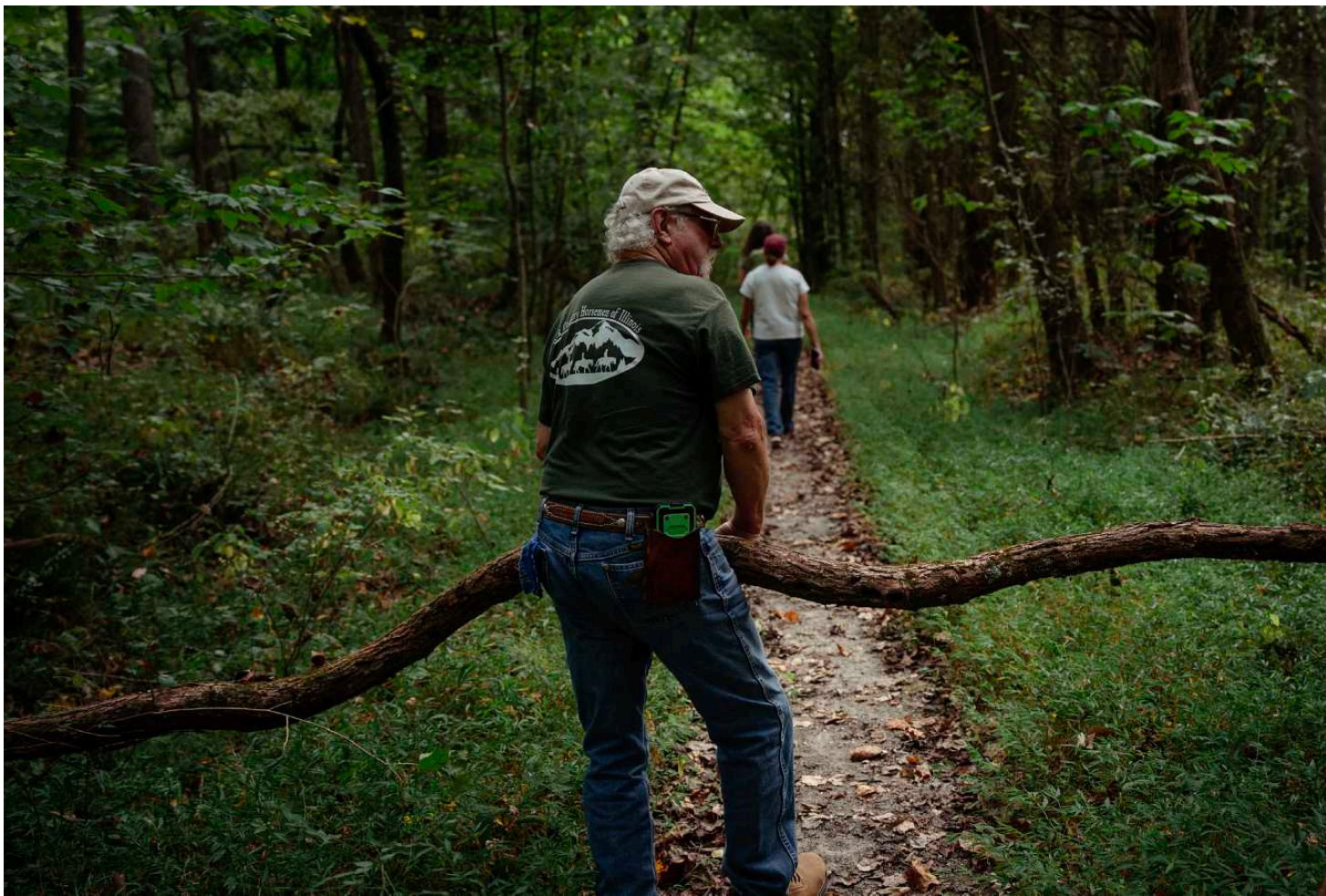


Chicago Tribune



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More than 170,000 acres in Midwest national forests, including Shawnee, could be opened to roads, logging and mining under Trump plan



'WE STAND TO LOSE OUR SOLITUDE'

By Christiana Freitag | FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

For 73-year-old Harold "Cricket" Simons, a major appeal of the Shawnee National Forest is what isn't there.

No motorized vehicles. No traffic passing on most trails. No horns or engines breaking the quiet.

Simons travels through the forest on horseback. The former Bloomington, Illinois, rodeo rider spends much of his retirement leading the Illinois chapter of the Back Country Horsemen of America, a national organization of horse-riding volunteers who help maintain trails and public lands.

His five horses are accustomed to the sounds of trail work: the occasional chain-saw or falling tree.

But he said his workhorses, like him, prefer silence.

