

Chicago Tribune



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O.J. SIMPSON 1947-2024



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Football star's trial gripped the nation as racial inflection point

O.J. Simpson, the football star and Hollywood actor acquitted of charges that he killed his former wife and her friend in a trial that mesmerized the public and exposed divisions on race and policing in America, died of prostate cancer on Wednesday. He was 76. **Page 9**

Biden expands checks on guns

New rule forces all firearm dealers to vet potential buyers, closing loophole

By Colleen Long and Alanna Durkin Richer
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Thousands more firearms dealers across the United States will have to run background checks on buyers at gun shows or other places outside brick-and-mortar stores, according to a Biden administration rule that will soon go into effect.

The rule aims to close a loophole that has allowed tens of thousands of guns to be sold every year by unlicensed dealers who do not perform background checks to ensure the potential buyer is not legally prohibited from having a firearm. Gun rights groups are expected to fight it in court.

It's the administration's latest effort to combat gun violence. But in a contentious election year, it's also an effort to show voters — especially younger ones for whom gun violence deeply resonates — that the White House is trying to stop the deaths.

“This is going to keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers and felons,” President Joe Biden said in a statement. “And my administration is going to continue to do everything we possibly can to save lives. Congress needs to finish the job and pass universal background checks legislation now.”

The rule, which was finalized this week, makes clear that anyone who sells

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HARNESS RACERS ASK STATE TO UNDO DEAL

Horsemen claim favoritism for Hawthorne, which is allowed to veto any racino plans within 35-mile radius, resulting in dead end as industry slowly withers



Horses come and go on the track on April 6 at Hawthorne Race Course in Stickney. **VINCENT ALBAN/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

By Robert McCoppin
Chicago Tribune

Illinois enacted a sweeping law in 2019 to allow casinos at horse racing tracks, known as racinos. Nearly five years later, Hawthorne Race Course, a main beneficiary of the legislation, still hasn't opened a racino. In the meantime, the industry is dying for lack of money.

Part of that legislation gave Hawthorne officials an extraordinary monopoly: They have the sole power to veto any proposal to build a harness track with a casino within 35 miles.

Out of desperation, the Illinois Harness Horsemen's Association is now calling for the state to end

Hawthorne's veto power. The horsemen say the favoritism for Hawthorne has led to a dead end, and it's time to let the free market finally build a racino.

“Our industry is being held hostage by Tim Carey's family, who owns Hawthorne,” association President Jeff Davis said. “We have to have a dedicated harness track.”

Carey proposed a \$400 million racino to open at Hawthorne in 2021. In 2022, he again promised construction would begin that year. Last fall, Carey told the Illinois Racing Board it would open by the end of 2024, but in February, he said he was still working on getting financing.

Asked for an update, Hawthorne issued a statement:

“We remain fully committed to developing a new harness track to complement racing at Hawthorne, as was intended in the legislation. We are the only Illinois business with the proven experience, integrity and wherewithal to do so. Our \$400 million redevelopment of Hawthorne is the most significant investment ever made into the Illinois racing industry and is the beginning of an exciting new future for the tens of thousands of jobs that we support across the state.”

State law names seven townships in southwest

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“We'd love to see the harness guys have their own track, and we could run at our track. But this doesn't help us get a racino built at Hawthorne.”

— *Thoroughbred association President Chris Block*



Birders watch for great horned owls in Lincoln Park on Jan. 11. An adult male owl was found unresponsive near the park on Wednesday. **E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Experts say Lincoln Park owl may have died from rat poison

By Avani Kalra
Chicago Tribune

After a small family of owls made Lincoln Park's North Pond their home this spring, Chicago residents flocked to the area to try to catch a glimpse of the two great horned owls raising their young.

But, the father of the family, an adult male owl, was found unresponsive by the Chicago Bird Collision

Monitors midday Wednesday. According to Annette Prince, executive director of the organization, the horned owl died shortly after being rescued.

The group suspects the male owl consumed a rat tainted by rat poison.

“They lived in a tree facing Cannon Drive,” Prince said. “The father would hunt for the family, and the mom would stay with the young. People

have told me they saw him feeding on things like rats and mice.”

The owl was found vomiting blood, which is often a sign of rat poison, according to Prince. She said the only other option that could cause that kind of internal bleeding is blunt force trauma, which seems unlikely since the owl appeared externally

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INSIDE Amazon to pay Chicago firm \$525M

Amazon Web Services must pay \$525 million to Chicago-based tech company Kove for infringing upon three of the company's patents, a federal jury decided Wednesday. The technology in question enables the search of “vast quantities of data in a very efficient way,” said Renato Mariotti, an attorney for Kove. **Business**

An Ill. ban on some hemp products?

Illinois lawmakers joined the licensed cannabis industry Thursday in calling for a ban on intoxicating hemp products such as Delta-8-THC, a move retailers of such substances said would put them out of business. The products are now commonly sold at gas stations, smoke shops and corner stores, with no age restrictions and no requirements for labeling. **Page 2**

Bears file appeal of property tax in Arlington Heights

Pivoting to site on Chicago lakefront, team now seeks \$7.2 million refund

By Robert McCoppin
Chicago Tribune

The Chicago Bears have filed a property tax appeal for the former Arlington International Racecourse, seeking a refund of \$7.2 million from local taxing bodies, an attorney for local schools said Wednesday.

The team filed the request with the Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board for the site where the Bears had proposed building a \$2 billion enclosed stadium. The Cook County Board of Review set its valuation of the property at \$125 million.

Team officials recently pivoted to focus instead on a new proposal to build a stadium on the lakefront to replace Soldier Field.

But the team still owns the site in Arlington Heights, which it bought last year for \$197 million. To reduce the tax bill, the organization razed the grandstand and other buildings, and is continu-

ing to fight over how much taxes it has to pay.

At a meeting of Community Consolidated School District 15 in Palatine, schools attorney Ares Dalianis updated the board on stalled negotiations with the team.

If the suburban stadium were to be built with a proposed surrounding mixed-use development of housing, retail and entertainment, school officials estimated it could generate 350 to 400 new students at local schools.

At a cost of \$1.5 million for a classroom of 24 students, that could work out to \$22 million, a school official estimated. If the district needs to build a new school, that could cost \$50 million to \$75 million.

“It's a big challenge for us if we have 350 or 400 kids,” Superintendent Laurie Heinz said. “It's staggering. ... This is critical for District 15 that this is done right.”

Because the Bears'

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