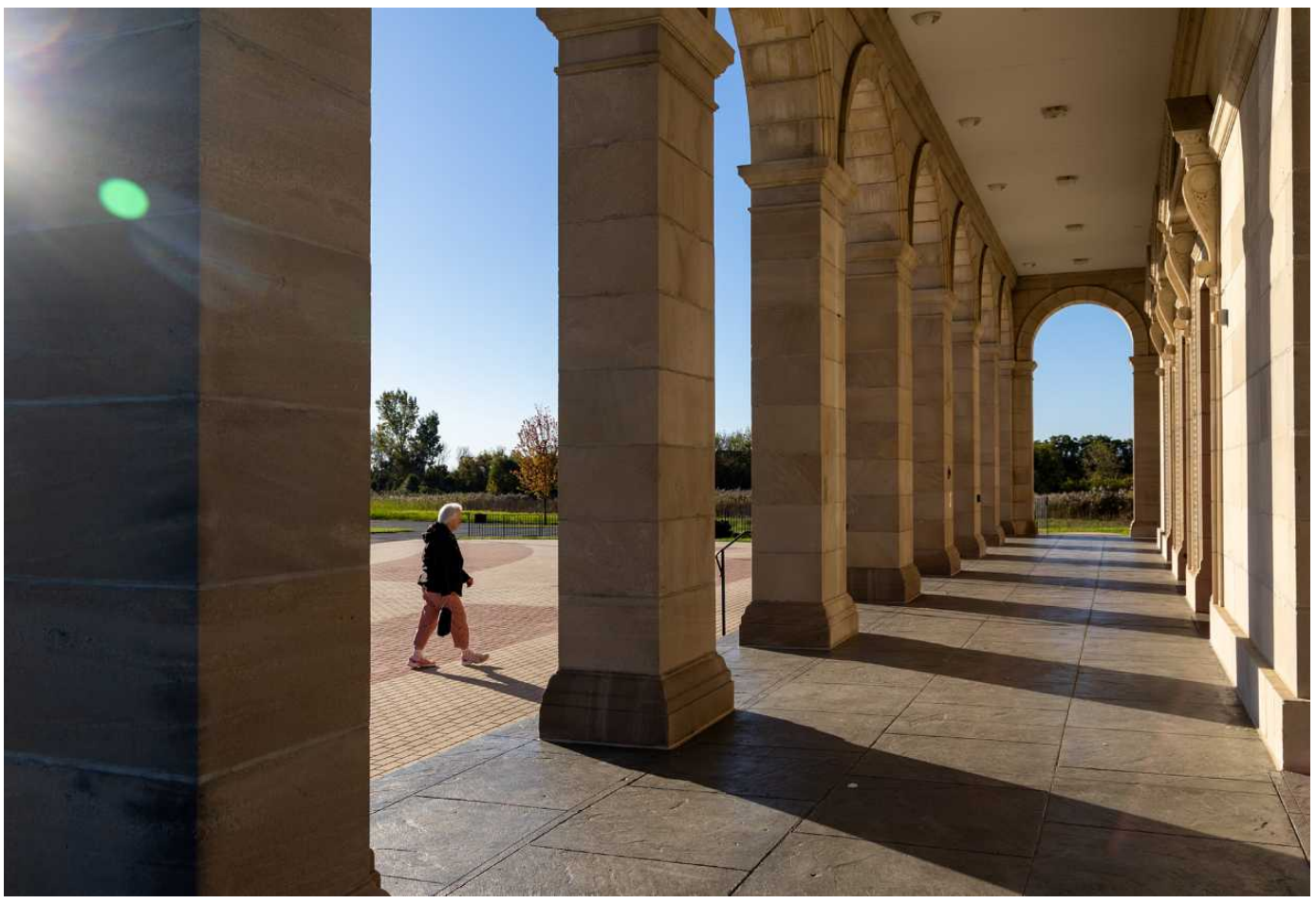
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Transformation of stained glass window shattered in Rockford church fire reveals 'second life' of holy vestiges and blessings that emerge from tragedy



SYMBOLS OF RENEWAL

By Angie Leventis Lourgos
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Plumes of smoke billowed from the steep-pitched roof of a northern Illinois church one winter night after its organ caught fire during a practice session.

Everyone was evacuated from the property. No one was hurt in the Feb. 23 blaze at Christ United Methodist Church in Rockford, which firefighters quickly extinguished and determined to be accidental.

Yet the fire caused great damage to the sanctuary.

And to vent the thick smoke, firefighters had to break the window closest to the organ — a beloved stained glass rendering of the crucifixion of Christ, an image at the spiritual and emotional center of the faith.

