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Dec. 20th, 2016 "Our 66th Issue!"

Vol. 4, No. 16

Jones College Prep Student Used Uncle's Address to Enroll Fraudulently

By [David Matthews](#) | December 15, 2016 3:12pm

DOWNTOWN — A handful of families are banned from some of Chicago's most prestigious schools after lying about where they lived to get in, according to a new report.

A west suburban Berwyn family who used a brother-in-law's city address to get into Jones College Prep and a Garfield Ridge family who used a West Side address to get into Payton College Prep are among the instances of admissions fraud reported Thursday by Chicago Public Schools' Office of the Inspector General.

The discoveries at Jones and Payton are featured in the Inspector's wide-ranging annual report that also finds CPS boosted its attendance rate by erroneously counting home-schooled children.

The inspector's office has recommended the Berwyn family pay back nearly \$13,000 for one year's worth of nonresident tuition at Jones, a selective-enrollment CPS high school at 700 S. State St.

Such schools use grades, test scores and socioeconomic data from applicants' addresses to admit students. [Payton and Jones are two of the city's most selective schools.](#)

The Inspector's office also found:

- A North Center family used a more favorable Rogers Park address to get a student into Jones.
- A Bridgeport family used an address in a more disadvantaged part of the neighborhood to get into Jones.
- A Douglas family used a Grand Boulevard address to get into Jones.
- A Bridgeview family used a Pilsen address to get into Jones.
- A family from Garfield Ridge used a Heart of Chicago address to get into Payton College Prep.
- A Morgan Park family used a false address to get into Payton.
- Two students from Tri-Taylor used a false address to apply to South Loop Elementary's gifted regional center, but didn't get in.

(Continued on page 6)

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COMING TO THE JAZZ SHOWCASE

Tue, Dec 20, 8 & 10pm.....Vocalist Suneetha Vaitheswaran Quartet
 Wed, Dec 21, 8 & 10pm.....Guitarist Goran Ivanovic Trio
Thur-Fri, Dec 22-23, 8 & 10pm.....Vocalist Tammy McCann Quartet
Sat. Dec 24, 8 & 10pm.....Vocalist Tammy McCann Quartet
Sun. Dec 25.....CLOSED
Mon-Fri, Dec 26-30, 8 & 10pm.....Roy Hargrove Quintet
Sat, Dec 31, 8 & 11pm.....Roy Hargrove Quintet
Sun, Jan 1, 4pm/8 & 10 pm.....Roy Hargrove Quintet
Thur-Sat, Jan 5-7, 8 & 10pm.....Saxophonist Ari Brown Quintet
Sun, Jan 8, 4 pm/8 & 10pm.....Saxophonist Ari Brown Quintet
 Tues, Jan 10, 8 & 10pm.....Brian Gephart Group w/ Tom Garling-trombone,
 Neal Alger-guitar, Karl , Kelly Sill-bass,
 Weds, Jan 11, 8 & 10pm Pianist Dave Gordon Quintet with Brian
 Trumpet,Brian Sandstrom, Bass; Dushun Mosley, Drums
 Thurs—Sun, Jan 12—15 , 8pm & 10pm.....Saxophonist Juli Woods & Caroline
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South Loop Neighbors

South Loop Neighbors is a non-profit membership based organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in South Loop's neighborhoods and preserving the area's landmark districts.

South Loop Neighbors represents South Loop residents who are concerned about:

- Ensuring high-quality, reasonably-sized real estate development as well as infrastructure improvements that respect the unique character of our community
- Preserving and protecting the area's Landmark Districts, including Printing House Row and Historic Michigan Boulevard
- Promoting quality education, recreation, services, retail, community activities, and events
- Maintaining a socially, culturally, and economically diverse neighborhood
- Developing strong relationships with key city officials to ensure they respect, hear, and act on the concerns and ideas of the South Loop community. South Loop Neighbors serves members and residents within the area bounded by Congress Parkway to approximately 25th Street and from the Chicago River to Lake Michigan.

www.southloopneighbors.org

Call For New Board Members!

We are looking for individuals interested in serving on the South Loop Neighbors Board. More than ever, we need input from all corners of the South Loop. Historic Printers Row representation could use a boost too. So many intelligent, mindful people have shared their advice and opinions this year. The South Loop is becoming more diverse every day and we want to represent the citizens of our beloved neighborhood.

In 2015 our footprint was carved into four aldermanic wards. Many, many new developments are in the works and being discussed. It takes time and effort to cover all the local action, plan our open meetings and events like Loft Walk, Yard Sale, and Jazz Night, and keep up with social media.

SOUTH LOOP
NEIGHBORS

We try to be productive and thoughtful in our programming and respectful of everyone's time. We are all volunteers, most working full time (and then some). We are looking for folks who can dedicate 4-5 hours each month to the meetings and events and help us to reach all of our neighbors through creative programs and outreach.

Please consider us! Let us know you are interested by dropping a note to info@southloopneighbors.org and we'll go from there. Thanks!



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OPINION

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or South Loop Referral Group.

You know what I love about Donald Trump? He's hilarious!

While all my friends are hand-wringing, stomach-holding and heart-breaking because Donald Trump is going to be President in a few weeks, I'm having fits of laughter.

While all my friends are scared to death of The Donald, all I do is giggle.

Donald Trump is the funniest guy to come down the pike since Stewart, Colbert and Fallon. Not so sure he means to be so funny. But funny he is.

If laughter is the best medicine, we should be in for a healthy four years.

Like Donald deciding recently--with a very straight face--that it would be OK, while president, to [remain as executive producer](#) of *Celebrity Apprentice*.

The idea that our president-elect wants to have a little part-time gig as the man overseeing a crazy TV reality show is pure Saturday Night Live!

Trump [not reading his CIA briefings](#) because it's the same thing every day and he has better things to do is also a reason to snicker. I mean, he's right. You read 'em once, you've read 'em. When they change, he said, let him know.

And in the meantime, if everyone's so scared that he'll set off a war with Il Jong Ding-Dong or one of the other international looneys we have to contend with, maybe it's best that the many generals, security advisors, etc. he is ensconcing in the government deal with that sort of thing while Donald wonders about how to improve *Celebrity Apprentice*.

