

CHICAGO, WE TELL YOUR STORIES

At the Chicago Tribune, we are committed to reflecting the drama, vitality, conflict and hope of life in Chicago in the 21st century — in print, online and on radio and television.

INSIDE

- A letter from the editor
- Compelling stories about the people and places of Chicago
- Meet some of the Tribune’s storytellers

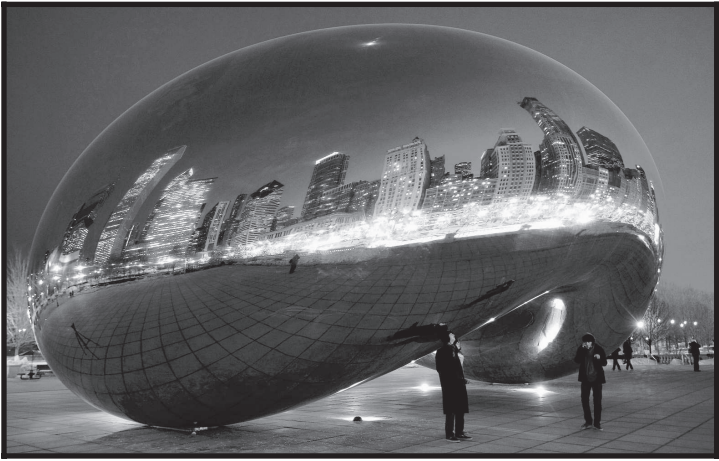


HAVE A STORY IDEA?

Do you have a news tip or unique part of the Chicago experience you'd like to share? E-mail chicagostories@tribune.com

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Call 800-874-2863 or go to chicagotribune.com/subscribe



PHIL VELASQUEZ/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Reflecting the drama of Chicago

The Chicago Tribune is a mirror reflecting the drama, vitality, conflict and hope of life in Chicago. Call it the Chicago experience. We capture it for you better than anyone else — in print, online and on radio and television, 24 hours a day.

For the more than 9 million of us who live in the sweeping arc between Wisconsin and Indiana, the Chicago region is where we make our homes, raise our families, go to school and build our careers.

This is where we play hard, whether we're cheering for the Bears, Sox, Cubs, Hawks, Bulls or our high school and college teams; going to Steppenwolf, the CSO, Lollapalooza or the Lyric; or gathering at Navy Pier for fireworks to celebrate Independence Day.

This is where we fight to create a just society, where we volunteer our time, money and hearts to improve our neighborhoods.

At the Tribune, our lives are rooted here too. We celebrate what is great about the Chicago area and investigate and correct what isn't.

Keeping our promise

This is the latest in a series of reports about the work we strive to do for you, our readers. In a special report in June, we told you about our commitment to watchdog reporting, and we promised to stand guard for Chicago. Local investigative reporting is at the heart of our mission, and it drives everything we do.

We are keeping that promise. Each day we make watchdog reporting a defining characteristic of our news report. You've seen this in our exclusive reports about political corruption in this state, the University of Illinois admissions scandal, dangerous conditions inside Illinois' nursing homes, the nepotism of city aldermen and scores of other stories that hold our leaders and institutions accountable. You can see the results of these stories at chicagotribune.com/watchdog.

We understand, of course, that local relevance is not strictly geographic. We live in a dangerous, turbulent world. Shock waves emanating from the far side of the globe can shake us here. Our president is a Chicagoan, and so are many power brokers in Washington. Their decisions affect the entire nation. That's why our company maintains one of the largest and most accomplished Washington bureaus in the nation, as well as a broad network of foreign correspondents stationed in flash points from Baghdad to Beijing so we can bring you a clear perspective on the world at large. Just a few days ago, we were the first to report on a federal plan to relocate detainees from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to a maximum-security prison in Thomson, Ill.

Struggle and triumph

We are the definitive source of news, information, commentary and conversation for and about the Chicago region. We bring you stories about people who are part of the everyday drama of life in Chicago, stories that reveal who we are and what we value.