The nearly 10-foot-tall image of Jesus suspended from the cross was shattered into hundreds of colored pieces, which scattered on the ground inside as well as outside the building.

"It's the most important, most moving thing in the Christian faith. It's renewal. It's that hope. It's ... the hope in his resurrection. And now, the resurrection of our church, too."

KATHY WIGHT, of Rockford

"When I collected the glass, I felt a sense of urgency," recalled Mark West, church trustee chair. "I had to get it picked up before it got thrown out."

He took those broken pieces to a local glassblower, who refashioned them into more than a hundred small round pendants, to serve as keepsakes for members of the church.

Now each of these glass stones

See **RENEWAL** on Page A12

Above: Christ United Methodist Church in Rockford member Mark West holds his necklace before services on Sept. 27. The necklace was crafted from broken stained glass after a fire in February. **RYAN RAYBURN/FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE**
Top: A woman enters St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church for Mass on Oct. 4 in Old Mill Creek. The church, which opened in 2014, includes recycled parts of multiple closed houses of worship. **ARTHUR MAIORELLA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Extreme heat is killer that's rarely blamed



Martease Boyd finishes an ice pop while working outside Wrigley Field for a Noah Kahan concert on July 14. The temperature at the time was 95 degrees. **JOHN J. KIM/TRIBUNE**

County's death toll not the whole picture, experts say

By Adriana Pérez
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

At least 14 people have died in Cook County this summer from heat-related causes, with July marking the area's deadliest month for heat-related deaths in more than a decade, according to data from the medical examiner's office. Successive heat waves in late June and early-to-mid-July this year pushed the heat index, a combination of temperature and humidity, above 100 degrees for several days.

The majority of the people who died in Cook County had underlying health issues that were complicated by the extreme heat, according to the medical examiner's office, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension and obesity.

See **HEAT** on Page A2

ELECTION 2026

Pritzker puts his mark on US races

Governor spends millions in Texas, beyond to elevate Dems — and his 2028 clout

By Daniel C. Vock and Dan Petrella
FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker has spent nearly $39 million so far this election cycle to support fellow Democrats and their causes beyond his own reelection, even though many out-of-state races he's backing look like long shots. To see why, look at Texas.

The billionaire Democrat already had a long-running rivalry with Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott when Pritzker last year invited a contingent of Democratic state lawmakers to hide out in the Chicago suburbs to block, or at least delay, a GOP plan to redraw Texas' congressional map to elect more Republicans.

At the time, it seemed like a desperate ploy by a delegation with few cards left to play. The idea that Texas, long a bastion of conservatism, could elect Democrats seemed remote at best.

But on the eve of Tuesday's midterms, Texas Democrats are increasingly hopeful they can win a statewide race for the first time since 1994. Three of the candidates with the best shot — including U.S. Senate hopeful James Talarico and Gina Hinojosa, Abbott's general election opponent — were among the Democratic lawmakers who fled to Illinois last year. Pritzker has put his money behind all three.

He's taking a similar approach in Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi and Tennessee, states that have drawn less attention than traditional battlegrounds. Those aren't places where Democrats have typically done well, Pritzker acknowledges.

See **PRITZKER** on Page A4

■ Democrats could flip the only GOP-held seat on the Cook County Board on Tuesday. **Chicagoland, Page A3**

■ Days away from Chicago's historic school board election, the 40-plus candidates are knocking on doors in a final push. **Chicagoland, Page A5**

■ A tangle with Springfield forms the crux of Chicago School Board president debate. **Chicagoland, Page A6**

INSIDE



TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/TRIBUNE

In Pilsen, the art of remembrance

The National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood is celebrating four decades of ofrendas with scores of colorful altars on display for Días de Muertos, showcasing how much variety exists in the tradition. **Arts & Entertainment**

'A TRUE ALPHA': Arrival of defensive tackle Jeffrey Simmons may change what's possible for the Bears. **Sports**

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WEATHER FORECAST

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179th year No. 305
© Chicago Tribune

Drink in bucolic Douro Valley in Portugal



Rick Steves



The Douro region in Portugal can shift from brown in winter to green in summer to red and gold in autumn. **DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI**

One of Portugal's most endearing slices is the Douro River Valley — the winding, terraced region that produces the country's beloved port wine. This is Portugal's version of Germany's romantic Rhine River Valley.

But unlike the Rhine, the Douro was never a strategic military location. So, rather than castles and stony ramparts, visitors encounter farms and sleepy villages. The only thing fortified here ... is the wine.

