Looting jars local business

COVID-19 rebound setback

By Tim Hadac

An unprecedented wave of looting, vandalism and arson struck the Southwest Side last weekend, spilling into the new week.

The crime wave was triggered by protests over police brutality—specifically, the May 25 death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Video of Floyd—handcuffed and begging for his life as a policeman held a knee on his neck—went viral and sparked large-scale protests that have swept across the nation.

In Chicago, the destruktion dashed the hopes of many small-business owners who had hoped to reopen as the COVID-19 pandemic started to fade.

"This is so f---ed up," said Stephanie Vargas, her voice wavering as she fought back tears and narrated a cellphone video that chronicled the theft and damage caused by vandals who looted her parents' Ashburn restaurant, Quesadilla Monarca, 3645 W. 83rd Pl. "Like, what do these small businesses have to do with all of this?"

"So much hard work—years of hard work—that my parents have put into this business," she continued, sniffing through angry tears. "Like, this business is literally what our family depends on. This is really going to break my mom's heart. I can't even find all the words to describe this."

Vargas' anger and frustration appeared emblematic of a number of Southwest Side small-business owners who wondered why they should bear the brunt of people's anger with law enforcement authorities.

"We all want justice for George Floyd—and we support the protests and Black Lives Matter—but looting small, family-owned businesses is not right," Vargas said, noting that Quesadilla Monarca has offered free breakfasts to those who have lost work because of the pandemic. "My family has a hard pill to swallow tonight. The restaurant my mom had spent her savings on, got looted."

A GoFundMe page to help Quesadilla Monarca has raised more than $3,200 of a $6,000 goal.

City officials struggle

At a Monday morning press conference, Mayor Lori Lightfoot called the uncounted millions of dollars in damage as "completely heart wrenching" and said that "attacks on our local storefronts—and particularly, our small, black-owned businesses—was nothing short of devastating."

She expressed disappointment that the looting has overshadowed the message of the protests over police brutality.

Lightfoot appeared to be in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation.

Some of the mayor's critics claimed that by deploying so many police resources to the tony River North shopping district, she left the blue-collar parts of the city under-protected. On Sunday night, the blue-collar parts of the city under-protected. On Sunday night, call volume to 911 was so great that dispatchers heard on Zone 6 radio (which includes the Southwest Side's Eighth Police District) acknowledged that some citizens were waiting up to five hours to see a police response—and that many of those calls were simply dumped at some point.

Lightfoot countered the claim with statistics showing an even distribution of resources over various sections of the city.

Other critics—including one-time mayoral candidate Ja'mal Green, claimed that the looting and vandalism were caused by what he called Lightfoot's oppressive police response to the protests in River North.

Still other critics on the Southwest Side charged that Lightfoot's alleged failure to send a clear, preventive message against looting, led to looting. As evidence, some pointed to a cellphone selfie video taken by a man who had helped break into Ford City Mall and loot a jewelry store at mid-day Sunday.

"We got official jewelry off this b---tch (referring to the jewelry store)," the man says as he holds up jewelry he stole. "Real diamonds."

Seconds later, he adds, "Lori told them police, don't f--k with us. That's why I don't f--k with Lori."

For his part, Governor JB Pritzker activated 375 Illinois National Guard soldiers for State Active Duty to assist the Chicago Police Department in protecting the city. In a statement, Pritzker said the Guard will carry out a limited mission to help manage street closures and will not interfere with peaceful protesters exercising their First Amendment rights.

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Riots were no accident

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and federal recommendations. You can still show your support for the family by leaving them a condolence on our website or sending a thoughtful card in care of the family to Damar-Kaminski Funeral Home & Crematorium, 7861 S. 88th Avenue, Justice, Illinois 60458 or www.kaminskifamilyfuneralhomes.com.

STELLA DORNA

Stella Dorna (nee Magdzik), age 91, of Morgan Park community, passed away May 26. She was a retired Meat Packer for Vienna Sausage where she worked for 44 years. She is the beloved wife of the late Joseph Dorna; loving mother of Alicja Krysztna (late James) Bowles and George Dorna; dearest granddaughter of Luke and Claire Dorna and the late Jim Bowles; great-grandmother of Maddie Dorna; dearest sister of Marii (Jan) Firewciukwicz, Silwetta (Henryk) Konopka and the late Franciszek (Lonia) Magdziak; also nieces and nephews. Private visitation, funeral and cemetery service are being held. Interment Resurrection Cemetery, Justice. Please post your condolences to Stella’s tribute to let her family know you are thinking of them. Sympathy cards can be mailed to the Dorna Family in care of the funeral home’s address: Zarzycki Manor Chapels, Ltd., 5088 South Archer Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60632.

