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Labor strife spilling off docks into City Hall

Political implications for mayor as 2 unions fight to represent stevedores

By Talia Soglin
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

At the mouth of the Calumet River on Chicago's industrial Southeast Side, workers load steel, sugar and lumber off and onto ships.

The port is the center of Chicago's maritime economy. But labor strife here is spilling off of the docks and into City Hall, with political implications for Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson, himself a former labor organizer who is expected to run for reelection in less than a year.

Two unions are fighting over who should represent the dozens of stevedores who work for QSL America, a private company that operates at the publicly owned port.

For more than a year, some QSL workers have been on strike with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150. But others are still at work, laboring under a new collective bargaining agreement with another labor organization, the International Longshoremen's Association. QSL agreed to recognize the ILA as the dockworkers' union representative last year, after the Operating Engineers' strike began, setting off a battle between the labor groups that is under review by federal regulators at the National Labor Relations Board.

In early June, Johnson met with workers who support the ILA and took a photo with them. The episode prompted accusations of hypocrisy from Local 150, which views the ILA-affiliated workers as strike-breakers and accused Johnson of taking sides.

Johnson is no political ally of the Operating Engineers, who backed Paul Vallas against him in the 2023 mayoral runoff. Local 150's president chairs political committees that have poured money into the campaign of Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, a likely 2027 mayoral challenger.

"Mayor Johnson built his public image on the language of solidarity and worker justice, but when working people at Chicago's ports needed that solidarity most, he chose to take a meeting with the very people undermining them and then posed smiling in a photo with longshoremen and workers crossing the picket line," Local 150 spokesperson Kristine Kavanagh said in a statement in June.

The ILA denies that the workers who support them are scabs, saying they are longtime port workers who chose the ILA to represent them. In

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Ghosts of Kaskaskia

In the first capital of Illinois, all that's left is a church and the congregation keeping it alive



Above: An aerial view of Kaskaskia from May 23 shows Immaculate Conception Church, which was founded as a mission by Jacques Marquette in 1675. **At top:** An annual fish fry cookout gathering of family and friends in Kaskaskia on May 23 was a memorial this year to Robby Ray Davis.

E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE PHOTOS

By Andrew Carter
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The congregation started to arrive at the usual time, about half an hour before Mass on a recent Saturday afternoon, the old church slowly filling with the descendants and caretakers of a place of great serenity but also great loss. It is a place, these days, that is mostly empty. Desolate. Nature has reclaimed Kaskaskia, the site of Illinois' founding and its first capital, one flood at a time.

Usually, the town's namesake island, far down in downstate Illinois, is quiet enough to hear the hum of the barges droning along the Mississippi River. It is quiet enough that the silence, itself, is a kind of noise. It is the only part of Illinois west of the Mississippi, a geographical oddity that reflects the current's power and unpredictability. The river gave the place life before taking it back.

The history in Kaskaskia is as rich as the soil that attracted settlers in the first place and made it, for a time, Illinois' most important place. There is a Liberty Bell, a gift from King Louis XV of France, that predates the larger and more famous one in Philadelphia, and there's an American story that predates America's founding 250 years ago. There's not much of anything else, aside from the ghosts and the church, its survival a testament to the people who keep it going.

The Immaculate Conception Chapel, a brick Catholic church with a steep spire that has served as a beacon in rising waters, is not dissimilar to the land where it sits. Both exist

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AMERICA 250



STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Celebrating America

Glenna Broderick, right, and Joie Allen, center, along with other circus performers, delight the crowd at Elgin's Fourth of July parade on Saturday. Crowds fanned out across the region to celebrate the holiday with fireworks, parades and community. **Chicagoland**, Page A3

In Nation & World: U.S. celebrates from sea to shining sea. **Page B5**

In Arts & Entertainment: A ride on the Freedom Truck.

