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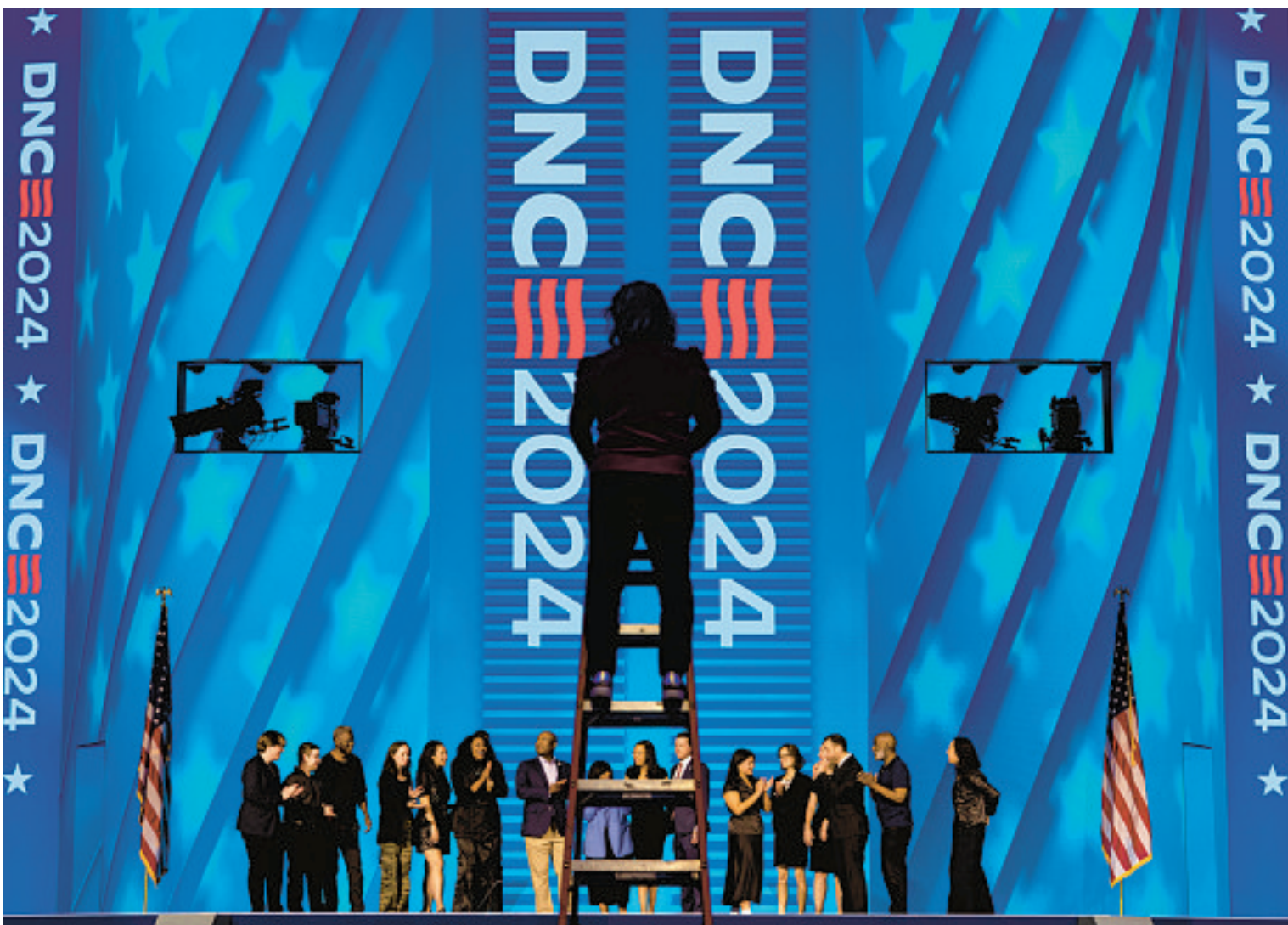
SUNDAY, AUGUST 18, 2024

BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

There's a chip on those Big Shoulders, thanks to a national narrative about violent crime that's been exploited and exaggerated for political points. Will this week's made-for-television showcase be a chance to redefine the city?

All eyes on Chicago



Democratic National Convention officials take pictures on the stage Thursday at the United Center in Chicago. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

By Rick Pearson
and Jeremy Gerner
Chicago Tribune

The eyes of the political world turn to Chicago this week as tens of thousands of delegates, media, dignitaries and political influencers arrive for a historic Democratic National Convention featuring Vice President Kamala Harris' celebratory and ceremonial acceptance of the party's presidential nomination.