ELEANOR V. DUSZA

Eleanor V. Dusza (nee Smith), age 95, passed away May 22. She was the beloved wife of the late Peter P. Dusza; loving mother of Susan Los, John (Renee) Dusza and Margaret Russell; dearest sister of James (Vera) Olszewski, Thomas (Christine) Chmielewski, Tanya, Jennifer (Eric) Hennig, Hannah (Jacob) Condon, Michaela Russell and Scott Dym; dearest granddaughter of Zoe Hennig, Gavin Hennig and Logan Tatar; fond sister of Maryanne Smith; daughter of the late Albert Smith and late Anton Smith. Also survived by many relatives and friends.

Funeral services held privately for family members only in accordance with all current state and federal recommendations. You can still show your support for the family by leaving them a condolence on our website or sending a thoughtful card in care of the family to Damar-Kaminski Funeral Home & Crematorium, 7861 S. 88th Avenue, Justice, Illinois 60458 or www.kaminskifamilyfuneralhomes.com.

MONGKHOULTANA INTRAKHAMHANG

Mongkholtana Intrakhamhang, age 69, passed away May 18. Beloved husband of Monrudane (nee Evan M) Intrakhamhang and Obama Intrakhamhang, "Joe" (Giselle) Intrakhamhang and Mogkara "Johnny" (Cheryl) Intrakhamhang; dearest grandfather of Audrey Intrakhamhang and Cayla Intrakhamhang, grandchildren of the late Chus and the late General Punt Intrakhamhang; fond brother of Toy Intrakhamhang and Jimmy Intrakhamhang. Also survived by nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

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DANUTA KLECYNGIER-BUDZINSKI

Danuta Kleczyngier-Budzinski, age 81, passed away May 18. Beloved wife of the late Jan Budzinski; cherished daughter of the late Domenic and Anika Klecyngier and the late Bronislaw Kleczyngier; loving sister of Jozef (Bozena) Kleczyngier, Stanislaw (Ewa) Kleczyngier and Radoslaw, grandfather of the late Antoni Kleczyngier. Also survived by nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

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STANISLAWA BARTNIK

Stanisława Bartnik (nee Cabaj), age 50, passed away May 16. The beloved wife of the late Jan Bartnik; dearest daughter of the last Zofia (nee Kmiecik) and the late Stanisław Kmiecik. Also survived by nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

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MARIA BUDZ

Maria Budz (nee Rusin), age 59, passed away May 21. Beloved wife of the late Franciszek Budz; loving mother of Marcin and Pawel Budz; devoted daughter of the late Helen Rusin and late Stanisław Rusin; dearest sister of the late Joseph Rusin; daughter-in-law of the late Jan Marusarz; dear nieces, nephews, relatives and friends. Private visitation, funeral and cemetery service are being held. Interment Resurrection Cemetery, Justice. Please post your condolences to Maria’s tribute to let her family know you are thinking of them. Sympathy cards can be mailed to the Budz Family in care of the funeral home’s address: Zarzycki Manor Chapels, Ltd., 5088 South Archer Ave. Chicago, Illinois 60632.

MIECZYSLAW LOJAS

Mieczyslaw Lojas, age 48, passed away May 16. He is survived by his wife Brij Sood; children Manasa-Vinish Manchanda, Mukta-Rakesh Sachdeva, and Manashi-Victoria Sood and grandchildren Shivon, Kanika, Dhruv and Avishek; large family and large group of friends. One of nine siblings, he passed away peacefully after a yearlong struggle with ALS. Instead of sending gifts or flowers, please donate to the ALS Association of Greater Chicago in Pia’s Sud’s memory at http://web.asalsa.org/goto/pia/surad.

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PIARA LAL SUD

Pia Lal Sud, age 82, passed away May 16. He is survived by his wife by Brij Sood; children Manasa-Vinish Manchanda, Mukta-Rakesh Sachdeva, and Manashi-Victoria Sood and grandchildren Shivon, Kanika, Dhruv and Avishek; large family and large group of friends. One of nine siblings, he passed away peacefully after a yearlong struggle with ALS. Instead of sending gifts or flowers, please donate to the ALS Association of Greater Chicago in Pia’s Sud’s memory at http://web.asalsa.org/goto/pia/surad.

