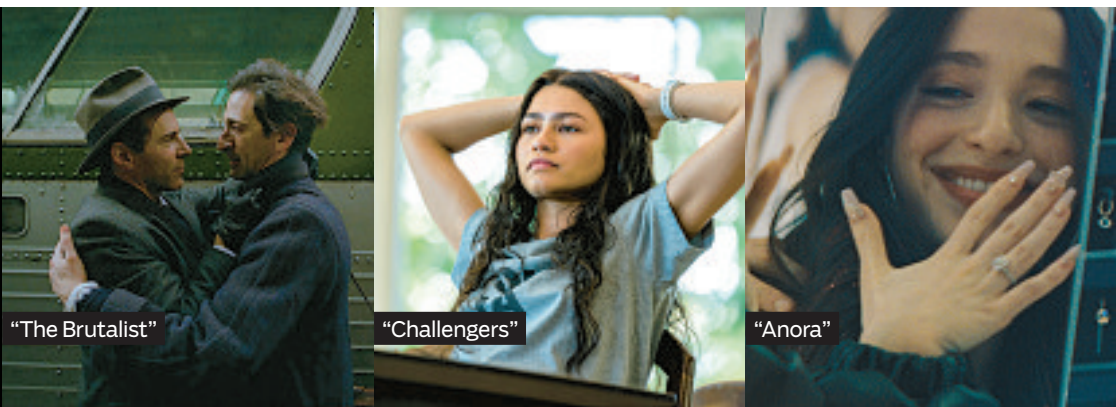


A+E
Best movies of 2024
In a time of scoundrels, our Top 10 for the year includes “The Brutalist,” “Challengers” and “Anora.” Plus, the year in TV was a modestly better lineup than usual, but did it feel that way?



LIFE+TRAVEL
What’s in a name?
Pronouncing it properly is about respect and identity. What to do when others don’t get it right.

REAL ESTATE
Sweden to Spain
In an architectural journey, a couple gives friends free rein to create a new vacation home.

WINNER OF 28 PULITZER PRIZES FOR EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM

★ Final



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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Schools pick local control over grants

Districts concerned about what books could be allowed, banned

By Olivia Olander and Jeremy Gorner
Chicago Tribune

Starting this year, public libraries in Illinois had a choice: adopt principles against book banning or give up state grants.

A number of school districts, many of them in deeply conservative areas of south and central Illinois, appear to have taken the latter option. Administrators at some of those districts acknowledged being concerned about giving up any measure of control on what books are allowed on their schools’ library shelves.

“I’m sure there are certain politicians that want to score political points for themselves and maybe make an issue of it,” said Keith Price, superintendent of the North Clay Community Unit 25 school district in southeast Illinois. “But we feel strongly about our local decision-making here.”

The state library grants are not large — about \$850 for small districts. No district that opted out of applying for funding this year received more than \$4,000 in grant money during the last fiscal year, according to state records.

Dustin Foutch, superintendent at Central Community High School District 71 in downstate Breese, said his district’s leadership didn’t feel an \$850 grant was worth giving up any independence in making decisions on books.

“I think there’s a concerted effort around the state of Illinois from a lot of school boards to kind of take back a little bit of control,” Foutch said.

Book bans have been the subject of intense debate in recent years amid heightened political partisanship. Democrats on the state and national level say book bans often discriminate against the LGBTQ community and other marginalized groups, while Republicans have argued that some titles need to be out of the reach of children if they contain pornography or

Turn to Books, Page 5

INSIDE



ALESSANDRA TARANTINO/AP

Notre Dame reopens triumphantly

The monument roared back to life Saturday with dignitaries on hand to highlight the cathedral’s status as a global icon. **Nation & World**

Ex-state legislator called to testify

Edward Acevedo granted immunity and compelled to testify in Michael Madigan’s corruption trial. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

ELECTION 2024

‘Seriously flawed’ choices

Muslim voters in Illinois were dissatisfied with both major presidential candidates in the election, with the war in Gaza the defining issue for many



Voters at Woodworth School in Dearborn, Michigan, on Nov. 5. NICK HAGEN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

By Zareen Syed
Chicago Tribune

Longtime Bridgeview resident Itedal Shalabi typically votes Democratic but when the time came to pick a candidate for U.S. president this year, she took a pass.

Shalabi saw both major party choices on the Nov. 5 ballot — Republican Donald Trump and his history of Islamophobic rhetoric and Democrat Vice President Kamala Harris and her ties to a Biden administration many Muslims lost faith in because of its unwavering support of Israel in the war in Gaza — as “seriously flawed,” and said she couldn’t

bring herself to support either of them.

“There’s no way in all good conscience, I could have put my head down on a pillow and slept that night if I had voted for Kamala Harris,” Shalabi said. “They let us down — the whole system let us down.”

In Bridgeview — a southwest suburban community called “Little Palestine” because so many Muslims and Palestinians live there — Shalabi reflected a growing trend of Muslim voters who in the 2024 election either didn’t cast a vote for president, wrote in a third-party candidate

Turn to Muslims, Page 4



Bears interim head coach Thomas Brown oversees practice at Halas Hall in Lake Forest on Wednesday. EILEEN T. MESLAR/TRIBUNE

BEARS ARE ‘LEANING IN’ TO THOMAS BROWN

By Colleen Kane
Chicago Tribune

Thomas Brown was talking through the massive task ahead of him in his second news conference as Chicago Bears interim head coach.

How can he affect a team on a six-game losing streak? How does he plan to balance offensive play calling with head coach duties on game day? How can he further quarterback Caleb Williams’ development? How does he look at the grand opportunity in front of him to show the NFL what he’s all about?

But about four minutes in, when considering the most notable changes around Halas Hall since the Bears fired coach Matt Eberflus, Brown veered down

Can he steady the ship and rise above his interim coach label?

a lighthearted tangent — about weight loss. At 225 pounds early in November, Brown was trying to cut weight. It turned out being named offensive coordinator to replace Shane Waldron was just what he needed.

“You increase tasks to your day, you forget about food,” Brown said later. “I went a couple days and just really didn’t eat, didn’t really think about it, wasn’t hungry. I was thinking about the next moment, what to say to this player, doing

game planning and I look up and I’m almost 30 pounds down. So we’ll keep going, see how long it lasts.”

Brown was told he should market the unorthodox plan that has him down to 205 pounds.

“I’ll write a book and we’ll see,” Brown said. “I hope you guys buy it. I’ll probably be pretty pissed if you don’t buy it.”

The ensuing laughter was a surprising sound amid all the dreariness in Lake Forest lately. It’s that presence from Brown as the Bears’ new temporary leader that has players buying into his message ahead of their road game Sunday against the San Francisco 49ers.

Multiple players said Brown’s direct

Turn to Brown, Page 6

THOMAS BROWN’S AUDITION: The Bears’ interim coach has a chance to try out for the Bears and every other team that will have an opening in January and beyond — and players need to realize they’re being evaluated too. **Brad Biggs in Chicago Sports**



Bears at 49ers
3:25 p.m. Sunday
Fox-32

TODAY’S WEATHER



High 47 Low 41

Complete Chicagoland forecast on Page 20

\$5.75 city and suburbs and elsewhere
177th year No. 343 © Chicago Tribune

