

READER



Politics of fear

Are youth really to blame for the carjacking spike?

By MAYA DUKMASOVA 10

IN THIS ISSUE



10 Dukmasova | Police *Cops say teen carjackers with a thirst for violence and joyrides are terrorizing the city. An examination of arrests reveals a narrative built on shoddy data and anecdotal evidence.*

ARTS & CULTURE

16 Architecture *A new building filled with social service and education amenities at Altgeld Gardens is a test case for the limits of design and architecture.*

FOOD & DRINK

04 Sula | Review *A veteran cook has no use for your jerk egg rolls and rasta pasta.*

NEWS & POLITICS



06 Joravsky | Politics *MAGA plays its LeBron card to scare white people into supporting the GOP.*
08 Isaacs | Culture *The city's \$60 million Arts 77 program aims to support every community area.*



20 Visual Art *This year's Black Creativity is a testament to the artists and program leaders who didn't give up on shining a spotlight on Black art.*
22 Lit *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop challenges how educational institutions support people of color—and provides a blueprint to be better.*



THEATER

24 Dance *Chicago Inclusive Dance Festival brings richness and depth to dance and life.*
25 Season of Renewal *Actor-playwright-illustrator: Heather Chrisler bounces back as a triple threat.*

FILM

27 Movies of note *The documentary Downstream to Kinshasa is both heart-wrenching and joyful, Tell Me When is a charming look at love and loss, and Together Together is a tender dramedy with a tour de force of comedic talent.*

MUSIC & NIGHTLIFE

28 Galil | Feature *Three years of careful incubation have turned Mia Joy's debut album, Spirit Tamer, into a place of solace that welcomes anyone who listens.*

32 Records of Note *This week the Reader reviews current releases by Wadada Leo Smith, Douglas R. Ewart, and Mike Reed; Marianne Faithfull with Warren Ellis; Paper Mice; Jupiter & Okwess; and more.*
36 Chicagoans of Note *Jennifer Pham, cofounder of Haibayô and Celebrate Argyle*
38 Early Warnings *Rescheduled concerts and other updated listings*
38 Gossip Wolf *Ayanna Woods raises funds to capture ten years of songwriting in the studio, Fulton Street Collective hosts an exhibit of photos by four jazz musicians, and underground Chicago hip-hop veterans Pseudo Slang collaborate with German producer Pawcut.*

OPINION

39 Savage Love *Dan Savage offers advice on what lesbians should RSVP to a Trump wedding.*

CLASSIFIEDS

42 Jobs
42 Apartments & Spaces
42 Marketplace

ON THE COVER: ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK OKAY. FOR MORE OF OKAY'S WORK, GO TO FRANKOKAY.COM.



TO CONTACT ANY READER EMPLOYEE, E-MAIL: (FIRST INITIAL)(LAST NAME) @CHICAGOREADER.COM

PUBLISHER AND PRESIDENT TRACY BAIM
PUBLISHER AND EDITOR IN CHIEF KAREN HAWKINS
EDITOR IN CHIEF SUJAY KUMAR
MANAGING EDITOR BRIANNA WELLEN
PRODUCTION MANAGER KIRK WILLIAMSON
GRAPHIC DESIGNER AMBER HUFF
MUSIC EDITOR PHILIP MONTORO
THEATER AND DANCE EDITOR KERRY REID
ASSOCIATE EDITOR JAMIE LUDWIG
SENIOR WRITERS MAYA DUKMASOVA, LEOR GALIL, DEANNA ISAACS, BEN JORAVSKY, MIKE SULA
LISTINGS COORDINATOR SALEM COLLO-JULIN
SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORTING FELLOW ADAM M. RHODES
EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE TARYN ALLEN

DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL JOHN DUNLEVY
SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR JANAYA GREENE

STRATEGIC INNOVATION DIRECTOR MARIAH NEUROTH
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR COLETTE WILLARD
MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS COORDINATOR YAZMIN DOMINGUEZ
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT SANDRA L. KLEIN
MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR ABHIMANYU CHANDRA
SPECIAL EVENTS CONSULTANT KRISTEN KAZA

ADVERTISING
 312-392-2970, ADS@CHICAGOREADER.COM
CLASSIFIEDS:
 CLASSIFIED-ADS@CHICAGOREADER.COM

VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AMY MATHENY
SALES DIRECTOR AMBER NETTLES
SENIOR ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES LENI MANAA-HOPPENWORTH, TED PIEKARZ, WILL ROGERS, LISA SOLOMON

NATIONAL ADVERTISING
 VOICE MEDIA GROUP 1-888-278-9866
 VMGADVERTISING.COM
 JOE LARKIN AND SUE BELAIR

DISTRIBUTION CONCERNS
 distributionissues@chicagoreader.com
 312-392-2970

CHICAGO READER L3C
BOARD PRESIDENT DOROTHY R. LEAVELL
TREASURER EILEEN RHODES
AT-LARGE SLADJANA VUCKOVIC

READER INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY JOURNALISM, INC.
CHAIRWOMAN EILEEN RHODES
TREASURER CAROL BELL
DIRECTORS ALISON CUDDY, VANESSA FERNANDEZ, KIM L. HUNT, JACKIE KAPLAN-PERKINS, DOROTHY R. LEAVELL, SLADJANA VUCKOVIC

READER (ISSN 1096-6919) IS PUBLISHED BIWEEKLY BY CHICAGO READER L3C
 2930 S. MICHIGAN, SUITE 102 CHICAGO, IL 60616
 312-392-2934, CHICAGOREADER.COM

COPYRIGHT © 2021 CHICAGO READER
 PERIODICAL POSTAGE PAID AT CHICAGO, IL

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. CHICAGO READER, READER, AND REVERSED R: REGISTERED TRADEMARKS ®

A NOTE ON THIS WEEK'S COVER STORY

WHEN I WAS SEVEN I broke into a house with some older kids one summer. This was in Russia in the 90s, as the society around us was collapsing. The fall of the Soviet Union and the descent of the country into sudden, unregulated capitalism yielded the rapid development of inequality. Seemingly overnight a place in which, for decades, people basically had the same homes, made the same paychecks, and got access to the same opportunities became a place where ostentatious wealth coexisted with grinding poverty. Grannies with college educations were begging for change in the street in threadbare clothes while the latest Mercedes sedans zoomed past. I and a lot of others had a parent who'd lapsed into drug addiction or alcoholism and disappeared from our lives, while some of our classmates had parents with money who bought them their own apartments in the poshest parts of town. Within a few years, the same people who'd relied on humanitarian aid shipments of

clothing from London were going on vacations to the French Riviera while retirees who'd rebuilt the nation after WWII were going back to work to pay their light bills. My grandmother was among them. She toiled on a small plot of land in the countryside all summer to grow the food our family needed while nearby new-fangled "businessmen" built palatial second homes. The house we broke into was one of those, standing empty while the owners were away in the city. I was small enough to squeeze through an open window and unlock the doors for the rest of the crew.

I remember so vividly the feeling that none of it was real. The house—massive, multistory, filled with nice furniture and expensive electronics—looked like something out of an American movie. I didn't feel like I was assaulting a neighbor's space. I don't know if anyone stole anything, but I remember doing damage in the house. We threw food and paint around the bedrooms, found tires to roll down

the stairs, bounced around in the pool shed on rolls of fiberglass until we were exhausted. I knew what we were doing was wrong, I knew I could get in a lot of trouble if my family found out, but I didn't care. The consequences seemed far away, and in front of me was a chance to have fun.

Maybe we were depraved little villains with irresponsible parents, maybe we weren't whipped enough. But thinking back on it now, all I can conclude about our bizarre, dangerous, harmful decisions is that we had nothing to do on a summer day, and when confronted with what, to us, seemed like fairytale riches and a window of opportunity, we psyched each other up to do something wild. Why didn't I do it again? Probably the biggest "consequence" that deterred me was the fiberglass powder lodged in my skin that took days of bath soaks and interrogations from my mom to clear. I also never had a chance to. Life just got too filled with other things to do.

—MAYA DUKMASOVA

VIVIAN MAIER in color

See beyond the ordinary.



OPENS MAY 8

[CHICAGOHISTORY.ORG/EXHIBITIONS](https://chicagohistory.org/exhibitions)



You've got the goal. WGU can help you achieve it.

Don't let financial barriers or lack of reliable internet access stop you from reaching your dreams.

With the Resiliency Grant, Opportunity Grant, and Online Access Scholarship, we're committed to making sure that everyone with the desire to get a degree in business, IT, healthcare (including nursing), or education has the opportunity. Call or visit the link below to get started.

Learn more.
wgu.edu/access | 866.225.5948



Nicolette S.
MBA Healthcare Management



Jamaica-born chef Ricardo Blake just wants to be authentic, and he's got the unforgettable jerk chicken to prove it.  MATT SCHWERIN FOR CHICAGO READER

RESTAURANT REVIEW

St. Bess aims for Jamaican domination

A veteran cook has no use for your jerk egg rolls and rasta pasta.

