

## NEWS

By Tricia Parker | Staff Writer

## Harris Theater appoints new CEO



Paul Organitsak (Harris Theater)

The Harris Theater has named Paul Organitsak president and CEO, ending the 12-year tenure of former President and Managing Director Michael Tiknis.

Organitsak previously served as vice president of programming for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, where he oversaw a wide range of performance, including dance, theater and cabaret performances. His 30-year career also includes stints at Dance Umbrella (Boston), the American College Dance Festival Association (ACDFA) and the Pittsburgh Dance Council.

"I am honored and thrilled to join the [Harris] team," says Organitsak. "Its status as a . . . cultural jewel of Chicago drew me immediately to this position."

Opened in November 2003, the Harris hosts the "most diverse offerings of any venue in Chicago," according to a company press release, partnering with more than 35 performing arts organizations across the city.

## GEMS hosts mascot contest

GEMS World Academy's new dragon mascot, which debuted in December, is still missing one important thing.

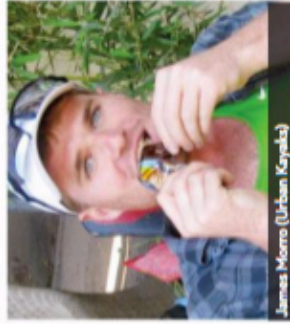
"We hope to have a name by the first week of March," says Marketing Coordinator Ashley Demma, adding that GEMS is sponsoring an online contest seeking a moniker for the mascot. GEMS created the new mascot in advance

of its Upper School opening this fall. "We've had a very positive response to our mascot," says Demma about the ice-blue dragon. With its flattened ears and pointy wings, the new mascot inspires courage and willpower.

"The dragon provides an apt symbol for the risk-taking, thoughtful and entrepreneurial spirit of our students, faculty, parents and community," says Demma.

Going forward, GEMS sports teams will be known as "The Dragons." This is the first time in its three-year history that GEMS has had a mascot.

## Urban Kayaks' James Morro elected president of water safety group



James Morro (Urban Kayaks)

James Morro, one of three owners at Urban Kayaks, has been elected president of the Chicago Harbor Safety Committee (CHSC), a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring the safety of Chicago's waterways. Formed in 2013, the committee's geographic area includes the Chicago River and the entire Chicago lakefront.

"We all deeply care about the waterway and how it works . . . the relationship among everybody," says Morro. "I'm happy to step up and contribute." Morro says the CHSC includes "at least 20" stakeholders from nine different sectors.

In his one-year term as president, Morro says he will be especially committed to smoothing the waters between large and small crafts. "The relationship with kayak operators and barge companies was a little rocky to say the least," Morro says, adding that in recent months the CHSC has earned accolades for its spirit of collaboration.

## NEWS

Continued from page 2.

Fronza. "I don't hear much noise, not too many women in high heels," he laughs.

In November, Hyatt also added 28 additional meeting rooms in the Pedway space, as well as new ceilings, new wall coverings and new finishings.

Feilen says the "final" step is installing permanent signage from the ceiling, directing users to certain rooms.

"I think it's very huge," says Feilen, about the renovations. "For eight or 10 years a large portion of the Pedway . . . looked like it was impoverished. Now you walk through there and it's a lively, brightly lit, occupied space. It does a lot for the complex."

## Cloud Gate's "blue cage" still in limbo



"Summer Vault" (Piston)

After a series of setbacks, the status of a 12-foot-wide blue domed sculpture in Millennium Park is uncertain. The sculpture, called "Summer Vault" is located near the south east corner of Cloud Gate and was due to be removed in April 2016.

"It seems entirely forgotten by anyone who could do something about it," says architect Paul Preissner, designer of "Summer Vault."

Originally designed to be a lakefront food kiosk, "Summer Vault" was selected by the 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial while still incomplete.

"There were still parts of the designs that weren't finished," says Preissner, who says that an interior table and cabinetry would make it more "functional" as a service kiosk.

Restrictions on food vendors in Millennium Park eliminated the option of

using "Summer Vault" for commerce.

On a late February weeknight, what looked like brown animal tracks covered the floor of "Summer Vault," dotted the walls and peeling paint could be spotted on "Summer Vault's" screens, exposing black metal. Black plastic zip ties secured the front and back doors.

"They're supposed to have formal locking mechanisms," said Preissner. "Because it's in Chase Promenade there's a lot of limitation as to what they can do in terms of service. They don't want any construction occurring."

"Summer Vault" was due to be shipped to Chicago's Washington Park last April, but Alderman Leslie Hairston (5th) blocked the move, after constituents complained about "Summer Vault's" size.

For now, the city is still cagey about where "Summer Vault" will go.

"I'm not sure how long it will remain," says DCASE spokesperson Mary May.

## Crown Fountain undergoes repairs

A city spokesperson says Millennium Park's Crown Fountain is getting more than its usual winter repairs this season.

"Several granite and glass blocks are being repaired, and the technology is being upgraded," says DCASE spokesperson Mary May.

Clear plastic tarps encase each fountain, while blue fencing blocks off the pedestrian area in between.

May says the Michigan Avenue fountains, completed in 2004, will be turned on around April 15.

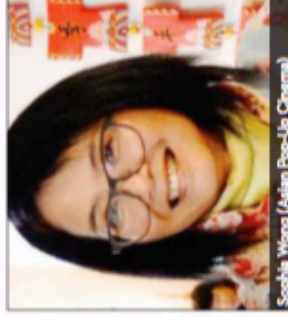
## Asian film fest begins three-month run

The Asian Pop-Up Cinema film festival will return to AMC Theatres and the Cultural Center this month, bringing the Far East to within walking distance of Lakeshore East.

From March until May, the festival will present 18 films from seven countries, including Mongolia, China, Vietnam and Tibet.

Ten of the screenings will be free.

"We are like a little soldier," says festival director Sophia Wong, about the fast-growing festiva in its third year.



Sophia Wong (Asian Pop-Up Cinema)

Wong emphasized the festival's focus on dramas versus martial arts films, saying that the programming "moves beyond stereotypes." Wong says AMC and the Cultural Center appealed as festival anchors for their proximity to a "large" population of Asian professionals. Other screenings will take place at smaller venues downtown.

Tickets are \$10 for regular screenings and \$15 for films with special Q&As.

Members of the New Eastside Neighbors Meetup receive a discount for the March 29 screening of "My Egg Boy" with the discount code ESmeetup. [www.asianpopupcinema.org/tickets](http://www.asianpopupcinema.org/tickets)

## Light-up seesaws coming to Navy Pier

Fifteen glow-in-the-dark seesaws will be coming to Navy Pier's Polk Bros. Park from March 10 to May 12. The seesaws produce an audible tone when they teeter.

The installation, called "Impulse," toured a handful of cities, including Brussels, London and Montreal, before settling down in Chicago.

## City Winery debuts Riverwalk domes

City Winery says it will open three heated private domes on the Riverwalk, available for sipping wine under the skyline at \$100-\$150. The see-through domes will be open March 17-April 30 and include a carafe of wine, cheese and charcuterie. Sessions last 90 minutes. The domes, open from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. daily, can accommodate groups of two to six.

[www.citywinery.com/chicago](http://www.citywinery.com/chicago)