The Douro region stretches along the river of the same name, about 60 miles inland from the city of Porto (Portugal's second-largest city, where the Douro River spills into the Atlantic Ocean). Joy-riding through the region you enjoy steep, twisting valleys; rolling hills draped in corduroy jackets of vineyards; and tidy terraces as far as the eye can see. Depending on when you visit, the hillside can shift in color, from dusty brown in winter, to scrubby green in summer, to glowing red and gold in fall.

Like the United States and "bourbon" — or Champagne and "champagne" — the Douro Valley is the only place that can legally produce what's called "port wine." This is thanks to the Marquês de Pombal, who demarcated the region in 1756 to make sure his country's prized drink wouldn't be confused with cheap knockoffs. Visiting here, you can appreciate just how much hard work it was — and still is — to produce traditional port wine. This vine-draped and ever-changing terrain was sculpted by centuries of hardy farmers, who laboriously terraced the land. To this day, port production remains a labor of love, as grapes are still generally picked by hand and crushed the traditional way — by foot — as machines are unable to achieve high-quality results.

Since port wine is a blend of several types of grapes, most port-producing vineyards, called quintas, grow a few different varieties of grapes. Unlike traditional wine, which undergoes fermentation in full, port is a fortified wine. During fermentation, brandy is added to it, thereby halting the process and preserving some of the sugars from the grapes. This is what gives port its signature sweetness.

After fermentation, port traditionally stays in the Douro Valley for one winter after it's made, as the cold temperatures encourage the wine and brandy to marry. It's then transported by truck to port-wine lodges in Porto, where the more humid, mild climate at sea level is ideal for aging. (A dozen or so port-wine lodges in Porto's Vila nova de Gaia district welcome visitors for tastings and tours to see the barrels and vats in which the wine is maturing.)

Without a car, a slow but scenic way to visit the Douro Valley is to take a boat from Porto to the heart of the Douro (a seven-hour trip). There are also trains that run between Porto and the two main towns in the region: Peso da Régua and Pinhão. Neither town is particularly exciting, but both have hotels and make a decent home base for visiting the area's quintas.

Régua, which feels more urban and functional, is home to two main streets and the Douro Museum, with exhibits that explain the landscape, industry, culture and geology of the region. A rabelo — the traditional flat-bottomed boat that was once used to transport barrels of port downriver from Douro to Porto — is permanently moored to the rooftop. Pinhão — even smaller and with just one main street — feels more deeply rooted in Douro culture and scenery.

But the best way to fully experience the Douro Valley is to rent a car and drive, so you can visit several quintas. While some are private, many welcome travelers (and some even rent rooms).

Of the quintas that are open to the public, most offer a one-hour tour that's followed by a tasting of several wines.

Compare quintas with the help of a guidebook, online research or local advice. One good place is Quinta do Panascal, which produces the popular Fonseca port. Though a commercial operation, it feels special due to its tucked-away location — and because it's one of the few places that lets visitors roam free among its terraced vineyards.

But my favorite ones to visit are the small and family-run quintas, where you get the chance to meet the latest generation of winemakers and appreciate the pride of these artisans, so passionate about their traditions and craft.

Two good family-run places that welcome visitors are Quinta de la Rosa near Pinhão and Quinta de Marrocos (near Régua), which also rents rooms in their family farmhouse.

If you have time, it's worthwhile to spend a night or two at a quinta. You'll be welcomed like a guest in a local family's home, and you get to savor the beautiful countryside right outside your window. It's a memorable experience, and the best way to gain an appreciation for this wonderfully drinkable bit of Portuguese culture.

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

Locations play vital role in film on Monroe

By Jae-Ha Kim
TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY



Dana Carpenter said "Flesh Impact" gave her an idea of what Marilyn Monroe could be like today. **JAE-HA KIM**

After Marilyn Monroe married Joe DiMaggio in 1954, the couple went on what would become a working honeymoon.

While her husband was busy coaching local baseball teams in Japan, Monroe accepted an invitation to entertain the U.S. troops stationed in South Korea during the Korean War, an experience that she had described as "the best thing that ever happened to me."

More than seven decades later, "Flesh Impact" — filmmaker Maggie Gyllenhaal's homage to the iconic movie star — made its Asian debut in Korea at this year's Busan International Film Festival. The critically acclaimed 17-minute movie already has garnered buzz as an Academy Award contender in the best live-action short film category.