'SENSE OF PEACE'

Archdiocese cemetery unveils memorial for suicide loss survivors, the first Catholic tribute of its kind in the nation

By Angie Leventis Lourgos
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

On the seventh anniversary of his death, Bridget Biddinger visited the grave of her brother at Queen of Heaven Catholic Cemetery in Hillside to honor his memory, as she has every year since he died by suicide on June 26, 2019.

Yet when she approached his final resting place, the 37-year-old from Plainfield noticed a crowd forming around a garden

and prominent sculpture on the cemetery grounds that she had never seen there before.

"I don't recognize that," Biddinger thought. "That's new."

She was stunned to learn that, in an uncanny coincidence, Catholic Cemeteries of the Archdiocese of Chicago was hosting a prayer service and dedication of a memorial shrine commemorating lives lost to suicide as well as the loved ones who grieve them.

It is the first memorial of its kind erected by an archdiocese at

a Catholic cemetery in the United States and serves as a physical testament to the church's evolution on the matter of suicide.

Historically, the Catholic Church had denied religious funerals inside houses of worship as well as traditional burials for those who died in this way.

Yet Catholicism — along with much of the rest of society — now offers a much more nuanced and compassionate stance, including

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Cubs in pop culture

How a painting helped solidify a perception about the Cubs as "lovable losers" that has stuck with them ever since, regardless of the standings.



SPORTS

Reaching fever pitch

If you don't have World Cup fever after watching Argentina play Cape Verde, you should get a red card, plus other sports takeaways from Paul Sullivan.

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179th year No. 186
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Renaissance easy to appreciate on Italy trips



Among the many things I love about Italy is how the Renaissance can be spliced into your travels. Imagine: In Florence, you can sleep in a converted 16th-century monastery that’s just a block from Michelangelo’s David, around the corner from Brunelleschi’s famous cathedral dome, and down the street from the tombs of the great Medici art patrons ... and that’s just for starters.

Before the Renaissance, Europeans spent about 1,000 years in a cultural slumber. Most art was made to serve the Church, and man played only a bit part — typically as a sinner. But around 1400, everything began changing.

The new “Renaissance Man” shaped his own destiny and was no longer a mere plaything of the supernatural. Belief in the importance of the individual skyrocketed, and life became much more than a preparation for the hereafter.

This new “humanism” wasn’t a repudiation of God; it was an understanding that the best way to glorify God was not to bow down in church all day long, but to recognize the talents God gave you — and use them.

And that’s what the Renaissance Florentines were doing. Think of the extraordinary “class of 1500” living during that exciting time: Michelangelo was inspired by Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo was hanging around with political bad boy Niccolò Machiavelli. Machiavelli had the ear of power broker Lorenzo de’ Medici the Magnificent. Lorenzo’s son, Pope Leo X, gave big painting commissions to Raphael, who exchanged masterpieces with artist Albrecht Dürer in Germany,



Visitors to Italy still plan itineraries to see great Renaissance works — like the Sistine Chapel. **DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI**

who was personally converted to Protestantism by Martin Luther ... who was excommunicated by Leo X ... who had gone to school with Michelangelo.

Never before had artists been asked to do so much or given so much money and freedom. In the Middle Ages, unheralded craftsmen cranked out by-the-numbers religious art. During the Renaissance, artists no longer worked anonymously. The most successful ones — like Leonardo, Michelangelo and Raphael — achieved celebrity status, dictating their terms and creating as the spirit moved them.

Artists of the Renaissance deserved the respect they got. To create realistic paintings and statues, they merged art and science. They studied anatomy like doctors, nature like biologists and the laws of

perspective like mathematicians.

Enhanced by experiments with perspective, paintings became more true to life — and packed a bigger psychological punch. When you look at Leonardo’s Last Supper, you don’t think, “Isn’t it amazing how the lines of perspective pull me right to the figure of Christ?” But subconsciously those lines powerfully direct your eye — and heart — to the center of the fresco, right to Jesus.

Leonardo — a sculptor, engineer, inventor and scientist — typified the well-rounded Renaissance Man (and he wasn’t a bad painter either). Indifferent to what his patrons thought, Leonardo often left projects undone. Of the few surviving paintings by his hand, two are unfinished — abandoned when something more interesting came

along.