Ivanka [becoming the de facto First Lady](#) strikes me funny, too. While Melania stays home in New York, [spending all her time with Barron](#) (aside from the time in between dropping him off and picking him up at school), Ivanka apparently plans to use the First Lady's office as the quiet voice of The Left.

I also love that Donald has knocked those white-wine-sipping-big-money-raising-left-wing-phonies off their keisters on the coasts. And I love that he's destabilized the Scotch-sipping-Wall-Street-money-grubbing-oil-pumping-brahmin off theirs, too. I can just see the whole bunch having apoplexy because this utterly obnoxious-white-eyed-bushy-tailed-orange-coated-superlative-using-money-loving-tireless-bandito is having fun knocking them all for a loop.

From the absurdity, perhaps will rise some goodness.

Donald is going to do things his way. I love the parading of the potential cabinet picks through the garish Trump Tower abode. That's transparency, man!

His economic plan is not simple trickle down economics. It's much more complicated and hands-on. And maybe he can pull off a real economic recovery of some kind. In the meantime, he's capable of providing enough stand-up, pratfalls and one-liners to get us through the rough spots.

I love his tweeting. I love his disdain for the establishment. I love imagining what the tweetee is thinking when the tweet is read on the other end. Insomniac to insomniac. In the middle of the night. Insultor to insultee.

I love his brutal honesty: Like when he explained on the campaign trail that [when he needed things from politicians, he gave them money](#)

and he got what he wanted.

Refreshing, isn't it?

I love [each and every Wikileaks](#). Because each and every one is a laugh riot.

And if the Russians did it so that Assange could pass them to us, they are the best friends we ever had. And Donald, if they did it for you, I thank you, too.

Because we got something we rarely get from any politician or any mainstream news source: the real truth.

Never have I laughed so hard as when [Megyn Kelly confronted that pompous liar Donna Brazile](#) about getting the debate questions beforehand and slipping them to Hillary Clinton!

Or when reporters in the street confronted Hillary spokesman Jennifer Palmieri about the leaks. The spokesman became utterly speechless. As much as she tried, the word spinner couldn't get any words out. For the first time, she couldn't think of any spin. Her own honesty confronted her in the face and no lie was available to serve up.

I loved when the stick in the mud prize winning reporters were found, in the Wikileaks, to be [groveling at the feet of the Clinton campaign](#), asking them to read and edit their pieces. But to please keep it secret. Actually, as an award-winning journalist myself, that one I didn't guffaw over too much. That one, actually, was worth a good cry.

I also loved it when all the advisors--from Podesta to Tanden to Abedin--couldn't say enough bad things about their dear Hillary in their email correspondence. They wondered what her message was, what her methods were and about all the "messes" she was making. And the thought of them all--including Hillary--realizing that the public was able to see their ministrations had me in hysterics.

The Wiki-leaks should be required reading for all Americans. They show the phoniness, the lies, the rottenness for what it is and who they are. Rotten. Phony. Liars. And quite amusing, to boot.

And then there was this cartoon recently. So absolutely witty I am still constantly ROTFLOL-ing thinking about it. Incisive.

As the three most recent administrations recede into the past--the [Clinton Contamination](#), the Bush Idiocy and (what turned out to be) the Obama Arrogance, I am ready to welcome the Comedy of Trump.

Trump's soon to be presidency is giving us a great gift: the gift of laughter.



Bonnie McGrath

Visit my blog: <http://www.chicagonow.com/mom-think-poignant/>



OPINION

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Mondays with Mike:

by [mknezo2014](#) |

Neighborhood fabric Dec 5, 2016



A couple of stories caught my eye this past week. [One is from the Chicago Tribune on Illinois' system for funding schools](#). The way we fund schools in Illinois is nothing new, and it keeps not changing thanks to dysfunctional politics, but the short of it is that Illinois relies to an unusual degree on local property taxes to fund schools. One result is that affluent districts—the ones with enough money to also pay for test prep courses and other aids—are willing to pay out the nose for good schools. For those who think there's a crisis in public education, it isn't in these places.

But its residents pay out the nose.

And it gives poor areas short shrift—even with Federal programs designed to attempt to balance the deficit poor localities face when it comes to education compared to rich areas. Anyway, it's a long piece, but if you're an Illinoisan, or you just care about education, [it's worth the read](#).

The other story was about [how selective enrollment schools haven't had the positive impact hoped for when it comes to kids from lower income areas](#) who get in. In fact, the story explains how attending the likes of the vaunted Walter Payton High School actually hurts their chances of getting into elite colleges.

Education is always in the news. Charter schools are always a controversial topic, and they're going to be even more so in the near future. In my view, selective enrollment schools and [charter schools](#) are flip sides of the same coin. They represent an abandonment of the very principle of public education; they are gimmicks to subvert public education, and they run from root problems.

Here in Chicago, you may have heard we have a gun violence problem. In my view, we have a neighborhood poverty problem that has worsened in my lifetime. And, in my view, a big cause has been collective loss of interest in the notion of common interest, of shared interest—public interest—as manifested by our support for public education.

When I grew up (here comes the *get off my lawn* part), schools were a part of the fabric of our neighborhoods and of our community life. That they were healthy made a big difference.

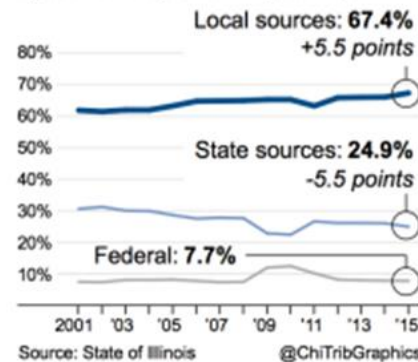
What we have in Chicago, as best I can tell, is a system that siphons many of the best students—the kind that can help anchor a healthy school culture—out of their neighborhood schools.

I'm no Ph.D., but that would seem to make it harder to maintain a healthy school culture, and easier to hollow those schools out, write those schools off and eventually close them.

And the neighborhoods suffer for all that; it's a slow painful bleed. And I don't think anything's going to get better until we recognize our common interest in making sure kids on the South and West sides get a good education—in their own backyards.

Illinois district funding ratio

By academic year ending each year



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(Jones Fraudulent Enrollment from page 1)

The students have since been expelled, and their families are permanently banned from applying to any more CPS selective-enrollment schools or programs.