By **MIKE SULA**

Ricardo Blake is not having it with your jerk egg rolls.

"We don't wanna do jerk pizza," he says. "I just want to be authentic. I want to be outstanding. You gonna go to a Jamaican restaurant, you look for oxtails, curry goat, jerk chicken. We don't want jerk pasta."

That's what the chef told me when I asked him why he doesn't have a jerk egg roll on the menus at any of his three St. Bess Jerk outposts, three seeds of a nascent empire trafficking in classic Jamaican food, and a few trending mashups.

Jerk, both the method and the seasoning, is perhaps one of the first regional barbecue styles, the indigenous Caribbean Taino having taught escaped African slaves—Maroons—the process of roasting meats low and slow over native wood. In that case it was pimento, which also provided the allspice that, along with scotch bonnet peppers, evolved into the signature warmly spiced, smoky flavors it's known for.

Blake grew up in his mother's restaurants in Saint Elizabeth, Jamaica, and is steeped in this tradition. He's unimpressed by the jerk taco

revolution that swept the south and west sides of Chicago in the last few years. Though he has allowed jerk chicken, shrimp, and catfish tacos on his menus, that isn't what he's making his name on.

Blake came to Chicago 13 years ago and started cooking a similar lineup of scratch dishes at Auburn Gresham's Jamaican Jerk Villa, and then at the near-southside Jerk Villa Bar & Grill. But in June during high pandemic, he struck out on his own, opening the first St. Bess (named for home), a takeout-only joint in a Burbank strip mall.

I didn't hear about it until October, when it started catching my eye on Instagram (@stbessjerkchicken). That's when Exclusive773 impresario Steve Wazwaz, who was looking for a dependable caterer to work his charity events, was impressed enough that he bought in, taking over marketing. Business took off thanks in part to his significant social media presence, but certainly due to Blake's commitment to cooking entirely from scratch.

That's particularly evident in the half birds roasted in a barrel smoker over live coals until Blake's sweet and slowly piercing marinade is married to the smoke. The smell of it makes it difficult to concentrate on anything else, but seafood jerk plates, along with his more stewy dishes, are just as compelling: jiggling oxtails, chunks of meaty goat, brown stewed chicken, all practically melting into the background of a bed of sauce-soaked rice. A focused lineup of sides—say creamy mac and cheese, or soft, almost caramelized cabbage—beg to jump in, adding their own textures.

Blake opened his second location in Norwood Park in a former burger joint at the thrumming intersection of Northwest Highway and Nagle, just north of Bryn Mawr and I-90. With a handful of tables and a surrounding parking lot, it seems perfectly situated to dominate a vast jerk-less frontier on the far northwest side.

But Blake isn't stopping there. Earlier this month he opened his third spot in Norwich, Connecticut, with his childhood best friend, and he's shooting for two more Chicago-area locations before the year is out. (I think I made a strong case for Albany Park.)

Blake envisions a national presence, but for now he and Wazwaz seem to have different ideas about the best way to grow. Wazwaz wants to see a built-out bar-and-grill-type model: "I feel like one big headache is better than five small headaches," he says.

Blake wants to focus on carryout, but he will allow that in a bigger spot he might entertain the possibility of offering some of jerk's more contemporary descendants. But egg rolls and rasta pasta just don't seem like they're in his blood.

"I don't want to follow what people are doing." 

 @MikeSula



POLITICS

The James rules

MAGA plays its LeBron card to scare white people into supporting the GOP.

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

For the record, I've never cheered for a team on which LeBron James has played, on account of the fact that I'm a die-hard Chicago Bulls fan and he's broken my heart far too many times for me to count.

I'm still not officially over game four of the 2015 playoffs where the Bulls were up by two with seconds left, and the ball came to LeBron, with Jimmy Butler draped all over him, and . . .

Well, like I said, I'm still not over what happened next . . .

Actually, now that I think about it, I rooted for LeBron's Cavs over the Warriors in the 2016 NBA finals. But that was only because Golden State had the audacity to break the record for most regular-season wins previously set by the '96 Bulls. A team even Stephen Curry must acknowledge as the greatest ever.

No, by and large, LeBron James joins a long list of superstars—from Wilt Chamberlain to Larry Bird to Isiah Thomas—who have used their mind-blowing talents to beat my beloved

Bulls.

I realize not every Chicagoan sees it this way. This town is crawling with front-runners who openly root for LeBron's Lakers.

Like a certain ex-Marine I'll call Jauwan, who's been known to occasionally send me trash-talking texts whenever my Bulls hit a low point. Like last week's game against Cleveland. Still not talking about that.

Well, I could go on and on. But enough basketball chitchat for today.

Despite all the trauma LeBron has given the Bulls, when it comes to his off-the-court activities, I just may be one of his biggest fans.

This is a man who grew up in poverty—no father in the house—and willed his way to excellence. And once he made his millions, he never forgot where he came from. He helped build a public school in his hometown of Akron, Ohio, with a heavy emphasis on the arts and conflict resolution. And he's been courageously speaking out on behalf of Black

Nope, MAGA, King James will not shut up.

by JAMIE LAMOR THOMPSON

Americans against police brutality for years.

As such, James has become public enemy number one to MAGA. Having replaced Colin Kaepernick as the Black athlete MAGA loves to hate the most. Quite an honor, in a backhanded sort of way.

Over the last few days, MAGA's hatred of LeBron has been on full display. After a white police officer in Columbus, Ohio, shot and killed Ma'Khia Bryant, a 16-year-old Black girl, LeBron tweeted . . .

"YOU'RE NEXT #ACCOUNTABILITY." over a photo of the cop.

Clearly, it was an impulsive tweet, which he deleted as footage emerged of the killing, in which the cop appears to intervene as Bryant attacks another Black teenager with a knife.

James then tweeted: "I'm so damn tired of seeing Black people killed by police. I took the tweet down because it's being used to create more hate. This isn't about one officer. It's about the entire system and they always use our words to create more racism. I am so desperate for more ACCOUNTABILITY."

In short, he displayed more regret for a spur-of-the-moment tweet than Donald Trump has ever displayed in a lifetime of saying or tweeting nasty lies. Trump still hasn't apologized for buying a full-page ad in the *New York Times* calling for the execution of the Central Park Five, even though they turned out to be innocent of the charges.

Over the last few days, Senators Tom Cotton and Ted Cruz and other MAGA members have blasted James in tweets, articles, Instagram posts, and TikTok clips, culminating in a statement from their grand imperial leader himself. Yes, Trump weighed in with this . . .

"LeBron James' RACIST rants are divisive, nasty, insulting, and demeaning. He may be a great basketball player, but he is doing nothing to bring our Country together."

Ah, yes, advice on bringing the country together from the president who did so much to tear it apart.

This episode reveals MAGA's curious attitude toward race in America. They say LeBron's wealth and fame prove that race no longer matters. And that, in fact, LeBron James should be thanking America for making him so rich and so famous, instead of criticizing it.

But when it comes to lefties criticizing MAGA's Black leaders—oh, my goodness, suddenly race in America matters a lot.

Think about it. When a Democrat dares to criticize Senator Tim Scott, Congressman Burgess Owens, or another prominent Black Republican, MAGA cries—you're just picking on them 'cause they're Black!

In short, when LeBron James or D. Wade or Curry or any Black basketball player speaks up about police brutality, it's "shut up and dribble." To quote Laura Ingraham.

But if you criticize a Black Republican? It's cancel culture!

It's an updated version of the tactic employed by Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas at his Senate confirmation hearing in 1991.

Thomas's position was that America no longer needed affirmative action. 'Cause racial discrimination had dissipated. And getting a break actually hurts Black people more than it helps them. Though you never hear a white guy complaining about getting into a highly selective university as a legacy applicant.

But when Thomas's nomination was in doubt after Anita Hill testified he had sexually harassed her, Thomas did a flip-flop. And he played the race card—complaining he was the victim of a "high-tech" lynching.

So Thomas's logic was—race doesn't matter when I make my rulings against ordinary Black people. But it matters a lot when my behavior may keep me from getting what I want.

With his clever rhetorical twists, Thomas won the Senate confirmation votes he needed to make it to the highest court in the land. Where he's used his vote to, among other things, try to eviscerate affirmative action on the grounds that, you know, race doesn't matter.

Back to LeBron . . .

He's become a pawn in the larger culture wars that Republicans are waging to take back Congress, the Senate and, ultimately, the White House.

Their strategy plays like this—try to keep Black people from voting with new laws that discourage early voting, while firing up the white base by frightening and/or enraging them over LeBron James.

The Republicans keep saying race doesn't matter. Even as they exploit racial fears to win back the political power that they lost.

