

TAKING THE HELM

Diamond Gibbs, the youngest captain with Chicago's First Lady Cruises, is anchored by her love of the job. **Life+Travel**



E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Kids like to swear

Who do we blame — Olivia Rodrigo, Beyoncé, Taylor Swift — or ourselves? **Christopher Borrelli in A+E**



Agents become stars

Real estate joins showbiz in a field fueled by love of reality television and a desire to see luxury homes. **Real Estate**

Another smoky summer possible

Wildfire risks expected to be high after one of driest winters on record

By John Lippert
Chicago Tribune

After repeated blasts of thick and smelly wildfire smoke last summer and one of the warmest and driest winters on record, Chicagoans can be forgiven for anticipating the 2024 wildfire season with a sense of dread.

In fact, governments in both the United States and Canada say they're correct to feel this way.

"The conditions are ripe for another bad fire season," said John Mooney, air quality director for the Environmental Protection Agency's regional office in Chicago.

"The snowpack was down. The ice cover on the lakes was down. If the wind blows in the right direction, we're going to get hit in the eastern half of the United States again," Mooney said in an interview.

"We need to prepare for the worst," he said, noting that significant wildfire risks exist in the northern forests of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

Half a century after Congress passed the Clean Air Act, industrial, vehicular and power plant pollution remains a significant health threat in the Midwest, particularly in Black and brown communities.

In Chicago and other industrial towns, smoke from past wildfires and those that lie ahead will make the pre-existing pollution deadlier and harder to control.

The smoke will intensify EPA crackdowns on PM2.5, or small particle pollution, and nitrogen oxide, which helps form ground-level ozone.

These crackdowns, in turn, could slow economic growth.

While some experts don't expect a repeat of the unprece-

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GRAPPLING WITH BEING THE BOSS

By Alice Yin, Jake Sheridan and A.D. Quig | Chicago Tribune

Mayor Brandon Johnson paused to soak in the scene as row after row of longtime union members and leaders sprang to their feet.

As he approached his first anniversary in office, the freshman mayor whose political career began at the firebrand Chicago Teachers Union looked right at home before the adoring crowd of self-proclaimed troublemakers at the annual Labor Notes conference in April near O'Hare International Airport.

During his speech to the group, Johnson commended the City Council's controversial, razor-thin January endorsement of a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war.

"I'm also proud that the city of Chicago led the way the beginning this year of passing a resolution calling for a permanent cease-fire in Gaza," he said. "And I'm so grateful that I got a chance to vote to break the tie."

After running as outsider, Johnson faces crises, challenges of office

Above: Mayor Brandon Johnson presides over a Chicago City Council meeting at City Hall on April 17.
EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Outside, meanwhile, protesters were clashing with Rosemont cops. Hundreds of pro-Palestinian demonstrators banged on a police car to demand the release of one of them who had been detained.

Johnson, celebrating his newfound role as the boss of the nation's third-largest city with a roomful of union bigwigs at the annual strategy session, was not the target of the rally-turned-skirmish by rank-and-file labor groups outside the event, the Labor for Palestine National Network said.

But the chorus of protesters singing the labor anthem "Which side are you on?" while fighting

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Chicago moms get scholarships with their kids



April Kilgore-Wooden stands with her daughter, Lauryn Kilgore-Wooden, on Thursday. **TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

"I was so overwhelmed just knowing that someone is investing in me and my child, first and second generation."

— April Kilgore-Wooden, on a scholarship program for parents attending college at the same time as their children

Program provides trips to college for 2 generations at once

By Alysa Guffey
Chicago Tribune

Lara Romero vividly remembers the first time she attended college nearly two decades ago, having just given birth to her first child, Salvatore, soon after graduating high school. It took Romero nearly a decade to finish the two-year associate's program at City Colleges of Chicago.

Those 10 years were plagued with stress about the cost, pressure to prioritize motherhood and long days without a babysitter. Some days, she brought Salvatore to class and asked a professor to watch him while she took notes.

After eight years, Romero, 38, enrolled in college again last fall — at the same time as her son.

This time, Romero enrolled at National Louis University with

the hope of becoming a nursing clinical instructor. Salvatore, now 19, started his freshman year at the University of Illinois to study data science and geography.

The Romero family represents a rising number of parents attending college and earning degrees at the same time as their children through a local organization that fully funds college scholarships for two generations at once.

Scholarships for parents and their kids make longtime dreams a reality.

"I was a little nervous about going back to school, but it's something I've always wanted to do," said Lara Romero, who lives in the Pilsen neighborhood with her three younger children.

For the Romeros, navigating college simultaneously is an unusual experience.

They are similar to college roommates, texting each other good luck messages before

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INSIDE



JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Looking to develop a franchise QB

As the Bears begin with Caleb Williams, a glimpse into foundational aspects from those who have worked with successful rookies. **Chicago Sports**

Israel orders new evacuations in Rafah

Tens of thousands more people are forced to leave as Israel prepares to expand its military operation deeper into what is considered Gaza's last refuge. **Nation & World**