That's at risk as the Trump administration's Department of Agriculture proposed in August to repeal a 2001 federal rule restricting road construction on national forest lands.

"We stand to lose our solitude in our roadless areas," Simons said.

The repeal of the conservation regulation commonly known as the Roadless Rule, would affect nearly 45 million acres of national forests across the country, including about 10,666 acres in Shawnee.

Across the Midwest, more than 170,000 acres of public lands are protected under the Roadless Rule, including portions of Indiana's Hoosier National Forest, Minnesota's Superior and Chippewa national forests and Michigan's Ottawa and Huron-Manistee national forests.

The proposal is drawing concern from horseback riders like Simons and hunters, hikers and other outdoor recreationists, as well as tribal groups with treaty rights across the Great Lakes region. Conservationists worry that numerous threatened and endangered species will be adversely affected.

"There's a lot to lose here, and everybody needs to be made aware of it," said Kelly Thayer, senior policy advocate with the Environmental Law & Policy Center.

The proposed repeal comes as the U.S. Forest Service is also contending with other changes to federal forest management policy, Thayer said,

See **ROADLESS** on Page A4

Above: Harold "Cricket" Simons clears a log from a trail in Shawnee National Forest in Illinois on Sept. 21.

E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

ELECTION 2026
U.S. SENATE

Long odds for GOP's Tracy

The Republican nominee is facing a big political challenge against Stratton

By Olivia Olander
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Addressing supporters at an evening fundraiser off Lake Decatur in July, Republican U.S. Senate nominee Don Tracy offered one reason he thinks he has a shot in the general election, despite Democrats winning every statewide contest for more than a decade.

"I hear this question up and down the state, 'Don, who is your opponent?'" Tracy said. "I answer that, and I say, 'Well, my opponent is the lieutenant governor. Do you know his or her name?' Nobody knows."

But then he pivoted almost immediately.

"Granted, she has more name ID than I do, so far," Tracy said. "But it's not that much more."

Such is the political challenge for Tracy, a candidate for a statewide office with a unique background — a onetime Democrat who became chair of the Illinois Republican Party, a position he later left amid party turmoil. Nonetheless, he has taken up the GOP mantle to make a long-shot Senate bid.



Tracy

See **TRACY** on Page A6

INSIDE

Co-pilot used ax in attack, UAE says

The co-pilot was an Omani national who had been barred from flying on his country's airline. **Nation & World, Page B5**

Relive the legend of singer-songwriter

The celebrations for what would have been John Prine's 80th birthday will be lavish and music-filled. **Arts & Entertainment**

Many want an office, just not a conventional one

Chicagoans needing place to work set up in co-working spaces

By Lila Hempel-Edgers
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

By the time he's halfway up a climbing wall, Emerson Boyd is thinking only about which colorful nub might best carry his weight. For a few minutes, he's beyond the reach of incoming emails — a freedom that's hard to come by in the middle of a workday.

"Everyone here is doing their own thing, but they're all working toward some goal that they have," said the 29-year-old software developer, who co-works from First Ascent in the Loop. "The variety is good."

Boyd is part of a growing contra-

diction in Chicago, a city that simultaneously boasts the nation's second-largest co-working market and some of the highest office vacancy rates in the country. The disparity suggests workers might be looking for something more than a quiet cubicle.

Industry experts say Chicagoans are setting up laptops in spaces that double as climbing gyms and dog parks, trading subsidized parking for culinary classes and on-site podcast studios. Many still need a place to work, but the appeal of the conventional office has soured alongside the work-from-home routine they didn't ask for.

"What people want in an office building has changed," said Sean Boyd, who manages Avison Young's market intelligence team. "But the



Hayden Golemon, 27, climbs at First Ascent climbing gym at Block 37 in downtown Chicago on Thursday. Golemon uses the gym regularly to both work and climb during the week. **CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

See **WORK** on Page A10

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179th year No. 277
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France’s Gothic cathedrals inspire awe



When traveling in France, I can’t help but marvel at the towering Gothic cathedrals that mark the centers of many towns. I like to imagine what it was like to be a pilgrim 600 years ago, hiking for days to a particular church on a particular holy day... and feeling the awe when the soaring spire of the cathedral finally appeared on the distant horizon.

The Gothic style evolved in France in the Middle Ages, from heavier Romanesque architecture. As French urban life grew more stable, churches didn’t need to be so fortresslike — and engineering innovations allowed architects to build airier, vertical buildings that stretch heavenward and allow more of God’s light to shine in. Gothic is marked by pointed arches (which make space for stunning stained-glass windows) and counter-weight “flying buttresses” — beams that stick out of the church and support the roof by pushing back inward.

