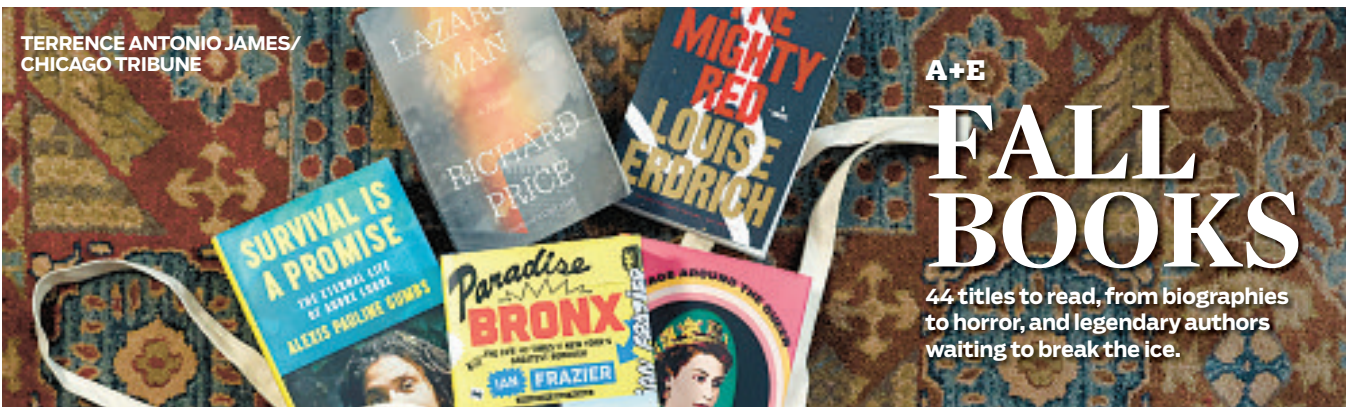


LIFE+TRAVEL

Dental care with inclusivity

A new clinic at the University of Illinois Chicago solves a problem not many dentist offices are thinking about: being a place that anybody can access.

Unearthing a hidden treasure: The Georgia town of LaGrange preserves two centuries of history amid the gleam of Southern charm.



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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM



Jared Gregg harvests soybeans Friday on farmland in Cerro Gordo, Ill. **E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Dip in Mississippi River levels heightens concern

Entering harvest season, Illinois farmers worry about drop in crop prices

By **Adriana Pérez**
Chicago Tribune

Water levels in the Lower Mississippi River have dipped unusually low for a third year in a row, restricting how much grain can be transported downstream as harvest season gets underway. If levels keep dropping and barge traffic slows navigation, some Illinois farmers worry that soybean and corn prices will drop too or that they won't be able to get fertilizer from downstream to begin prepping their fields for

next year's crops. Concerns are bubbling up among farmers after a good growing season, since those who depend on river transport might be stuck with their product for longer than anticipated. "Especially with a potential record number of crops coming in and no place to go," said Jared Gregg, a seventh-generation soybean and corn farmer in Piatt County west of Champaign. "There could be folks (along the Mississippi River) that won't be able to get harvest done until that

clears out." Low water concerns come after Illinois experienced its third-wettest July, with a preliminary statewide precipitation total of 7.01 inches, nearly 3 inches above the 1991-2020 average. But state climatologist Trent Ford said in a recent update that the "tap shut off" during August and the first half of September. Most parts of Illinois have seen less than 2 inches of rain since the beginning of August, which is 2 to 4 inches below normal. Additionally, above-normal heat in

late August and September has worsened dry conditions through more evaporation. As whiplashing weather patterns caused by climate change intensify and average temperatures increase globally, climatologists worry these issues will persist and even worsen in the coming years. In its most recent update Thursday, the U.S. Drought Monitor indicated that all of Illinois is now abnormally dry: 45%

Turn to River, Page 14

Wheaton College again tied to politics

From Project 2025 to Evangelicals for Harris, grads have varied views

By **Angie Leventis Lourgos**
Chicago Tribune

As a chief architect of Project 2025, Russell Vought has risen into the national spotlight for co-authoring the controversial conservative blueprint designed to radically overhaul the federal government under the next Republican president. But years ago, the Wheaton College graduate made headlines for another written work — one that included strong words against Muslims used in defense of the actions of his alma mater. The west suburban evangelical Christian college in 2015 suspended its first tenured Black female faculty member after she announced plans to wear a hijab in solidarity with Muslims facing persecution, while stating that Christians and Muslims "worship the same God." Some evangelical leaders criticized her for not explaining what makes Islam distinct from Christianity. Vought's rebuke went even



Vought

Turn to Wheaton, Page 4

Prosecutors in Madigan case facing clear challenge

Deadlock by jury in La Schiazza trial could pose an ominous sign

By **Jason Meisner and Megan Crepeau**
Chicago Tribune

Closing arguments in the federal trial of former AT&T Illinois boss Paul La Schiazza, who was accused of bribing House Speaker Michael Madigan, brought an expected crowd to a Chicago courtroom. But only one spectator could claim to have had a direct influence on the proceedings. That was James Snyder, the former mayor of Portage, Indiana, whose fight to overturn his own bribery case ended with a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June that raised the bar for prosecutors in a number of Illinois public corruption cases. Snyder told the Tribune he was downtown to meet with his appellate lawyer on Tuesday and decided to take in some of the La Schiazza closings. But he was not there two days later, when the case ended dramatically in a mistrial because the jury deadlocked over many of the same issues that were



La Schiazza

Turn to Trial, Page 2

Ask Sox fans about 120. They'll say it's just a number

No celebrating failure as team approaches baseball infamy



Rick Kogan

Sitting in the office of then-mayor and ever devoted White Sox fan Richard M. Daley, I heard him talk baseball. "I played all the time. Spring, summer and fall, we were always playing. I played catch with my dad ... always in the backyard throwing the ball. And then, going to games, better than going to the movies. You knew all the players, all the

averages and statistics. Baseball was king." Yes, it was. For generations of us, baseball has been an ongoing novel, filled with sights and sounds and packed with disappointments and joys. There have been goats and black cats, bats juiced with cork, that lively Greek chorus known as sportswriters, owners, coaches, managers, ump, broadcasters, vendors, Andy Frain ... I've been a Sox fan for more than half a century. I had my eighth birthday party at Comiskey. I shook hand with Luis Aparicio and had lunch with Moose Skowron. And so with other fans I confront this season and the White Sox's march toward (or trip down) to the

Turn to Kogan, Page 16



This season's White Sox ineptitude has everyone searching for who to blame, but it wasn't always so bleak. It was easier being a South Side fan when the 1959 Go-Go White Sox made their way to the World Series. **CHICAGO TRIBUNE HISTORICAL PHOTO**

Getting ailing offense back in gear

Coming off two sickly offensive performances, the Bears head to Indianapolis seeking remedies to enliven the unit. **Chicago Sports**

US taking cautious steps in Middle East

Biden administration is taking a more hands-off approach than usual amid escalation fears after Israeli strike, pager blasts. **Nation & World**

TODAY'S WEATHER



High 74 Low 58

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 22

\$5.75 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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