The inspector's office recommended in its report that CPS "evaluat [e] the child's overall historic socio-economic situation" instead of just mailing addresses to ensure applicants' eligibility.

Emily Bittner, a CPS spokeswoman, said that such a move would bring an "extraordinary paperwork burden" on families, but that CPS "looks forward to closely reviewing" the inspector's findings.

"CPS has taken action and will continue to increase controls and improve accountability throughout the district, both in conjunction with these recommendations and proactively in numerous areas," Bittner said.

The principals of Jones and Payton schools did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

<http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/>

Friday, December 16, 2016

HealthPark Potentially Coming to Old Skate Park in Grant Park



DNainfo has the scoop on a new amenity coming to our neck of grant park:

The Grant Park Conservancy has shared renderings of the "health park" it wants to build at the northwest corner of 8th Street and Columbus Drive before a public presentation Wednesday night at Northerly Island Park Field House, 1521 S. Linn White Drive.

Unlike Los Angeles' "Muscle Beach," Grant Park's health park is going for an "inclusive" setting with free fitness classes, handicap-accessible equipment and a "green, almost arboretum" setting with hills akin to Maggie Daley Park nearby, said Bob O'Neill, president of the conservancy.

Looks pretty cool to us.

<http://www.sloopin.com/>



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Book Review: Paul Beatty, The Sellout (2015 Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

In selecting *The Sellout* as the first American book to win the prestigious UK Man Booker Prize, the judges—four white people and a British Zanzibari—proclaimed it a “tirelessly inventive modern satire...[which] slays sacred cows with abandon and takes aim at racial and political taboos....” *The Guardian*, *The Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times* and the three white authors quoted on the book jacket all hail it as “brilliant.” But recent elections, cabinet nominations, unremitting police abuse, neighborhoods unprotected from murder and shuttered inner-city public schools suggest that, even in this proclaimed “post-racial” era, white people cannot always be trusted. There’s the worry that, like the globe going gaga over a black and brown cast rapping about Alexander Hamilton in a play that ignores the slave-trading of the Founding Fathers and fails to allude to Hamilton’s own arguments in 1791 in favor of child labor, everybody likes Paul Beatty because he doesn’t expose his readers’ favorite stereotypes as shibboleths.

One has to get to the end to appreciate that the critics, despite their backgrounds, are right and the worry is unwarranted. This is a beautifully-written, joke-filled survey course in critical race theory, Quintilian rhetoric, and vocabulary, where no fool of any hue is spared Beatty’s insightful keystrokes. The narrator is a young black farmer

in a poor LA exurb, home-schooled in elevated black consciousness by a single sociology-professor dad who includes aversion therapy in his lessons plans. The son undertakes to saving his town and its African-American identity through unconventional, if not unconstitutional means. There’s a plethora of pot-smoking, surfing, animal husbandry, sex, “Our Gang” comedy, and courtroom drama. Beatty’s treatment of the US Supreme Court, its denizens, and our mighty constitution makes the reader roar with laughter and gulp for air. Though timely, some bits are already dated. “The popularity of the spicy tuna roll and a black American president were to white male domination what the smallpox blankets were to Native American existence.... [The white male] stopped voting.” Wrong. And on a lighter note, the author lacked prescience when he wrote that only “college hippies, Negro Jubilee singers, Cubs fans, and other assorted idealists” know all the words to ‘We Shall Overcome,’ a virtual Black-written anthem whose copyright is owned by the Estate of Pete Seeger. *The Sellout* convinces us to accept “contradiction as not being a sin and a crime but a human frailty like split ends and libertarianism,” and do what we can to improve our collective lot.

Lorraine Schmall

Dearborn Park, December 2016



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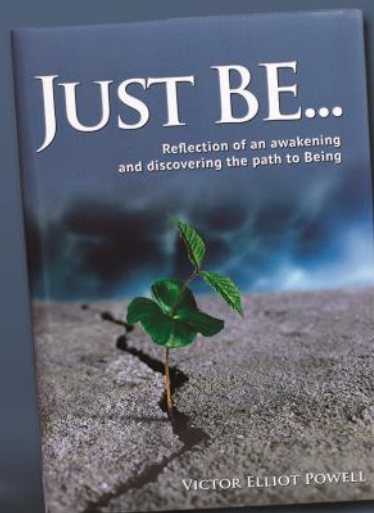
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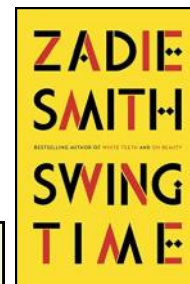




Recommendations for Holiday Giving and Reading from Ulrich and Ellen Sandmeyer

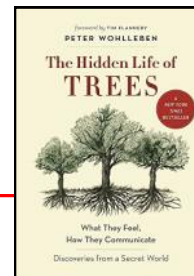
Abandoned in Place by Roland Miller (University of New Mexico Press, \$45)

Haunting color photographs document the NASA, Air Force and Army facilities across the nation that once played a crucial role in the space race. A wonderful collaboration of prose and imagery.



Swing Time by Zadie Smith (Penguin Press, \$27)

This exuberant novel portrays the friendship of two dance-loving girls, from the housing projects of Northwest London to a village in West Africa, considering issues of race, fame, power, and art along the way. Dazzling and thought provoking.



The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate by Peter Wohlleben (Greystone Books, \$24.95)

Are trees social beings? Wohlleben, a forester in Germany, makes the case that the forest is a social network. It is at once romantic and scientific. After reading this charming book, a walk in the woods will never be the same.



South Side: A Portrait of Chicago and American Segregation by Natalie Y. Moore (St. Martin's Press, \$27.95) Ta-Nehisi Coates (*Between the World and Me*) calls it "an exquisite exploration of a portion of Chicago that has long embodied the problems and promise of Black America."



I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark by Debbie Levy and Elizabeth Baddeley (Simon and Schuster, \$17.99)

Disagreeing does not make a person disagreeable. In fact, it can change the world! RBG's life for young readers (ages 4-8).



Animals by Ingela Arrhenius (Candlewick, \$22) Every oversized page highlights a different specimen, from an adorable sheep to an elegant flamingo (ages 3-5).



