

Out of difficulties grow miracles.

— Jean de la Bruyere

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

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Payton College Prep will continue to be outpost for Chinese government's Confucius Institute

Some express concerns about PRC propaganda

BY PETER VON BUOL

Located inside Walter Payton College Prep High School, 1034 N. Wells, Chicago's Confucius Classroom has a stated purpose of being an "educational resource for educators, parents and students throughout the greater Chicagoland on the teaching and learning of the Chinese language and culture."

While many have praised the educational opportunities offered through the Chicago Public School's partnership with the Chinese government's Confucius Institute, some have begun to express concerns about a program which includes among its reading materials a glowing biography of Mao Zedong, the founder of the

People's Republic of China. As leader, Zedong was directly responsible for the deaths of more than 45 million people during their Great Leap Forward (1958-

In August, the U.S. Dept. of State designated the parent organization of Chicago's Confucius Classroom as a "foreign mission" and this has caused heightened public concern about the Chicago facility.

1961), and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

In August, the U.S. Dept. of State designated the parent organization of Chicago's Confucius Classroom as a "foreign mission" and this has caused heightened public concern about the Chicago facility.

Critics of the Confucius Institute, which include Republicans and Democrats in Congress, have said the institute uses its influence to shape public opinion in the United States and has coordinated the placement of Chinese nationals in sensitive positions at research universities throughout the United States. This has caused numerous universities and colleges to end their partnerships with the Confucius Institute.

"As the de facto "parent" organization of the Confucius Institute program in the United States, the State Dept. designated the "Confucius Institute U.S. Center" [CIUS] as a foreign mission of the

PAYTON see p. 8

Attorney for Chinese investors of failed development skeptical clients will get their money back

BY PETER VON BUOL

An attorney representing a group of Chinese investors who lent \$49.5 million to a New York City-based developer to build a 60-story condominium/hotel tower at the corner of Wabash Ave. and Superior St. remains skeptical the developer will return his client's money.

Symmetry Property Development had initially planned to replace a group of 19th century buildings at 42 and 44-46 E. Superior St. with a new skyscraper designed by Skidmore Owings and Merrill. These existing properties, which were built shortly after the Chicago Fire of 1871, have now been included in the city of Chicago's new Near North Side Multiple Property Landmark District.

While some press accounts have described Symmetry as having agreed to return the money to the Chinese investors, the matter remains far from settled. The "agreement" could simply have been a tactic used in court to buy more time for Symmetry Property Development.

"I think it is premature because the "settlement" gives them 60 days to find the money to pay the Chinese, and if they don't get it, the lawsuit goes right back to where it was. It is not a definitive settlement in any sense," said

Doug Litowitz, a Deerfield-based attorney who is representing the group of Chinese investors in a federal class-action lawsuit.

As always, a court ruling would still require the winning side collecting any settlement, and a corporate bankruptcy filing frequently complicates collecting the full sum in large court settlements.

The project was quashed by Ald. Brendan Reilly [42nd] in 2017 after the project's critics said it would have added unmanageable density and congestion to an already-busy intersection.

The project was quashed by Ald. Brendan Reilly [42nd] in 2017 after the project's critics said it would have added unmanageable density and congestion to an already-busy intersection. The immediate vicinity includes the popular restaurants Rosebud on Rush, 720 N. Rush St., and Jake Melnick's Corner Tap, 41 E. Superior Street.

In late 2019, Symmetry had been circulating a series of images in local media and had filed these designs with the city's Dept. of Planning and Development. These images revealed an amalgamation of the original Carillon Tower project which incorporated the facades of the 19th century

buildings.

Attempts to contact Symmetry have been unsuccessful. A listed phone number for the company is no longer accepting telephone calls and its website is simply a placeholder. The head of Symmetry, attorney Jeffrey Laytin, had once been a high-profile intellectual property attorney in New York City who represented clients such as professional sports leagues and expensive clothing brands.

The Chinese investors lent their money to Symmetry in order to participate in the federal EB-5 Visa program. Investors participate in the program because they want to become legal residents of the United States. For that reason, many of these investors will accept a lower-rate-of-return on their investment. Each investor contributed at least \$550,000 in the Symmetry project. Unfortunately, there have been numerous incidents of fraud in the EB-5 program.

And no EB-5 Visa will be issued even if the money is not returned.

According to the website of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (part of the Dept. of Homeland Security), the federal program was initially created by Congress in 1990 "to stimulate

INVESTORS see p. 8



Mag Mile SSA tax fails

Plywood at Tiffany & Co., 730 N. Michigan Ave. Customers must now walk inside if they want to see the jewelry being sold.

Photo by Marisa Sloan, Medill News Service

The effort at self-taxation along Michigan Ave has failed. A proposed Special Service Area tax did not advance in City Council Monday due to strong opposition from two local aldermen, Brendan Reilly [42nd] and Brian Hopkins [2nd].

The funds were going to be used for additional security, and to help re-establish the shopping district after a pandemic and corresponding drop in tourists and conventioners made most of the customers disappear.

Then came the riots and looting of June and August and that pretty much brought the virtual gates down on Boul Mich - in this case gates being plywood board-ups and police barricades.

The Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development earlier was aiding the North Michigan Ave. Association to move a plan through

City Hall that would have raised \$742,000 in 2021 for security, marketing campaigns and other related costs. But the full City Council will not consider the proposal at its meeting this week.

The extra taxes would have been bourn by land owners and landlords, which they'd typically pass on to tenants who would of course get the money from their customers through higher sales prices. Those higher taxes would have put an additional financial burden on the tenants at a time when many are already struggling.

As Chicago's most famous retail strip, Michigan Ave. has suffered amid a plunge in tourism and severe drop in shopper traffic at brick-and-mortar stores. The violence and looting over the summer forced several stores to close temporarily.

Police oversight worker arrested for Macy's looting — then released

BY CWBCHICAGO

An employee of Chicago's police oversight agency was arrested Dec. 8 in connection with the looting of Macy's State St. store on Aug. 10, according to a CPD internal communication provided to this reporter by a source. The man was later released without being charged, according to a police spokesperson.

