

# Chicagoland

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## In mayoral race, forget high school

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So, yes, Gery Chico undoubtedly understands some things about Chicago that Rahm Emanuel doesn't.

But that doesn't indicate who can best manage this city. Governing a city requires seeing it on many levels, and sometimes an outsider's eye is the clearest one. Emanuel, insider and outsider, is the front-runner in the mayor's race. Chico is his closest rival. They'd both, probably, make decent mayors.

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The candidate who sees those divisions clearly, and has the best plan for repairs, is the one to vote for, regardless of where he or she went to high school.



At Super H Mart in Naperville, Esther Liu eyeballs a winter melon with her daughter Patricia Liu, a student at Aurora University. When the parents make the seven-hour drive to visit from Bloomington, Minn., they always make a point to shop for groceries. CHUCK BERMAN/TRIBUNE PHOTOS

## Super shoppers come long way for suburban Asian groceries

Specialty stores draw customers from other states

By Vikki Ortiz Healy  
TRIBUNE REPORTER

By noon on a recent Sunday, Jin Bong's monthly grocery shopping trip was almost complete. She paid \$250 for meat, noodles, spices and vegetables at the Super H Mart in Naperville, then thanked the bagger who escorted her to the parking lot and lifted a giant box of cabbage into her trunk.

With that done, Bong had just one thing left on her to-do list: A two-hour, 116-mile drive home.

"To buy here is more convenient," insisted Bong, who used to hop from one tiny Asian market to the next near her home in Clinton, Iowa. But even then, she couldn't always find fresh ingredients for her Korean beef bulgogi.

"They have it, but sometimes it's kind of old," she said.

Every weekend, Asian immigrants like Bong wake up early to drive from Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Iowa — even Nebraska — to spend hundreds of dollars in the large, flourishing Asian grocery stores in Naperville, Arlington Heights and Niles.

These super shoppers push two carts at once in stores some locals don't even know exist. And they have been in full force

recently, stocking up on mooncakes, Moutai liquor and other delicacies for Lunar New Year celebrations that began earlier this month.

"It's like, how can I say — it's a big entertainment for us," said Chikako Siebers, who routinely travels from New Berlin, Wis., to the Mitsuwa Marketplace in Arlington Heights to choose from its 10 varieties of miso seasoning. "I'm like a kid in an amusement park. It's a lot of fun to look around and pick different items."

Twenty years ago, Asian shoppers visiting from other states headed straight to Chinatown, Koreatown, Argyle Street and other ethnic Chicago neighborhoods for the authentic tofu salads, frozen dumplings and bok choy they craved.

Since then, the Asian population has grown significantly in Chicago's suburbs. In Naperville, for example, the number of Asian residents has grown an estimated 50 percent during the last decade — to almost 19,000 — according to demographer Rob Paral, citing U.S. Census Bureau figures.

Meanwhile, since the 1990s, large grocery store companies across the country have expanded ethnic food offerings, said Lee Peterson, an executive vice president at WD Partners, a Columbus, Ohio-based retail design and development firm.

From smaller grocery chains adding East African aisles in Massachusetts to Wal-Mart's 2009 opening of a string of supermercados for Hispanic shop-

pers in the Southwest U.S., grocers have recognized both the immigrant demand for ethnic products and mainstream America's expanding palate, Peterson said.

Meanwhile, Asian grocery stores were opening in Chicago's suburbs.

Mitsuwa Marketplace opened in Arlington Heights under another name in 1981, offering fresh seafood for sushi and an Asian food court, as well as an expansive Japanese book and comics section.

"You wouldn't get it in Minnesota."

— Joe Liu, of Minneapolis, picking up a case of Korean pears

The Korean Super H Market in Niles opened in 2006, followed by a second store in Naperville in 2008. Shoppers there can choose from 25 varieties of rice cookers, an aisle of nothing but soy sauce, and countless specialties from the Far East: dried baby squid in flattened bags, kimchee vegetables in a rainbow of colors, rice candy with Asian cartoon characters beckoning from the packages.