Dragons have long been absent from their ancestral home in the Veiled Valley. Through spells and deceptions, a mysterious shape-shifter attacked them and now threatens the Valley's hard-won tranquility. With the dragons' strengths and magic apparently gone forever, the lives of the Valley's humans and otherworldly creatures hang in the balance. Will two young dragon-riders help heal the rift between human and dragon?

Malevir: Dragons Return is the first of Susan Bass Marcus' epic fantasy series, a fresh take on

classic themes of family, courage, and sacrifice that recalls the thrills fans find in the work of Anne McCaffrey or J.R.R. Tolkien.

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Safe & Sound Blog by Beth Finke

<http://Bethfinke.wordsmith.com>



[Dispatches from 20th century immigrants, part one: Annelore](#)

A number of the writers in the memoir classes I lead are immigrants, and for the next couple weeks I'm planning to feature essays these wonderful writers wrote when I asked them to describe the role food plays in their holiday traditions.

Let's start with Annelore. She was born in Germany and met her American-born husband Roy in the early 1960s, when both of them worked in a small town on the Czech border. "I was working as a medical lab tech and Roy was in a special division of the U.S. Army," she told me, explaining that he maintained Radar equipment for listening in on Czech and Russian conversation along the border. "It was a unit of 20 engineers and linguists and very secret – you could say he was a spy."

The two of them married in Germany and relocated to his hometown in North Dakota in 1963, where they had three children. "Everybody knows that when we are far from home, when we are expatriated we tend to cling to tradition, to customs we are familiar with and that make us feel at home," she wrote in an [essay she titled Christmas Traditions](#). "Missing the wonderful winter Christmases from my childhood in Germany, I tried and tried to reconstruct them for my children year after year."

Recreating her German Christmas traditions became even more challenging when Roy accepted an engineering position that required the family to spend the next couple decades relocating from country to country around the world. "It was not always easy to find the right ingredients to make it happen," she wrote. "Live pine trees for example are sparse in deserts like Southern Patagonia or Egypt or in the tropical climate of the Caribbean."

Listening to Annelore read her essay out loud in class made us all hungry. They started baking in late November, she said. Gingerbread. Stollen. Hazelnut cookies. Almond crescents. Cinnamon stars. Marzipan. "It was not always easy to bake in 'third-world-ovens,'" she wrote.

For the children, the baking was all part of the anticipation for Christmas Eve. Depending on which country they

were living in, it might start with a candlelight service at church. Wherever they were, friends were always invited to join them later for a small meal of Sauerkraut, sausages, steamed salmon, and dark bread. The Christmas tree usually was in the living room with the doors closed.

"Then, a tiny sound!" Annelore wrote. "The tinkling of a bell – Christkind

must have come to put presents under the tree. " She said Christkind comes in the guise of a small angel who slips through a window left open for that very purpose. Only then could they open the door to the sound of music and the sight of the beautiful tree. She described the large tray of cookies waiting in that room as well, and if they were living in a country where the weather outside was cold enough, the aroma of Gluehwein would fill the air. "For the adults this would be the time to settle into the spirit of Christmas, enjoying along with the children, presents, sweets, and music by candle light until late into the night," she wrote. "Was there room for dessert? Never! But there was plenty of room for being grateful for friends, a delicious feast and of course, the tradition of celebrating together."

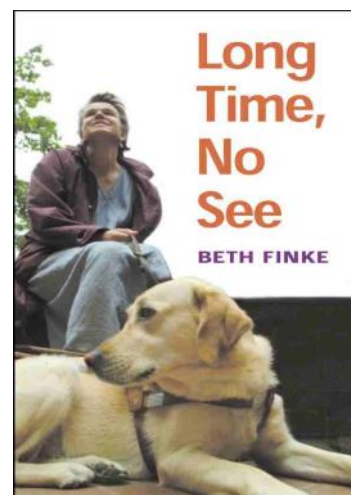
Annelore's classmate Sharon Kramer compiles essays by writers from the "Me, Myself and I" class I lead at the Chicago Cultural Center on the [Beth's Class blog](#), and you can [read Annelore's essay in its entirety](#) there to find out how searching in Buenos Aires for a traditional goose almost left her serving fish for their feast one year.



A depiction of Christkind, the Christmas angel.

Beth Finke's books: "Safe and Sound" and "Long Time No See" can be purchased at Sandmeyer's Book Store.

See Beth's column on page 9



Friday, 06 Jan 2017 –

12:00 PM

Venue: PianoForte Studios,
1335 S Michigan Avenue

FREE

Jana Pavlovskaja was born in Skopje, Macedonia in 1983. After completing her education in her native country as a class' valedictorian at The National Music Academy, she moved to The USA, to pursue Masters' level studies in Piano Performance with Dr. Winston Choi at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts (CCPA). She recently completed her studies of Artist Diploma in Piano Performance with Dr. Ludmila Lazar at Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

Jana has successfully performed as a soloist nationally, as well as internationally in Bulgaria, Italy, France, United Kingdom, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Germany and The U.S.A. Chicago-based performances include appearances in Ganz Hall, The Chopin Theatre, Nichols Hall, 19th Century Club, Millennium Park and Armour stage at Orchestra Hall.

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Artist-Led Tours

Tour [Voices of Wisdom](#) with the artists as your guides. Hear about the ideas and experiences that lay at the heart of their projects and learn about the techniques and materials used to create them, from steamrollers and seaweed to gold leaf and toilet paper rolls!

Thursday, January 19 from 12 to 1:30 pm
Melanie Dankowicz | Jonathan Franklin | Stephen Levin | Amy Reichert

[Space is limited. Reserve your spot >](#)

Sunday, March 19 from 2 to 4 pm
Sylvia Alotta | Susan Dickman | Ellen Holtzblatt | Judith Joseph | Carol Neiger

[Space is limited. Reserve your spot >](#)

Voices of Wisdom is on view in Spertus Institute's new Ground Level Arts Lab through March 19.

The Ground Level Arts Lab is made possible in part through the generous support of the Harry and Sadie Lasky and Charles & M.R.