A fugitive apprehension team arrested the Chicago Office of Police Accountability (COPA) worker in the 2900 block of S. Michigan around 7:55 a.m. Tuesday, according to the CPD notification. Kellie Bartoli, a CPD spokesperson, confirmed details of the notification and said the COPA employee had been released without being charged by Tuesday afternoon.

In a statement Dec. 8, COPA confirmed that police arrested and later released one of its employees. The agency is conducting a separate internal review of the matter.

"If misconduct has occurred, the employee will be held accountable," the agency said.

"As an agency with high accountability standards and a strict code of conduct, we take these matters very seriously and will work with the Office of Inspector General in any review it may undertake," said COPA Spokesperson Ephraim Eaddy.

The internal CPD communication said police notified the city's inspector general about the arrest at 10:20 a.m. Dec. 8.

Investigators have released several surveillance videos that show scores of looters hauling merchandise out of Macy's Loop store, 111 N. State, during widespread raids of downtown businesses on Aug. 10.

Bartoli, the CPD spokesperson, did not say why the COPA employee was released without being charged. Police did not ask prosecutors to approve felony charges in the case, according to

ARRESTED see p. 8

Discovering delight in the big plans that go awry



By Thomas J. O'Gorman

Have you strung any outdoor lights, made any wreaths, or wrapped any packages yet?

Have you located that recipe for the "Tom and Jerry's"? Any homemade soup on the horizon?

Has the pandemic given you the time to actually think about your life? Your relationships? Your choices and decisions? Does it actually push you to reflect?

Do you have the ability to sift through the evidence, for forensics, taking fingerprints like a scrub-wearing technician on NCIS?

I bring that up because I just grocery-listed for myself all of my own small moments for extra thought and elongated analysis that I've experienced since the start of last December. Twelve months.

A year ago I thought I'd be on my way to the Irish countryside, for our own Christmas version of Downton Abbey. At Roundwood House. All my usual Christmas guests were to be in attendance. I even had daily menus planned offering the best of Irish farm products and wild game. You can guess, local duck eggs and homemade brown bread for breakfast. Pots of sweet berry jams made in the industrious autumn. Fresh Irish butter. Fires burning in all our rooms to ward off the chill of beautiful, but real, 17th century rooms. Two weeks of story telling, cooking lessons and the best French wines we could get our hands on.

We'd have Roundwood House to ourself in rural County Laois. With simple lunches of homemade soups and leftover roast or

cold Irish salmon. Yeast buns and Christmas cookies.

My little gaggle of holiday makers could devise day trips through the countryside. Winter picnic lunches with hot toddies and strong tea. Afternoon thirsts quenched at local pubs and Christmas carol practice back at Roundwood House like we were living in a dorm at Wellesley. Or rehearsing our party piece like we were Danny Kaye and Bing Crosby looking for Rosemary Clooney and Vera Ellen.

So not being in Ireland and not being together for the first time in 28 years has me cogitating about our lives.

How lucky I am to even have such a rational family and quasi-sane friends. We've embraced Chicago politics together. And deaths of treasured friends, like the dearest Margaret Dargan. And the marriages of some guests. To each other. Adding a table leaf for my niece and her delightful choice of a brainiac physician husband. And the charming arrival of painters and sculptors, guests bubbling at our Christmas table, like the uncorked vintage Veuve Clicquot. A place where the commotion of the arts and the festivity of the grand piano rule the day.

Christmas at my house borders always on French cabaret, especially after the champagne is poured.

Funny, it would now take an Act of Congress to alter in any way the menu we set in place long decades ago. Lobster salad. Standing ribs of beef. Irish Colcannon (whipped potatoes and winter cabbage mixed). Creme d'onions a la Julia Child. Haricot vert with burnt walnut butter and, of course, Yorkshire pudding.

My guests will allow no substitution or tinkering with the bill of faire. Though my vegan niece gets free rein over extra vegetables.

Buttercream cakes make up dessert before the Edith Piaf and Bach begins. I'm glad to reflect on this, to take time to measure



Roundwood House in County Laois, Ireland.

the manner and style of our holiday evolution. Christmas and Hanukkah. Dreidels and all.

I'm glad I have some moments not to focus on our loss this year, but on our bounty all the other years. Six of us started out on Astor St. years ago. But we have been transformed by children, now adults, who weren't around in those early City Hall years, with more accommodating dining space. So we've kept adding more leafs to our table.

It's important to be reminded just how lucky we are.

It is comforting to discover that not all our achievements in life are of our own doing. Even if everyone goes home with a prize.

Perhaps the cosmos assists. Perhaps true power and goodness have both the ability and opportunity to lend us a hand in achieving our life's goals, the secret desires of the heart or the consuming impact that our life can have on another. Maybe the more we give, the greater is the return of our giving. Perhaps life is ruled by the quiet invitation to be of service to another. And love. Encouraging us to feel the brokenness of another. Or the hungers of those most desperately in need of food, compassion, justice or the comforting words of a friend.

All of us have the opportunity during this pandemic to witness the results of human isolation and human fear. We see more clearly the human hurt that forces people to hide from others as if they were a Coronavirus.

Maybe we can sense the debilitating paralysis that keeps others from their full humanity. Whatever our abilities, we can change the course of the living of others and reverse the direction of life that seems to have little purpose.

Our life can put breath back into the heartache of others. By our attention, our openness to work out solutions and willingness to open all our doors. The crack in the walls of heaven that permit it to spill out into our everyday living and daily struggles to make others whole is best achieved in the common struggle to help all people be free.

The restlessness of human life spills onto the footpath of others far too often. We need a plan by which we can strengthen others and ourselves. Who knows, per-

haps it can secure the life and love we share with others, made safe without cold judgments. Made exciting by our willingness to lift others to their common birthright of dignity, inclusion and hope.

Christmas remains the poetic moment of engaging the Divine. The sacred aroma unfolding in the midst of decay. A familiar fragrance that gives all of us the chance to dispel the clouds of desperate living with the healing of creative human mercy. We see that in the grandeur of real life-changing achievements. Softer words. Less bitter critiques. Quicker forgiveness. Fresher focus on hard-wrought achievements. More eggs. Less shells. Embracing times to reflect. Finding mystery revealed in the calmness. Discovering delight in the big plans that go awry.

