

LIFE+TRAVEL
NOT THE LAST CHAPTER
Black bookstores Da Book Joint and Semicolon nearly closed. But the owners have found ways to “stick it out” for their community.



JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

A+E
All things grow
Justin Peck is transforming Sufjan Stevens' acclaimed album into “Illinoise,” a different kind of stage musical.

REAL ESTATE
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Chicago Tribune



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SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Wave of violence a grim reminder

Illinois and Chicago routinely rank among nation's worst for mass shootings

By Claire Malon and Sam Charles
Chicago Tribune

A rash of deadly violence across the southwest suburbs last week was the latest iteration, leaving 11 people shot to death in a matter of hours.

Four women — a mother and three daughters — were killed in their Tinley Park home Jan. 21 in “an act of senseless domestic violence,” law enforcement officials said. Prosecutors have since charged Maher Kassem, the husband and father of the victims, with four counts of murder.

Twenty miles west, in Joliet, seven people were killed in two shootings on the same block. The suspect — Romeo Nance, the son, brother and nephew of the seven killed — later took his own life in Texas while being pursued by U.S. Marshals. Nance shot two other men in Will County, killing one, after he killed his relatives, according to police.

Each violent act is of course unique, but they point to a stark reality: Illinois and Chicago saw

more mass shootings than any other state and city in the country over the last decade, according to Tribune analysis of data from the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit and research group that tracks gun crime from over 7,500 law enforcement, media, government and commercial sources.

It's an unwanted distinction, driven mostly by Chicago's entrenched gun violence, figures

Turn to Shootings, Page 4



A bullet hole is visible in a window after a shooting wounded 15 people during an event in North Lawndale in October. BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Aid for city is unlikely as migrant crisis swells

Fed deal not a cure-all — and it's doubtful to pass through Congress

By Nell Salzman
Chicago Tribune

Thousands of newly arrived migrants have stepped off buses into freezing Chicago temperatures over the past few weeks, and most city-run shelters are at capacity. But any chances of help from Congress look slim.

In negotiations that have lasted weeks, congressional Republicans have refused to approve any further aid for Ukraine without major U.S. border policy changes, which congressional leaders cannot agree on.

Experts observing the issue closely say that even if legislation passes, it will not improve Chicago's situation much, if at all.

While details of the bipartisan bill have not been made public, proposals from Republican senators center around raising the bar for migrants to claim asylum and curbing the president's ability to grant parole — or permission to enter the United States on a temporary basis while asylum claims are reviewed by the courts. These efforts may deter the flow of migrants across borders, but there are larger factors that could keep driving immigrants to Chicago.

The national policy deal holds even more consequence ahead of a 2024 presidential election cycle where immigration will likely be a central and contentious issue. President Joe Biden has been heavily criticized by Republicans who say his liberal policies have encouraged record movement of migrants across the southern border.

This is partially what led Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott to begin sending migrants on buses to Chicago nearly 17 months ago — to make a statement about promises by liberal cities and states to welcome asylum-seekers. Migrants, mostly from Venezuela, are now reliant on shelters or camping out on the streets of a sanctuary city that said it would provide shelter and resources.

Turn to Migrants, Page 10



Illinois farmers struggle with agricultural runoff

Downstream nutrient pollution a major contributor to Gulf dead zone

By Karina Atkins | Chicago Tribune

Lance Nacio's family has made its living fishing along the coast of Louisiana's Terrebonne Parish for three generations. He's continuing the family business, but it's becoming increasingly difficult.

Nitrogen and phosphorus are flowing from the Mississippi River Basin into the Gulf of Mexico, creating an oxygen-void area along southern Louisiana and eastern Texas over 18 times larger than Chicago.

Fish, shrimp and other commercial species swim farther from the coast to escape, and those that can't move fast enough die. Fishermen must follow, spending more time and money to sail away from this “dead zone” with dicier odds of a good catch.

“It's costly for fishermen because we struggle to catch fish, and we have to go deeper into the Gulf to get out of the dead zone,” said Nacio.

This virtually lifeless expanse, which was first

Above: Lance Nacio, of Anne Marie Shrimp in Montegut, Louisiana, top, and deckhand Jorge Portillo travel past a dock and fishing camp damaged by Hurricane Ida as they harvest traps for blue crab in the Barataria Basin between the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers on Tuesday. The area is affected by runoff from the Mississippi watershed, including Midwest states like Illinois.

MATTHEW HINTON/
FOR THE CHICAGO
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discovered in the 1970s, has caused up to \$2.4 billion in damages to Gulf fisheries and marine habitats every year from 1980 to 2017, according to a 2020 study.

Illinois has been one of the top contributors to the problem. All the state's waterways feed into the Mississippi River, so millions of pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus-rich discharge from wastewater treatment plants, urban stormwater drainage and agricultural runoff eventually make their way to the Gulf. Increased precipitation associated with climate change is accelerating the flow of these pollutants.

The state's latest biennial report on this nutrient pollution, released in December, shows a 5% increase in nitrogen levels and a 35% increase in phosphorus levels originating from Illinois compared with a base line period from 1980 to 1996. This is a far cry from Illinois' goal of achieving a 15% decrease in nitrogen and 25% decrease in phosphorus by 2025, with sights set on reducing both 45% by 2035.

Turn to Pollution, Page 12

Hostage deal may be close

Negotiators are edging closer to a deal in which Israel would suspend its war in Gaza for about two months in exchange for the release of hostages. **Nation & World**



AMIR LEVY/GETTY



RYAN SUN/AP

Hello. My name is ...

Names to know for the Bears in this week's Senior Bowl, including a top edge rusher and a bevy of centers and wide receivers. **Brad Biggs in Chicago Sports**

TODAY'S
WEATHER



High 40 Low 30

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 24

\$5.75 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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