While mostly made of stone, many Gothic churches feature a wooden roof or spire, making them susceptible to fires — like the one that overtook Paris’ Notre-Dame Cathedral in 2019. Happily, the church has been restored, and visitors can once again take in France’s most famous Gothic wonder. But there are many other magnificent Gothic cathedrals sprinkled across the country, like jeweled pins on a map.

Chartres is home to arguably Europe’s best example of pure Gothic. Officially known as the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres — it’s one of more than 100 churches dedicated to “Our Lady” (“Notre-Dame”) scattered around France — it too



Chartres' cathedral shows off the unity of architecture that epitomize France's Gothic style. **DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI**

experienced a harrowing fire, burning to the ground in 1194.

Amazingly, Chartres’ cathedral took just 30 years to rebuild, astonishing when you consider it took centuries to build other major cathedrals (such as Paris’ Notre-Dame). What you see now is a unity of architecture, statuary and stained glass that captures the spirit of the 13th century (known as the “Age of Faith”) like no other church of that era.

At the time of Chartres’ fire, the church owned the veil supposedly worn by Mary when she gave birth to Jesus, making this small town a major player on the pilgrim circuit. While the veil was feared lost in the fire, it was found days later unharmed in the crypt and — whether miracle or marketing play — became

the impetus to rebuild quickly. You can still view the veil, along with many statues dedicated to Mary, but the highlight for me is the Blue Virgin Window — the central window behind the altar. It shows Mary dressed in the famed “Chartres blue,” a sumptuous color made by mixing cobalt oxide into the glass.

Beyond Chartres, you’ll find two more classic examples of Gothic cathedrals in Normandy.

In contrast to small-town Chartres, Rouen was France’s second-largest city in medieval times. While its cathedral was also dedicated to Mary, it’s more famous as a landmark of art history: its façade is what Claude Monet painted 30 different studies of at various times of day, capturing “impressions” as the light played across its detailed

masonry. (Several of these are housed at the Orsay Museum in Paris.)

The building you see today was constructed between the 12th and 14th centuries — though lightning strikes, an accidental bombing during World War II, and other destructive forces meant constant rebuilding. Inside is a chapel dedicated to Joan of Arc (she was convicted of heresy in Rouen and burned at the stake here in 1431) and several stone tombs from when Rouen was the capital of the dukes of Normandy — including one containing English King Richard the Lionheart’s lion-heart.

Two hours west, Bayeux’s cathedral — as big as Paris’ Notre-Dame — dominates this small town. Its two towers and west façade were originally Romanesque, but the towers were

later capped with tall Gothic spires and the façade embellished with a decorative Gothic “curtain.” Historians believe the Bayeux Tapestry, the 225-foot-long embroidery telling the story of William the Conqueror’s victory in the Battle of Hastings, originally hung above the nave.

Heading the other direction, the most impressive Gothic cathedral in eastern France is in Strasbourg, where its venerable church — yet another “Notre-Dame” — somehow survived the French Revolution, the Franco-Prussian War and both World Wars. The interior is worth savoring slowly, with its wide nave, exquisite gold-leaf organ and elaborately carved stone pulpit. The marvelous stained glass, 80 percent of which is original, dates as far back as the 12th

century. The exterior, with its cloud-piercing spire (at 466 feet, it was the world’s tallest until the mid-1800s) and red sandstone (from the 13th and 14th centuries), stands out from the other great Gothic churches in France.

Gothic churches have proven to be resilient — both physically and as powerful works of architectural art. Through wars, fires and Mother Nature, France’s great cathedrals have survived thanks to their ingenuity of design and the loving care of the people they serve.

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

Author prefers to be quiet at home

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

For critically acclaimed author Min Jin Lee, the in-depth research she did for her latest novel, “American Hagwon,” included extensive visits across three continents to ensure that her fictional family’s lives rang true.

In an effort to secure strong futures for their children, the Kohs move from Seoul to Sydney to Orange County, California. With each move, the importance of education and hagwons — for-profit cram schools — is explored.

“I traveled to Australia four times,” the former attorney said in a phone interview from her New York home. “The reason why Australia is in the book is because it is a place that a lot of South Koreans send their children to learn English if they can’t afford the U.S. Middle-class Korean people who want to give their kids a better shot for their future know that native fluency of English is really important.”

“American Hagwon” is a followup to Lee’s sweeping 2017 bestseller “Pachinko.”

This interview with Lee has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Do the teachers’ own accents determine who will be hired to work at hagwons?

A: You could argue that there’s a hierarchy system of hagwon teachers depending upon which accent you have, and they will be paid a different rate. I interviewed a lot of hagwon teachers and one said, “I have an American accent and it’s actually



Author Min Jin Lee says the diversity of New York City made her feel welcome as a young immigrant. **CHANNEL YES**

worth more than a British accent.” ... Koreans want their kids to sound like a Midwestern American when you speak English versus sounding British. Not everyone can afford to sound the way you and I do, so they will send their children to Australia or New Zealand or the Philippines to learn to speak English.