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MARVIN ZABILKA

Marvin Zabilka, age 91, of Chicago, Archer Heights community, passed away May 26. He was a World War II Navy veteran and retired Chicago firefighter.

Beloved husband of the late Dolores ‘Dolly’ Zabilka (nee Krystyna); loving father of Sharon (Sall) Arena, Gary (Annette) and late Larry (Kim) Zabilka; dearest granddaughter of Michael and John (Carrie) Arena, Krista (Patrick) Volk, Kasia (Paul) Lima and Karla (Joseph) Lincemont; preceded in death by his six siblings; fond uncle of many nieces and nephews.

Marvin was a member of St. Richard’s Parish. Inurnment Abraham Lincoln Cemetery. For further information: www.ZarzyckiManorChapels.com/ 708-839-8999.
Dr. John Hanlon, OSF Little Company president, to retire

By Joe Boyle

John Hanlon, M.D., president of OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park, has announced he is retiring after 33 years of service to the hospital.

Hanlon started serving at OSF Little Company of Mary in 1987, practicing as an ophthalmologist for 30 years. He served in various leadership roles over the past 20 years while still maintaining his ophthalmology practice. Hanlon became president of the medical staff in 2000 and went on to serve as the chief executive officer in August 2018 following a term as the chief medical officer.

He has overseen vast changes at Little Company, 2800 W. 95th St., during his tenure as president.

Hanlon grew up one mile from the hospital. Hanlon said he knew the Southwest Side and Evergreen Park well, which is what initially drew him to working at OSF Little Company of Mary.

Over time, Hanlon said he learned how personally rewarding it can be to help the members of his community. He is the first member of his family to work in medicine.

“When I accepted the position as president in 2018, I wanted to serve long enough to see positive changes, to see quality improvement and growth, and to see us through a merger.”

With Scooter – We Sell & Repair – Tool Store – Go-Kart Shop

Fourteenth Ward Ald. Edward M. Burke poses for a photo with police and West Elsdon residents after he helped identify and apprehend people accused of looting several stores near 51st and Pulaski last Sunday. – Supplied photo

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Dead man found in 71st Street home

The body of a 37-year-old man was found in a home in the 3300 block of West 71st Street at about 10 a.m. Sunday, May 31. The body had multiple gunshot wounds, and police declined to release any further details, including the victim’s identity. The Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office would only add that the man was Hispanic.

Man slain on 63rd Street

A 26-year-old man was shot and killed in the 2900 block of West 63rd Street on Saturday, May 30. Police responding to a ShotSpotter alert at about 7:15 p.m. said they saw the victim with multiple gunshot wounds. He was taken to Advocate Christ Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead at 10 p.m. The Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office did not release the man’s identity, only adding that the victim was Hispanic. No one is in custody.

Man shot dead in Hearst area

A 31-year-old West Side man was shot and killed in the 4500 block of South Lamon at about 12:45 p.m. Friday, May 29. Rafael Simmons, of the East Garfield Park neighborhood, was found lying in the street by police officers responding to a ShotSpotter indication. He had been shot multiple times, and he was pronounced dead at the scene. No one is in custody.

Purported looter shot in the head

A 26-year-old man was shot in the head as he reportedly tried to break into an ATM at the Chase Bank branch at 8340 S. Kedzie at 3:22 p.m. Sunday, May 31. Police said the victim was one of a group of people trying to break into the cash machine when a vehicle pulled up and a gunman opened fire before speeding away. The victim was taken to Advocate Christ Medical Center, where he was listed in critical condition. No one is in custody.

Teen shot in the leg in Brighton Park

An 18-year-old man was shot multiple times in the leg as he stood in a parking lot in the 4900 block of South Western at 11:57 p.m. Sunday, May 31. The victim was transported to Stroger Hospital, where he was listed in good condition. No one is in custody.

Man sexually abused girls, police say

A 42-year-old Archer Heights man was charged with two counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse after he was arrested at his home in the 500 block of South Kostner at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 20. Henry Paul Noriega allegedly grabbed a 12-year-old girl and a 13-year-old girl—both about 11 years old—in 2019 in incidents on the North Side, a CPD spokesman said. According to public records, Noriega has been arrested 14 times by CPD since 2014 on charges that included battery, domestic battery, and possession of a controlled substance.

