

Joe & Ted's excellent PlayPen adventure

Local brothers create city, state's only 100% Black-owned spirit company



Heart of the 'Hood

by Felicia Dechter

Joe Moton and his older brother, Ted Robinson, grew up in the Little Italy neighborhood and at the time, it wasn't the bustling urban hub it is now. There were housing projects and hardships, said the 37-year-old Moton.

Yet even back then, the pair had big dreams. One day, they were going to create a business, centered around their love for Chicago, and good times.

Last July, in the midst of the pandemic, Moton had to re-think what he wanted to do with his life. He works in the downtown hospitality industry, experienced in the bar and restaurant scene, and while doing so he developed a passion for vodka, often experimenting with the newest popular brand. After trying several products and looking for something different, Moton thought, "Why not start my own



(L) Joe Moton, right, and Ted Robinson. (R) PlayPen Vodka is the only 100% black-owned spirit brand bottled and produced in Illinois.



vodka company?"

He tossed around the idea of what he would call his business. Then one day while enjoying some summer fun and sun on his friend's boat in the area from Navy Pier north to Oak St. known as the "Play Pen," Moton thought PlayPen -- PlayPen Vodka.

He jotted down his idea, and started looking for a partner.

During an afternoon of visiting at their mother's house, Moton and Robinson started talking about vodka and the idea of PlayPen. Robinson, who has worked in corporate jobs his entire adult life, decided he was all in, bring-

ing both his finances and skills to the table. Thus, PlayPen Vodka went from an idea to an action.

"The blend of corporate discipline and organization, and the 'get it done, while having a fun' hospitality attitude became a recipe for success," said Moton, an Edgewater resident. "PlayPen is a fun time, a good time."

Black History Month started Monday, and I'm thrilled for Moton and Robinson who, after perfecting the vodka last Fall, are now launching PlayPen. But they didn't just create a smooth-tasting alcoholic beverage. They also have created the first 100%,

Black-owned spirit company in Chicago, bottled and produced in Illinois. Knowing that has brought them a feeling of accomplishment, but also a feeling of responsibility to make the best product they can at an affordable price. (\$19.99 per bottle).

Congratulations to them both.

"We didn't realize it until two to three weeks ago," said Moton. "We knew we were the only Black spirit company in Chicago, but reaffirmed it in the state. We thought it was newsworthy and we gotta let people know."

Keeping it local and wanting high quality were crucial, so Mo-

ton and Robinson spent months researching which grain to use for PlayPen, which is made in small batches.

"Because we are from the Midwest, corn became the grain of choice," said Moton. "Midwest corn is local and accessible."

"Most vodkas are gluten-free, and corn helps with that aspect," he said. "Corn is not only local to the Midwest but also a quality grain for crafting vodka."

With that figured out, the brothers then wondered how to actually get their vodka made. They sought a local distillery that could help bring their vision to reality. The pair called nine distilleries a drivable distance from Chicago, and heard back from only four, with one being the Melrose Park-based Skeptic Distillery. Moton and Robinson met and decided to partner with Skeptic and together they crafted a recipe. While some vodkas are cooked, PlayPen is cold vacuum distilled at temperatures lower than 50 degrees, and six times carbon filtered, which brings out an unparalleled taste, Moton said. (And I love their cool Chicago skyline label and wooden cap, which resembles the wood from a boat).

"It's smooth, clean and crisp," said Moton. "We gave it different tries and chose from that."

PLAYPEN see p. 10

CHICAGO MATH & SCIENCE ACADEMY
CMSA
2004

BEST HIGH SCHOOLS
USNews RANKINGS

1
LEVEL 1

Chicago Math and Science Academy:
A Tradition of EXCELLENCE in ROGERS PARK

2021-2022 Applications due by February 10, 2021 GRADES 6-12

Rated Level 1 or 1+ by CPS 8 Years in a Row

#1 Public Charter High School in Illinois as ranked by U.S. News and World Report

100% college acceptance and \$44 million in merit scholarships over the last six years

Class of 2020 now attends: Northwestern University, Loyola University, Howard University, Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Illinois Chicago, North Park University, University Illinois Urbana Champaign, Columbia College, DePaul University, California Polytechnic State University, and Northern Illinois University to name a few.

Enroll Today
at www.cmsaonline.net
LOTTERY DATE: FEBRUARY 12, 2021

PLAYPEN from p. 3

Their goal in the first 12 months is to be in restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and places like Walmart. Hopefully, after Chicago, will come other markets in nearby states. Moton said the next improvement will be increasing the six times distilled to 10 times and also creating PlayPen Black, an expensive, quality, luxury vodka.

“PlayPen is just about hopes -- relaxing, enjoying yourself and pour it and play,” Moton said. “That’s our take on it and we’ll see where it goes I guess.”

And how is PlayPen best served? Moton drinks his martini style, with three shots of PlayPen and one shot of water. When I laughed and told him there had better be a bed nearby if I were to drink that, he said lightweights like me should use two shots PlayPen and one shot of water -- shaken or stirred, martini-style.

We wish Moton and Robinson the best of luck in their new endeavor. And if you do get yourself a bottle of PlayPen, please, drink responsibly.