So string those lights. Make that soup. At least sip a few "Tom & Jerry's."

STICKY BUNS: Nice going **Ald. Tom Tunney** [44th],



Ald. Tom Tunney

while some of your colleagues might face federal indictments for chicanery at City Hall and collect coin from no-show jobs with ComEd, it's nice to know someone is there to throw themselves on the sword for cinnamon buns and lingonberries. But for those who have already cast the first stone, let's not forget he was keeping the joint open at a loss so his loyal staff

stayed employed, rather than being cast off into uncertainty like so many of our other local restaurant workers have been. A note to the weak and meek in City Hall: Tunney never once quibbled, denied, diverted, spun or blamed **President Trump**, he took that spear right in his own chest along with all that virtuous media posing. He never blamed anyone else for what was going on inside his own place. That's leadership too. This column knows of a long-time newspaper editor who has himself dined on only the finest of sticky buns inside at Ann Sather's.

CUFF-HIM: Could the rumors be true that **Mayor Lightfoot** and her posse have got **Police Superintendent David Brown** hogtied and that he is evolving into a figurehead? Anything he wants to do must first be cleared through the mayor's team and they don't ever seem to be cooperating. Police want her to get her nose out

of the tent.

CHRISTMAS STAR: During the upcoming winter solstice Jupiter and Saturn are lining up to create an incredibly bright star of wonder, or what is known as the "Christmas Star" or "Star of Bethlehem," for the first time in 800 years. These two planets haven't appeared this close together from Earth's vantage point since the Middle Ages. Stargazers in the northern hemisphere should turn their heads and telescopes to the southwest portion of the sky about 45 minutes after sunset to see the planets align on Dec. 21.

MONET ON THE MOVE: The recent vote by the Union League Club to place their **Claude Monet** painting, "Apple Trees in Bloom" (1872), on the auction bloc, has all the chattering classes in disarray. The painting is the pride of the club's extensive art collection displayed throughout the cozy walnut paneled interior. 2020 appears to be Monet's year in Chicago. Though closed at the present, a popular exhibition currently at the Art Institute, "Monet and Chicago," traces Monet's curious relationship to the city, particularly in the 19th century through more than 30 paintings. **Mrs. Potter Palmer** was an early collector of the artist. In 1895, the Union League Club paid \$500 for the pride of their collection. Some \$15,000 in today's value. Becoming the first Chicago institution to acquire one of Monet's works. In 1903 the Art Institute became the first American museum to purchase a Monet. Citing the financial downturn wrought by the pandemic, the club is hoping that

DELIGHT see p. 6

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Heart of the 'Hood

by Felicia Dechter

It's around noon on Saturday and the knock at my front door lets me know that Megan Edwards and her kindergarten-aged son, Jake, have come to collect my donations for the coat drive at Stone Academy, 6239 N. Leavitt St.

Edwards told me that the collection is part of a program called the Stone Academy Circle of Care. It supports families in the school community who are in need, she said.

What a great idea, especially these days when times are tough for so many people.

"Our goal is to help alleviate some financial stress so that students can focus on learning and growing at school," said Edwards.

If you happen to have any warm weather gear you're not using, please consider donating it to the school, which is collecting coats through mid-January. After serving its community, the remaining items will be given to Care for Real -- which brings nourishment and hope to neighbors in need -- and Family Tree Resale, a socially-conscious thrift and consignment store at 5066 N. Lincoln Ave. that serves local charities and school districts by offering a free voucher program.

Edwards first became involved in collecting for the academy after she attended a couple of virtual Friends of Stone Academy [FOSA] meetings during the Stone Circle of Care warm weather clothing drive.

"Volunteering is very important in our family," said Edwards, a West Ridge resident. "Stone Academy has an amazing community within it."

FOSA is a not-for-profit organization of parents and representatives from Stone's faculty, administration and LSC, and Circle of Care is an initiative within FOSA. Although they will be officially collecting until mid-January, what's impressive is that Stone families can write in to the school counselor all year long with specific requests and needs.

The general distribution of the coats from the drive has changed a little based on wanting to fill needs sooner as it's getting cold out. Coats are available to be perused and picked up during the regular school lunch pick-up from Stone's main entrance, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekdays. Masks are worn and all volunteers at Stone have to pass a temperature check and fill out a CPS health screener.

Therefore, drop off any donations safely. There is also pick up available, depending on location.



Megan Edwards and her son, Jake, collect items for the coat drive at Stone Academy, which runs through mid-January.

Contact the school for more information at 773-534-2045.

Love me some fancy soap... Around that same time on Sunday, noon, Rogers Parker Jessica Berson delivered a bar of the most heavenly-smelling, hand-made soap ever to my house. It was bright pink, blue and purple, called Unicorn's Grotto 2.0, and made with shea butter, and coconut, olive, sweet almond, and castor oils.

The label reads: "Soft and sweet florals with just a hint of fruit (and magic, of course) combined to make you feel like you're riding free through a honeysuckle field on the back of your rainbow-colored best friend."

Yep. I couldn't wait to try out my new bar of soap (which smelled and looked too pretty to use) in my brand new shower in my basement's new bathroom. It did not disappoint! Berson sells it for \$8 a bar which I know isn't cheap, but when you consider the ingredients used, it's well worth it. And as a gift, well, I would love it.

Berson doesn't have a website set up and running yet, but she's

been selling her wares on Instagram and Facebook under the pages Do Not Eat The Soap.

"I started making the soaps two years ago to give to friends

friendly, she said, though she does use artificial fragrance oil so this may not be for those with sensitive skin. Unicorn, one of her best sellers from last year, was remade



Jessica Berson delivers one of her fabulous-smelling bars of homemade soap. Soap: Unicorn's Grotto 2.0.

and family for Christmas, but so many people asked if they could purchase them that I made double the amount the next year," she explained.

For now, she sells only individual bars, which are made in very small batches, usually only 10 bars at a time. The soaps are kid-



Menachem Wolf, left, from the Lubavitch Chabad, got a little help from a Rogers Park neighbor named Sean erecting the menorah honoring Eliyahu Moscovitz on the first night of Hanukkah.

ing up to the point where I could start selling to a wider audience," she said.