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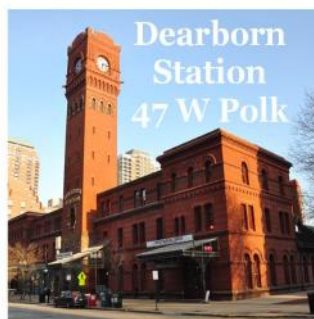
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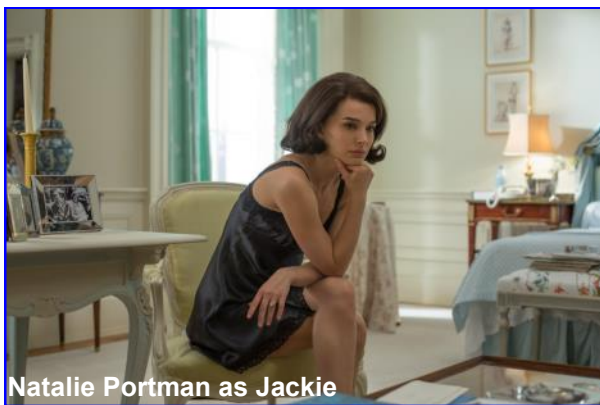
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Films to See During the Holidays



Natalie Portman as Jackie

Narrative Shape-Shifter - A Review Of "Kate Plays Christine"

http://newcityfilm.com/2016/12/05/narrative-shape-shifter/?utm_source=Newcity+Chiletter&utm_campaign=73d79d4903-Chicago+Artletter+6-28-16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_db7461bd4f-73d79d4903-306512713

The Romance Of Language - A Review Of "The Academy of Muses"

http://newcityfilm.com/2016/12/07/the-romance-of-language/?utm_source=Newcity+Chiletter&utm_campaign=73d79d4903-Chicago+Artletter+6-28-16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_db7461bd4f-73d79d4903-306512713

Humanity Crashing to the Shore - A Review Of "Fire at Sea"

http://newcityfilm.com/2016/12/06/humanity-crashing-to-the-shore/?utm_source=Newcity+Chiletter&utm_campaign=73d79d4903-Chicago+Artletter+6-28-16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_db7461bd4f-73d79d4903-306512713

Familial Urges - A Review Of "Don't Call Me Son"

http://newcityfilm.com/2016/12/06/familial-urges/?utm_source=Newcity+Chiletter&utm_campaign=73d79d4903-Chicago+Artletter+6-28-16&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_db7461bd4f-73d79d4903-306512713

Brittle, Bristling Bravura A Review of "Jackie"

RECOMMENDED

The vivid, even voluptuous chamber drama "Jackie" is Chilean director Pablo Larraín's second meditation on the life of famed figures to be released this year, alongside the more phantasmagoric "Neruda." Written by Noah Oppenheim, whose day job is executive in charge of NBC's "Today" show, the barbed, fictionalized narrative refracts several days in Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy's life. The intimate shards include the immediate aftermath of November 22, the day when she must vacate the White House, and several sessions of pointed queries of an unnamed LIFE magazine journalist (Billy Crudup, channeling political scribe Theodore H. White) she jousts with to etch her legacy, as well as that of her late husband. Dazed yet undaunted, grief-stricken but determined, genteel yet steely, Jackie is the role Natalie Portman was born to embody, swaddled in a brilliant skin of a score by Mica Levi. The twenty-nine-year-old classically trained experimental composer's music, like her work for Jonathan Glazer's "Under the Skin," is luxurious yet unnerving, sometimes cacophonous, other times disordered, and nothing less than lovely, even thrilling in its own right, but also piercingly, disarmingly subjective to the trauma onscreen. Portman indicates edginess at any doubt of Jackie's intelligence or her resolve to seal "Jack"'s legacy, the memory of a moment labeled "Camelot." Her Jackie is brittle yet bristling. (Click on link for the rest of the review)

http://newcityfilm.com/2016/12/07/brittle-bristling-bravura/?utm_source=Newcity+Chiletter&utm_campaign=73d79d4903-Chicago+Artletter+6-28-16

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DeMercat a La Planxa Getting a Face-lift Starting in the New Year

Via [Chicago Tribune](#):

There are few phrases more chilling for a restaurant than "closed for renovation," which often is code for "getting our stuff out before the landlord changes the locks."

But management at Mercat a la Planxa, the 8-year-old Spanish restaurant inside the Blackstone Hotel (638 S. Michigan Ave.), assured that this renovation is, indeed, a renovation.

"It will start Jan. 2 and last a couple of months," said general manager Andy Pishko. "It's pretty significant."

Plans include expanded seating for both bars, and new dining-room furniture to move the restaurant from rustic to contemporary. A wall will be opened up to create a private seating area overlooking the hotel lobby, and a few cosmetic touches will give the dining room cleaner lines and a sleeker look.

Fear not, Mercat aficionados; the honeycomb room divider and the Gaudi-inspired art high on the walls will remain.



While it's good to hear they're not closing, it does mean two of the better restaurants on Michigan Avenue in this area will be closed. Besides Mercat, the popular [Brasserie by LM restaurant at the Essex Inn](#) is closing for approximately two years to make way for their new tower.

<http://www.sloopin.com/>

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Vegetation Being Cleared Out of "Rezko Lot"

Looks like the "Rezko Lot" is getting some grooming - via a reader:

Just wondering if you've gotten word or any updates on the clearing out of the Rezko lot? It looks like it has been cleared of trees, debris, high grass etc. starting at Roosevelt and up to about 14th Street. Over the last couple of days I have seen this same, single green excavation type equipment out there and this morning noticed there were two guys who seemed to be standing guard. I assume it is preparation for what is to come, whatever that may be. I have attached a picture which is pretty fuzzy as I was zoomed in.

Two different readers sent us some pictures:



As you may recall this amazingly large lot is part of a gigantic (undisclosed) development plan by prominent real estate group Related Midwest. They haven't released many details about the plan, [but last we heard we would see something in 2017.](#)

This lot will [also have the Wells-Wentworth connector running through it](#) which is aimed at providing another north/south route to better connect the loop to south loop and Chinatown.

It's unclear if the city or the developer (or both) are clearing out this lot. Regardless it's definitely a sign of something to come.

<http://www.sloopin.com/>



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Columbia's Identity Crisis

A fixture in the South Loop for more than a century, the college has produced movie stars, moguls, musicians, and artists of every stripe. Can it stay relevant in the face of plunging enrollment?