Man charged with burglary, weapons rap

An 18-year-old Garfield Ridge man was charged with burglary and aggravated unlawful use of a weapon after he was arrested in the 5800 block of South Western at 4:47 p.m. Monday, May 18. Victor Medina, of the 5500 block of South Austin, allegedly burglarized a home a block east of where he was arrested. A CPD spokesman declined to say what weapon was allegedly found on Medina.

Noriega

Charge man with domestic battery

A 23-year-old Clearing man was charged with domestic battery after he was arrested at his home in the 6000 block of West 63rd Street at 1:50 a.m. Monday, May 18. Kenneth W. Ausmus allegedly hit a 21-year-old woman on her left cheek during an argument. According to police records, Ausmus has been arrested four times by CPD since 2014 on charges that included reckless conduct and unlawful use of a blackjack/knife.

Hit suburban man with drug charge

A 42-year-old man from suburban Justice was charged with possession of a controlled substance after he was arrested in the 6400 block of South Austin at 6 p.m. Thursday, May 28. Robert J. Orosco, of the 8100 block of Marion Drive, was apprehended during a traffic stop. A CPD spokesman said that the vehicle driven by Orosco matched the description of a vehicle involved in an illegal drug transaction. The spokesman declined to say what drugs were allegedly found on Orosco. He also was charged with driving on a suspended license. According to public records, Orosco has been arrested four times by CPD since 2014 on charges that included criminal trespass to real property and possession of a controlled substance.

Charge man with drugs, weapons crime

A 22-year-old Clearing man was charged with possession of a controlled substance, as well as unlawful use of a weapon, after he was arrested in the 5800 block of South Keefer at 10:45 p.m. Saturday, May 23. Jeremie D. Thompson, of the 6700 block of West 65th Street, was a passenger in a vehicle stopped by officers. A CPD spokesman said that officers found a bag of pills, as well as a loaded firearm, on Thompson.

Hit man with drug charge

A 22-year-old West Lawn man was charged with possession of a controlled substance after he was arrested in the 5500 block of South Tripp at 11:59 a.m. Sunday, May 24. Leonardo Unzueta, of the 3900 block of West 68th Street, was a passenger in a vehicle stopped by police. He allegedly had cocaine on him, a CPD spokesman said. According to public records, Unzueta has been arrested by CPD six times since 2016 on charges that included assault, burglary and possession of a stolen vehicle.
I've lived through a few riots, as I am sure many of you have also. I was at Grant Park when a Santana concert was ordered cancelled by police before the band could land in their helicopter. The thousands of fans who waited hours at the park went on an angry rampage.

Many days later, protesters tore up Michigan Avenue during the Democratic National Convention and confronted Chicago Police in what the national media referred to as “a police riot.” I remember watching TV news, seeing one protetor throw a garbage drum—shattering the window of the Conrad Hilton.

I watched as cars filled with teenagers driving in from other neighborhoods drove through our Southeast Side community after Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. They stopped to provoke fights with other local kids. It was all about race.

Rioters have been arrested for what has been a weeklong violent rage that has become pointless, driven by the underlying racism that is fueling the riots. They are too fearful of the racist police officers to spend hours watching the live news reports of arson fires, looting of major retail stores and shootings and attacks on the police and protesters.

The riots have intensified since the killing took place, spiking this epidemic. More than 45 million people, mostly in low-wage employment, have lost their jobs. The desperation certainly has helped elevate this violence.

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Social media has also made it worse—giving crazy, irresponsible criminals the opportunity to make threats that if Chicago closes, they will take their anger to the suburbs where there have been individual acts of violence, looting and destruction.

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The Black Lives Matter movement, which is behind the protests, can't find any real reasons for the violence other than race.

Since then, Illinois has seen no such outbreaks until one was revealed last week. JDPH told me of a very recent church-related outbreak of 39 cases, including the pastor.

Outbreak was acknowledged last Wednes- day by the administrator of the Jackson County Health Department. The administrator told WSIU Radio that the unnamed southern Illinois church had been holding services in defiance of the governor's stay-at-home order.

Now, you gotta figure more church-related outbreaks could happen if people aren't careful. Gov. Pritzker told reporters last week that his administration will be posting “guidance, not mandates” to faith leaders to use in their efforts to ensure the health and safety of their congregants.