You can find these stories every time you open our pages or click on our Web site.

Tribune reporter Lisa Black wrote about Omar Gutierrez, an Evanston man who rallied his neighbors to help pizza deliveryman Stephen Walker, who was mugged and carjacked. After the story ran, people from as far away as South Korea and Germany sent in more than \$16,000 — enough to buy Walker a car so he could return to work.

Bonnie Miller Rubin's story about homelessness chronicled the experiences of Maria Maior, her son and her fiancé, who were reduced to living in a Streamwood storage unit after Maior and her fiancé lost their jobs. The community raised money and moved them into temporary quarters at an Itasca motel. You can read about their improving fortunes in today's Tribune.



Gerould W. Kern, Editor

Consider Stephanie Banchero's story of Derrius Quarles, a young man who fought his way out of a troubled childhood in foster care to win more than \$1 million in scholarship offers.

Or Ted Gregory's story about Steve Shoup, the Chicago police officer so moved by the tragic hit-and-run death of 4-year-old Maya Hirsch that he took up a personal crusade to keep watch at that street corner.

Voices of Chicago

Our columnists, writers and critics bring their expertise and unique perspectives to tell Chicago's stories.

John Kass' poignant column last week about the suicide of Chicago school board President Michael Scott made us consider the sum of a man's life and the private depths of a public figure. "No man, public or private, should have to end like that," Kass wrote.

Tribune Bulls writer K.C. Johnson wrote a moving tribute to slain Simeon High School basketball star Ben Wilson. Twenty-five years ago, Johnson was on the Evanston High School team that played Simeon on the day Wilson died.

Sometimes the city wants to sing and dance, as many did when Oprah Winfrey turned Michigan Avenue into a giant block party. We gave you the first look at U2's gigantic, otherworldly stage when it landed, and Greg Kot took you to the show. Julia Keller introduced you to Jayne Ann Phillips' novel "Lark & Termite," winner of the Tribune's Heartland Prize for fiction, and to Greg Stolz's "2122 North Clark," winner of our Great Chicago Ghost Story Contest.

And for the 11th year, Tribune columnists Mary Schmich and Eric Zorn will host "Songs of Good Cheer," this year at the Old Town School of Folk Music on Dec. 18-20, to celebrate the season and raise money to help those in need.

Powerful storytelling

The images captured by our photographers reveal the joy, sorrow, grit and glitz of our city and its people. Chris Sweda's beautiful photo essay of night shift workers across Chicago introduced us to people and worlds we might never encounter on our own. Abel Uribe's photos of Fenger High School students passing through a no-man's-land of violence let us see the price those young people pay just to get to school each day.

No other news organization puts more people, time, energy and money into covering Chicago's stories, whether it's in the Chicago Tribune, chicagotribune.com, through our broadcast partners, WGN-TV, WGN Radio and CLTV, or our sister publications, RedEye, The Mash and Hoy.

Today we feature some of the Chicago Tribune's brilliant storytellers on the back page of this report.

We also want to know what you think, what you see, what is important to you. So we invite you to share your ideas about the Chicago experience at chicagostories@tribune.com.

We are Chicago's newspaper. We tell your stories.

Our news focus

WATCHDOG	Guarding your interests as a taxpayer, citizen and consumer.
THE CHICAGO EXPERIENCE	What it means to work, play and live in this region.
COMMUNITY ISSUES AND GOVERNMENT	Examining the elected officials, schools, transportation systems and other topics that affect your daily life across the city and suburbs.
LOCAL ECONOMY AND BUSINESS	How Chicagoans fit into the economy at home and abroad.
ENTERTAINMENT, CULTURE AND SPORTS	Exploring and evaluating the vibrant local worlds of theater, TV, movies, music, visual arts, architecture and sports.