BY TED C. FISHMAN, CHICAGO MAGAZINE

Columbia College may be Chicago's most , big deal. Over the course of its nearly 130-year history, this open-door school for the creative arts in the South Loop has turned out more than 100,000 alumni, many of whom have gone on to great things. Former Columbia students have garnered, by the school's own count, six Oscars, two Grammys, 20 Emmys, two Tonys, and two Pulitzers. Many more have found rewarding careers in art, film, music, theater, television, radio, photojournalism, and, more recently, digital gaming and design. The current president of HBO Films went to Columbia, as did *SNL* cast member Aidy Bryant and rapper Common, to name just a few. When you count the more than 1,000 teachers who currently make up the part-time faculty, to say nothing of the paying audiences who have patronized the Chicago arts institutions that alumni have founded or energized, Columbia's imprint on the city's creative and economic life grows geometrically.

Then, too, there is Columbia's physical footprint. Today the college owns 17 buildings in the South Loop: turn-of-the-century office towers, industrial lofts, former theaters, and more. Many of these properties were bought when the South Loop was shabby. Now, thanks in no small part to the school's outsize presence, the neighborhood bustles with students and young professionals and is pushing skyward with new condo towers. Columbia College Chicago is the South Loop's biggest property owner.

All this represents a remarkable state of affairs for a place that started out as an oratory institute in 1890, turned itself into a small trade school for radio broadcasters, and then, in the 1960s, under the stewardship of pioneering president Mike Alexandroff, morphed into an idiosyncratic arts college with a reputation for welcoming low-income students, counterculture provocateurs, and all manner of self-styled misfits who had rejected, or been rejected by, mainstream schools. By 1992, when Alexandroff retired, Columbia had 7,000 students and was one of the great success stories in American higher education—a school that had evolved in tandem with the city as it shed its provincial industrial past and grew into a global hub for the service and creative industries.

Now Columbia has hit another, much sharper turning point—one that's viewed by trustees as a long-overdue moment of reinvention and by some teachers and students as an existential threat. After peaking at 12,500 students in 2008, enrollment has been crashing. It now stands at slightly more than 8,000, having dropped by a staggering 2,000 in the past three years alone. Operating costs remain high, and competition from other arts schools is stiff. The flood of easy student loans and the pool of middle-class parents willing to give their children an arts education have both dried up in the wake of the Great Recession. Faced with tens of millions in lost tuition dollars, the administration has cut budgets, trimmed personnel, pared back academic programs, enlarged class sizes, and, in a risky gambit intended to at-

tract new students, promised new facilities that will cost tens of millions more. Those moves have angered unionized faculty and staff. Tensions boiled over in 2012 when, at a State of the College address, then-president Warrick Carter told a protesting student to "shut up." Within a year, Carter was gone.

(Continued on next page)

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(Continued from previous page)

Columbia College's Sliding Enrollment

Prospective students, and the cautious parents who support them, are increasingly wary of Columbia. The question trustees are grappling with is whether the damage can be contained, if not reversed. They've hired a new president and adopted a strategic plan that calls for making the school more selective (Columbia long had an open-admissions policy for applicants with high school diplomas) and for improving graduation rates, career prospects, and other crucial performance measures by which colleges soar or sink in national rankings.

The impending changes haven't quelled unrest at the school; in 2015 some part-time faculty and students occupied the new president's offices and had to be escorted out by campus security. Many faculty members question whether the turnaround, if it happens, will cost the college the quirky identity that has been its calling card for half a century.

Columbia has always stressed creativity and hands-on instruction over academics. The school's image as a last-chance option for students who do not find places at more prestigious institutions has generally been considered a point of pride by its leaders, an asset to be leveraged. For many years, Columbia's academic year started later than most, which allowed students to enroll after being rejected elsewhere or fleeing from other campuses. Today, 35 percent of Columbia students come from the bottom half of their high school classes, and only 43 percent of students graduate within six years. For decades, that figure was closer to 25 percent.

Until Columbia's recent troubles, those low graduation rates had never slowed the school's growth. Columbia served students who wanted a real-world career in a creative industry but who could not, or would not, go to more exclusive arts schools and conservatories. With open admissions and a lower tuition than at most private colleges—it was roughly \$6,000 in the early 1990s and hovers around \$25,000 today, considerably less than the cost of DePaul University, a competitor—low- and middle-income students could afford to enroll. Many still can, often with the help of scholarships. Today around 40 percent of Columbia students are low-income Pell grant recipients.

In decades past, when student loans were more easily available and the job market for graduates was more robust, spending a year or two in an arts college felt for many students like a low-risk proposition. If it didn't work out, they moved on.

Columbia's chief selling point has long been its industry-savvy teachers, whose connections could provide entrée into the job market. Well before other schools learned to rely on adjunct faculty, Columbia sold its part-time instructors as a strength. Students in broadcasting learned from the pros at WGN, writers learned from published novelists, and future advertising execs learned from the creatives at Leo Burnett. Photographers studied with the heirs to the Bauhaus artists who'd settled in Chicago. Aspiring jazz musicians studied with working artists, such as local legend Bill Russo. Actors worked with Second City veterans. It wasn't uncommon for students to drop out because they were already gigging regularly before they reached graduation. When CNN invented cable news, the fledgling network snapped up students from Columbia's TV department.