Remembering a life... I witnessed community spirit at its best last Thursday, the first night of Hanukkah. As I walked my dog in Loyola Park, I spotted West Rogers Parker Menachem Wolf out in the park, erecting the gigantic menorah that has been placed and lit each Hanukkah at the spot where Eliyahu Moscovitz, 24, was murdered while playing Pokemon Go in Oct. 2018.

Wolf looked like he could use a hand, and along came a neighbor, Sean Rholl, offering his help. The pair worked in tandem by the light of the streetlamp to get the job done. Once lit, the sight of the religious symbol against the darkness of the night with the lake in the background was stunning to see. It still is. Get there to see it if possible as Hanukkah ends Friday evening.

Wolf, who has known the Moscovitz family for most of his life, shared his thoughts on Eliyahu. "He was super friendly, outgoing, helpful to people of every type. He wasn't closed in and was very embracing of all people."

There is still frustration that Moscovitz's killer has never been caught. Yet those who knew and loved Eliyahu are, "still hopeful," said Wolf, whose brother, Rabbi Yoel Wolf, along with the area's Lubavitch Chabad congregation, makes sure the menorah goes up annually.

As for Rholl, who was walking by and offered his menorah-erecting services, he lives in the neighborhood and was here "when this awful thing happened."

"I heard the shots and I wish I'd run out to figure out what happened," said Rholl. "We think about it all the time. I didn't know him but I still remember."

"I'm so happy to help," said Rholl. "We all care. Everybody cares."



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Police Beat...

Police shoot man who opened fire on them in Rogers Park

Chicago police shot a man who opened fire as they investigated a domestic incident in Rogers Park on Dec. 8, according to CPD. Police shot the alleged offender, but no officers were wounded by his gunfire, Dep. Chief Randall Darlin said during a press conference tonight.

Officers pulled the man over in the 6900 block of N. Ravenswood to conduct their investigation around 4:56 p.m., police said. According to Darlin, the man got out of the vehicle with a gun and shot at the police. A CPD spokesperson later tweeted a photograph of a handgun and ammunition magazine that he said belonged to the man.

The man was taken to St. Francis Hospital in Evanston. Darlin said the man's condition was unknown, but fire department personnel previously said the man's condition was "red," which generally means a patient has life-threatening injuries that may be survivable.

Several witnesses, including members of the media, saw police officers being placed into ambulances at the scene, but Darlin released no information about what kinds of injuries cops received or what conditions any injured officers might be in.

The fire department declared an EMS Plan 1, which brought five ambulances and other support personnel to the scene. In addition to the alleged offender, fire department personnel told dispatchers that ambulances were transporting one patient in "green" condition to St. Francis Hospital and three patients in "yellow" condition to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. Green is the least serious EMS triage level, while yellow indicates that a patient's treatment can be delayed until more critically-wounded patients are treated.

Darlin said Tuesday's incident is the 72nd time this year that people have fired shots at Chicago police officers.

The Chicago Office of Police Accountability is investigating the shooting. All of the officers who were involved will be placed on administrative duties for 30 days per CPD policy, according to Darlin.

Robbers score Instacart grocery delivery in Lakeview

Just when you think Chicago has dished out every possible crime scenario, it whips up a new one.

Two men reportedly pushed and threatened an Instacart grocery driver when he stopped to deliver an order in Lakeview Dec. 7. The courier was not injured, and no arrests have been made.

According to the driver, he parked his car and left the vehicle unlocked as he made a delivery in the 3000 block of N. Sheridan around 8:40 p.m., CPD spokesperson Kellie Bartoli said.

A few moments later, the 44-year-old driver saw two men rifling through his car, and he yelled out to them, Bartoli said. The men grabbed delivery bags filled with about \$150 worth of groceries and jumped into a black SUV that sped away southbound, according to the driver.

While a witness said the driver was threatened and pushed, he was

not harmed. Bartoli said police did not have a detailed description of the suspects.

Alleged robber slain near Goose Island mugged another man almost exactly 3 years earlier

A West Town man who was reportedly killed after he shot his friend during a robbery attempt near Goose Island Dec. 6 died almost exactly three years after he robbed another man while claiming to have a gun in the same area, according to court records.



Adan Delgado

Police found Adan Delgado, 27, with multiple gunshot wounds and a handgun lying nearby in the 1200 block of W. Fry around 4:30 a.m. Another man who lives about a block away reportedly told police that his friend, Delgado, shot him in the leg during a robbery attempt moments earlier. The man, 28, said he ran away after Delgado shot him and he then heard more gunfire behind him.

Detectives are trying to sort out who shot Delgado and why.

But court records show Delgado has a history of robbery. In fact, he completed probation last month for battering and robbing a man in the same neighborhood at 5:30 a.m. on Dec. 5, 2017.

Woman charged with dragging cop "several blocks" in River North, but her passenger gets stricter bail

A driver who allegedly dragged a Chicago cop for several blocks with her car during a traffic stop in River North this week got out of jail by posting just \$5,000 bond after a court hearing, according to court records.

The woman's passenger, who is charged with possessing less than three ounces of marijuana, actually received stricter bail conditions than she did.



Jasmine Smith

According to prosecutors, when officers pulled Jasmine Smith over for a traffic violation in the 700 block of N. State around 4 p.m., she had a state ID but no license. Cops said they smelled burnt weed coming from the vehicle, too.

After Smith and her passenger, Christopher Fleming, repeatedly refused to get out of the car, a cop reached through the passenger-side window to remove Smith's seatbelt, prosecutors said. That's when Smith, 28, allegedly put her car into drive and accelerated down State St. with the cop hanging out of her car.

The officer tried to put the car into park as Smith dragged him down the street, "disregarding multiple red lights" along the way, according to prosecutors. Once the cop managed to put the car into park, Fleming allegedly told her to keep going. Smith put her car back into drive and sped away with the officer still hanging out of the vehicle, an assistant state's attorney said.