Dori ... All of us at this newspaper were shocked and saddened to hear of the death of the trend-setting, beautiful PR guru Dori Wilson. Unfortunately, we were going to press just when we heard of the news. Our condolences go out to Dori’s family and friends. Please read our extended cover-



Bowzer the turtle was rescued recently from Indian Boundary Park in West Ridge.

age next week.

Indian Boundary rescue!... Kudos to some quick-thinking Indian Boundary Park employees who recently saved the life of a turtle that was abandoned in the park’s lagoon.

Apparently, a park visitor alerted employee Marvin Tate that a turtle was stranded on the lagoon’s ice. It was around 5 p.m. and getting dark, and I’m told the turtle should have been hibernating and because of the cold, it was barely moving. Had it been left there overnight, it surely would have frozen to death.

Tate alerted another employee, Cynthia McGhee, and she and yet another employee pulled the turtle to them on the ice “like a hockey puck” using broomsticks

and poles. They placed him safely in a tote box and McGhee called animal rescue places but had no luck finding anyone who would take the turtle.

So, she brought the lucky tortoise home. According to research done by McGhee’s son, Felix, an animal lover, it seems to be a yellow-bellied slider, about seven-inches long. It is a land and water turtle belonging to the family Emydidae.

Felix also found out that when turtles hibernate, if it gets warm, sometimes the pond or water they’re hibernating in will “burp” and the hibernating turtle will get pushed up with the bubble.

The turtle, now named Bowzer, will stay with Felix, who has a worm farm and keeps a handy

supply. Bowzer swims in the bathtub and will live there until April, when he will be returned to the lagoon with other turtles.

Park supervisor Phil Martini asked me to help get the word out to people to please not drop their unwanted pets off at Indian Boundary. Bowzer was an easy rescue, but most times, that’s not the case.

“If there’s something we can do we will, but generally, we don’t interfere,” said Martini. It’s not a sanctuary, so “please don’t drop off pets because they won’t be taken care of and they’ll die,” said Martini, who has supervised the park on and off since 1988. “There’s no mechanism for them to be cared for or to get to a shelter.”

Throughout the years people have abandoned various animals, but last year was the most unusual. Someone dropped off a domesticated skunk, one that had been de-scented so it had no defense. The skunk had double stripes, which identified it as not being from around here, Martini said.

Bowzer was very fortunate because he was reachable, Martini said. He’ll be reintroduced to Indian Boundary’s lagoon in April since it’s believed that’s where he came from.

POLICE BEAT from p. 8

register was damaged. Video showed the offenders using a sledgehammer to break in around 4:53 a.m.

On Jan. 26, a group of about 6 offenders used a black Jeep and another vehicle as they broke into groceries, liquor stores, and retail shops throughout Lakeview and Old Town.

They wrapped up their night by brazenly dislodging and stealing an ATM from an Old Town service station that was open for business with an employee present.

Police issued two community alerts about the burglary team later the same day. In those bulletins, detectives linked the break-ins to a series of other retail break-ins that were reported in Lincoln Park on Dec. 26, Jan. 1 and 20.

According to CPD, last week’s crew consisted of about six Black males between 18- and 30-years-old who wore masks, gloves, and dark clothing.

Anyone with information about the burglars can contact Area Three detectives at 312-744-8263.

Group beats, robs passenger on Red Line

A group of up to eight offenders beat and robbed a 61-year-old man aboard a Red Line train in River North Jan. 29, police said. Earlier in the morning, another group robbed a man of his backpack and phone on the Blue Line downtown.

The incidents and other recent reports reinforce evidence that the CTA train system’s violent crime rate has doubled despite having significantly fewer riders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most recently, the 61-year-old was riding the Red Line around 5:20 a.m. when a group of about eight young men battered him and took his wallet at the Grand Red Line CTA station, according to CPD spokesperson Kellie Bartoli.

He sought help after exiting the

train at Van Buren. Fire department personnel treated him for his injuries at the scene, Bartoli said.

She said the suspects are several Black males between 18- and 22-years-old. Police searched for the offenders in a pedestrian tunnel that links the Red and Blue Line trains, but no arrests were made.

Around 12:30 a.m. Jan. 29, a group of four young men or teenagers approached a man on the Blue Line near Washington. The group told the victim, who’s in his 40’s, to hand over his backpack and phone. He complied and the offenders fled, according to Chicago police.

Man shot with rifle inside River North hotel room

A man is hospitalized after being shot in the leg with a rifle while inside a River North hotel room Jan. 30. The shooter fled the scene with the weapon before police arrived.

Police responded to a call of a person shot in a third-floor room of the Hampton Inn, 33 W. Illinois, around 7:20 p.m. Officers found an 18-year-old man inside a guest room with a gunshot wound to his left leg.

In a media statement, CPD said the victim was inside the room when someone “entered the room with a firearm and fired shots at the victim.”

One shell casing from a rifle round was also found inside the room, according to a CPD report. Officers at the scene said the victim was not cooperating with their investigation.