But Leonardo was far from a flake. From the notebooks he left behind, we see him as a keen observer and a fearless thinker: He dissected corpses, diagrammed the flight of birds and formulated hypotheses about the movement of water.

Michelangelo was no less inventive than Leonardo, and he was equally famous. He split his time between Florence (his hometown) and Rome, where the money was. Over his long life, he ended up working for nine popes.

Michelangelo insisted he was a sculptor, not a painter. And though he preferred working in Florence, when Pope Julius II said, “Come to Rome and do a painting,” he couldn’t refuse — so he spent years at the Vatican, frescoing the Sistine Chapel.

That chapel ceiling is the story of creation — and the essence of Renaissance humanism. When Michelangelo shows God giving Adam the spark of life, man is truly made in God’s image, as glorious as his creator.

Raphael, the third of the big three, combined the quiet elegance of Leonardo with the raw power of Michelangelo. A bit of an upstart, Raphael rubbed elbows with his elder mentors in Florence for a time, but soon moved on to Rome.

There, the pope hired him to paint the walls of his library in the Vatican. In his huge fresco, called the “School of Athens,” Raphael celebrated the great pre-Christian thinkers — a shocking break from Church tradition. And to make the embrace of these once taboo figures even stronger, Raphael depicted

the great thinkers of ancient Greece as the leading Renaissance artists and geniuses of his generation. Not only did the Renaissance appreciate the greats of the ancient world, they considered themselves in the same league. Renaissance humanism ruled.

Although the Italian Renaissance sputtered out by 1600, by then people from around the world were already coming to see its masterpieces.

Especially in Italy today, visitors continue to plan itineraries around seeing the great works of this cultural explosion.

Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

CELEBRITY TRAVEL

Traveling improves teamwork of singers

By **Jae-Ha Kim**
TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY

For the K-pop group AtHeart, traveling around the world is a perk of their job that they don’t take for granted.

“Even though I had been to Los Angeles before, I had only been there (previously) as a tourist,” said Katelyn, who hails from the Philippines. “This time, however, we were filming a music video, so it was a completely new experience for me. It was so much fun and really exciting because I love LA, and I hope we get the chance to go there more often in the future.”

Besides Katelyn, the group includes Japanese American Michi, Aurora from Japan, and Korean members Arin, Bome, Nahyun and Seohyeon. They have released a new single “Say It.”

This interview with the members of AtHeart has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Where did you shoot the music video for “Say It”?

Seohyeon: In Mokpo (South Korea). I thought the filming locations were absolutely beautiful and perfectly matched the story and concept of the music video. The scenery and atmosphere added so much to the overall mood, which made the experience even more memorable for me.

Q: What is your bucket-list venue that you have yet to perform in?

Katelyn: I want to perform in all of the members’ hometowns, and, of course, in the Philippines! I’d also love to perform at iconic music festivals and



AtHeart members say their dream is to perform at iconic music festivals like Coachella. **TITAN CONTENT**

stadiums like Coachella, Lollapalooza and Wembley Stadium someday ... **S...** and the Tokyo Dome!

Q: What's the most important thing you've learned from your travels?

Aurora: I think whenever I travel, I always become more independent and mentally stronger. I did a homestay in Korea when I was 12 years old and attended a music camp in New York when I was 14. At first, being in an unfamiliar country without any family around felt very scary. There were many challenges and obstacles along the way. However, being in that kind of environment taught me how to speak up for myself and step out of my comfort zone. I believe that stepping outside of your own country and familiar environment can teach you life-long lessons. **K:** I’ve learned how to appreciate my family more. Since we’re all growing up, we’ll be busy with our own lives and won’t always have time to be together. That’s why when I once asked my parents why we often traveled outside the country, they told me that once we get older, we won’t always have the time to do it anymore.

Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?