The cop shifted the car into park again after being "dragged several city blocks," according to prosecutors. She then allegedly struggled with of-



Christopher Fleming

ficers who tried to take her into custody.

An ambulance transported the officer to Northwestern Memorial Hospital in fair condition with a knee injury, according to a CPD statement.

Private security cameras, CPD vehicle dashcams, and officers' body-worn cameras recorded the incident.

Prosecutors charged Smith with felony aggravated battery of a peace officer; felony aggravated fleeing causing injury; misdemeanor reckless driving; and three citations.

Police said they found 73 grams of cannabis and \$1,507 cash in Fleming's possession during a custody search after the incident. He is charged with felony possession of cannabis.

According to Illinois Department of Corrections records, Fleming, 38, was paroled in April after serving half of a three-year sentence that he received for resisting police. He has previous convictions for aggravated fleeing, home invasion, and robbery, according to IDOC.

Judge Mary Marubio set bail for Smith at \$50,000. Marubio set the same bail for Fleming but also ordered him to go onto electronic monitoring if he posts bond.

Smith, who allegedly dragged the police officer for several blocks, posted a 10% deposit bond and went home after the bail hearing, records show. Fleming remains jailed on the marijuana charge.

Man had CPD taser that went missing during May riots

So that's where the darn thing went! It's always the last place you look.

A three-time felon is facing a fresh felony weapons charge after cops allegedly found a stolen CPD taser in his car during a traffic stop over the weekend. Prosecutors said the taser was one of many pieces of equipment that were either lost or stolen from Chicago police during riots, looting, and protests this year.



Devron Jackson

On Dec. 6, police pulled over Devron Jackson, 26, for a traffic violation on the West Side and took him into custody for allegedly driving without a license.

A passenger in Jackson's car took his keys, refused to give the keys to police, and battered officers, prosecutors said. So, they arrested her, too.

Cops agreed to let Jackson's relatives collect items from the vehicle before police towed it. As officers helped them remove property from Jackson's car, an officer discovered a Chicago Police Dept. taser next to a bag.

Investigators found the taser's serial number and determined that the device went missing during a riot and looting at Foot Locker, 3900 W. Madison, on May 31, according to prosecutors. Jackson allegedly told police he found the taser during the civil unrest, and he's had it ever since.

Prosecutors said Jackson has been sent to prison twice for gun violations — once in 2014 and again in 2015. He is now charged with driving on a suspended license and aggravated unlawful use of a weapon in the taser case.

Judge Mary Marubio set Jackson's bail at \$5,000. He went home by posting a \$500 deposit bond.

During Jackson's bail hearing, prosecutors said Chicago cops lost other tasers and CPD property during uprisings and protests during the spring and summer.

One beat a man unconscious, the other broke car windows — guess who went to prison



Liam McIntyre Patrick Newton

One man allegedly beat a guy unconscious inside a Wrigleyville pizza shop, leaving the victim hospitalized. The other was accused of breaking dozens of car windows with rocks. Guess which one got sent to prison?

Our researcher recently discovered the juxtaposition while checking court records for the status of cases we previously reported.

In June 2019, Liam McIntyre was charged with felony aggravated battery causing great bodily harm after he allegedly beat and kicked a man into unconsciousness at Dimo's Pizza, 3463 N. Clark St. The alleged victim, 23, suffered a concussion, was hospitalized, and suffered headaches for two weeks after the attack, according to a CPD report.

McIntyre, 23, was on bail while awaiting trial for burglary at the time of the alleged attack.

Recently, McIntyre pleaded guilty to burglary and aggravated battery causing great bodily harm. Judge William Raines sentenced him to two-years probation and 80 hours of community service, according to court records.

Then there's Patrick Newton.

Police hauled Newton into custody for allegedly breaking out the windows of nearly 20 parked cars on the Far North Side in June 2019.

A couple months later, Newton was arrested again after allegedly breaking the windows of dozens of cars inside Loop parking garages. He was also accused of breaking 23 car windows in west suburban Brookfield and even more in Hyde Park.

According to state records, he spent 322 days in jail before he pleaded guilty to three counts of felony criminal damage to property. A judge sentenced him to one year in prison.

Newton was released from custody on the same day he arrived at Stateville Correctional Center in Joliet because he received 322 days credit for time spent in jail, according to Illinois Dept. of Corrections records. He is now on parole.

Man brandished knife, punched cop who poured out his bottle of Fireball

Charges have been filed against a man who allegedly punched a Chicago cop while brandishing a knife because the officer poured out his bottle of Fireball cinnamon whisky.

Brian Debeleyzer, 55, is charged with two counts of felony aggravated battery in connection with the Dec. 9 incident on the Jackson Red Line platform.



Brian Debeleyzer

Officers patrolling the CTA system escorted Debeleyzer off the Red Line at Jackson around 6:45 p.m. so they could cite him for drinking beer aboard a train, prosecutors said.

Debeleyzer became combative as soon as police asked for his ID — screaming, cursing, and threatening the cops, an assistant state's attorney alleged.

During his tantrum, a bottle of Fireball allegedly fell out of his coat and clunked onto the platform. One of the cops poured out the bottle of liquor.

Debeleyzer yelled at him for wasting the liquor and punched the cop in the shoulder while holding a knife in his other hand, prosecutors said. Then, Debeleyzer allegedly punched the cop in the neck with the hand that was holding the knife.

Prosecutors said the cop struck Debeleyzer, who fell to the platform and hit his head. Officers allegedly recovered his knife and then called for paramedics to treat Debeleyzer's injury.

According to prosecutors, as first responders escorted Debeleyzer to an ambulance, he kicked a fireman in the knee. Debeleyzer was treated and released. Neither the officer nor the fire department employee required medical attention. The kick and the entire platform incident were reportedly captured on CTA surveillance video.

Judge Mary Marubio set bail for Debeleyzer at \$10,000. He went home by posting a \$1,000 deposit bond.

Prosecutors said Debeleyzer has only one misdemeanor conviction on his record — a 2018 drug possession. But CPD records show Debeleyzer has been arrested six times in the city since September 2018. All of the arrests took place near the Wilson Red Line station in Uptown.