An event that only a month ago saw Democratic organizers trying to build enthusiasm over the anticipated renomination of President Joe Biden has now developed its own energy with the president's decision to drop from the race and back Harris, the first Black and Asian woman to receive a major party nomination.

A convention that organizers had planned for more than a year to be a showcase of Biden accomplishments has been quickly rescripted to — starting Monday — define and boost Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, and offer voters an aggressive alternative in the Nov. 5 general election to former President Donald Trump and his running mate, U.S. Sen. JD Vance, of Ohio.

Biden is scheduled to deliver the opening night keynote address. In doing so, he will in effect cede the presidential campaign stage to Harris while forcefully touting the new ticket and what's at stake in the election. First Lady Jill Biden also is scheduled to speak on Monday and Harris, who is to fly into Chicago on Sunday night, is expected to be in attendance at the United Center.

As is traditionally the case at political conventions, the Democratic event will feature daily themes — “For the People” on Monday, “A Bold Vision For America's Future” on Tuesday, “A Fight for Our Freedoms” on Wednesday and “For Our Future” on Thursday. The themes will be used to promote their speakers, including former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton as well as the Harris-Walz ticket. But there also is one overarching convention theme of parochial importance that also

Turn to Eyes, Page 4

As ‘mecca of political conventions’ gets another chance on the big stage, a look back at everything from a packed Wigwam to the chaos of 1968



Rick Kogan

There is a small monument on the southeast corner of Wacker Drive and Lake Street that marks a momentous event in Chicago's political history, the birth of the city as the convention capital of the country.

It is a 5-foot-tall cast stone marker and on one side is a plaque that tells of the Wigwam,

a two-story building where in 1860 the Republican Party, formed only six years earlier in Wisconsin, met to select a candidate for the presidency.

The building was designed by the Water Tower architect W. W. Boyington and financed by civic leaders. Taking its name from an Algonquin word for a dwelling made of tree poles and bark, the Wigwam was the first structure in the country to be specifically built for a presidential convention. It included on-site telegraph equipment and had seating for more than 10,000 people.

Chicago won its first political convention because Illinois was one of the Midwestern states the Republicans needed to win the presidency. In late 1859, attorney Norman Judd and Chicago Tribune publisher Joseph Medill, two allies of Abraham Lincoln, persuaded the Republican National Committee that the party risked “losing the West” if it did not convene in Chicago, especially if its candidate was abolitionist U.S. Sen. William Seward of New York, then the favorite for the nomination.

Turn to History, Page 13

MOST SUSTAINABLE CONVENTION? The city and the DNC have partnered on initiatives to boost sustainability, with transportation at the top of the list. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

DNC TO-DOS: All over Chicago this week, invitations to celebrate our democracy abound. And since, in the words of late politician Abner Mikva, democracy is not a noun but a verb — it only works by doing — find 35 picks for things to do while the convention is in town. **A+E**

INSIDE

A path out of student debt

Since 2014, helping people get “life-changing” relief has been a priority for one Chicago attorney. Whether it's a parent curious about taking out Parent Plus Loans for their child, a high school student who has plans for their major and career, or a person who has been paying their student loan for 10 to 25 years, Rae Kaplan says she can be of assistance. **Life+Travel**

HOME DEBUT: It took awhile for Caleb Williams to find his rhythm in his home preseason debut on Saturday, but a long completion and a scramble for a score gave Bears fans reason to cheer. **Chicago Sports**

How NU lacrosse coach helped wrestler medal



Team USA's Kennedy Blades takes the silver medal after falling to Japan's Yuka Kagami in the final of women's 76 kg freestyle wrestling Aug. 11 at the Paris Olympics. **BRIAN CASSELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

By Stacy St. Clair
Chicago Tribune

As U.S. wrestler Kennedy Blades prepared for her semifinal match at the Paris Olympics, the Chicago native received a series of affirming text messages.

Her coach, Israel “Izzy” Martinez, found similarly useful missives on his phone as well.

The messages helped the pair sift through Blades' fears about the upcoming match, then reminded them those feelings were completely normal. They encouraged Blades, a devout Christian, to lean on her faith and remember the joy that wrestling brings her. They reminded Martinez to stress the things he wanted his athlete to do during the match and not focus on the result.

The sender had no wrestling expertise, had never coached an Olympian and was thousands of miles away from the Champ-de-Mars arena where Blades, 20, would soon be grappling for a medal.

But Kelly Amonte Hiller knows how to win and she knows how to bring out the best in college-aged women. So, in that regard, Amonte Hiller — the legendary lacrosse coach who turned Northwestern's program into a national powerhouse — was the perfect person to mentor Blades in the year leading up to the Paris Games.

Her addition to the already formidable team of Blades and Martinez played a significant role in the wrestler's stellar Olympic

Turn to Medal, Page 6

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