It's a cynical game, but it's the only one they've got. **✎**

@bennyjshow

CALL NOW AND YOU CAN SAVE UP TO 84% OFF YOUR NEXT PRESCRIPTION

Drug Name:	Qty	Price*	Drug Name:	Qty	Price*
Cialis 5mg	90	\$74.99	Bystolic 10mg	90	\$179.99
Viagra 100mg	16	\$30.99	Trelegy Ellipta 0.1mg/0.0625mg/0.025mg	90 ds	\$599.99
Cialis 20mg	16	\$34.99	Livalo 4mg	100	\$104.99
Viagra 50mg	16	\$29.99	Tradjenta 5mg	90	\$374.99
Stendra 200mg	16	\$284.99	Prempro 0.3mg/1.5mg	84	\$129.99
Levitra 20mg	30	\$154.99	Anoro Ellipta 62.5mcg/25mcg	90 ds	\$319.99
Eliquis 5mg	180	\$619.99	Combigan 0.2%/0.5%	15mL	\$54.99
Xarelto 20mg	90	\$478.99	Asacol 800mg	300	\$274.99
Symbicort Inhaler 160mcg/4.5mcg	360 ds	\$239.99	Lialda 1200mg	360	\$334.99
Vagifem 10mcg	24	\$69.99	Farxiga 10mg	84	\$334.99
Januvia 100mg	84	\$284.99			
Spiriva Handihaler 18mcg	90 ds	\$214.99			
Premarin 0.625mg	84	\$79.99			
Advair Diskus 250mcg/50mcg	180 ds	\$229.99			
Flovent HFA 110mcg	360 ds	\$174.99			
Estring 7.5mcg/24hr	1 ring	\$144.99			
Premarin Vaginal Cream 0.625mg/g	42g	\$124.99			
Colcrys 0.6mg	100	\$134.99			
Jardiance 25mg	90	\$439.99			
Synthroid 100mcg	90	\$35.99			
Combivent Respimat 20mcg/100mcg	360 ds	\$174.99			
Restasis 0.05%	90 ds	\$249.99			
Spiriva Respimat 2.5mcg	180 ds	\$259.99			
Xifaxan 550mg	200	\$349.99			
Lumigan 0.01%	9mL	\$104.99			
Myrbetriq 50mg	100	\$229.99			
Pradaxa 150mg	180	\$499.99			



Toll-Free Phone: 1-833-807-6980

Toll-Free Fax: 1-800-563-3822

All pricing in U.S. dollars and subject to change without notice. We accept Visa, Mastercard, Electronic Checking, Personal Check or International Money Order. *Prices shown are for the equivalent generic drug if available.

TotalCareMart.com
Savings made easy

Mailing Address: TotalCareMart.com PO Box 121 STN L
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3H 0Z4

CODE: QM72

POETRY CORNER

Origin Story

By Sylvia Ewing

Who are your people?
When the story of your origin,
Is the original lie of life,
seeking the truth feels like
cheating on your sisters
and breaking your mother's heart.
But you do it anyway.

Who are your people?
They are like trees in high summer,
bursting with life yet mysterious
around the root, branch, and stem.

Who are your people?
I know about roots
thanks to Mary Dunn of Georgia, who was
"dunn being a *slave"
and thus named my family.

Who are your people?
My mystery includes a 19-year-old.
She marries the one deemed
appropriate to provide a name,
and later, the one who remained
to provide a life.

Who are your people?
A stranger came to my door when I was 19.
He said, "I am your father," at a down-to-earth diner
over a toasted cheese and tomato sandwich.
He was not shiny bad on the outside and good inside
he was beautiful Black and rotten to the core.

Who are your people?
Papa was not a rolling stone leaving his hat to
make a home.
He spread his selves like Johnny Appleseed.
My papa was about the fruit,
not root, branch, and stem.

Who are your people?
I had coolly sought answers to answer my son
when he asked about his Black people.
Researched family and migrated to the reunions
that have taken place every Labor Day-
for some reason the preferred time for such
gatherings

Who are your people?
I reconnected to a hidden forest of family.
Coming in around the 57th consecutive gathering
under the theme, "we've come this far by faith."

We are your people.
Still, I burst into hot tears
and a hand flies to my heart space
sending someone's Starbucks
steaming into the air
as I heard my people say
"we have always searched for you."

*Slave was her word at the time

Sylvia Ewing is the producer of Lift Every Voice Chicago, a celebration of the Black poetry anthology for Library of America, Chicago Public Library, and the Writers Museum. Her poetry has appeared in two of poet Jon Sands's Emotional Historian chapbooks. Along with poetry and curating events, Ewing leads communication strategy at the nonprofit Elevate. Sylvia is the recipient of the 2020 Illinois Humanities Award.

Poem curated by José Olivarez: José Olivarez is the son of Mexican immigrants. His debut book of poems, *Citizen Illegal*, was a finalist for the PEN/ Jean Stein Award and a winner of the 2018 Chicago Review of Books Poetry Prize.

A biweekly series curated by the *Chicago Reader* and sponsored by the Poetry Foundation.

Enjoy more poetry with the Poetry Foundation!

Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Fellowships

Applications are open for the \$25,800 fellowships open to all US poets between 21 and 31 years of age

Deadline: April 30, 2021

Open Door Reading Series: Xandria Phillips, S. Yarberr, kiki nicole & Red Samaniego

Highlighting Chicago's outstanding writers and poetic partnerships

Tuesday, May 11, 2021, 7:00 PM

Learn more about **FREE** resources and opportunities at **PoetryFoundation.org**



WINDY CITY TIMES AT 35

A collection of covers from *Windy City Times*, *Outlines*, *Nightlines*, *BLACKlines*, *En La Vida* and more

By Tracy Baim and Kirk Williamson



Available as print book or PDF download at

<https://windycitytimes.com/book/>



The dome in the Grand Army of the Republic Rotunda. COURTESY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

CULTURE

Art as infrastructure

The city's \$60 million Arts 77 program aims to support every community area.

By **DEANNA ISAACS**

Last week's announcement of the city's "Arts 77" plan was a jaw-dropper.

Issued jointly by Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the city's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), and the Chicago Park District, it described a "citywide arts recovery and reopening plan" for Chicago's 77 community areas with an initial investment of "over \$60 million to support local artists and organizations."

\$60 million! For an arts community devastated by the pandemic and facing an uncertain

future, that's an impressive figure. It sounded like manna from heaven.

What it mostly is, however, is manna from the future.

A major chunk of the money for Arts 77 is coming from the capital improvement budgets of the city and the Park District. It's money intended for long-term infrastructure projects and funded by long-term public debt.

So a lot of that \$60 million will pay for brick-and-mortar-and-equipment improvements to civic and cultural facilities. At least \$40 mil-

lion will be spent to upgrade "theater, music, dance, and visual art presentation capabilities" at city cultural centers, many in parks on the south and west side

Thanks to a private donation of \$15 million in services, the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall and Rotunda at the Chicago Cultural Center will be returned to its late-19th-century glory. That includes a museum-quality restoration of the rotunda's 62,000-piece art glass dome.

Work on the G.A.R. rooms will continue through 2021, but the rest of the Cultural Center will reopen June 2, with a new shop selling work by local artists, and a "new mission" linking the People's Palace to Park District neighborhood cultural centers and regional libraries, in what DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly calls a "citywide cultural center ecosystem."

The money that'll flow more directly to local artists includes \$3.5 million to purchase and commission work for the International Terminal expansion at O'Hare Airport (there's a call out now for submissions), and \$15 million from the city's capital budget that'll be spent on other new neighborhood art projects over the next five years. Although Chicago's had a 1.33 "percent for art" ordinance for civic construction since 1978, Kelly says this is the first time public art has made it into the capital budget on its own; he sees it as recognition that public art is "part of the infrastructure of the city."

Among projects up for grabs right now is a new Neighborhood Access Program that'll hand out \$1 million in grants of \$5,000 to \$50,000 each to "support the cultural vitality in neighborhoods." DCASE is looking for ideas. Also open for proposals is Chicago Presents, which will grant up to 100 awards of \$5,000 to \$30,000 each for neighborhood cultural events this summer. They'll even kick in the cost of one or two soloists or groups from their new Chicago Band Roster. (Musicians: the roster has open slots.)

DCASE's most direct support for artists, its annual Individual Artists Program grants, have already been decided for this year, with 162 artists announced last week as recipients of project-based awards of \$800 to \$5,000, while 13 additional "Esteemed" artists (half of them musicians this year) are getting \$10,000 each.

The Arts 77 announcement also included a list of grants from a new source, a \$1.2 million Artist Response Program (funded in part by an anonymous donation of \$750,000). A total of \$600,000 from this program will be disbursed by seven arts organizations that will "regrant" it to about 60 artists. Those regranteeing groups are ConTextos, Folded Map Project/Englewood Arts Collective, Full Spectrum Features, Greater Southwest Development Corporation, Jazz Institute of Chicago, Kartemquin Films, and the National Museum of Mexican Art.

Another half-million dollars from the Artist Response Program is going to five individual artists and artist teams in project-related grants of (drum roll here) \$100,000 each. The five winners, chosen from over 200 applicants by DCASE-appointed panelists, are Tonika Lewis Johnson; Santiago X; Kirsten Leenaars with Circles & Ciphers; Hector Duarte, Nicole Marroquin, and Gabriel Villa; and the team of Aquil Charlton, William Estrada, Andrés Lemus-Spont, and Marya Spont-Lemus.