"I went to Columbia College after watching the movie *Scarecrow*," says Len Amato, the president of HBO Films. The 1973 Gene Hackman and Al Pacino vehicle made Amato want to write, direct, and act, so he enrolled. "The school wasn't accredited yet and there was no campus, but it had this progressive edge. The film department was on two floors of a loft building on Lake Shore Drive. I got there and they stuck a Bolex [movie camera] in my hand, put me in front of a Moviola [editing machine], and I was off making movies." Amato says the pros who taught there were role models because they were filmmakers first and teachers second. "They shared what they thought was realistic and told us that we could do it." For the rest of the story:

<http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/January-2017/Columbia-College/>

Winter Coat Drive

Second Presbyterian Church is offering its annual Winter Coat Drive for neighborhood friends in need. Donations of winter coats, warm clothing, sweatshirts, hoodies, sweaters, scarves, caps, gloves and mittens are needed! Also canned goods and non-perishable items are being received for holiday grocery bags. We invite you to bring your items to the church between the hours of

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Fourth anniversary of Newtown tragedy recognized in 'personal reflection'

By [Dylan Stableford](#) December 14, 2014 12:34 PM Yahoo News

Nicole Hockley, whose son, Dylan, was killed in the shootings, wrote an open letter to "[the mom I used to be](#)":

Two years ago, you were happy and whole. You had a plan for life — start a new business, get involved in the school PTA, teach your sons how to ride bicycles and play sports, spend as much time with your friends and parents as possible, watch your children mature, grow old with your husband. You were optimistic — a "glass half full" person who saw the silver lining in every cloud and often felt so much joy you thought you would burst. You always looked forward — never backwards, no regrets. You smiled and laughed a lot. You danced.

You aren't that person anymore.

Two years ago, on December 14, 2012, the world changed and you changed with it. A disturbed young man with access to high-powered firearms went to your sons' school and killed six educators and twenty first-graders. Your eldest son Jake survived, but was changed by the day he discovered some monsters are real. He describes it as the day "when hell came to my school." Your youngest son, Dylan, your beautiful baby boy who you thought of as pure love, with his captivating eyes, infectious giggle and warm deep cuddles, was killed. Shot multiple times, dying instantly in the arms of his special education assistant who also died while trying to protect him.

The tragedy changed every single aspect of your life, not only because of the obvious absence of your child, but because of the constant hole inside you that can never be filled. Your eldest son has been forced to grow up way too fast because of the unfathomable loss of his baby brother. The pain has altered the lines on your husband's face. The way you look at the world has changed. Your interactions with friends and family seem foreign. You've become much harder. No longer brimming with optimism, you are now someone far more realistic and still. And you look back so much more.

Remember

December 14, 2012

Sandy Hook

You view life through the prism of "before" and "after." Jake's fifth grade photos came recently. They are still sitting on a table because you haven't put them in the frame that sits next to Dylan's last school photo. It's too hard for you — too soon. Jake is getting older. But Dylan is frozen in time forever. Even after two years, there's this denial that is still very present inside you. You have Dylan's baby teeth and a lock of his hair on your bedside cabinet, beside the urn holding his ashes. That's all you have of your little boy now.

It hurts. It just hurts. You suppress your feelings as much as you can because you fear if you really let it out, you would never recover. If you started truly crying, you would never be able to stop. It would destroy you.

Hockley called on parents to take action to protect children from gun violence.

"For all the Moms and Dads reading this now — this doesn't have to be you," she wrote. "Because every gun-related death is a preventable death. These are not random acts. You can't ever say, 'This will never happen to me.' It can happen to anyone, at any point, at any place. You have to care enough and be insightful enough to do something before it's too late."

<http://news.yahoo.com/newtown-sandy-hook-shooting-2-years-later-173444284.html>

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Dec 25

[Christmas Day Masses](#)

8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.

NO 6 p.m. Mass

Dec 26 - Dec 27

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On Saturday night December 24th, we will host a Christmas Eve Candle-light worship at 7:00 p.m. This one-hour service will consist of lessons, carols, a meditation and prayer. The service will conclude with the traditional lighting of candles and singing "Silent Night, Holy Night". A Christmas table will precede the service from 5:30–6:30 p.m. All are welcome to celebrate this night of holy joy! 1936 S Michigan Ave.



Holiday Schedule at Grace

12/21 Blue Christmas Service @ 7pm

12/24 Christmas Eve Service @ 8pm

12/25 Sunday, Christmas Day Service @ 10am (no 8am service)

1/1 Sunday, New Year's Day Service @ 10am (no 8am service)

8:00 AM (40 min) Contemplative Eucharist

10:00 AM (60 min) Eucharist with Music

10:00 AM (40 min) Godly Play

11:30 AM (45 min) Faith Formation for Adults, most Sundays

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All are welcome at Holy Trinity in the Loop. At every service, Pastor Craig states, "Whoever you are, whatever the color of your skin, whoever you love or marry, or whatever you think of organized religion, you are welcome here."

The new worshipping community offers wine receptions following most services and anticipates volunteering in the South Loop neighborhood in the future.



South Loop Referral Group

Meets every other Friday at 7:30 am

Next Meeting
Fri., Dec 23 at
EW University
Student
Center Au Bon
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A Small business networking Group. All are welcome. Facebook at:
South Loop Referral Group 2015



South Loop Referral Group 2015 on facebook



Theatre. . . .

Cabaret

Thursday, Feb 23, Fri, Feb 24
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Monday, December 12, 2016

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[Robbery – Strongarm no weapon](#) on CTA train
1100 S State S · Dec 9 @ 8:50 am

[Pickpocketing](#) on CTA train
0 E Roosevelt Rd · Dec 8 @ 5:04 am

[Theft over \\$500](#) on street
100 W Polk St · Dec 8 @ 2:30 pm

[Robbery-Strongarm-no weapon](#) on sidewalk
600 S State · Dec 6 @ 4:45 pm

[Armed Robbery-handgun](#) in restaurant
600 S Wabash Ave · Dec 6 @ 4:06 pm

[Theft](#) from building
700 S State St · Dec 6 @ 1:35 pm

[Pickpocketing](#) on CTA train
0 E Harrison St · Dec 4 @ 5:30 pm

[Theft](#) in restaurant
500 S State St · Dec 3 @ 1:15 pm

[Theft under \\$500](#) from residence
1100 S Plymouth Ct · Dec 2 @ 11:00 am

[Motor Vehicle Theft](#) from parking lot
100 W Polk St · Dec 2 @ 9:20 pm

[Theft under \\$500](#) from CTA garage
1100 S State St · Dec 1 @ 5:00 pm

[Robbery – Armed with dangerous weapon](#) on street
600 S Federal St · Nov 30 @ 9:33 pm