Q: Was education a reason your parents chose to immigrate to the U.S.?

A: No. We came here because my father is a war refugee from North Korea. When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, he felt that because there’s only a ceasefire between North and South Korea and the war hadn’t technically ended, that the next war could again take place in South Korea.

Q: How did growing up in New York affect you as a writer?

A: It allowed me to really see my experience as being central. I think that I never felt like this statistical anomaly, because New York is made up of statistical anomalies and minorities and immigrants. The first time I really experienced a sense of otherness was when I went to college.

Q: In an interview we did about 10 years ago, you mentioned that your dream vacation would be to rent a house in Tuscany and invite all your friends and family. Have you done that yet?

A: No, but I don’t think

it’s my dream anymore. I love the idea of seeing the people that I care about and being with them. That part hasn’t changed. But the idea of something lavish doesn’t appeal to me in any way anymore. I would really like to be quiet and just sit at home.

Q: What has changed in New York that you enjoy?

A: Walking in New York has gotten better and better. The food in New York is outrageously good and the Korean food has become 10 times better than what it used to be 10 years ago. Los Angeles Korean food used to be so much better than here, but now we’re really holding our own at all price points. You can get something really high end, but also something really delicious for under \$20.

Q: When you’re traveling, how do you handle staying healthy and eating well?

A: Actually, this is going to sound funny, but I carry food with me. If I’m gone for a couple of days, I’ll bring a bag or two of Hero Bagels with me. Each bagel has 19 grams of protein. If you toast it, it almost tastes like a Lender’s bagel, which is what I grew up with as a kid. It’s kind of embarrassing that I live in the bagel capital of the planet and I end up eating this processed stuff, but when I travel, it’s very useful because I don’t really get time to go anywhere to eat.

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

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

Tour operator promises price lock, then breaks its contract

By **Christopher Elliott** | KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

I paid in full for an Overseas Adventure Travel (OAT) trip to Spain and Portugal almost a year in advance. I did this specifically to take advantage of the Good Buy program, which OAT advertises as a way to “secure your trip’s price and protect yourself from cost increases.”

A few months later, Air France canceled our original flight. OAT rebooked us on Delta, but then it mailed me an invoice for an additional \$670 for customized air cost. I called and spoke with a representative who told me that the fee was for a seating upgrade to Delta Comfort+. Since I wanted the extra legroom, I paid it.

When we got to the airport, the gate agent told us that we were in standard coach. No Comfort+ seats were ever reserved. When I returned home and asked for a refund, OAT changed its story. First, it said that the \$670 was an “excess” charge. Then, it admitted that its agent gave me “incorrect information” about the seat upgrade, but claimed the \$670 was actually to cover the cost of the more-expensive Delta flight.

I pointed to Section 7 of OAT’s own terms and conditions, which says that the company cannot increase airfare costs for Good Buy customers who’ve paid in full. OAT told me that clause applies to “other things” but not airfare — and that the \$670 was simply “correcting an error.”

OAT offered me a \$670 credit toward a future trip, but after this experience, I don’t trust the company. I want my money back. Does the Good Buy plan actually mean anything, or can OAT charge me whatever it wants?

— *Michael Hughes, in Burnsville, Minnesota*

A: OAT should’ve honored its contract with you. When a company offers a price lock as an incentive for customers to hand over thousands of dollars months — or even years — in advance, this agreement isn’t a suggestion. It’s a binding promise.

Section 7 of OAT’s agreement says that the company reserves the right to increase the trip price due to changes in airfares, “unless you prepaid according to the terms of the Good Buy Plan prior to the cost increase going into effect.” You paid in full 10 months before your departure date. OAT shouldn’t have passed this cost on to you.

Beyond the contract, there are federal protec-

tions. The U.S. Department of Transportation is clear; once a ticket is fully purchased, and the transaction is complete, an airline — and the agent acting on its behalf — is generally prohibited from increasing the price.

You did the right thing by keeping a meticulous record of your correspondence. When a company agent tells you that a fee is for a seat upgrade, and it turns out to be for a price hike that it wasn’t allowed to charge you in the first place, “oops” isn’t a valid defense.

When you hit a wall like this, you should always appeal the initial rejection to an executive. I list the OAT executive contacts on

my advocacy site, Elliott.org. A polite, firm email to an executive often works better than a dozen frustrating calls to a front-line agent who’s just reading from a script.

The company conducted a full internal review after I made them aware of your case. A spokesperson for OAT told us that the team processed a refund of the \$670 in question. It also apologized to you for the “confusion.”

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.