What kind of projects took the big prize? Tonika Lewis Johnson says she'll spend her grant on making "landmarkers" for homes that were sold in the post-WWII era via unscrupulous land sale contracts that were the only financing available to many Black homebuyers in Chicago. It's a project she's working on during a residency with the National Public Housing Museum. Kirsten Leenaars, in partnership with the restorative justice organization Circles & Ciphers, will use the money for their second video project, exploring through "rhyme and rap in parks and abandoned lots" what "collective freedom looks, sounds, and feels like" to young people and others in the Rogers Park community.

And Hector Duarte says the grant his team got will pay for a "massive mural" on two walls of the Pilsen Housing Cooperative, and for public programming at the site, which is across the street from the National Museum of Mexican Art. "The art we are creating is about a vision in which communities come up with their own effective solutions to entrenched problems" like gentrification and displacement, Duarte says. "In this case, residents collectively owning their neighborhoods."

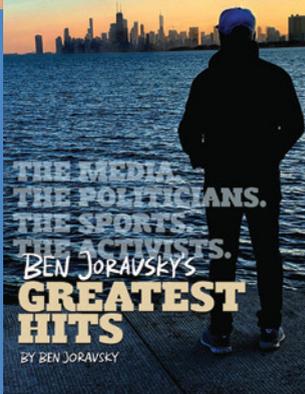
Award decisions were made by panels selected by DCASE staff; lists of panelists and award winners are available on the city website. DCASE says information about additional financial grants and programs for the arts "will follow in the upcoming weeks." 

 @Deannaisaacs

BEN JORAVSKY'S GREATEST HITS



READER



Ben Joravsky's Greatest Hits is a collection of profiles and features hand-picked by Ben from his 40 years of writing for the Reader. Each article offers a distinctive portrait of an activist, politician, writer, or sports personality who has left an indelible imprint on Chicago.

chicagoreader.com/store

235 pages / perfect bound / 5.5" x 8.5" size
Available in paperback and PDF download



Chicago Independent Media Alliance

A coalition of 68 independent, diverse, and community-driven media entities coming together in the spirit of collaboration to create a viable, self-sustaining media ecosystem in Chicago.

CIMA is a project of the *Chicago Reader*. Read more at chicagoreader.com/CIMA.

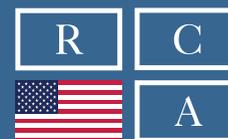
Second annual joint media fundraiser coming in May.

Follow us on twitter and like us on Facebook @ChilndyMedia

"You deserve
recovery."

KAT C. / RCA ALUMNA

Proven Addiction Treatment



Recovery Centers *of* America
AT ST. CHARLES

Open & Admitting Patients 24/7/365

In-Network with Major Insurance Providers

All Patients & RCA Staff Routinely
Tested for COVID-19



Recovery Centers of America (RCA) provides individualized, evidence-based addiction treatment. RCA has eight inpatient facilities located in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and now St. Charles, Illinois. RCA treatment centers have been named by *Newsweek Magazine* as the Best Addiction Treatment Centers of 2020 in their states.

To learn more visit RecoveryCentersOfAmerica.com
866-407-1399



FRANK OKAY

Politics of fear

The cops say masked teen carjackers with a thirst for violence and joyrides are terrorizing the city. An examination of arrests reveals a narrative built on shoddy data and anecdotal evidence.

By MAYA DUKMASOVA

On January 22, the City Council's public safety committee held a five-and-a-half hour Zoom hearing on carjackings, a crime that has surged across the country since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Last year Chicago had more than 1,400 carjackings—800 more than in 2019, and the highest it's been in two decades. News about these attacks were on TV and in the papers nearly every day. "Three CPD Officers Wounded In Shootout With Carjacking Suspect," CBS2 reported in July. "Boy, 15, Fatally Struck on Eisenhower Expressway Following Carjacking," NBC5 announced in September. "Ride-share drivers carjacked in Roseland," the *Sun-Times* proclaimed in November. "Chicago carjacking numbers not slowing," a *Tribune* headline declared in January, above a map that, at first glance, makes the whole city look awash in carjacking cases. "Carjackers smash window, pull woman and daughter, 2, from vehicle in Wicker Park carjacking, Chicago police say," ABC7 informed us two weeks ago.

The mayor and other city and county officials were regularly asked to weigh in on what appears to be an out-of-control crime wave.

Police top brass have frequently addressed carjackings in press conferences, at first telling the public that the stolen cars were used to commit other crimes, then adjusting their analysis to say that most carjackings were done by youth seeking joyrides. Before aldermen began grilling representatives from the Chicago Police Department, the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, and the Illinois State Police during the committee meeting, several city residents demanded accountability during the public comment period.

"I'm really tired of feeling like a victim when I come out of my house . . . I can't feel comfortable inside my car anymore," said one South Shore resident. She said carjackers were using the pandemic to hide behind masks, and suggested police institute an Amber Alert system for stolen cars.

A Calumet Heights resident said her 30-year-old son had been paralyzed after an attempted carjacking in 2019. "Despite video of the attack, no one had been arrested. Arrest and prosecute offenders regardless of age," she said.

"Our residents are extremely afraid," said

Seventh Ward superintendent Marcello Siggers. "They don't want to hear about why these kids may be doing it because they're not in school—they don't want to hear about all of that. They want these people held accountable for their actions."

The perception that young people have been behind the spike in carjackings has been driven by the Chicago Police Department's selective reporting of its own data. "The majority of our offenders are between 15 and 20 years of age," Chief of Detectives Brendan Deenihan said at the hearing, flashing a PowerPoint slide in the Zoom meeting. He said that while south and west side neighborhoods have been hit hardest, "there is no neighborhood that's immune to this crime."

Deenihan said typically victims are attacked while on their phone in their cars, and the most common location of an attack is "not a gas station, it's not the grocery store, it's not your driveway, it's all of the above." He said that "there's unbelievably emboldened criminals" and that when police try to detain them they "take off at high rates of speed and it's very difficult to stop them." Victims rarely identify offenders "who stuck a gun in their

face for four seconds while armed with a mask and hoodie." He said that most vehicles are abandoned within a few hours and repeated that the primary motivation for the crime appeared to be joyriding.

As Deenihan rushed through his slides, speaking at a fast, high-pressure clip while having his camera aimed at the side of his clean-shaven face, it was easy to miss what his PowerPoint actually showed: one set of data about carjacking incidents, and another about arrests.

Some of the 1,127 arrests made last year were for vehicular hijacking (taking a car from someone by force, a felony) and aggravated vehicular hijacking (doing it with a weapon or when the victim is a senior citizen or a child under 16 is in the car, also a felony). But 84 percent were for criminal trespass to vehicle (being in a car without the owner's permission, a misdemeanor). The department was showing the total arrests for all three crimes combined.

From the way CPD has presented the numbers it's not at all clear how many of the 1,127 arrests were actually related to last year's 1,417 carjacking cases. Deenihan didn't explain

continued from 11

that oftentimes CPD arrests multiple people related to a single carjacking incident, nor did he mention how many of those arrests were for incidents that happened in prior years. In a table breaking down arrestees' age ranges in five-year increments, the 15-20 age group was indeed the largest in 2020. More than half of the people arrested, however, were actually over the age of 20.

Deenihan once again glossed over these details as he commented on the 2021 data available. He said there'd been 166 reported carjacking cases in January and 108 arrests—half for misdemeanor criminal trespass to vehicle and the rest for different classes of vehicular hijacking and possession of a stolen motor vehicle (also a felony). He neglected to specify how many of these arrests for vehicle-related crimes were actually related to that month's carjacking cases.

Within hours of the meeting, though, the local press was reporting Deenihan's statements without qualification. "Chicago's other epidemic: A plague of juvenile carjackers," the *Tribune's* editorial board lamented.

It's bullshit. It's just false. It's wrong, the way it's being talked about," University of Chicago sociologist Robert Vargas told me months later. "From the beginning the city crafted this narrative as if it were young people seeking joyrides who were committing the carjackings, when anyone who's taken a simple statistics course would know they're basing their conclusion off a tiny fraction of data."

A few days after the hearing Vargas, together with University of Chicago data analyst Brian Fenaughty, wrote a letter that was published in the *Sun-Times*. Based on how many carjackings actually have associated arrests, "CPD has characteristics on just 13 percent of offenders," they wrote. "In social science, we call this sampling bias, or when members of a population are more likely to be selected in a sample than others."

