



Mary Schmich

Readers tap memories along with their ashes

You have become soooo 9/12." 9/12? I'd never heard that expression until a reader tsked at me in response to a column in which I advocated the proposed ban on smoking in Chicago's bars and restaurants and predicted that one day it will seem weird that we ever smoked in those places.

This reader, though, found the smoking ban very "9/12," meaning, I assume, that she thinks it's government intrusion on par with the Patriot Act. I don't, but it's a great phrase and I look forward to using it.

Meanwhile, other readers wrote with tender memories of the days when smoking infiltrated life's every nook and cranny.

"A couple of days ago, I, too, was musing about how much society has changed in their attitudes toward smoking," wrote Rachel of Park Ridge. "My dad had picked up me and my 18-month-old daughter Grace in his 1995 Caprice Classic. Grace was playing with all the fun stuff on the backseat door: the handle, the window opener and the ashtray. This 'convenience,' the backseat ashtray (in both backseat doors), brought to mind a very funny image. I pictured two people smoking up front using the middle ashtray under the dash and two people in the backseat smoking using the backseat ashtrays. The image of a car full of smoking people just seemed silly to me. I don't think I've ever seen a car full of people smoking."

You haven't? That makes me feel very old. Here's another prehistoric fact: The place where you plug in your cell phone? It used to be for the car's cigarette lighter.

"How about the Silent Butler?" wrote Shirley Gould. "It was basically an oversized ashtray, with a handle to hold it by and a flip-up cover. As hostess, I would go around the room, emptying ashtrays into it; then of course dumping the ashes in the garbage. When we moved into a new house in the 1960s, my sister-in-law brought one as a house gift. It was chrome; when she saw we had brass lamps, she insisted I return it to get one in brass."

How about a Silent Butler for a new age—say one that collects your recycling in blue bags and carries it to the Dumpster too?

"When I worked as a nurse in the hospitals in the '70s," wrote Suzy, "patients could smoke. I remember helping some of them light up because they couldn't do it for themselves."

Now that's prehistoric. From Jo Stewart of Chicago, who eventually kicked a 40-year cigarette addiction abetted by Bette Davis: "There I was in 1946, 19, a movie aficionado, and realizing that all you needed to be really chic and desirable was a satin blouse and a cigarette."

Now all you need is a satin blouse and a tattoo.

Steve Jenne had a different kind of smoking memory: "For a period of months I tried to contact Gov. Blagojevich to ascertain his feelings regarding secondhand smoke, first several times by mail, followed by numerous attempts through his Web site. All of these attempts went unanswered. I then e-mailed the same Web site with an offer to donate money to a family that had suffered a tragedy due to a fire. I received a phone call within hours from a representative of the governor. I'm guessing if I had offered to donate money to Blagojevich's campaign, I would have been invited to dinner in Springfield."

And for a big donation, Steve, you probably could have smoked at dinner.

"I recently moved to the Chicago area from California, where smoking in public buildings has been banned for years," wrote Sam Vance of Geneva. "On my very first house-hunting trip here, I was astounded to learn that smoking was still permitted indoors in Illinois."

Another tip for transplants, Sam: The surest way to get Chicagoans to balk at something is to tell them Californians do it.

"From the review of the census data it appears smoking is only declining among our older population," wrote Jonathan Pinard, who sent census abstracts. "As a matter of fact, the single biggest contributor to the decline in the rate of smoking among Americans may be the aging of our population." At least there are some advantages to getting old.

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Drug sting nets 19 arrests

2-year operation considered big blow to Chicago-area gang

By Rudolph Bush and David Heinzmann
Tribune staff reporters

A long-running sting on the Four Corner Hustlers street gang resulted in the arrest of 19 people Tuesday, including an alleged gang chief said to have run drug operations on the South Side and a Nigerian man authorities believe is one of the city's main heroin distributors.

Operation Head Start, as federal agents and Chicago police called the nearly two-year operation, represents a significant blow to the gang, which engaged in its own street sales and supplied other gangs, authorities said.

Among those taken into custody was Jerome T. Murray, 38, of Crete, who investigators charge ran one of the four drug dealing zones the gang operates in Chicago and the



The FBI is hunting Stephen Dyer (from left), Darryl Franklin and Ernest McCarter, who have been charged in the bust.

surrounding suburbs.

"Murray was the head of the Four Corner Hustlers for the entire South Side. He was responsible for narcotics distribution, getting street taxes

and gang-related violence," said Chicago Police Sgt. Joseph Brennan.

Authorities also arrested Oluwadamilola Are, 32, of Chicago Heights, a Nigerian man

who an informant and former Hustler pegged as the primary heroin distributor on the South and West Sides.

In all, the government charged 22 men and Murray's wife, Catherine Fauntleroy, with possessing and intending to distribute 50 grams of crack cocaine, 11 pounds of powder cocaine, 2.2 pounds of heroin and an unspecified amount of marijuana.

The crackdown "did a pretty good job of dismantling the entire network," Brennan said.

