

**SUN-TIMES  
NEWS GROUP**

Your local news source ::  
Look for your community »

Towns A - F 

Towns G - M 

Towns N - Z 

**Walt Disney World<sup>®</sup>  
RESORT**  
OPEN CALL  
**AUDITION**

**Chicago, October 21**  
*DisneyAuditions.com*  
EOE • Drawing Creativity from Diversity • ©Disney



**SEARCH  
CHICAGO**  
JOBS

**CHICAGO SUN-TIMES**  
[suntimes.com](http://suntimes.com) Member of the Sun-Times News Group

 **58°F**  
Cloudy  
[Traffic](#) • [Weather](#): "UPGRADED"

Search »  


☒ Site ☐ STNG

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Subscriber Benefits](#)
- [Customer Service](#)
- [Email newsletters](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Business](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Lifestyles](#) | [Ebert](#) | [Search](#) | [Archives](#) | [Blogs](#) | [RSS](#) 

## News

Archive  
Today's news  
Metro & Tri-State  
Nation  
World  
Blogs  
Commentary  
Editorials  
Education  
Lottery  
Obituaries  
Politics  
Religion  
Weather  
Special Sections  
George Ryan Trial  
Hired Truck Scandal  
**Columnists**  
Monroe Anderson  
Tom Bevan  
Mark Brown  
Cathleen Falsani  
Ed Feulner  
Stella Foster  
Andrew Greeley  
Betsy Hart  
Jack Higgins  
Steve Huntley  
Jesse Jackson  
Mary Laney  
Jeremy Levitt  
Carol Marin  
Ralph Martire  
Tom McNamee  
Rich Miller  
Mary Mitchell  
Robert Novak  
John O'Sullivan  
Suzanne Ontiveros  
Other Views  
Debra Pickett  
QT  
Cindy Richards  
Richard Roeper  
Dick Simpson  
Michael Sneed  
Neil Steinberg  
Mark Steyn  
Lynn Sweet  
Laura Washington  
George Will  
The Fixer

WORLD :: [PRINTER FRIENDLY »](#) [EMAIL ARTICLE »](#)

## Who was Columbus?

**Many mysteries 500 years after his death: Was he a hero or a brute? Was he really Italian?**

October 17, 2006

BY LISA ABEND AND GEOFF PINGREE

MADRID -- Genovese nobleman or Catalan pirate? Adventurous explorer or greedy tyrant? What if the Italian gentleman who discovered America was in fact a brutal torturer and slave owner? And what if he wasn't even Italian?

Schoolchildren may learn about a hero who proved the Earth wasn't flat, but Christopher Columbus' biography is full of holes. This year, the 500th anniversary of his death, two Spanish scholars are working to find answers.

Jose Antonio Lorente, a University of Granada geneticist, is trying to pin down Columbus' origins.

In 1927, a Peruvian historian claimed Columbus was from Catalonia -- in Spain -- not Genoa, Italy.

Lorente is collecting saliva from people in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Genoa, Valencia, and the south of France with the last name of Colon, Colom, or Columbo. He is comparing their DNA with that in the bones of Columbus, his brother, and Prince Carlos de Viana to see which population has the most genetic similarities.

"We can't say when we'll have results," Lorente said, citing technological snags.

Meanwhile, Consuelo Varela, a historian at Spain's Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, has probed another question: Why, once he was governor of Hispaniola, did Columbus fall so far from favor that he was arrested and returned to Spain in chains?

The discovery of a transcript of Columbus' trial made the answer clear to her: Columbus was a brute. In her book *The Fall of Columbus*, Varela cites 23 witnesses who testified that he used torture to maintain order.

He was also a strong supporter of slavery, refusing to baptize the indigenous people of Hispaniola so that they could be slaves (Christians could not be enslaved).

*Christian Science Monitor*

VIDEO :: [MORE »](#)

**Train Derailed**  
Nearly Destroys  
Two Homes  
[Play](#)



**Foley to Name**  
Priest Who 'Abused'  
Him  
[Play](#)



**Tear-Filled Day for**  
Lidle's Widow  
[Play](#)

TOP STORIES ::

## NEWS

**Breast cancer deadlier for blacks**

## BUSINESS

**CBOT agrees to \$8 billion merger offer from Merc**

## SPORTS

**Perfectly amazing: 6-0 Bears stun Cardinals**

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Timed exposure**

## LIFESTYLES

**Obsessed with our size**

BLOGS ::

## FULL COURT PRESS

**Luck or destiny?**

## HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL

**Rose Will Sign Early**

## HOEKSTRA

**Popular balladeer Fender dies at 69**

## MITCHELL

**Illinois forms Transatlantic Slave Trade Commission**

## PICKETT

**Friday's column: Breast-feeding is the new labor**

## SWEET:

**Bush: U.S. "does not torture." Signs new law for treatment of detainees.**



## Ads by Google

## Voluntary Police Officer

Help keep London safe. Becomea Special Constable.  
[www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/specials](http://www.metpolicecareers.co.uk/specials)

## International Volunteers

Volunteer in the wild western US!Environmental Conservation Projects  
[www.greatbasininstitute.org](http://www.greatbasininstitute.org)

## Prayer Volunteers Wanted

Prayer Touches Lives - Reach heartsaround the world with your prayers.  
[www.DailyGuideposts.com](http://www.DailyGuideposts.com)

## Volunteer in Israel

Help Yad Ezra VeShulamit. FeedingIsrael's Hungry Children & Families  
[www.yad-ezra.org](http://www.yad-ezra.org)

## Top Safari Volunteer Jobs

[suntimes.com: Feedback](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [Media Kit](#) | [Make Us Your Homepage](#)  
[Chicago Sun-Times: Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Sun-Times Store](#)



© Copyright 2006 Sun-Times News Group | [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

Member of the  
Real Cities Network