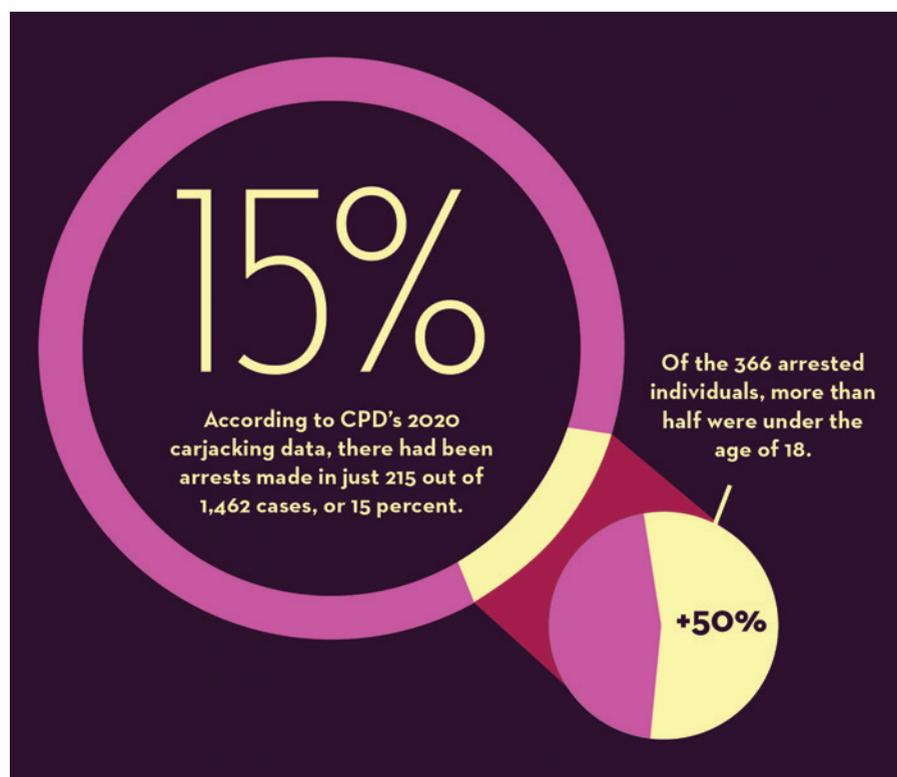
Across town at Northwestern University's law school, Stephanie Kollmann, the policy director at the Children and Family Justice Center, had been ringing similar alarm bells. "In Chicago we unfortunately have a pattern of focusing the spotlight on one crime type and focusing on youth involved in that crime type," she told me. "Sometimes it's gun violence, sometimes it's flash mobs, or the knock-out game. The city and media were focusing specifically on young people [in discussing

carjackings] and it was being linked to young people being out of school perhaps." Indeed, during his presentation, Deenihan showed a graph with a sharp drop in carjacking cases between August and September, which he labeled "e-learning school year begins."

There are many reasons why younger people are more likely to be in the sample of arrestees than in the population of carjackers. They might get caught because they didn't carefully plan the attack or did it in a group—"hallmarks of youth crime," Kollmann said. Police are also highly unlikely to make an arrest at any point other than immediately

biggest surprise," she said.

While carjacking had spiked, last year saw 21,567 fewer robberies, burglaries, and thefts compared to 2019. This was part of a yearslong trend in the decline of these types of crimes. About 18,000 parked, unattended cars are stolen every year in Illinois, and that hadn't become more common in 2020; CPD claims that these days cars are easier to steal because many people leave their key fobs in their vehicles. "Meanwhile this one uptick in this one subcategory of robbery had story after story and press conference after press conference," she remarked about carjacking.



after an attack, and if kids are not as skilled at getting away, they'll be the ones caught. "They're less experienced with committing this crime and less experienced driving different models of cars," Vargas and Fenaughty suggested in their op-ed. As for the idea, expressed by many aldermen, that carjackers tend to be repeat offenders—here, too, CPD's arrest data could just be a self-fulfilling prophecy. "If you're doing something multiple times you are more likely to get caught," Kollmann said.

Kollmann pored over CPD's public data portal online and also filed Freedom of Information Act requests for more detailed information. "What wasn't being reported was the

One reason carjacking could have become more frequent in a pandemic year, both Kollmann and Vargas posit, is because fewer people are in the streets, reducing opportunities for robbing people on the sidewalk or successfully burglarizing an empty home. "It makes sense that carjacking becomes the primary means of robbing somebody," Vargas said.

Kollmann said CPD was not only obscuring that it was reporting all vehicle-related arrests alongside the carjacking numbers, but it was also presenting an inflated solve rate for carjacking cases by reporting total numbers of arrestees rather than the numbers of cleared cases. "CPD not solving these crimes is why it feels like nobody is held responsible," she said.

Kollmann saw this as particularly problematic given the department's abysmally low clearance rate for violent crime in general.

Many of those arrested may just be friends or relatives of the carjackers who joined them in a vehicle after the car was taken. For example, a February *Tribune* article suggested just such a scenario (though it implied otherwise by labeling all four people involved in the story as "assailants"): A Noble Square man was carjacked at gunpoint by "two male attackers" while digging out his Lexus from the snow. A few hours later police saw the vehicle at a gas station in Austin and arrested four: two boys, 15 and 19, and two girls, also 15 and 19. The victim couldn't identify any of them and refused to press charges. Three of the four were let go and one was held on an outstanding shoplifting warrant. Arresting passengers from a car that had been carjacked at some earlier time is hardly the same thing as "solving" a carjacking case.

When the *Reader* filed a FOIA request for CPD's 2020 carjacking data in February, the department returned records on 1,462 cases. According to the data, arrests were made in just 215 of those cases, or 15 percent. (Even this data is worth considering with a grain of salt: Kollmann had made a similar FOIA request and also looked at data in CPD's public and semiprivate databases and came up with arrest rates that ranged between 5 and 10 percent.)

The *Reader* found that 43 percent of those 215 cases (some of which involved arrests of just one suspect, others as many as six) were "cleared" on the same day as the carjacking incident, and another 34 percent of the arrests were made within a week of the attack. The remaining quarter of arrests were just as likely to come within a month of the incident as within three or six. One arrest came more than a year later. In sum, most of those who have been "caught" and charged in relation to a carjacking were caught right away. This doesn't indicate that the police are successfully investigating or solving carjacking cases.

Several of the arrests listed in the data provided to the *Reader* were also for charges that didn't seem related to being in a stolen vehicle at all, though they were linked by the police department to carjacking incidents. For example, last March a 22-year-old Black woman was arrested for driving an uninsured vehicle without a license or registration. The case was linked with the carjacking of a Toyota Rav4 in January, suggesting that the department had cleared a carjacking case with a completely

unrelated arrest. CPD declined to answer questions about this case and all other queries for this story.

CPD arrested a total of 366 individuals connected to those 215 cleared carjacking cases, and just over half were under the age of 18. The youngest arrestees were ten years old, and the oldest were in their mid-50s. A fifth of the people arrested reside in the 60612 zip code—an area that covers parts of East Garfield Park, West Town, and the Near West Side. There were three times as many arrestees from there than from each of the next three zip codes with the most arrestees—60644 and 60624 on the west side (Austin and West Garfield Park) and 60628 on the far south side (Roseland and Pullman).

The arrestees were coming predominantly from the same areas where the carjackings had been most common. Though every zip code in the city had experienced at least one carjacking in 2020, the attacks were mostly concentrated in Black neighborhoods—22 percent were in west-side Lawndale and West Garfield Park and south-side Chatham and Greater Grand Crossing. While 14 percent of 2020's carjacking victims were white, 21 percent of the cases that had associated arrests had white victims.

Though there's been much speculation about the types of cars being targeted—in particular popular Dodge Chargers and Challengers because of anecdotal reports that they can be hacked—CPD's data showed that most often carjacked cars are the most common economy vehicle makes: Toyota, Ford, Nissan, Honda, and Chevrolet.

When the *Reader* asked CPD how many of the 2020 carjacked vehicles had been recovered and returned to owners, the department's spokespeople refused to answer. At the committee hearing Deenihan had claimed that nearly all carjacked cars are recovered. However, this isn't part of the information CPD publishes in its public data portal. Both Vargas and Kollmann stressed that to understand what's driving the carjacking spike, we have to have more data on recovered vehicles. "This is important because carjackings can be part of the informal economy as cars are sold for parts or, according to the FBI, transported out of state for resale," Vargas and Fenaughty wrote in their op-ed.

Some aldermen at the hearing said that they suspected a "profit motive" behind carjacking, as 40th Ward alderman Andre Vasquez put it. Despite the fact that Deenihan and other CPD representatives disputed that the current

carjacking wave was driven by people stealing cars to strip for parts or resell for profit, 22nd Ward alderman Mike Rodriguez said so-called "chop shops," where stolen cars are dismembered and repurposed, "are the problem" in his southwest-side community.

Meanwhile, anecdotal evidence suggests that many victims aren't getting their vehicles back. Last July, CBS2 reported that over the previous two and a half years only 12 percent of the owners of carjacked or stolen cars had been contacted about their vehicles being recovered. While filing reports, a victim has to tell police that she wants to be contacted if her car is found. Sometimes a victim doesn't learn that her car was recovered until she gets bills from the impound lot where CPD or the State Police took it for processing.