Stories that capture our lives and our city

When home is gone



Bonnie Miller Rubin's story about a spike in homelessness featured a family that was living in a Streamwood storage facility after the parents lost their jobs. Thanks to the generosity of friends, family and Tribune readers touched by their troubles, they have since moved into a motel.



DAVID PIERINI/TRIBUNE PHOTO



MICHAEL TERCHA/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Saving birds

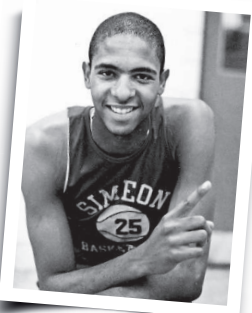


Barbara Mahany delved into a little-known corner of urban life, exploring the world of volunteers who try to help migrating birds safely navigate the dangers of the city.

Facing diabetes



David Haugh revealed a different side of Bears quarterback Jay Cutler when he wrote about the player's struggle with diabetes and rare candor in addressing it.



A legacy revisited



In 1984, Bulls beat writer **K.C. Johnson** was a member of the Evanston High School basketball team that played against Simeon High School on the day its brightest star, Ben Wilson, died of gunshot wounds. He revisited Wilson's legacy 25 years later.

A new leader



Tom Ricketts, who with his family now owns the Chicago Cubs, maintains such a low profile that he can attend a game unrecognized, but business reporter **Ameet Sachdev** offered readers a rare glimpse of the man whose family now runs one of the city's most beloved institutions.

Making music



As Italian maestro Riccardo Muti prepares to become the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's 10th music director, Tribune critic **John von Rhein** has produced an in-depth portrait of the musician and his ambitious agenda once he assumes his position in September.

Behind the scenes



Drawing on his expertise at evaluating projects for the American stage, Tribune critic **Chris Jones** took readers deep inside the minds and imaginations of the people behind "The Addams Family," a \$17 million musical based on the beloved Charles Addams cartoons and one of the year's most anticipated shows.



ABEL URIBE/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Safe passage

Shining a light on the persistent and often ignored problem of youth violence, the Seeking Safe Passage series explores this issue in all its dimensions, from documenting the danger children face just trying to get to school unharmed each day to examining the programs and research that point toward a solution.



Azam Ahmed



Rex Huppke



Kristen Mack



Deborah L. Shelton

Million-dollar scholar



Tribune reporter **Stephanie Banchemo** profiled Derrius Quarles, who fought his way out of a troubled childhood in foster care to win more than \$1 million in scholarship offers and a spot in the freshman class at prestigious Morehouse College.



WILLIAM DESHAZER/TRIBUNE PHOTO

March to glory



Low on cash but high on inspiration, the fabled marching band at Marian Catholic High School in Chicago Heights hadn't won a Grand National Championship since 2000. Tribune critic **Howard Reich** chronicled their quest to find new glory, accompanying the band to state, regional and national contests — with surprising results.



WILLIAM DESHAZER/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Chicago storytellers

With a newsroom staff of more than 400, the Chicago Tribune has more people bringing you news and information about our area than any other media company. Like you, our reporters, editors and

photographers live, work and play in this city and its suburbs. Here are some of the people whose unique and informed perspectives bring Chicago to you.