Parolee, AWOL from electronic monitoring, busted with another gun at River North video shoot

A paroled felon who went AWOL while on electronic monitoring for a pending gun case was arrested with an automatic-fire handgun Dec. 9 after police found a group of people shooting a music video under the Ontario feeder ramp, prosecutors said.

Cops went to an address in the 600 block of N. Kingsbury around 11:45 p.m. after a 911 caller reported seeing a large group of people trading property between vehicles under the expressway ramp. When officers arrived, they saw about 20 people filming a music video.



Brandon Milton

As police moved in, two cars sped away and Brandon Milton, 27, ran from the scene on foot, according to prosecutors. Cops ran after Milton, who repeatedly grabbed his waistband while running, an indication that he might be concealing a handgun, an assistant state's attorney alleged during his bond court hearing.

When Milton and the cops reached the 400 block of W. Ontario, a witness intervened and tackled Milton, allowing police to take him into custody.

That may not have been the wisest decision the helpful citizen ever made.

Prosecutors said a gun with an automatic-fire switch, and an extended ammunition magazine fell to the ground as police tried to take Milton into custody. Automatic-fire switches are illegal devices that convert standard handguns, which require the trigger to be pulled once for each shot, into mini-machine guns.

Cook County authorities have been looking for Milton since he escaped from electronic monitoring in August. He had been placed on house arrest after he posted \$3,000 to get out of jail while await-

We need a “Marshall Plan” to develop vacant lots



The Home Front

by Don DeBat

Chicago and Cook County's Land Bank has deposits of more than 51,300 vacant and abandoned properties, but developers are not making significant withdrawals.

According to a new report by County Treasurer Maria Pappas, the 81-year-old Land Bank's "Scavenger-Sale" program for vacant and abandoned properties has failed.

Developers and small renovators often bid but generally do not close on the vacant lots and abandoned properties because of burdensome bureaucratic red tape. Bids on 80% of the properties do not make it through a complex, lengthy 75-point process. Nearly 7,300 properties have had delinquent taxes for two decades.

As a result, Pappas says, the parcels act as a bureaucratic road block to the revitalization of struggling minority city neighborhoods—including Englewood, Greater Grand Crossing, Park Manor, Auburn Gresham,

Chatham, North Lawndale and Austin.

"Nobody wants these properties because they are in areas that are losing population, have high crime and aren't worth the property taxes you have to pay to own them," said Pappas.

In addition to the Scavenger-Sale list, the city owns another 15,000 properties, mostly in compromised socio-economic areas.

Pappas urged the Illinois General Assembly, which originally authorized the Scavenger Sale back in 1939, to come up with revised, innovative solutions for restoring such properties to the tax rolls.

Every two years, Cook County conducts the Scavenger Sale to auction tens of thousands of mostly vacant and often abandoned properties with a significant amount of unpaid taxes. However, more than half of the properties bid on in the 2015 and 2017 auctions were never transferred and developed, the report says.

While reform is needed in the program, experts say the problem of vacant and abandoned property is more complex than just improving the Scavenger Sale process.

Black population loss in Chicago has topped 200,000 people in an exodus that began before the Great Recession. Disinvestment in Chicago's African American



Looking back on the reign of Mayor Richard M. Daley, Boss Daley's son should be applauded for tearing down a half-dozen of the city's most infamous public-housing projects his father built, and replacing them with "mixed-income communities" between 2003 and 2006.

neighborhoods dates back to the 1950s redlining and block-busting era—long before the riots, vandalizing and burning that followed Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968.

Here are some innovative suggestions The Home Front column gathered from experts to help the General Assembly and the city rid Cook County of vacant properties, generate jobs and create a housing renaissance in the blighted areas:

• **A Marshall Plan:** Cook County needs to create a bold, sweeping vacant-land development plan like the U.S. initiated to rebuild Germany and Europe

after World War II. Of course, this would require a \$1-billion urban-renewal investment by the federal government over a period of years.

• **Enterprise zones:** Identify vacant-lot areas near CTA elevated lines and public transportation that can be developed quickly using existing Transit-Oriented Development incentives.

• **Build a Chicago casino:** The vacant 37-acre site of the former Michael Reese Hospital on the Near South Side is a prime site for construction of a world-class gambling casino that would generate hundreds of construction jobs. The city spent \$80 million to acquire the site, and already has invested more than \$100 million into the neighborhood infrastructure.

• **Build more mixed-income housing:** Looking back on the reign of Mayor Richard M. Daley, Boss Daley's son should be applauded for tearing down a half-dozen of the city's most infamous public-housing projects his father built, and replacing them with "mixed-income communities" between 2003 and 2006. Oakwood Shores, a 94-acre mixed-income community on Oakwood Boulevard (39th Street) between Langley and Ellis avenues in the Oakland/North Kenwood neighborhood, was built on the site of the former Ida B. Wells public housing project. The successful plan called for 3,000 new for-sale condominiums and townhomes, market-rate and affordable rental units.

• **New-home construction:** New home-building is booming

in Chicago's suburbs, and builders such as Pulte Homes, Toll Brothers and Lennar are always shopping for vacant land. The city should give the builders free vacant land and work with them to develop affordable housing on acreage donated from the Land Bank as long as union-trained minority workers are hired to do the work. Housing could be Section 8 and market-rate rentals and for-sale units.

• **Transform vacant factory buildings:** Some abandoned industrial properties could become centers for factory-built pre-fabricated affordable housing units. The units could be erected quickly with a crane, then, mechanicals, including solar panels, could be hooked up on-site by union workers.

• **Expand trade-union jobs:** Carpenter, electrical and plumbing unions should play a key role in the vacant-lot development plan. Abandoned school buildings should be opened and refitted as educational centers for young minority apprentices to be trained in the building trades.

• **Innovative housing-design ideas:** Because land would be free and builders are essentially working with a blank canvass, innovative architects and land planners should be encouraged to develop planned-unit, suburban-style sub-neighborhoods with curving streets, in-fill parks, ponds, and adjoining retail and schools as anchors.

• **Urban farming:** Some vacant acreage in the city already is being utilized for urban farming. Now that marijuana is legal, the city should create a program to grow pot in greenhouses on vacant lots, sell it in city-owned retail stores.