Last month the *Reader* filed a FOIA request for all the January 2021 carjacking incident reports and the associated arrests reports to gather more information about the circumstances of the attacks and characteristics of the arrestees. CPD has yet to return a single document, in violation of the state's open records law.

Despite the obvious shortcomings of CPD's data, most aldermen at the January hearing seemed ready to take the department at its word. Perhaps because what Deenihan was telling them was mostly confirming what they already believed. For months, the political rhetoric pervasively focused on the idea that there aren't sufficiently harsh "consequences" for this crime or that perpetrators *think* there aren't any consequences. Officials have taken to local news outlets to repeatedly and without evidence claim that kids are recruited by older people and told that they won't get in trouble for carjacking. Or that kids engage with the world as if they were playing real-life *Grand Theft Auto*. Or that they're carjacking to score points on social media. In a chilling echo of the "superpredator" rhetoric of the 1990s, many aldermen seemed to be under the impression that kids who commit carjackings are senseless villains impervious to fear.

"This carjacking is like something out of a video game," said Seventh Ward alderman Greg Mitchell. "I had to re-educate my older people in the ward and let them know that these kids aren't the kids that you raised." He said he was telling constituents to report any suspicious-looking people sitting around in cars on their blocks. "When we see something we need to say something—cars parked on our

streets with out-of-state license plates or no license plates, frequent activity at houses, four and five and six young men in a car with no facial hair but with a \$100,000 car. These are the things that we cannot let go."

Thirty-eighth Ward alderman Nicholas Sposato rebuffed the idea that the youth committing carjackings may have unmet mental health needs. "These are bad people, bad kids basically, that maybe have no direction in life," he said. "From what I know this is not anything to do with mental health."

The hearing presented an opportunity for aldermen to get on record with tough-on-crime messages. Of the 30 who spoke, 17 made statements calling for harsher punishment. "We need to figure out a way to make the prospect of getting arrested for committing a crime with a firearm a really, really scary proposition for a teenager," said 42nd Ward alderman Brendan Reilly. "How do we make this more of a crime juveniles as well as adults are afraid to do?" echoed 41st Ward alderman Anthony Napolitano.

The police department has done little to dispel the notion that "there's not even a slap on the wrist" for carjacking, as 15th Ward alderman Ray Lopez put it. He and many of his colleagues seemed to think that prosecutors don't seek charges serious enough, or judges don't mandate pretrial jail time often enough, or the Sheriff's Office is too loose with its house arrest program. But at the hearing Deenihan didn't blame other agencies for CPD's shortcomings. "We have to take some ownership and build better cases and present better cases to [the State's Attorney Office]," he said. "If there needs to be a change in the law, I'm gonna stay out of that. That's not our role."

While at first he did say that "youth intervention has to be huge. Nobody's interested in mass incarceration, everybody's interested in changing the child's behavior," later Deenihan characterized the same young people he said are behind the carjacking spike as "bad guys" randomly and opportunistically attacking people on the street or rideshare drivers for fun.

The representatives from the State's Attorney's Office—Kim Foxx's chief deputy Risa Lanier, and juvenile justice bureau chief Maryam Ahmad—were more careful about painting those they prosecute with a broad brush. They explained that existing "consequences" are already serious. "I don't know if changing laws every single time that we have a spike in a certain type of crime will necessarily answer or

solve the problem of how do we deter crime," Lanier said. She bluntly pushed back on 43rd Ward alderwoman Michele Smith's assertions that trespassing in a vehicle is a gateway crime to carjacking. Meanwhile, Ahmad calmly assured Alderman Mitchell that "not all minors that go through the system reoffend."

After the hearing, CPD responded to aldermen's questions about repeat offenders with data that showed that of the more than 2,300 individuals arrested for felony and misdemeanor vehicle-related crime in the last two years, 73 percent have had no subsequent arrests, and only 17 percent have had any further felony arrests. They didn't specify whether it was the people charged with vehicular hijacking that had subsequent arrests.

Contrary to popular belief—and many unsubstantiated claims from the Sheriff's Office, Fraternal Order of Police, CPD's top brass, and conservative legislators—the 2017 Cook County bail reforms that led to fewer people getting sent to jail pretrial have not resulted in more violent crime charges against those people while they're out in the community. A Loyola University study released last November found that the chances of someone out on bail being picked up again for a crime hasn't gone up since the reform. Before and after the reform, just 3 percent of defendants rack up new violent felony charges while out awaiting trial.

For adults, conviction for the misdemeanor offense of criminal trespass to vehicle can range from a few months of supervision to a year behind bars. Prison sentences start at three years for attempted vehicular hijacking or possession of a stolen motor vehicle—these are "class 2" felonies in Illinois that, depending on a person's prior record, can also come with probation sentences. When people are convicted of any form of vehicular hijacking, though, they're not eligible for probation. The minimum sentence for a simple vehicular hijacking is four years in prison; for an aggravated vehicular hijacking it's seven years; if the aggravation involves a firearm, it's 22 years.

For the less serious of the above offenses, juveniles can face probation sentences, and CPD actually runs its own diversion program for kids arrested for criminal trespass. Ahmad pointed out that "the bulk" of the youth arrested for this misdemeanor are directed to this program rather than to her office for prosecution. But for the more serious charges, kids can be sent to the Illinois Department of

continued from 13

Juvenile Justice to serve time until the age of 21. Juvenile cases can also be transferred to adult court. Though automatic transfers for vehicular hijacking have been limited by state law since 2016, kids as young as 13 can still be transferred to adult court if prosecutors ask for it and juvenile court judges approve. Ahmad assured aldermen that her office does make these asks. Kollmann confirmed this, too. “If there’s evidence that you committed a carjacking, especially with a gun—no, you are not run through a system that is going to downgrade and dismiss your charges frivolously,” she told me.

The fact that the majority of carjacking arrests are for misdemeanor criminal trespass seems to be one of the reasons so many people are incensed and have the impression carjackers are getting off easy. But it’s difficult to catch someone in the act, video of the attack isn’t always available, and witnesses are rarely able to identify suspects. CPD also says it doesn’t engage in high-speed car chases for the safety of officers and the public. So the most typical arrest scenario comes soon after an attack: A stolen vehicle is spotted by or reported to police and the people inside are apprehended. Deenihan told the aldermen that, at that point, the only cause the cops may have for an arrest is criminal trespass.

Unlike with felony charges, which have to be reviewed by prosecutors to make sure the evidence is strong enough before being brought to court, adult misdemeanors are sent directly to court by CPD. These cases fall apart if a witness or the police officer who made the arrest doesn’t show up. Several aldermen asked how often this happens. The State’s Attorney’s office doesn’t keep this data, and CPD still hasn’t provided answers to these questions. Some have implied that the State’s Attorney’s Office is in the habit of downgrading felony vehicle-related arrests to misdemeanors, but the data the office later shared with aldermen suggests this is actually rare. Only 5 percent of cases that started out with possession-of-a-stolen-motor-vehicle charges in 2020, for example, were eventually downgraded to criminal trespass.

When it comes to the felony carjacking charges—for which, according to Deenihan’s presentation, only 178 people were arrested last year—the State’s Attorney’s Office seems to be functioning as expected. In 2020, according to the office, felony carjacking charges for adults were approved 97 percent of the time, and resulted in convictions 93 percent of the

time. For juveniles, the State’s Attorney’s Office approved charges 89 percent of the time and convictions resulted in 90 percent of cases.

However, with all this talk of arrests and prosecutions and conviction rates there hasn’t been much room for questions about whether the police are funneling the “right” people into the criminal legal system under the guise of “catching carjackers,” or if cops and prosecutors are even operating constitutionally. Historically, crime waves are accompanied by increased pressure on police to make arrests and prosecutors to land convictions. These circumstances have also been breeding grounds for police overreach, misconduct, torture, wrongful convictions, and rampant violation of constitutional rights. Not to mention increased surveillance and criminalization of young Black and Latinx people, especially in poor neighborhoods.

Kollmann said that in addition to the rhetoric and misinformation around carjacking creating conditions in which law enforcement is more likely to “cut corners,” more of the wrong people could be arrested and charged because of the pandemic. While some point to mask-wearing as additional cover to commit the crime, Kollmann said masks can also be conducive to witness misidentification and increased racial profiling by police.

But what if the cops are right, and what if their arrest data was representative of the sort of people committing carjackings for the reasons they presume? If the spike is being driven by young people—what’s to be done about it?

“What people believe regarding young people is that the ability to send them to adult court or give them lengthy or harsh sentences is at least a deterrent for some kinds of behavior and the science is pretty clear that this isn’t true,” Kollmann said. “Especially for young people, the length and severity of punishment has almost no bearing compared to perceived near-term consequence—meaning effect on reputation or getting caught.” She continued. “Which doesn’t mean arrest, but like someone they don’t want to know about it finds out, like their grandma finds out. That is the biggest way young people are motivated [to refrain from bad behavior], it’s fear of discovery by people that they care about.” The same can be true in reverse—especially when they’re lacking people whose judgement they fear for bad behavior. Kids may be motivated by approval for that same behavior from other

people they care about. “Everything that comes after arrest is so remote in the mind of the young person that it really doesn’t enter their calculation.”