Governer Pritzker has capitulated, and the Thomas More Society is claiming victory in a trio of church lawsuits charging Illinois' governor with religious discrimination, a spokesperson for the organization said.

Then Attorney General Kwame Raoul filed his office's response, mandated by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh after an emerg- ency request was filed by two Illinois churches which wanted the governor’s restrictions lifted.

In that response, Raoul claimed that the filing was basically moot because the executive order would expire the next day “and the Governor has announced that after that date religious gath- erings will no longer be subject to mandatory restrictions.”

The governor’s subsequent order specifically says it “does not limit the free exercise of religion.”

Gov. Pritzker has always predicted ultimate victory in every case filed against his stay-at-home or stay-at-office order, and his office pushed back against suggestions of capitulation to churches. But the demand from the Trump nominee Kavanaugh may have spooked him.

Either way, nobody wants to make arrests or create a martyr, particularly a religious martyr. Most denominations will be complying with the new guidance. As for those who won’t listen, there’s not much anyone can do outside of law enforcement, and local sheriffs would likely resist orders to put preachers in jail. Best to just declare victory and move on. If there are more outbreaks like there were before the order was in place, perhaps church leaders and their congregants will eventually learn from it.

Meanwhile, the governor appears to be pushing ahead with a move into even a less-restrictive Phase 4 of his “Restore Illinois” plan next month, without first setting up a robust contact tracing program.

For weeks and weeks, Pritzker’s “Three Ts” have been: Testing, Tracing and Treatment. The state, he’s said, can’t do much about developing a treatment, but he has pledged to ramp up the state’s testing and contact tracing program.

Pritzker has done well with testing, but he didn’t hire anyone to stand up a contact tracing program until early May. He appeared in East St. Louis near the end of May to showcase the start of a local pilot project.

The governor’s Restore Illinois plan explic- itly states that one condition for the four IDPH regions moving into Phase 4 by the end of June is: “Begin contact tracing and monitoring within 24 hours of diagnosis for more than 90 percent of cases in region.”

On Wednesday, the governor said, “We’re at about 30 percent of the contact tracing that we need today.” The governor’s office claims they’re actually above that right now, but Pritzker re- peated that figure on Friday.

Then Pritzker said, “We’re going to get to it hopefully by the end of June, plus 50 percent, it’s going to take us weeks and weeks. I can’t tell you how long. I mean some people think it will take through August to do it.” One issue, he said, is that contact tracing cannot be mandated. A quick foray into social media will show you how many people say it’s a waste of time and other resources.

Anyway, my colleague, Hannah Meisel, asked the governor yesterday whatever happened to that 90 percent target. “Those are, I guess, inter- nal goals,” Pritzker replied.

I was told by the governor’s office that Pritzker wants to focus on readily quantifiable, health-re- lated goals. Contact tracing is apparently no longer a priority.

Not to mention that Chicago isn’t scheduled to have a contact tracing fully operational until sometime in September. The city won’t want to be left behind.

Gov. JB Pritzker moving goalposts on contact tracing

RAY HANANIA
Rays ramblings about many contentious issues and events, from national to local, as well as some from his past experiences.

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Farmers markets to reopen under new guidelines

Evergreen Park was the first town to open its farmers market last month and more will start opening now that they have been reclassified as essential businesses under Gov. Pritzker’s stay-at-home orders. They will not look like the same farmers markets you have been used to seeing the last few years, however.

New rules will limit vendors to those selling agricultural products, such as flowers, seeds and plants, produce and cottage foods, including honey, jam and fruit pies. Social distancing, however, means you will not be able to handle the foods as before. No more squeezing the tomatoes for freshness.

Previous vendors selling jewelry, clothing, accessories, crafts and Tupperware or Avon products are prohibited for now. So, too, are any consumable foods prepared on site.

You won’t be able to hang around either. There will be no entertainment, gathering, sitting or eating in the vicinity. Vendors will sanitize their stands regularly, wiping down everything that people come into contact with. Vendors will also not be able to make change, so credit and debit cards will rule along with exact change.

At Evergreen Park’s market, changes were readily apparent when the vendors opened at 7 a.m. May 21. The stands were at least six feet apart, and people working at the market and the shoppers were all required to wear masks.

The market will be open from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Thursday through mid-October at the Yukich Fields parking lot, 8900 S. Kedzie Ave.