Cops applied a tourniquet to stem the victim’s blood loss until paramedics arrived to transport him to Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

The shooter was described as a Black male wearing a pink hoodie and blue jeans at the time of the incident. Witnesses reported seeing three men walk out of the hotel carrying two duffle bags moments before police arrived, but it was not immediately clear if they were involved in the case.

Area Three detectives are investigating.

Hotel parties have been an on-going source of shootings and gun-related incidents around the downtown area since room rates have nose-dived during the COVID pandemic.

Armed crew robs food delivery drivers in Edgewater and Uptown

Groups of armed robbers targeted two food delivery drivers within 15 minutes in Edgewater and nearby Uptown on Jan. 29, but neither victim was carjacked. One of the hold-ups took place a block from where two armed hijackings were reported on Jan. 28.

In Friday’s first incident, police said a 28-year-old man was robbed as he prepared to make a delivery on the 1300 block of W. Thorndale around 6:50 p.m.

As he stepped to the back of his vehicle, a black SUV pulled up and five men got out. One of the men displayed a handgun and ordered the victim to hand over his property. The crew got away with his wallet, keys, phone, and cash, according to Officer Ronald Westbrooks, a CPD spokesperson.

The offenders got back into their SUV and drove away — only to come back down the block moments later. Westbrooks said the victim thought they were going to take his car, but they continued driving.

SELF CARE from p. 7

tion.

- Make healthy choices to lose weight: Trying to lose weight but not certain where to begin? Get some valuable nutritional advice and follow a plan like the DASH for Health diet to reduce your risk for heart disease, diabetes and other conditions.

- Overcome depression, stress and anxiety: You’re not alone. These are challenging times and a third of your fellow Americans

According to the victim, the robbers were five Black men between 5’-5” and 5’-8” tall who wore black ski masks and black clothing. Their vehicle may have been a Jeep Cherokee.

Then, just after 7 p.m., another food delivery driver was robbed by five men in the 1600 block of W. Carmen, Westbrooks said.

That driver, age 32, returned to his car after making a delivery when the group walked up to him and two of the offenders displayed handguns. According to Westbrooks, the men threatened to kill him before taking his earbuds, eyeglasses, and car keys.

After the robbery, all five robbers got into a silver Chevy Equinox and drove westbound on Carmen. Once again, the victim’s car was not taken. He told police the robbers were Black males in their late teens who weigh between 120- and 150 lbs and wore black clothing.

On Jan. 28, a group of four offenders carjacked two drivers just minutes apart on the 1200 block of W. Thorndale, about a block from where Friday’s first hold-up was reported.

Five men in a black SUV robbed a man on the 5200 block of N. Lakeview in Andersonville around 7:50 p.m. Jan. 28, too.

No one is in custody for any of the crimes. Area Three detectives are investigating.

— Compiled by CWBChicago.com

are struggling with their mental health. A healthcare provider can talk to you about how you’re feeling and even prescribe medication, if clinically indicated.

- Refill your prescriptions: Don’t run out of your routine medication – if you’re in a jam, resources such as Minute-Clinic can help you get a refill of your prescriptions.

Angela Patterson is a Chief Nurse Practitioner for Minute-Clinic at CVS

Lakeview Township Real Estate For Sale**Real Estate For Sale**

030303

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS
COUNTY DEPARTMENT - CHANCERY DIVISION
LOWELL HOUSE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION
Plaintiff,

-v-
TRINITY GREEN LLC-88 W SCHILLER

Defendants
19 CH 10492
88 W. SCHILLER ST, #1001
CHICAGO, IL 60610

NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on January 14, 2020, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 10:30 AM on February 25, 2021, at The Judicial Sales Corporation, One South Wacker Drive, CHICAGO, IL, 60606, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

Commonly known as 88 W. SCHILLER ST, #1001, CHICAGO, IL 60610
Property Index No. 17-04-209-043-1008
The real estate is improved with a condominium.
The judgment amount was \$60,897.28.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in “AS IS” condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information. If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver’s license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, Thomas M. Olson, KOVITZ SHIFRIN NESBIT Plaintiff’s Attorneys, 175 N. Archer Avenue, Mundelein, IL, 60060 (847) 537-0500. Please refer to file number CLOW00139010.

THE JUDICIAL SALES CORPORATION
One South Wacker Drive, 24th Floor, Chicago, IL 60606-4650 (312) 236-SALE

You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.jscc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

Thomas M. Olson
KOVITZ SHIFRIN NESBIT
175 N. Archer Avenue
Mundelein IL, 60060
847-537-0500
E-Mail: tolson@ksnlaw.com
Attorney File No. CLOW00139010
Attorney Code. 38862
Case Number: 19 CH 10492
TJSC#: 41-76

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff’s attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.
Case # 19 CH 10492

Legal Ads DBA Public Notices.

**We’ll Run Your Ad
For 3 Consecutive Weeks
For Only \$150.00.
Call 773-465-9700**

VIEW ILLINOIS PUBLIC NOTICES FREE ONLINE!
assessments | budgets | schools | taxes
foreclosures | hearings | adoptions | estates

WWW.PUBLICNOTICEILLINOIS.COM
A free service provided by newspapers of the Illinois Press Association

PNI
Public Notices
Illinois