As Jalen Kobayashi, 20, a youth mentor and organizer with GoodKids MadCity (which recently published a series of youth video responses to carjacking on its Twitter page) put it, “We have a lot of youth who are very impulsive,” due to a lifetime of trauma and poverty. “Trauma stunts part of your growth and development,” they said. “White kids from the north side don’t grow up seeing their friends and family die and overdose.” Kobayashi, who works with kids who are “involved in the streets,” explained that by the time they’re old enough to commit a crime they have often already gone through too much, including experiencing drug addiction, having friends shot and killed, and having relatives incarcerated. They expressed disappointment in the “elders in our community” who don’t acknowledge this trauma or make enough effort to mentor and support kids but are quick to demonize them for crime.

Kobayashi said some young people may carjack because they’ve “internalized the idea that we have no power and the only way we can take it is by taking it—burning bridges, actively taking people out of cars.” Others, they said, may be carjacking simply because they need to get somewhere or get away from something. “Sometimes it’s just kids out being kids and they’re goofy and they see what’s happened on the news and [get the idea that other people who carjacked] got away with it so we’ll try to do it.” They were highly skeptical that chasing clout on social media or reenacting violent video games was a big motivator, however.

Seventeen-year-old Le’Tiana Roberts, who also organizes and mentors peers through GoodKids MadCity, said that some kids might commit a carjacking and post about it on social media “for attention,” but that the bigger problem is a lack of resources and punitive school policies that force kids to “run to the streets” for guidance and camaraderie. Mentorship is needed but has to be a long-term effort, she said. “If you come to a person who’s broken they’re not gonna really accept you,” she said. “It’s gonna take a minute because at first they’re gonna feel like you’re just out to get them.”

Another GKMC youth mentor and organizer, 18-year-old Dovontay Richardson, echoed these sentiments. “People ain’t got money to get a Lyft or Uber and they don’t have money to get a car,” he said. “If the kids had resources,

I don’t think they’d be doing this.” He said that if it wasn’t for access to a basketball court he might have been one of them.

At the city council hearing, Ahmad, who oversees prosecutions in Cook County’s child protection court as well as juvenile delinquency cases, noted that kids charged with crimes are often coming from the poorest neighborhoods, and that she sees a connection between child abuse and neglect and youth crime. “We are lacking as a county in true restorative mental health, education, food security, trauma services for families,” she said. “I believe if we begin infusing services into these families we might see a change in some of this delinquent activity.”

Lanier conveyed the same message when Alderman Napolitano asked how people can be prevented from committing carjackings. Deterring crime “is not always driven by the criminal justice system, it is also driven by how do we reinvest in our communities and provide job opportunities, how do we reinvest in our communities and provide educational opportunities.”

Still, many of the city’s legislators seemed uninterested in tackling crime prevention by offering more resources to the city’s poorest people—and they purported to speak in the name of victims and their desires as they called for the reinstatement of automatic transfers of kids to adult court, longer sentences, fines on parents, and for CPD to start doing car chases again. They were also keen to direct additional funding to a police department that, despite already using 40 percent of the city’s budget and having some of the most sophisticated equipment in the country, doesn’t appear capable of effectively investigating and solving much crime. Aldermen expressed readiness to spend more on helicopters (of which CPD now has two) and social media surveillance, license-plate readers and pod cameras to catch carjackers. “I allow the city to use my TIF money to do everything else,” said 27th Ward alderman Walter Burnett, Jr. “Use my TIF money to buy a helicopter, man.”

A few of the progressive caucus aldermen demanded the city infuse more money into the poorest communities, especially for health and social services. “The only thing I’ve heard in this hearing is about punishment, punishment, punishment,” said 33rd Ward alderwoman Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez. “I would like for us to think about public safety from a very holistic framework that tends to the humanity of people doing this kind of thing.” Seventeenth Ward alderman David Moore,

whose south-side community has been among the most affected by this crime wave, said kids' maturity levels may be far lower than their age might suggest. "Our first response is 'Lock 'em up.' We gotta figure this out in terms of punishment that's equitable," he said. "It's disheartening when we see what happened in the Capitol and people get charged with trespassing but then we're talking about hitting our babies with these major charges."

Still, these voices were in the minority. Kollmann worries about the types of legislative responses that could come out of the ongoing media circus around the carjackings. Despite the debunking of the "superpredator" theory, which characterized some children as vicious and incapable of remorse, there's "still this presumption that committing a very serious crime makes you somehow an adult," she said. "We have all the science that we need to know that's false."

There's scant evidence to support that harsh laws fashioned in response to past crime waves were actually helpful in abating them. "The field of criminology is still trying to solve the mystery of the great homicide decline that happened after the mid-90s," Kollmann said. "People were sent to prison for longer sentences and in every scientific review the consensus is that while there is some impact of locking people up on whether they can commit [new] offenses, that is such a small percentage and the cost socially and financially is so large that increased, lengthy prison-based punishments really aren't the cause of crime declines in any significant way."

"There's very little strong convincing social science on what drives a steep decline in crime and homicide," Vargas said. "It's hard enough to explain a harsh increase in violence and it's even harder to explain why it drops." But always, inevitably, the drop comes. And with it, an opportunity for political gain.

The splintered nature of the criminal legal system in Chicago and Cook County makes it easy to pass the blame around when crime goes up and claim credit when it falls. The CPD answers only to itself and the mayor—they get a win when they make an arrest and it doesn't hurt their stats when prosecutors don't approve charges. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office can only prosecute people who the cops arrest and against whom the cops collect sufficient evidence. Cook County's judiciary, which doesn't answer to anyone but the voters and each other, is bound by state law on the sorts of detention

conditions it can impose on those arrested for carjacking—and on the sentences they can dole out to those convicted. The State Police's jurisdiction is limited to highways. The Cook County Sheriff mostly follows judicial orders on detention and is responsible for minimal policing in the suburbs. This is just how America works. But because so many different agencies with politically independent leadership, siloed bureaucracies, and disconnected data are tasked with responding to crime, they can point the finger at each other when the public deems the overall response to be insufficient. They can manipulate the numbers and take advantage of the gaps in knowledge created by disjointed record keeping.

In a recent working paper, Vargas and colleagues traced the city's response to four historic homicide waves between the 1920s and 2016. Every time, the police claimed credit for the eventual decline in murders and came out bigger and more powerful, while the city used the waves to "delegitimize Black social movements" and "frame homicide as an individual rather than systemic problem." Feeble efforts to respond to increased crime through increasing city resources to poor communities pioneered under Mayor Harold Washington were quashed under Richard M. Daley.

Whether it's the "superpredator" of the 90s or the "bored youth carjacker" of today, "they're playing a politics of fear that local governments and police departments have played for decades," backed by shoddy data and anecdotal evidence, Vargas said. Despite their own data to the contrary, much of the messaging from CPD's top brass has been that carjackings are happening everywhere and randomly, that anyone can be a victim at any time. But unlike prior crime waves, this "politics of fear" is playing out "at a time when CPD has come the closest it's ever come to seeing its budget decrease."

Kobayashi said, "Law enforcement is beating the drum to draw attention away from their own failures, like, 'Hey, hey look at these kids carjacking, you need us!'" And they don't think that the crime will subside as a result of anything CPD might do about it. "We don't have police solve things, we have police reacting to things."

Even when making a statement about the fatal shooting of 13-year-old Adam Toledo, CPD superintendent David Brown—who in March tagged other big city police chiefs and agencies while triumphantly tweeting about the arrest of a "13-year-old male juvenile . . . for a pair of vehicular hijackings that took

place last July"—was hinting at carjackings. "My greatest fear as the Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department has been a deadly encounter between one of our own and a juvenile especially given the recent rise in violent crimes involving juveniles throughout our city," Brown wrote on April 1, as his communications staff was busy sowing the false story that Toledo was holding a gun when he was shot by Officer Eric Stillman.

In March, the carjacking numbers were already down, closer in line with previous years' monthly averages. It's possible that the wave will abate on its own, along with the pandemic. Or maybe the fact that the federal government will start providing every family in America with an income under \$150,000 with \$250-\$300 per month per child—a step that is estimated to help cut childhood poverty in the country by half—will make a difference.

In a city of glaring inequalities like Chicago, Kobayashi said, the bottom line is that poor kids just need more cash and stuff to do. "[We need to be] giving Black kids money and not worrying about what they do with it," they said. "The youth are saying, 'We just need more, we don't have shit. We need more fun things to do.' You got corner stores, you got churches, you got liquor stores, that's it . . . we need more to do, more to learn, more to activate our times."