Despite the changes, residents dealing with COVID-19 and stay-at-home orders since mid-March were looking for a pleasant escape.

“I think everyone is just happy to be out,” said Vicki Garcia, who operates Ever Pure Organics. She sells chemical and dye-free soybean candles. “It’s a nice day and everyone has been so nice.”

Garcia has had a table at the Evergreen Park Farmers Market for 20 years and enjoys coming. The Homer Glen resident also sells organic soaps and shampoos.

“I’m getting a lot of orders from people,” Garcia said. “I think it will take some time. Everyone is being cautious.”

Garcia said that as everyone gets used to going outside more often, more stands will be set up. The Taste of Martha’s Kitchen, which will offer Amish baked goods, is scheduled to be at the farmers market starting next week.

Garcia’s neighbor was Lisa Wienczek, who operates Floralore. The Tinley Park resident sells fresh flowers. Unlike Garcia, this is the first time for Wienczek at the Evergreen Park Farmers Market.

“It’s just nice to be outside,” said Wienczek, who has previously sold flowers in Chicago Ridge and Oak Forest. “I have had a lot of people drop by.”

Beth Novotney, the director of the Office of Citizens’ Services in Evergreen Park, was excited to see the farmers market return.

“We weren’t sure if we were going to start in June, so the fact we are out here today is great,” said Novotney, who officially became the director of the organization in January after serving as an assistant director and volunteer for many years. “The weather is nice, and today is a great day for everyone. Everybody is being conscientious and respectful. Everyone is wearing masks and keeping social distance.”

Signs are posted at the entrance and at several locations reminding shoppers to wear masks and keep a social distance of at least six feet. Novotney said that this was a promising start to the farmers market.

Novotney believes that the steady flow of customers at the first farmers market is a positive sign as summer soon approaches. Some of the other businesses who are featured at the farmers market include Kal-Bro Farms, who sell flowers and vegetables; Laurie’s Creations, with blankets and table runners for sale; Jewel-Stu, Gigawatts Coffee Roaster, Dotson’s Farms, El Coyote Mexican Restaurant, Villa’s Nuts and Candy, and Cooper Farms, which offers fruit. Additional vendors will join the farmers market during the summer, Novotney said.

Other farmers markets are expected to attend the June 6 market. This represents a decline as compared to past years, but some vendors have opted not to participate because of COVID-19 concerns.

Hardin Family Farm and Rose’s Catering are among those that will be back.

Palos Heights, which will return from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, June 17, at the municipal parking lot on Harlem Avenue.

Mayor Bob Straz said the quarantine has “been too long. We need the essence of normalcy.”

Tinley Park, which will resume from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays starting June 6 in the north parking lot of the Oak Park Avenue Metra station.

Frankfort, which will run its summer market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sundays starting June 7 at 1 N. White St. and Broadstreet parking lots. The market will run through Aug. 30. The village had to cancel its spring season market because of the pandemic.

Darvin Furniture to honor Community Heroes

Darvin Furniture President Will Harris has announced a new program to recognize local community heroes for their dedication and hard work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Darvin Community Hero Program offers anyone the opportunity to nominate someone they feel is a hero during these challenging times. Every week, the nominations are posted on the Darvin website and Facebook. Visitors can vote for that week’s favorite hero. Each week, the winning nominee will be announced. They will receive a Darvin Furniture gift card as recognition and move on to the Grand Prize drawing. A new group on nominees will be added for the upcoming week.

“Unprecedented times require unprecedented responses,” says Harris. “The jobs these community heroes do for all of us is very hard on them and their families. Nominating one of them is easy to do and my hope is that the full impact of recognizing so many will in some small way let them know how much we appreciate what they sacrifice.”

Joe Boyle contributed to this report.
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Today is National Donut Day! Each year we celebrate this important holiday on the first Friday of June. The event was first created by the Salvation Army in Chicago in 1938 to honor those who served soldiers during World War I. Happy National Donut Day to all. Huck Finn Restaurant and Donuts, 6650 S. Pulaski, is now open for carry-outs. This is good news because the restaurant was closed for quite a while. Call them at (773) 581-4285. I wouldn’t mind having one of your yummy donuts, especially if I like your giant donut big enough for several people (or one hungry news reporter).