American oldies and reggae music play over the store's loudspeakers.

"It was kind of a perfectly good storm for Asian big-box grocers," said Paral, who added that it may be a while before surrounding

states get their own stores. "Metro Chicago is a world-class magnet for immigration. ... We get a lot more immigrants than anyone else does in the Midwest."

For now, the managers of Chicago's Asian super grocery stores are happy to welcome the super shoppers.

At Mitsuwa Marketplace, manager Masato Takai has negotiated deals with area hotels so guests receive a discounted room rate if they show their grocery receipt. Takai tries to direct new out-of-town shoppers to the store's special features, like its selection of 100 kinds of sake.

Paige Yun, a customer service representative at the Super H Mart in Naperville, helps to organize calendar giveaways, gift promotions and Asian Food Fairs to make long-distance drives worthwhile.

"A lot of our customers, they miss their home country," Yun said. "Since we're Asian, they feel more connected to us."

Joe Liu is Chinese by heritage, but took pleasure in seeing products from all Asian groups at the Super H Mart in Naperville. A few steps inside the store, a display of boxed Korean pears justified his seven-hour drive from Minneapolis.

"You wouldn't get it in Minnesota," said Liu, who happily picked up a \$16.99 case to add to his family's grocery cart — as soon as he could catch up with his wife, who sped off with it to peruse the exotic vegetables.

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## Pet shelter's owner accused of neglect

Dead and sick animals found at site near Tinley Park, cops say

By Ashley Rueff and Liam Ford  
TRIBUNE REPORTERS

The owner of an animal rescue shelter just outside Tinley Park has been charged with neglect and cruel treatment after more than 100 animals, many malnourished and some dead, were found at the site, the Cook County sheriff's police said Saturday.

Dawn Hamill, 41, was charged late Friday with misdemeanor neglect of owner's duties and cruel treatment. The charges came after sheriff's police served a warrant at her Dazzle's Painted Pastures Animal Rescue and Sanctuary, in the 5500 block of West 175th Street, near Tinley Park, according to the sheriff's office.

The investigation arose from tips to Cook County Animal and Rabies Control about conditions at the pet rescue sanctuary that Hamill founded in 2006.

At the animal rescue, investigators found a dead 3½-year-old miniature horse in a barn stall and a dead Himalayan cat, according to the sheriff's office.

Officials euthanized two dogs, one because of age and the other because of "aggression issues,"



An animal control officer leads a dog away from Dawn Hamill's animal shelter on Friday. She was later charged. ASHLEY RUEFF/TRIBUNE PHOTO

the sheriff's office said. One cat also later died.

In all, 63 dogs, 31 cats, 6 rabbits and 30 livestock animals — including horses, sheep, goats and llamas — were rescued, the sheriff's office said.

They had been kept in barns, trailers and sheds, many of which were unheated and without water, sheriff's police said.

Hamill procured animals from the Internet and other sources, keeping them in the sanctuary with the idea of eventually facilitating their adoption, sheriff's police said.

The animals had various

officials were part of Friday's search of the shelter.

"We need help," Hamill said. "We're in a situation where we just want to get down on the (number of) dogs so we can care for them the way I want to care for them."

Officials have shut down the facility.

The sheriff's police said Hamill had grown increasingly unable to care for the animals.

"After her arrest, Hamill thanked investigators for intervening in a situation that had grown out of control and which led to criminal charges," the sheriff's police said.

Marylou Hickey, who said she has made monthly donations to the facility, defended Hamill on Saturday.

"I've known Dawn for more than 15 years and she would never do anything to hurt animals," said Hickey, who has sold Hamill a horse and turned to her for advice on how to care for another.

"She wouldn't let animals suffer. She's not that kind of person."

The domestic animals taken from Hamill's facility are being housed at the Animal Welfare League, 10305 Southwest Highway, Chicago Ridge.

Tribune reporter Bridget Doyle contributed.

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**BY MARY SCHMICH**

Sunday, February 13, 2011

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