At BIFF, I caught up with Dana Carpenter, the executive vice president of entertainment for Authentic Brands Group, which owns the rights to Monroe's name and likeness. This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: How did "Flesh Impact" come to be?
A: Genesis approached us about this film, and we were very intrigued because we knew they had been in this space for a while. After the first call that we did with them, it really took our breath away about how insightful, creative and forward thinking they were about how they wanted to tell a story about Marilyn as an artist.

Q: Not about Marilyn the blonde bombshell, right?
A: Exactly. That was really exciting for us. Genesis wasn't interested in recreating what moviegoers already knew, like her in the white dress blowing over the subway grating. We could never re-create that. That was her moment. They wanted to do something different with a new story that was boundary breaking and very unexpected that fans hadn't seen before. They asked Maggie to write a script, which turned out phenomenal, and direct the film. Marilyn would've turned 100 this year. Maggie wrote the role of Marilyn as a 100-year-old actor who wanted to be viewed as a serious actor.

Q: Was the film shot in places that would've been meaningful to Marilyn?
A: Yes, the locations were very important to the movie because she had lived in Los Angeles and New York. She was a Hollywood-born woman. And she had famously said that Brooklyn was her favorite place in the world and that she was going to retire there one day. New York played an important role in the film. It was a really beautiful homecoming to film in New York City, a place where she had studied and refined her craft in acting. We filmed on Broadway in the theater district, at the Music Box Theatre. In Los Angeles, we filmed at two different studios. It was incredible to be on a traditional Hollywood film set ... that really spoke to the era of where she came through. It felt surreal to film in the cities that had been so important to Marilyn. It was magical and beautiful.

Q: You're here for BIFF. Is this your first trip to South Korea?
A: No, I've been here many times over the course of my career. I think the first time I came to Korea was in 2006. But I haven't been back for eight years, since pre-Covid, so it's really exciting to be back. The creativity that comes from the people in Korea has been so inspiring, whether it's fashion and technology or the arts. Koreans take craftsmanship to new heights and push the envelope. It's really exciting to see that.

Q: Had there been a discussion about whether Marilyn's time in Korea might make a cameo in "Flesh Impact"?
A: We talked about various scenarios. The fact that Marilyn had spent time in Korea was something that I think was really interesting, because she so enjoyed her time here. She actually made kind of a small pivot to perform for the troops here, possibly to Joe's displeasure.

Q: The last trip you took?
A: (Laughs.) We went to Venice for this film's premiere at the Venice Film Festival (in September).

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

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

Refund promised for noisy rental, but agents dance around payout

By Christopher Elliott | KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

I booked an Airbnb rental in Toronto for a stay of more than two months. The listing description used the words "quiet" and "peaceful" five times, which was exactly what I needed for my stay.

Unfortunately, the reality was anything but calm. Almost every night, recurring heavy-impact noise from the unit above would wake us up at 4 a.m.

I didn't just complain; I documented the disturbance with video and audio recordings.

I shared these with the host multiple times, and while they acknowledged the ongoing noise, they couldn't stop it.

I also reported the issue to Airbnb within the required 72-hour window. An agent reviewed my evidence and confirmed that I was covered by Airbnb's AirCover guarantee.

He gave me a written commitment for a full refund of 12 unused nights and a 30% refund for the 20 nights that we endured the noise. He even told me that he was "currently processing" the request.

Since we moved out, Airbnb reassigned the file to multiple agents who all contradicted each other.

One agent denied our eligibility entirely. Another senior manager claimed that the host wasn't willing to alter the dates, despite the thread showing that the host had already approved the early checkout. The agent then tried to close the case without giving us a cent.

I just want Airbnb to honor the written commitment that its agent made. Can you help me get them to pay what they promised?

— Tatsuyuki Morishita, in Ontario, Canada

A: Airbnb should have stuck to its word.

When an agent confirms AirCover eligibility and provides a specific refund amount in writing, this is a contract. You relied on this commitment when you packed your bags and left.

For the company to play "hot potato" with your case afterward is unacceptable.

AirCover is supposed to protect guests when a listing isn't what was advertised. Since "quiet" was a central feature of the description, the early morning noise brigade was a clear violation.

You documented the noise, notified the host and got a promise from support before you left the premises. Good job!

Many travelers make the mistake of leaving first and asking for money later, but you had the "green light" in writing.

When a company goes silent or starts walking back on a promise, you should appeal to an executive. I list the names and email addresses of Airbnb's leadership executives on my advocacy site, Elliott.org.

I contacted Airbnb on your behalf. Shortly afterward, a member of the senior support team called you. While you rightly insisted on keeping the conversation in writing, they followed up on the platform to apologize.

Airbnb honored the original refund of $1,268 and even threw in a $250 coupon for the trouble.

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.