The pot business in Illinois recently surpassed the \$100-million threshold in total sales for the first time. Recreational marijuana sales generated a record \$75 million across the state during Oct. 2020. Pot will generate jobs. Of course, security will be needed to keep the marijuana greenhouses safe.

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.

POLICE BEAT from p. 4

ing trial for being a felon in possession of a weapon in the suburbs, prosecutors said.

Illinois Dept. of Corrections records show Milton was paroled in June after serving six years of an 11-year sentence that he received for armed robbery in 2014.

Prosecutors charged him with escape, Class X unlawful use of a weapon, and felony unlawful use of a weapon by a felon. Judge Mary Marubio ordered him held without bail for violating the terms of bond in the suburban gun case. She set bail at \$250,000 on the escape charge and another \$250,000 on the new gun case. Authorities will also hold him without bail while state officials consider revocation of his parole.

Man killed 15-year-old while trying to buy pot near Lincoln Square

An Evanston man gunned down a 15-year-old boy in an alley near Lincoln Square during a possible marijuana rip-off earlier this year, according to allegations made in court Dec. 13.

Chicago police arrested Eric Gunn, 21, at his home Dec. 12 and prosecutors laid out the state's first-degree murder allegations against him during a bond court hearing Sunday.

Around 9:30 p.m. March 16, Gunn asked a woman to drive him and his

brother to a location so they could get some pot for her to buy, Assistant



Eric Gunn

State's Attorney Michelle Cunningham said. Gunn allegedly gave the woman directions and eventually told her to stop when they came upon Esteban Luvianos, 15, standing in an alley on the 2000 block of W. Farragut.

Gunn got out of the woman's minivan, and surveillance video shows a man, allegedly Gunn, struggling with Luvianos for control of a bag. Gunn then fired a single shot, striking the teenager one time in his face.

The woman allegedly told police that she heard a gunshot, and Gunn jumped back into her vehicle, ordering her to "Go! Go! Go!" According to Cunningham, she dropped Gunn and his brother off at their home after they sold her the marijuana.

Luvianos was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police contacted the woman after identifying her father as the owner of the minivan seen in surveillance videos. She directed police to Gunn's Snapchat account, where investigators allegedly found photos of Gunn posing with a handgun on the day of Luvianos' murder.

Gunn's Snapchat account pinged his phone location along a path that

tracks closely to the route the woman drove to and from the murder scene.



Esteban Luvianos

Two days after the murder, police recovered a handgun in an unrelated matter that preliminary lab tests matched with "high confidence" to a shell casing found at the murder scene,

according to Cunningham. The gun bears a "strong resemblance" to the weapon Gunn posed with on Snapchat. Gunn, who was himself shot in April, is a Spanish Gangster Disciple street gang member.

Judge David Navarro ordered Gunn held without bail.

Man shot while traveling on LSD near Soldier Field

A man was shot while traveling in a car near Soldier Field Dec. 10. No one

POLICE BEAT see p. 6



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Winter Solstice Concert Series features two virtual performances

Hamid Drake and Michael Zerang's 30th Annual Winter Solstice Concert Series begins at 6:30 a.m. Monday, Dec. 21.

The sunrise concert is designed to help the community "bring in the sun on the shortest day of the year," organizers said.

The performance will be live-streamed from a surprise location in Chicago, featuring Drake and Zerang on the drums and percussion.

The duo will be joined by longtime collaborators Joshua Abrams (contrabass, gumbri) and Ayako Kato (movement) for a second performance, which will be broadcast live at 8 p.m. on the Solstice from Constellation Chicago, 3111 N. Western Ave.

Both concerts are free to watch, but ticket purchases are encouraged. The suggested cost is \$20 for each show. For more information call 773-281-0824.

'Tchaikovsky' to be live-streamed

A live-streamed performance of "Tchaikovsky" premieres at 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20, as part of a partnership among Porchlight Music Theatre, Hershey Felder Presents, and Live from Florence.

Felder portrays composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky in the show, which celebrates Tchaikovsky and his work, including "The Nutcracker."

Tickets are \$55 per household and are available for purchase at PorchlightMusicTheatre.org.

Ticket-holders will receive the

live-stream link Friday, Dec. 18, via email. The performance may be streamed from a smart TV, computer, smartphone or tablet.

Video of the show will be available online for a week following the premiere, beginning one hour after the live broadcast ends. Viewing ends at 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 27.

Latecomers may purchase tickets to view the broadcast during the week of "on demand" access. For more information call 773-777-9884.

POLICE BEAT from p. 5

is in custody.

The victim and a woman were heading southbound on the 1800 block of S. Lake Shore Dr. when another car pulled alongside them around 11:45 a.m. The other car's passenger then began shooting at them, police said.

Fire department personnel located the victims' car near Cermack and State streets. The man, age 24, had two gunshot wounds to the left side of his back, according to CPD, but the woman was not injured.

Another vehicle that was traveling on Lake Shore Drive was also struck by bullets, but no one in that car was injured. Police met with that driver near McCormick Place.

Police said the shooting victim was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital, but his condition was not known. CPD did not release any descriptions of the gunman or their vehicle.

Four armed robberies in about an hour across Edgewater

Four armed robberies were reported in under about an hour on Dec. 12 in Edgewater, according to an alert from Chicago police. No arrests have been made, and no injuries were reported in the hold-ups, which appear to be related.

The offenders ordered the victims to hand over their cash and surrender their phones after forcing the victims to unlock and disable the devices.

First, two armed men displayed a handgun and tried to rob a victim on the 5800 block of N. Paulina at 7:09 p.m. The robbery failed, and both offenders ran away northbound on Paulina, according to a CPD report.

At 7:33 p.m., a man was robbed at gunpoint by two offenders as he walked home from work on the 1700 block of W. Peterson.

Then, around 7:45 p.m., two robbers jumped out of a white SUV and robbed a woman as she walked on the 5600 block of N. Glenwood, police said.

Finally, a man was robbed at gunpoint by two offenders as he made a delivery in the 1400 block of W. Edgewater around 8:20 p.m.