Three of the charged men, Stephen Dyer, of Chicago; Er-

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Chicago Police Officers Mark Wilson (right) and Tom Walsh issue a warning to a bicyclist Tuesday in the city's Lakeview neighborhood. Next month, police will begin issuing tickets to bicyclists who disobey traffic laws.

Bicyclists not free to ride as they please

A police crackdown in the city's Lakeview neighborhood carries a warning: Traffic laws that apply to cars also apply to bikes.

By Kelly Kennedy
Tribune staff reporter

When bicycle police stopped Jacob Meehan at Roscoe and Halsted Streets in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, he immediately knew what he had done.

"I was going the wrong direction on a one-way," Meehan said.

"No, we caught him going through a stop sign," the officer said.

"Oh," Meehan said. Police spent six hours

Tuesday on bike patrol in Lakeview, giving out 37 warnings to bicyclists for running red lights, riding on sidewalks and, indeed, going the wrong direction on a one-way street. Next month, police will start handing out tickets, with fines that range from \$25 to \$250.

Members of Mayor Richard Daley's Bicycling Ambassadors, an educational outreach group, were also in Lakeview on Tuesday, passing out bike safety information and maps showing

routes with bike lanes or wide streets. They'll be out again in Lakeview from 1 to 9 p.m. Wednesday.

"It's kind of annoying because I was trying to do my thing, but it's understandable," Meehan said about the police stop. "At least they were gracious enough to give me a warning."

Then he asked the officer if he should be wearing a helmet in Chicago.

Yes. PLEASE SEE **BICYCLISTS**, PAGE 6

Safety tips

Don't ride against traffic: 20 percent of all car-bike collisions involve cyclists going the wrong way

Don't hug the curb: The farther from the curb you ride, the better motorists can see you. It also helps you avoid people opening car doors.

Ride in the middle: When you're moving at the speed of traffic or if the lane is too small for cars to pass you safely.

No weaving: Don't weave around parked cars

More safety information: Visit the Web site www.cityofchicago.org/transportation.

Source: Chicago Department of Transportation

Trades, city OK tentative contract

4-year agreement covers 8,000, runs through June 2007

By Delroy Alexander
Tribune staff reporter

Building-trade unions representing more than 8,000 city workers reached a tentative contract agreement Tuesday after more than two years of negotiations with the Daley administration.

The deal with construction workers follows a similar tentative contract last week with unions representing 150 nurses and an earlier agreement with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The city said it also expects to conclude talks with 3,600 civilian employees and sergeants in the Police Department in the next few weeks.

Neither the administration nor the unions would discuss details of the new four-year pact. It is expected to be ratified by nearly 30 unions in the next week, said Dennis Gannon, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO.

"It was at the end of the road," said Gannon of the discussions. "It took about a month or so, but we finally wrapped it up."

As the sometimes contentious negotiations dragged on, Gannon was among those with harsh words for the administration. In April he raised the possibility of demonstrations during the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting in Chicago, but he later agreed to continue talks.

The agreement, if ratified, would be retroactive to July 1, 2003, and would run to June 30, 2007.

Active union members will

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Drought sparks alerts across area

By Hal Dardick, John Biemer and Jeff Long
Tribune staff reporters

Concerned about crops failing from drought, Kane and Will County leaders Tuesday issued local disaster declarations, while regional officials warned of heightened fire risks from arid conditions.

Will County Executive Larry Walsh issued his county's declaration to highlight the plight of 850 farmers who work about half of the 540,000 acres in the county.

"With the loss reports we're already getting from the farm bureau, we know the econom-



Will County Executive Larry Walsh raised concerns over the plight of farmers, as did officials in Kane County.

ic impact of this drought on Will County will be huge," Walsh said. "Agriculture still plays a major role in the economy of Will County."

A survey done Thursday indicated that 60 percent of 925 farmers in Will and southern Cook County expected a 40

percent crop loss this season, said Mark Schneidwind, manager of the Will County Farm Bureau. An additional 20 percent expected a 70 percent crop loss, and the remaining 20 percent estimated loss-

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Developer seeks to hold prosecutors in contempt

By Rudolph Bush
Tribune staff reporter

A politically connected real estate developer convicted of obstruction of justice filed a rare motion in federal court Tuesday asking a judge to hold prosecutors in contempt for allegedly lying before the court in his trial and attempting to cover up the lie.

An attorney for Peter Palivos claimed in court that the government's star witness in his 2003 trial provided damning testimony because the prosecution deceived him and the court about scientific evidence.

The witness, real estate attorney Nicholas Black, testified that Palivos instructed him in 2000 to concoct two

post-dated notes to throw off federal agents probing the fraudulent sale of the Waterfalls restaurant in downtown Antioch. The restaurant, co-owned by Palivos' brother, George, is now closed.

Palivos' attorney, Raymond Smith, told Judge Joan Humphrey Lefkowitz that Black had sworn in a June deposition that "the government deceived him into thinking that it had scientific tests that proved that the crucial notes in the obstruction case were created by him in 2000."

The effect, Palivos has alleged, was to coerce Black into cooperating and falsely testifying.

"The government chose the

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