Arin: It’s the Philippines. I’d love to learn more about where Katelyn is from and what makes it so special. I’d also love to try the local food, explore the culture and spend time experiencing the beautiful beaches

and scenery. **Nahyun:** I’d love to visit Michi’s hometown, Hawaii, try local Hawaiian food and spend some relaxing time by the beach.

Q: Do you feel that the vibe of a different place makes its way into your music and videos?

Bome: I definitely think so. The final result can change a lot depending on the directors and even the atmosphere or situation on the day of filming. Because of that, I think those factors have a big influence on how a project turns out. It’s always interesting to see how different elements come together to create something unique.

Q: When you are overseas working, do you have any free time built in?

Michi: Having traveled to both the U.S. and Japan for promotions and filming, we’ve had the chance to meet our overseas (fans) and create many precious memories together. Even with our busy schedules, when we have free time, we try to experience the local culture — visiting popular spots, trying famous foods, shopping or trying new activities. We also make sure to document our experiences so that (our fandom), heartbeat, can join us and share those first times together. Traveling abroad as a group has strengthened our teamwork, and we’re truly grateful for these shared experiences that allow us to grow even closer.

For more from the reporter, visit www.jaehakim.com.

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

Company refuses to cover added costs after river cruise canceled

By **Christopher Elliott** | KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

My wife and I have been looking forward to our six-day Rhine River cruise with CroisiEurope. It was supposed to be a relaxing trip before we continued on to Dublin. What we got instead was a series of mechanical problems and a lot of anxiety. On the first night, the ship stopped cruising early. The next morning, scuba divers worked under the hull. We departed late, and a scheduled excursion to Heidelberg, Germany, was canceled.

That night, around midnight, the ship hit something, and the hull shook. At 1:30 a.m., all passengers were woken up and sent to the lounge. This lasted for an hour before we were allowed to go back to our staterooms. The final announcement came the next morning: The cruise was canceled because of a bad motor.

Our original disembarkation port was in Amsterdam, and we had nonrefundable travel booked from there to Dublin. My wife and I didn’t want to risk further delays. We immediately booked noncancelable train travel to Amsterdam, plus two nonrefundable nights at the Hotel des Arts. Later that afternoon, a CroisiEurope representative advised that some guests would continue by bus, but by then, we’d already made firm commitments and couldn’t join the alternative trip.

CroisiEurope refunded the original cruise fare of \$4,792, but we have additional expenses of about \$1,400. Can you help us get a refund?

— *Michael Cawley, West Chester, Pennsylvania*

A: I think CroisiEurope should have reimbursed you for all of your expenses. Mechanical failures and an interrupted night’s sleep after the ship struck something — these aren’t minor inconveniences.

Under EU Regulation 1177/2010, a European consumer protection law, passengers on inland waterway journeys are entitled to reimbursement in cases of cancellation because of technical faults, which includes meals and a reasonable accommodations if an overnight stay becomes necessary.

But the regulation for inland waterways is a little tricky.

Once an event like yours happens, the operator must offer two options: either reroute you to the final destination free of charge or provide a full refund of the ticket price.

CroisiEurope offered a bus reroute after you’d already committed to the nonrefundable train and hotel to Amsterdam. This timing is important. You were forced to make arrangements because the company didn’t immediately provide the necessary assistance. The offer of a bus came too late.

What could you have done differently? The moment that the cruise was officially canceled, you should have contacted a manager at CroisiEurope and ask that it book and pay for your rerouting, which the regulation implies that it should do.

Booking nonrefundable tickets on your own, especially without a clear paper trail that confirms CroisiEurope’s refused assistance, makes recovering this money harder. Since CroisiEu-

rope already issued the full cruise refund, your dispute is over the out-of-pocket expenses. After we contacted the company, CroisiEurope offered you a \$1,400 credit for a future cruise.

“Per our legal analysis, the Regulation (EU) No. 1177/2010 does not apply to Mr. Cawley’s case, as this law concerns a package travel contract and not merely a river transport service,” a representative told us. This isn’t the resolution you were hoping for — and frankly, it wasn’t what I was hoping for either.

Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Contact him at elliott.org/help or chris@elliott.org.