[Theft](#) from building
700 S Michigan Ave · Nov 30 @ 12:00 pm

[Burglary-forcible entry](#) in retail store
700 S Clark St · Nov 29 @ 7:30 pm

[Theft under \\$500](#) on street
700 S Michigan Ave · Nov 28 @ 9:00 pm

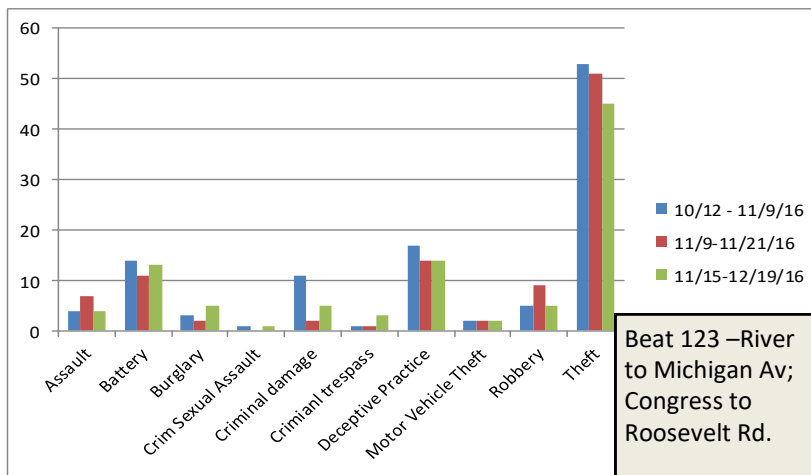
[Burglary - Forcible Entry](#) in school
800 S Wabash St · Nov 26 @ 6:220 pm

Beat 123 Meeting will be held the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm. The Meetings are held at University Center 525 S State.



January 11
March 8
May 10

February 8
April 12
June 14



The Crime Stats for Beat 123 shows no significant increase in crime in any category. Theft continues to be the highest crime category with 45 thefts reported compared to 51 last period.

Shots Fired During 'Disturbance' In Printers Row Late Monday: Police

By [Dong Jin Oh](#) | December 13, 2016 9:04am

CHICAGO — A "disturbance" in Printers Row in the Loop led to shots being fired Monday night, police said.

At 11:11 p.m. Monday, shots were fired in the 700 block of South Dearborn Street, police said.

No one was injured and no one was arrested.

No further information was immediately available.

<http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/>

Interested in learning more about becoming a Chicago Police Officer? Be sure to attend one of these upcoming events. CPD will open its Training Academy to all Chicagoans, where they will be invited to learn more from CPD leadership, interact directly with police officers and new recruits, and sample parts of the pre-recruitment tests such as the Power Test.

Saturday, January 14th
Training Academy Open House
1300 W. Jackson Blvd.
10a-2p

Saturday, January 28th
Training Academy Open House
1300 W. Jackson Blvd.
10a-2p

REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS

\$154,000

640 S FEDERAL 506
11/25/16

\$251,000

801 S PLYMOUTH 101
11/22/16

\$213,500

732 S FINANCIAL 311
11/22/16

\$507,000

714 S DEARBORN 6
11/22/16

\$445,000

520 S STATE 1511
11/21/16

\$295,000

1143 S PLYMOUTH 401
11/18/16

\$215,000

732 S FINANCIAL 309
11/16/16

\$172,000

40 E 8TH 611
11/16/16

\$339,500

1143 S PLYMOUTH 102
11/16/16

\$325,000

431 S DEARBORN 1602
11/15/16

\$345,000

2 E 8TH 102
11/15/16

\$162,000

40 E 9TH ST 613
11/14/16

\$190,000

801 S PLYMOUTH 620
11/14/16

\$375,000

1322 S WABASH 601
11/14/16

\$202,000

640 S FEDERAL 5
11/10/16

\$325,000

1133 S WABASH 603
11/10/16

For Sale

See listings on next page**Dearborn Street Realty****Tom Feddor,
312.203.3841****tomfeddor@gmail.com**

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A Dearborn Park real estate expert with extensive neighborhood knowledge and experience, I work tirelessly on behalf of my clients to deliver optimal results. Whether a buyer or a seller, I will educate you on all aspects of a transaction. I listen and put your interests first, finding the housing solution that perfectly fits your personal and financial needs. Contact me today with all your real estate questions.

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Broker

773.546.8045 | tzebrowski@koenigrubloff.com

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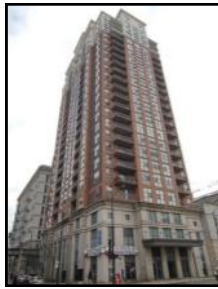
This publication is sponsored by the South Loop Referral Group, a professional and business networking group. It is our mission to provide the Printers Row area with current news and to promote local businesses and organizations. This publication will be distributed through email to individuals who wish to receive it. It is our hope that we will be able to expand our features and publish every 20 days. If you have any questions or would like to contribute information, please email us:

thedearbornexpress@gmail.com

41 E 8th St #2506

3 bed, 3 bath, 2,000 sq ft
\$649,900

Marcus Ibrahim,
Exit Strategy Realty
617.285.2966

**971 S Park Terrace**

3 bed, 2.5 bath, 1450 sq ft
\$485,000

Richard Anselmo,
@properties
773.432.0200

**720 S Dearborn St #203**

2 bed, 1.5 bath
\$365,000

Tim Zielonka
Redfin Corporation
1877.973.3346

**680 S Federal St #901**

2 bed, 2 bath, 1433 sq ft
\$289,900

Vincent Anzalone,
Cloud Realty Chicago
312.690.4220

**1101 S State St #1400**

3 bed, 2 bath 1412
Sq Ft
\$449,900

Paulette Edwards,
Coldwell Banker Res-
idential

**1 E 8th St #309**

1 bed, 1 bath, 750 sq ft
\$225,000

Amber Alfonso,
The Building Group Inc
312.466.8100

**600 S Dearborn #207**

2 bed, 1.5 baths 1100 sq ft
\$329,000

Anita Lynn, ADL Realty

**431 S Dearborn #1005**

2 bed, 2 bath, 1500 sq ft
\$314,000

Sara Zamora,
Baird & Warner
773.456.1260

**888 S Michigan Ave #900**

3 bed, 2 bath 2170 Sq Ft
\$825,000

Bruce Glazer
@Properties
765.914.8199

**161 W Harrison, #501**

2 bed, 2 bath, 1450 Sq Ft
\$365,000

Nancy Thomas,
Berkshire Hathaway
312.671.1191

