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Robservations: A smaller Chicago Tribune ‘may take some getting used to,’ editor says

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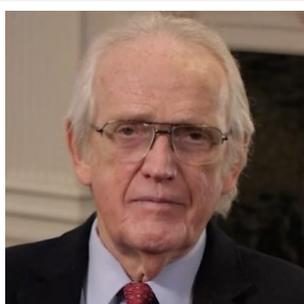
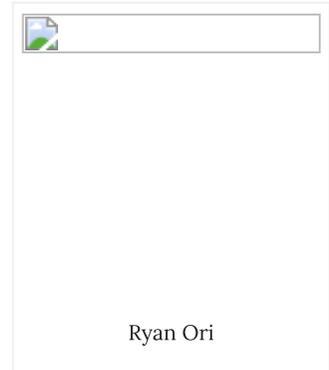
Chicago Tribune

Robservations on the media beat:

Weekday print editions of the **Chicago Tribune** shrank from four sections to three and the newspaper’s stand-alone feature section vanished. Those were among this week’s noticeable cutbacks as the newspaper continues to downsize under the new ownership of hedge fund Alden Global Capital (and adjust to the sudden loss of more than 40 newsroom employees through buyouts). Under Alden, Tribune Publishing newspapers were ordered to cut local and feature pages by 20 percent, move up editorial deadlines and halt

most special sections, according to [Crain's Chicago Business](#). **Colin McMahon**, editor-in-chief of the Tribune, outlined the newspaper's reorganization this week in an [unsigned letter](#) to readers. ([Here is the link](#).) "We hope that these changes, while they may take some getting used to, offer you more consistency and predictability in the makeup and order of the newspaper," it read. "We'll still have roughly the same amount of news space dedicated to our journalism as opposed to advertising. We measure that in column inches, and that total will be roughly the same." In a meeting with staffers McMahon said none of the columnists who've left the paper will be replaced.

The hemorrhaging of great talent from the Chicago Tribune continues unabated. This week's departures include columnist **Ryan Ori**, who covered commercial real estate, and senior content editor **Kathleen O'Malley**. Ori, who joined the Tribune from Crain's Chicago Business in 2017, told colleagues in an email: "These past few years have offered the chance to cover the city's ever-expanding skyline and the unrelenting obstacles to that growth, all for Chicago's newspaper of record. Strangely, it occasionally has meant covering our own newsroom's comings and goings." Ori said he plans to spend time with his family and travel before announcing his next move. O'Malley, who joined the Tribune as a copy editor from the Indianapolis Star in 2012, has been hired by the New York Times.



Lester Munson

The nonprofit [Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation](#) and [Sports Video Group](#) have teamed up on an especially timely 10-part online video series aimed at helping people working on the Tokyo Olympics. "[Mental Health Minute](#)," focuses on emotional issues faced by those covering the event. ([Here is the link](#).) "From my past experience as a sports reporter, I know the excitement but also the stress that comes with covering big, deadline-driven events like the Olympics," said veteran Chicago journalist **Lester Munson**, board chairman of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. "These short videos can have such a positive impact on people dealing with mental health challenges and other issues. I'm really proud our organization can contribute to this partnership."

Apparently not all the plaques from the [WGN Radio Walk of Fame](#) wound up in that [makeshift graveyard](#) in northwest suburban Elk Grove Village. **Marlene Wells**, a 2019 inductee, posted a Facebook photo of her plaque Wednesday embedded in her garden at home. Wells has been coordinator of sales promotion and merchandising at news/talk WGN 720-AM since 1967. As [reported here](#) earlier, most of the plaques were moved from their original location outside Tribune Tower on Michigan Avenue to a grassy patch adjacent to WGN's transmitter site on Martingale Road north of Biesterfield Road. Bosses of the Nexstar Media station said the relocation was temporary until a "new, suitable home" can be found. Pro tip: Don't hold your breath.



Marlene Wells Walk of Fame plaque

More than 160 journalists from around the world gathered on a Zoom call Thursday in a surprise tribute to a beloved professor at Northwestern University's [Medill School of Journalism](#). **Roger Boye** was saluted on his 50th year of guiding the [Medill-Northwestern Journalism Institute](#), the five-week summer journalism program for incoming high school seniors, also known as the Cherub program. Medill Dean **Charles Whitaker** joined alumni, faculty, staff and generations of former Cherubs in praising Boye for his gracious



Roger Boye

leadership and remarkable dedication. Former Chicago Tribune critic and onetime Cherub **Howard Reich** was among many on the call who cited Boye as an inspiration. I too have benefitted countless times from Roger’s kindness and generosity since I was a Cherub in the summer of 1973. P.S. Medill marks its **100th anniversary** this year.

Margaret Larkin, production assistant at Audacy all-news WBBM 780-AM/WCFS 105.9-FM, instructor at Columbia College and host of the long-running “**Radiogirl Podcast,**” can now add author to her credits. Chicago-based Eckhartz



Margaret Larkin

Press has published **Wicker Park Wishes**, Larkin’s debut novel. (**Here is the link to order.**) The story is set in 1994 in Chicago’s Wicker Park and Lincoln Park neighborhoods and downtown. Larkin will highlight the book at the 36th annual Printers Row Lit Fest September 11.

Wednesday’s comment of the day: Brian Keith Tecktiel: *I have always been amazed how WXRT is able to survive within a large corporation. There are relatively few stations owned by large groups that are willing to play new rock music. Greg [Solk] is an important part of this and let’s hope that WXRT continues the fight. I’m sure I’ll get some criticism for this because there are people that find WXRT as not cutting edge enough. But let’s appreciate them for trying.*



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