In the alert, police described the suspects as a Black male between 15- and 18-years-old who stands about 5'-6" tall and weighs about 140 lbs. He wore a black hoodie, black jeans, a surgical mask, and displayed a black handgun; and a second Black male, 15- to 18-years-old, 5'-10" to 6'-2" tall. He wore a black hooded jacket, black pants, a mask, and displayed a silver handgun.

—Compiled by CWBChicago.com

DELIGHT from p. 2

success in the sales rooms will permit them the opportunity to stay flush and not have to pinch pennies that aren't there. There is however another voice that says they should hold on to their treasure, particularly in troubled times. No technical plans have been announced for an international auction. However there are a few Chicagoans rumored to be hoping a popular local philanthropist might intervene and buy the painting giving it to the Art Institute or returning it to the club. More rumors flourish over the antics of those who would like to conduct the auction of the painting. An unnamed female says she wants first dibs.

ANCHORS AWAY: Midshipman **Sydney Barber**, will be the first Black female Brigade Commander at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. As the first Black woman to hold the academy's leadership post of Brigade Commander, she now represents 4,400 future Navy and Marine Corps officers.

AGELESS BEAUTY: **Irene Michaels** is bursting with delight now that her new book "I On Beauty - Living Beautifully and Luxuriously Beyond 50," has been published. It's her debut book in Four Beauty & Lifestyle Categories and is already being acclaimed an international best seller. Hollywood and high society are all in agreement on its timely value and have given lovely endorsements. Beauties like **Jill St. John**, **Christie Hefner**, **Rita Cosby**, **Nikki Haskell**, and **Margaux Levy**, all girls over 50 are raving about Irene's work to hold back time. The foreword is by **Dr. Robert Goldman, MD**, co-Founder/Chairman - American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

PEUVENT LES ANGES VOUS CONDUIRE AU PARADIS: The aristocratic French leader **Valery Giscard d'Estaing**, the Grand Old Man of French politics, has died from COVID-19 at the age of 94. As the president of France from 1974 to 1981 he became a champion of European integration, Giscard was the first sponsor of the Musée d'Orsay, the Paris museum, but perhaps the French should remember – and thank – him as much for what he stopped than what he allowed. One of his first actions as president was to halt development schemes to build skyscrapers and office towers in Paris, insisting that its monumental treasures and unencumbered skyline should be preserved. A Dieu mon cher.

BYE-BYE: Wing Hoe Restaurant will close after 49 years in Edgewater, making way for residential development. The Sheridan Rd. restaurant closed up on Dec. 12, and the mansion it inhabits is to be redeveloped into



Sherry Lea Fox, Paula Borg, Heather Jane Johnston, Bobbi Panter, Melissa Babcock, Sheree Schimmer Valukas, Sherrill Bodine and Sherry Abrahams.



Mike Hopkins

apartments.

EMMETT WHELAN: The Beverly savant just got his first iPad and will now be using it more since he's in Chicago lockdown during the pandemic. The Notre Dame and Board of Trade alum

will undoubtedly share all great thoughts. Isn't this how Ben Franklin got his start? Anyone got a spare kite?

W H O ' S W H E R E : Bondgirl **Diane O'Connell** and society girl **Rose O'Neill** were seen lunching at Gibson's Steakhouse and cheering everyone up with

their erudite banter, especially executive chef **Russell Kook**... creating the perfect popovers for a glorious meal, **Brian White** and **Jim Kinney** entertaining **Jim Kramer**, **Hopie** and **Annie Hambleton**... then setting up yet another dinner in their pickled paneled library with **Julie Harron**, **Heather** and **Andy Wright**, **Zack** and **Violet Sudler**, and **Peggy Snorf**... Merry Christmas from the **Contessa Bottega** and **Petros** who have put up a dazzling Christmas Tree... outfitted in orange, attorney **Mike Harring**, a U. of Illinois Happy Homecoming cheerleader, ran the virtual Homecoming 5-K... Chicagoan **Adriana Diaz** will co-anchor the "CBS Weekend News" from the studio here in Chicago... **Linda Robin** and **Richard Robin** having a ball with **Gary** and **Joellen Liefer** at the recent lovely Bronner wedding... **Treasurer Maria Pappas** is zooming over taxes. Check her out... **Lisa Smyth**, descendant of the historic pioneer Chicago furniture family, hosted a delightful Drive Through Tea Party in the parking lot of the Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest where you didn't have to even leave your car to enjoy the high tea vittles... Having a cozy Sunday Supper at Ralph Lauren Bar

& Grill were **Sherry Lea Fox**, **Sherrill Bodine**, **Paula Borg**, **Sheree Schimmer Valukas**, **Bobbi Panter**, **Melissa Babcock**, **Heather Jane Johnston** and **Sherry Abrahams**.

HOMECOMING SPACE STATION: U. of Illinois alum and astronaut **Mike Hopkins** flew over the campus during Homecoming at 6:19 p.m. last week aboard the International Space Station. The ISS appeared from the northwest and soared across Champaign-Urbana for two minutes. I-L-L.

RADIO NEWS: Last Sunday **Candace Jordan** returned to "The Hannah and Fred Show [WCGO Radio], 1590 AM, with **Fred Weintraub** and **Hannah Stanley**. Tune in if you can 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY: Congrats to **Dr. Sandy Goldberg** and hubby, **Greg Hines**, on their wedding anniversary. No one does more to promote quality of life opportunities than our favorite TV doc. Don't forget her Silver Lining Foundation.

BRUSH STROKE: Chicago artist **Adam Holzrichter** will be teaching a six-week course on Post Impressionist painting techniques for The Teaching Studio of Art on Long Island (via Zoom meetings), beginning Jan. 7, 2021. Read more and sign up at www.teachingstudios.com/adam-holzrichter. (Reach out directly to him with any questions about the course outline).

TEMPERATURES RISING: Does a certain member of the wait staff at Ralph Lauren Bar & Grill generate an overabundance of heat to customers? A recent diner experienced a visible rapid rise in temperature. Don't be alarmed. It wasn't COVID-related, but rather hot-waiter related.

I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

— Maya Angelou

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