

# LAKEFRONT OUTLOOK

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## Olympic fight relived

by Sam Cholke

At Experimental Station on Oct. 12, activists that opposed Chicago's failed bid for the 2016 Olympics retold the story where they were the underdog group that achieved victory through secret spies, smart messaging and sheer impetuosity.

"The Olympics is not just another project. It would have changed the face of Chicago. ... And yet, there was more conversation about a dog park at the Belmont beach," said Tom Tresser, an organizer in No Games Chicago, who is now using his role in opposing the Olympics in a bid for the president of Cook County Board seat.

To hear No Games organizers tell it, the bid — which would have radically reshaped the South Side — failed because Mayor Richard M.

### OLYMPICS

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Daley was never up front about the city's financial commitments, which protestors used to turn the public against him.

"When Daley said he would sign on the dotted line, that forced the '50 Wards in 50 Days' tour" to assuage rising concern about the public cost of the Olympics, said Bob Quellos, a No Games organizer.

Quellos saw the bid failing because the mayor wasn't prepared for the public criticism, especially in the wake of the city's unpopular lease of its parking meters. No Games played the role of a resource outlet for people looking for answers they weren't getting from the mayor and the press, Quellos said.

"The media in Chicago never fully addressed the Olympics during the bid process," he said.

Tresser sees the story as one of overseas espionage that undermined the bid.

"The International Olympics Committee is like a country unto itself," Tresser said. "It's almost as if feudal Europe has survived into modern times."

Tresser and other protestors made several trips to offices of the IOC in Europe. He

thinks the information about Chicago corruption he snuck past armed guards and into the hands of IOC members was what really brought down the bid.

He also claims a "spy" inside the Chicago bid committee, who slipped him a directory of IOC members, was instrumental. No Games e-mailed IOC members daily with negative information about Chicago. That most of the e-mails were opened, to Tresser, confirms that they were read and affected the decision.

"It was a David and Goliath story," said Pat Hill, an activist from Black People Against Police Torture, who also traveled to Europe to oppose the bid.

Hill, a qualifier for the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, said it was Daley who brought down the bid by trying to bargain with people you don't bargain with.

"What the IOC showed Daley is they can out-gangster him any day of the week," she said.

All the activists said that by the time the IOC was set to vote between Chicago, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo and Madrid they knew the bid would fail.

"I got a call a week before and an hour before they announced the vote that it would fail," Hill said.

The activists said in the end, whatever the exact reasons, it was Daley who brought down the Olympic bid.

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