

# Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

**“They are not expendable party favors, they’re living things you should only plan on getting if you’re planning on being a responsible owner.”**

— Annette Prince, director of Chicago Bird Collision Monitors



## Wings and a prayer

Abandoned pet ducks often can’t survive in the wild, leaving Chicago’s expert bird rescuers overloaded

By **Adriana Pérez** | Chicago Tribune

**T**he bright white feathers of a pair of Pekin ducks ruffled in the summer breeze as they snoozed on concrete steps leading into the Chicago River at Ping Tom Memorial Park. The birds were unfazed by the whistling trains, the rumbling traffic of the city and the nearby gaggles of Canada geese and wild mallards.

As former pets, humans didn’t disturb them either. That is until a woman from a bird rescue group tried to net them.

When the ducks quickly dispersed, she took out a walkie-talkie and called for reinforcements. In moments, a volunteer whizzed by in a kayak, ready to catch the waterfowl with his bare hands as he expertly maneuvered the vessel.

Chicago Bird Collision Monitors rescues thousands of birds annually, said the organization’s director, Annette Prince. Over a hundred of those rescue calls involve former pet ducks such as the Pekins, who had been at the park in Chinatown for a few months.

They are left to fend for themselves — but experts say it’s often a death sentence. There’s no official data on how often this happens, but according to an estimate by an anthrozoologist in a 2023 National Geographic report, tens of thousands of domestic ducks are dumped each year throughout the United States.

“This is a true education problem,” said Adrienne Eyer, a volunteer with the bird monitors project.

Domestic ducks in the wild become easy targets for predators; they are literally sitting ducks. Being bred and reared for the meat industry means most domestic ducks can’t fly because their bodies are oversized and their wings are too small. And Chicago has no shortage of possible predators, including coyotes, foxes, raccoons, hawks and great horned owls. As pets, ducks also learn to depend on humans for food so they aren’t prepared to forage.

Every spring, families purchase

**Turn to Ducks, Page 4**

Annette Prince carries a rescued Pekin duck to safety in Chinatown’s Ping Tom Park in Chicago on Sept. 5. She is the director of Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, a group that monitors, protects and rescues birds. **STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

## A fresh start for ‘El Grito’

City prepares to host official Mexican Independence Day celebration in Grant Park

By **Laura Rodríguez Presa**  
Chicago Tribune

For the first time in a decade, city officials and Mexican leaders in Chicago will host a central celebration downtown to commemorate Mexican Independence Day with a two-day festival.

“El Grito” is a result of the overwhelming push from community leaders to find ways to regulate the car caravans that have taken over the streets in recent years, causing closures, gridlock and anger from Loop residents amidst pride and joy from revelers the days ahead of Sept. 16.

“Let’s celebrate the fact that this is happening in Chicago and downtown. I’m very proud of the fact that our cultural heritage is being lifted up. I’m very proud that we have demonstrated as an administration that we can lift the soul of who we are,” Mayor Brandon Johnson said this week during an unveiling of the refurbished gateway arch in Little Village.

The festival, taking place at Grant Park’s Butler Field on Saturday and Sunday, aims



Paula Lerma hangs Mexican flags along a fence on Friday while setting up for the Mexican Independence Day celebration in Chicago’s Grant Park. **CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

to be a family-centered celebration, offering food vendors, activations and other performances from local and international artists who represent Mexican culture.

On Sunday night, the consul general of Mexico in Chicago, Ambassador Reyna Torres Mendivil, will host the official commemoration of El Grito at the Petrillo Bandshell in Grant Park. While tickets to the festival range from \$10 to \$175 per person, the civic ceremony will be free and

open to the public.

“The Cry of Independence,” as it is translated, is the traditional ceremony paying homage to the traditional call to arms on the eve of Mexican Independence Day on Sept. 16, 1810, and the fight for independence from Spain.

“This is the first seed to change the narrative of El Grito in years to come,”

**Turn to Celebration, Page 2**

## New tariffs target China

White House move covers billions in imported goods

By **Ana Swanson**  
and **Jordyn Holman**  
The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration Friday announced measures that will add tariffs to tens of billions of dollars of products that the United States imports from China, a move intended to protect U.S. factories and project a tough-on-China approach before the presidential election.

The tariffs will apply to clothing, solar panels, electric vehicles, syringes, steel and other goods that China has been selling at far cheaper prices than many U.S. businesses, threatening to put U.S. factories out of business.

The steps are likely to raise the cost of some imports at a time when Americans are already dissatisfied with rising prices. But they also represent a major effort by the Biden administration to address a salient political issue for some voters: America’s dependence on China for an array of products.

Both Democrats and Republicans have turned away from emphasizing the benefits of free trade to criticizing the role that Chinese imports have played in hollowing out U.S. manufacturing and damaging the communities centered around those factories. This week, Vice President Kamala Harris sparred with former President Donald Trump over the impact of tariffs, and Republican lawmakers proposed several new laws aimed at reducing China’s economic influence.

One of the measures the Biden administration proposed would drastically limit a trade rule, called de minimis, that allowed more than 1 billion packages from China to enter the United States last year without being subject to existing tariffs. The administration said a flood of shipments under the rule had hurt U.S. manufacturers and allowed products like fentanyl and counterfeit goods to come into the country.

**Turn to Tariffs, Page 6**

### LA SCHIAZZA TRIAL

## Former top Madigan aide says he was a ‘team player’

By **Jason Meisner**  
Chicago Tribune

Longtime lobbyist Tom Cullen said he was just trying to be a “team player” when he agreed in 2017 to take on former state Rep. Eddie Acevedo as an off-the-books consultant as a favor for one of his top clients, AT&T Illinois.

But Cullen, who for years served as a top political aide to then-House Speaker Michael Madigan, told a federal jury on Friday that Acevedo was not very pleased with AT&T’s \$2,500-a-month offer, even though the job called for little or no work.

In fact, Cullen said, after a meeting about the proposal, Acevedo called him and blew his stack.

“He basically said, ‘What the F is goin’ on here? I’m worth more money,’” Cullen testified, adding that his recollection was that Acevedo demanded double what was being offered.



Cullen

**Turn to Trial, Page 2**

