he tried to rob her. The second woman survived.

Now charged with first-degree murder and attempted first-degree murder, Sharriff is being held without bail.

Remote learning assault

Perhaps the highest-profile recent example of someone committing a violent crime while on bail for felony charges is the case of Catrell Walls, the 18-year-old man who's accused of sexually assaulting his 7-year-old female cousin while she participated in remote school classes this month.

On Aug. 29, Walls was charged with felony unlawful use of a weapon after police accused him of possessing a firearm in the Grand Crossing neighborhood. Judge John

Lyke set bail at \$3,000, and Walls posted a \$300 deposit bond to go home.

Less than two months later, on Oct. 16, Walls forced the girl to perform oral sex within view of her online learning computer's camera. Other students who were logged on during the study period drew the teacher's attention to the incident. Walls was seen closing the girl's laptop after the assault was discovered, prosecutors said. Police said Walls later admitted to the crime.

GEM from p. 3

said Bjordal.

Bjordal recalled how after John left Amoco, he became a "leading light" of Rogers Park's Democratic Party as well as a leading member of grassroots community policing, among other things.

"He was an active supporter of arts in the local parks, particularly the lake shore park where he lived adjacent," said Bjordal. "He came to know the trees, birds, grasses, and artists who made up the landscape."

John also became one of those artists. He was a keen photographer, providing many exceptional photos -- and story ideas -- for this newspaper.

"John was able to merge the lens of his eyes in tandem with his camera to capture images and events some only dream about," said Felicia Kaplan, who served with John on the annual Artists of the Wall Festival planning board.

While writing this, I was searching for an email sent to me by John's friends Patty, Andrew, Lois and Irene. To my surprise, up popped a June 2019 email I'd received from John, with a trip photo they'd all taken together and the following info: "Irene ('Mom'), Patty, Andrew and I traveled together for many years - Scotland, Italy, France, the UK, the St. Lawrence in Canada, the American southwest national parks and a road trip, through a hurricane, down the Mississippi River..."

During the pandemic, they'd Zoomed with John every Sunday, terming it their "Lifeline" Zoom because seven of them regularly went to Lifeline Theatre together and often for dinner afterward at Twisted Tapas.

"John was our friend for almost 45 years," said Patty, Lois and Irene Nowak and Andrew Comens in the email. "We celebrated holidays and birthdays together. For seven years, we traveled with John and my mother Irene. He called her 'Mom' and she called him her 'bad son.'"

Friend and fellow Rogers Parker Reid Hyams said John was "a wonderful person with brilliant insight making positive contributions to our community -- one hell of a damn good man." Activist/radio host Thom Clark called John a, "Phenomenal community chronicler using superb photographic art to capture a vibrant neighbor-

hood... Classic Republic of Rogers Park personality."

"John's intellect and wit was surpassed only by his kindness and generosity," said John Evans, a neighbor of three decades. "He contributed his time, knowledge, and energy to make our neighborhood the jewel that it is. John can rest in peace, knowing he made the world a better place."

Evans said he is looking into the possibility of planting a shade tree -- he's thinking Hackberry -- in John's honor through the Chicago Park District's [CPD] Green Deed Tree Dedication Program. I know John would love that.

Neighbor Anne Kretzmann Igoe said her kids will remember John, "every time we see an interesting bird, when we walk through the dune grass, and enjoy a beautiful sunrise."

Something John was extremely proud of was the planting of the Marram grass throughout Loyola Park. He held a doctorate in ecology and was a former board member on the park's advisory council

(LPAC said they're thankful for his community engagement and service through the years). John helped the CPD plant the grass to stop sand-causing erosion and also helped create a nature area just north of Pratt Beach, which is also where two weeping willow trees John planted in the 1960s still stand today.

No one really knows what John has done for the community throughout the years, said his friend Dee Cooper. "He never sought the limelight," Cooper said.

I last saw my loveable but sarcastic - could be kind of prickly - neighbor John about a month before he died. I brought him a chocolate cupcake with a candle for his birthday and he in turn gave me some delicious crystallized ginger. We had also spoken about a week before his death, when I called him for a neighborly wellness check.

Rogers Park Chamber of Commerce president Bill Morton co-founded the Facebook group Photographers of Rogers Park, where John shared much of his work.



John Lamping selfie, taken in Oct. 2019. "Didn't have a selfie stick and no one else was around so I did the best I could and let the rising Sun do all the work," he said of the photo.

Morton said he and Chamber administrator Trudy Leong, along with the Leone Beach Park Advisory Council, are interested in hosting a John Lamping Legacy Project featuring his released and unreleased photography and videos.

"After a very tragic 2020, showcasing the beauty of Rogers Park through the eyes of John Lamping in the Legacy Project with such events as a show in the Rogers Park Art Gallery, at the Leone Beach Park fieldhouse, and then traveling to Rogers Park businesses, would help inspire others to photograph, record, and love Rogers Park as much as John Lamping did, and as much as Trudy and I love Rogers Park," Morton said.

Those who knew John's photography treasured it, and those who didn't admired his work from afar.

"My heart breaks and I do not even know him," said Rogers Park artist Juli Litzkow. "I only knew his beautiful vision through FB photos. I always hoped I'd meet him on the beach some day."

If John has anything to do with it, I know that's where his spirit will be. On the beach, camera in hand, enjoying the everlasting beauty of what his beloved Loyola Park and Lake Michigan have to offer.

I'll see ya there, my dear neighbor.

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