Luis Arroyave
— About Last Night

Amy Dickinson
— Ask Amy

David Haugh — In the Wake of the News

Jon Hilkevitch
— Getting Around

K.C. Johnson
— The Bulls

Kevin Pang
— Dining and culture

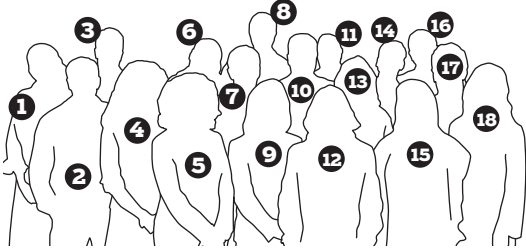
Mary Ellen Podmolik
— Local real estate

Dan Pompei
— The Bears

Phil Rogers
— Baseball

Scott Stantis
— Editorial cartoonist

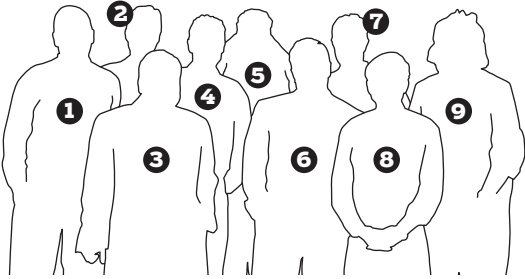
COLUMNISTS AND PERSONALITIES



- 1. Dawn Turner Trice — Short stories
- 2. Jon Yates — What's Your Problem?
- 3. Rick Morrissey — In the Wake of the News
- 4. Ellen Warren — Shopping, Answer Angel
- 5. Gail MarksJarvis — Personal finance
- 6. Phil Rosenthal — Media
- 7. Steve Rosenbloom — Smack!
- 8. Eric Zorn — Commentary
- 9. Melissa Harris — Chicago Confidential
- 10. Ameet Sachdev — Chicago Law
- 11. Fred Mitchell — Around Town
- 12. Barbara Brotman — Page Two
- 13. Julie Deardorff — Health and fitness
- 14. Greg Burns — Business
- 15. Mary Schmich — Chicagoland
- 16. Steve Johnson — Web Spin
- 17. John Kass — Page Two
- 18. Vikki Ortiz Healy — What Ever Happened to ...



CRITICS



- 1. Bill Daley — Food and wine
- 2. Michael Phillips — Movies
- 3. Chris Jones — Theater
- 4. Greg Kot — Rock music
- 5. Phil Vettel — Restaurants (in disguise)
- 6. John von Rhein — Classical music
- 7. Blair Kamin — Architecture
- 8. Howard Reich — Jazz
- 9. Maureen Ryan — Television

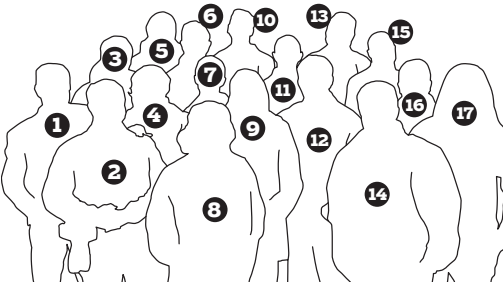


Julia Keller
— Culture



CHRIS WALKER/TRIBUNE PHOTOS

PHOTOGRAPHERS



- 1. Nuccio DiNuzzo
- 2. Zbigniew Bzdak
- 3. Heather Charles
- 4. Scott Strazzante
- 5. José Osorio
- 6. Bill Hogan
- 7. Chris Walker
- 8. Abel Uribe
- 9. Nancy Stone
- 10. E. Jason Wambsgans
- 11. Brian Cassella
- 12. Terrence Antonio James
- 13. Alex Garcia
- 14. Antonio Perez
- 15. David Pierini
- 16. Chuck Berman
- 17. Lane Christiansen



Chris Sweda



Michael Tercha



Phil Velasquez



Stacey Wescott

We've got you covered

The Chicago Tribune newspaper is just one way we keep you informed about Chicago. On **chicagotribune.com**, you can find — in addition to current and archived newspaper stories — the Chicago Breaking News Center blog, which brings you up-to-the-second updates about what's happening in our city. Chicago Breaking Sports features the latest in sports. We also offer an online help desk where you can ask a Tribune expert for assistance getting public records, an interactive tutorial for finding documents on your own and a searchable database of complaints about records requests. Other searchable databases allow you to get information about local nursing homes, school report cards, crime statistics and more. We also reach out to Chicagoans through our sister publications — RedEye, Hoy and The Mash — and our broadcast partners, CLTV, WGN-TV and WGN-Radio.

