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Tribune books

"Dinner at Home" Cooking at home doesn't have to be difficult, but it should always be delicious. Since 2007, JeanMarie Brownson, culinary director for Rick Bayless' Frontera Foods, has been helping readers put inventive, yet simple, dishes on the table through *Dinner at Home* column for the Tribune. Her book includes everything you need to create spectacular food any day of the week, including sample menus and recipes for everything from prosciutto Parmesan puffs to roasted chicken with tomato-olive relish. *Dinner at home* has never been better.

"Capone: A Photographic Portrait of America's Most Notorious Gangster." Using many never-before-published photographs and newspaper clippings from the Tribune's archives, this coffee-table book chronicles the rise and fall of Al Capone.

"Ask Amy: Advice for Better Living" For over a decade, Amy Dickinson has been the Tribune's signature general advice columnist, helping readers with questions both personal and pressing. This book, which collects columns from 2011 to 2013, is a testament to the empathetic counsel and practical common-sense tips that Dickinson has been distilling for years.

"Culture Worrier: Reflections on Race, Politics and Social Change." Clarence Page's newest book commemorates the 30th anniversary of his column's first appearance in the Tribune. It is the first such collection of the Pulitzer Prize winner's columns, covering topics such as politics, social issues, pop culture, race, family, new media and prominent figures, as well as his personal life.

"10 Things You Might Not Know About Nearly Everything." You may never need to know the human body contains a half-pound of salt, but that's just one of the obscure facts you'll find about sports, history, religion, politics, arts and culture, food and leisure, and science and technology in this collection of columns from Mark Jacob and Stephan Benzkofer.

"Life Skills: How To Do Almost Anything" How do you give a good wedding toast? How do you fix a clogged drain? How do you bowl without hurting anyone? Questions like these make up this engaging do-it-yourself guide.

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ENVIRONMENT

In Chicago, US EPA workers protest Trump, say rollbacks will put 'every American at risk'

By Adriana Pérez
Chicago Tribune

A crowd of more than 100 people, including workers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, rallied Tuesday outside its regional headquarters in downtown Chicago to protest regulatory rollbacks as well as funding and personnel cuts ordered by President Donald Trump.

While the administration says it is spearheading government efficiency, current federal employees and the 1,000 probationary workers across several agencies who were fired in February are speaking out against the reductions.

Two weeks ago the national agency's new administrator Lee Zeldin announced a series of deregulatory actions to "unleash American energy, lower costs for Americans, revitalize the American auto industry" by reviewing oil and gas industry regulations, clean air standards and more.

Ellie Hagen, an environmental scientist and part of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 704 union that represents U.S. EPA workers, said she's concerned about how this change in direction will affect working-class Americans.

"We do not feel that these cuts would protect everyday people," she said. "We feel that these cuts only seek to increase the profits (of) billionaires."

To do her job as congressional liaison, Shannon Wolf said she took an oath to defend the Constitution and protect human health and the environment, including the air, land and water that sustain life. Wolf is also part of AFGE Local 704.

"And right now, that very fundamental work is being threatened. That puts every American at risk, their health, their safety. Red, blue, purple — it doesn't matter. These risks, these cuts to our agency, are devastating for all Americans," she said. "For a tiny fraction of the federal budget, we protect the Earth that we all live on, and there is no alternative option. I can't think of any more efficient expenditure of funds than protecting the air that we breathe and the water that we drink."

Debra Shore, who served as the agency's regional administrator for the last 3 1/2 years after being appointed by former President Joe Biden, said the quality of life in the country has improved in the last 55 years since the U.S. EPA was established. And taxpayers have reaped the fruit of that progress and the work of civil servants.

"The American people, through our tax dollars, have



Environmental Protection Agency employees from the Chicago area rally Tuesday against attacks on the agency by the Trump administration, outside the Metcalf Federal Building. E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

made such an investment in the young people who were hired and were being trained to be inspectors and emergency responders and community outreach people and lawyers," she said. "To toss that away merely because they had not served for a full year — that's waste. That's waste, of human capital and of an investment in young people."

Shore called the administration's actions "willful cruelty" toward civil servants with expert knowledge and a passion for protecting human health and the environment. "To dismiss them wholesale, without due process, without caring, is terrible, and no one deserves that," she said.

A judge ordered in mid-March that all fired probationary employees be reinstated, but many of them are still in a state of limbo after having been put on paid administrative leave.

In early March, many federally owned buildings in Chicago — including the Ralph H. Metcalf Federal Building where the U.S. EPA Region 5 offices are located — appeared on a list of "noncore" properties for sale. The list was pulled the next day and has been undergoing revisions. It is part of an overhaul by the General Services Administration, which runs the federal real estate portfolio, working alongside billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency to cancel the leases for hundreds of federal offices and facilities — a national list that this month grew to nearly 800 buildings.

From budget cuts to workforce reduction and now a possible office move, recent executive actions have also tainted morale among employees who are still around.

Colin Kramer, a qual-

ity assurance chemist and a union steward for AFGE Local 704, said he has been working in a state of fear and confusion since January.

"We (cannot) sustain these cuts and still be able to protect the communities that we care about," he said at the protest Tuesday. "So we're here to make sure that all of us can do the work that we want to do, which is protecting our communities, protecting human health and the environment and making America a more safe and healthy place."

Joe Boyle, a Glenview resident and retired hydrogeologist, worked in the regional Chicago office for more than three decades and in the mid-1970s helped draft regulations for the management of hazardous chemical and production waste.

"The practice was to just dump stuff in the holes in the ground," he said, where it could seep into drinking water supplies. "And then, wherever it went was out of sight, out of mind. And of course, that led to other, in retrospect, very poor practices."

One of these business practices was renting a warehouse to store flammable and toxic chemical waste in countless barrels, then filing for bankruptcy to "let the government take care of it."

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act to regulate this kind of waste went into effect a few weeks after former President Ronald Reagan was elected, which Boyle remembers as a time during which the agency and its mission were also subject to strong criticism.

This time, however, he feels like the attacks are different.

"There was a whole process that was pretty much recognized: If we had an issue with a particular regulation, there was an effort to

comment on its proposal, object to its proposal, and then if it became final and you still had objections to it, there was judicial relief that could be sought in the courts," Boyle said. "It was all organized and with the proper judicial system — which seems very much to be threatened in the current environment that my successors are facing."

As he pushes forward a deregulatory agenda and an overhaul of government, Trump has ignored court orders and attacked federal judges who haven't ruled in his favor.

Kramer said the administration hasn't considered how these changes will lower the quality of life for Americans and slow site cleanup and emergency responses, such as the East Palestine accident two years ago when a train derailed and spilled more than 100,000 gallons of hazardous chemicals in a poor Ohio village.

But there are other routine tasks and monitoring the U.S. EPA often carries out behind the scenes and away from the public eye that might not happen anymore.

"Eventually, it will mean that there'll be fewer inspections, fewer air monitors out," said Shore, the former regional administrator. "People will be still exposed to polluted air or water — they just won't know it."

It's a frightening reality, Boyle said.

"It really pays for itself, when you consider the impacts on the most precious aspects, which are our own particular human lives and those of our loved ones," he said. He tapped the sign he was holding, which read: "Save EPA. Save lives."

"It really does get down to life."

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Boutros

from Page 1

Boutros is a first-generation

illegal drugs before cooperating with the government against Silk Road founder Ross Ulbricht.

He also led the prosecution

cutors.

The office has recently secured convictions in several major public corruption cases, including the

ity in Chicago, support our brave men and women in law enforcement, and prevent corruption is now more critical than ever," LaHood said