The Dunkin’ Donuts at 6650 S. Pulaski has been open during the pandemic. You can use the drive-through or go inside to purchase their delicious donuts. One of my readers called me and said she saw a line of people inside the restaurant—picking up donuts to go—and several were not wearing masks. So, perhaps it’s safer to use the drive-through. Call them at (773) 585-5999 if you have any questions.

If you go to any of our wonderful West Lawn restaura- nts, be sure to check your receipts. One restaurant in our neighborhood listed a “COVID19” tax on their receipt. This is illegal. The city can set tax prices and raise them, but individual stores cannot. Stores can raise prices of food and other goods for any reason they want, but they cannot make up a tax. If you see this tax on your receipt, make a copy and send it to the Department of Consumer Protection, 121 N. LaSalle, Room 800, Chicago, 60602. You can also email the department at bcppcy@city.gov.

For more information call the department at (312) 744-6249.

Thank you to 15th Ward Ald. Raymond Lopez for this information.

Peggy Zabicki
West Lawn correspondent
3633 W. 60th Place
Chicago, IL 60629
(773) 504-9327

Summer bicycling gets rolling again

St. Gall artwork brightens the day

The Chicago Sun-Times held a student art contest called the Imagination Proj- ect. The theme was “The North Shore Days.” They received 450 submissions from grammar school to high school, from the south suburbs to the North Shore. They re- ceived a wide range of art, from pictures of our mayor to abstract works. Sofia R., a third grade student at St. Gall School, received an honorable mention. Congrat- ulations Sophia, keep up the good work.

Your picture was beautiful.

Check out the Free Little Library at 55th and Kilbourn. Mary and Margaret O’Donnell are cherished in their neigh- borhood. Mary passed away in January 2019. She taught at St. Gall from 1976 to 1996. In Mary’s honor, Miguel Monarrez and Miguel Ramirez hand crafted a Little Library that can be enjoyed by the entire neighborhood.

If you knew Mary, please leave a book or a little note in her honor. Read to your kids from birth and beyond. Read every day. Keep books easily accessible around your home. Visit bookstores and libraries. Let the kids pick the books out to read, and let them see you read. Reading opens up a whole new world.

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**6116 S. MEADE**
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**5259 S. KILBOURN**
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Last week we talked about the Rev. Homero Sanchez, pastor of St. Rita of Cascia Parish, and his efforts to feed the hungry during the current pandemic. This week we had him a happy birthday—which we should actually have done last week, but I was so wrapped up in the story that I neglected to include the wishes. As it turned out, he had a pretty nice birthday surprise. Unbeknownst to him, parishioners and friends gathered in the parking lot of St. Clare of Montefalco Church on his special day. With a police escort they proceeded to the parking lot at St. Rita, where Father Homero had been summoned for some type of emergency. The cars, many decorated with balloons and signs, passed by—beeping their horns, calling out birthday wishes and handing gifts to the pastor. He was totally taken by surprise by the outpouring of love. That tells us a lot.

Not wanting to put any of their projects on hold during the summer months, the Southeast Side Organizing Project has been continuing their work planning and putting together job opportunities for youth on the Southside. Toward that end, project leaders meet virtually to solidify their future plans.

Included in the group are the Youth Job Center head-quarters in Evanston, Metropolitan Family Services, PODER, Daley College, Marquette Bank, the Greater Chicago Food Depository (which has a program for job training in the summer), and Greater Southwest Development Corp.

Back in January we talked about a popular local financial institution that was located on Western Avenue. It was called Chicago Savings and Loan. It was then that we learned (unless you already knew) that the savings and loan business was always outsourced to the local banks.

The purpose of the

Even the dangers of a moving train did not stop this mob from breaking into and looting freight containers on flat-bed cars, near Southwest Highway and Western. — Supplied photo

The Chief Judge of the Superior Court of Cook County, the Honorable James T. Fitzgibbons, Jr., ordered a plan to stop the crime wave, which he said is a lack of a police presence and a breakdown of the court system. Mr. Lopez said that the lack of a police presence is what he said is a lack of a police department and blasted the mayor for his handling of the situation. "We're fed up with this and we want to get this right. We're tired of being on the run. We want to have a police department that is going to work for us and bring about real and lasting change."

"We're going to have a plan to stop the crime wave and we're going to make it happen," Mr. Lopez said. "We're going to have a plan to stop the crime wave and we're going to make it happen."

"We're going to have a plan to stop the crime wave and we're going to make it happen."
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