I didn't interview any carjackers for this story, but I did find a 2003 study written by three white criminologists who did. In exchange for \$50 and the promise of anonymity, a few Black Saint Louis residents between ages 16 and 45 who said they'd committed carjackings shared their motivations. The researchers concluded that while each situation is influenced by the particular people involved and their immediate needs, the decision to commit a carjacking "is activated, mediated, and shaped by participation in urban street culture."

The study felt dated, with its references to souped-up cars whose drivers were carjacked for "flossing" too hard. The way carjacking scenarios were described hardly seemed to fit the patterns of the crime as it manifests itself in Chicago today. Who's to say the participants were honest with the researchers about what really drove them, or if they could speak for the carjackers of 2021? There was no differentiation between adult and youth interviewees.

The people accused of committing carjackings become less relatable to "ordinary citizens" as politicians and the media peddle

in language that dehumanizes them, as mug shots of arrestees' tattooed faces flash on TV, as the hoodies, music, and video games in fashion among young people at the moment are blamed. Just as the victims are uniformly presented as innocent people who deserve our sympathy, the "bad guys" perpetrating the crime are equally flat characters. It's not hard to relate to the victims because no one wants to get carjacked. But where has painting the people committing crimes (very often victims themselves) as less than human gotten us? Perhaps those of us who struggle to imagine the inner worlds of the "emboldened criminals" taking people's cars at gunpoint also struggle to imagine a life of poverty, abuse, boredom, housing instability, inadequate schools, and fear of random assault at all times. Or we've forgotten what it's like to be a kid, especially in a world that sears with its unfairness.

GoodKids MadCity's name is a riff on Kendrick Lamar's 2012 autobiographical album *Good Kid, M.A.A.D City*. The songs are interspersed with skits depicting an evening of friends cruising around Compton in a car, getting drunk and high, chasing girls, burglarizing someone's house, getting into a shootout with some guys from another part of town. The tragedy and fear conjured by the idea of these individual events in isolation is softened by the affable, relatable energy we hear in the rapport between the friends. As a listener riding in the car with them, you can relate to the joy, the bravado, that fun in recklessness that most of us indulged in as kids, especially if we grew up with working or impaired parents, in places where there wasn't much to do, creating our own adventures. It's not a "glorification of violence" but an observation about reality. What happened to the kids from the car? One of them ended up dead. Another became a successful rapper. Their individual paths diverged due to the bad luck of a bullet trajectory and the random chance of talent. But the social and economic conditions that create nights like the kind they had in the car are still there. The youngest kids arrested in connection to carjacking last year in Chicago were 10-year-olds from West Englewood. They were born when Rahm Emanuel became mayor, promising to bring new opportunities and resources to their community. We all know how that went. In ten more years will we be blaming the poorest infants born during this pandemic for some new burst of chaos? 

 @mdoukmas

ARTS & CULTURE



An aerial view of the new Altgeld Family Resource Center just outside the Altgeld Gardens public housing units

© COURTESY KOO/MIKE SCHWARTZ

ARCHITECTURE

Is this library politics?

A new building filled with social service and education amenities at Altgeld Gardens is a test case for the limits of design and architecture.

By ZACH MORTICE

Drive south on the Bishop Ford Expressway to Altgeld Gardens and you'll pass plenty of reminders you're in a landscape not meant for inquisitive visitors. There are looming grain silos next to a parked shipping freighter, a village-scaled water reclamation plant, and plenty of anonymous warehouses. But once you pass 130th Street and drive into the Chicago Housing Authority's (CHA) largest surviving traditional public housing community, that spell breaks on approach to the new Altgeld Family Resource Center (FRC), a combined childcare center, community center, and Chicago Public Library. There, over a rising and falling roofline, neon-blue atriums slide in and out of view, beckoning with a playful game

of peek-a-boo. The amoeba-shaped building's curves are mirrored by Altgeld's street plan, an oddity for grid-obsessed Chicago. Twenty miles from the Loop at the city's southern tip, connected only by one bus route, its ring of curving and meandering streets give the feeling of a suburban subdivision, or maybe something else.

"One of the things that always struck me when I first came to Altgeld is that the layout is almost medieval, or quasi-suburban," says Dan Rappel of KOO, the architecture firm that designed the FRC.

With more than 1,500 townhouse apartments over 157 acres, Altgeld was built in the mid-40s for returning Black WWII veterans,

and was one of few places in Chicago they could live. It was meant to be self-contained and comprehensive, and included a library, schools, an auditorium, a clubhouse, and a shopping center.

If Altgeld ever functioned as an inward-facing medieval fortress, with residents nervously eyeing ramparts, there's good reason. The existence of, and especially the integration of, Black public housing was continually threatened with violence from racist white people, who were rarely held accountable. And there's an entire canon of urban planning that addresses notions of safety in public housing communities, where conventional (but incomplete) analyses have posited that high-rise

towers, like the doomed Cabrini-Green projects, breed alienation and distrust by densely packing residents into common spaces and corridors. Meanwhile, low-rise projects like the still-surviving Altgeld Gardens are made functional and defensible by offering residents individuated dwellings.

Rappel says that he wanted to "subtly subvert" some of Altgeld's inward-facing nature with the new building's exuberance. But perhaps the most important factor determining Altgeld's defensive posture is less rooted in the social dynamics of the place and more in the material conditions of the economy.

At Altgeld, the buildings are small but landscapes are vast. These are industrial tracts comprising landfill hills, factories, and refineries; infrastructural landscape behind fences and retaining walls, inaccessible and inhuman. Altgeld was alone on an industrial frontier. But these 50-some landfills and hundreds of industrial facilities spread beyond their borders via the water, soil, and air, and residents of Altgeld have suffered from cyanide-contaminated drinking water, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination, and 250 leaking underground storage tanks, and more, with some pollutants dating back to George Pullman's railcar empire in the late 19th century.

The development could only have happened this way through a deadly mix of racist and classist paternalism and predation. In the 1970s, water left the faucets with a light brown hue. The community had the highest incidence of cancer in the entire city. In response, Altgeld's Hazel Johnson created the People for Community Recovery (PCR) in 1979 to lobby for remediations that could clean up what became known as the "toxic doughnut." (She got a bit of help from a young community organizer named Barack Obama, including a push to expand the neighborhood's library.) Now known as the "mother of environmental justice," a stretch of 130th Street has been named after her.

But despite PCR's successes, Chicago's industrial base shrank. Jobs left, the pollution stayed, and Altgeld continued to suffer. Residents experienced more crime and disorder as the population grew poorer, and several hundred units were torn down in 2016 and 2018. (Remaining units were renovated from 2004 to 2016.) The FRC won't change this, and Alt-

geld's history of layering quality architecture on top of and amidst a deplorable site illustrates how and why design's agency to change the world for the better is limited by the same forces that built Altgeld on top of a toxic landfill. In a place where so much is owed—and at a time when COVID-19 and the uprisings against racist police violence have demonstrated just how unprepared and unwilling we are to care for the most vulnerable—the worlds of design, urban planning, and architecture have been consumed by the question of what their contribution to this struggle can be. The FRC and Altgeld is a story of ambition, complicity, and reconciliation, and in this complexity, it illustrates how far politics at the drafting desk can take you, and how far it can't.

For Black veterans returning from WWII, a chance to live at Altgeld Gardens was an Edenic dream deserving of its name. Long time residents tell stories of a neighborhood chorus, Halloween bonfires, and block clubs with enough kids to each field a baseball team.

Boxed out of expanding suburbs by racist lending practices and redlining during a historically tight housing market, Altgeld offered Black families subsidized housing in a tidy suburban atmosphere. Generous shared courtyards connected long, two-story apartment blocks with gabled roofs that could look quite a bit like single-family homes if you squinted. In J.S. Fuerst's book *When Public Housing Was Paradise: Building Community in Chicago*, Claude Wyatt, a resident of Altgeld for ten years from the mid-40s to mid-50s, tells of the revelatory joy at not having “to go into a big building. I would put my key in the front door, go out through the back, come around to the front door again, and walk in and go through—again. I couldn't believe it.” The development was far from the city center (residents would refer to the rest of Chicago as “the city”), but it was relatively close to the burgeoning industrial concerns of the southeast side. And because there were simply so few other places for Black people to live, there was little stigma attached to public housing.

Despite its failings, Altgeld's design pedigree put residents on even footing with the burgeoning middle classes. Altgeld was designed by the Chicago architecture firm Naess and Murphy and built in 1945, and the development was joined by the Philip Murray Homes in 1954. Altgeld made historic preservation nonprofit Preservation Chicago's 2017 most endangered list, and Executive Director Ward Miller says it should be considered for the

National Register of Historic Places for three reasons. First, there's the history of President Obama's involvement there, and second, the history of the environmental justice movement, embodied in Hazel Johnson. But there's also the architecture. Miller praises Altgeld's quirky stepped parapets that frame its gabled roofs, and its intimate neighborliness. It “exudes a certain human scale,” he says. “It has a certain charm about it.”

Altgeld offered a quality of life that was “perhaps not too different from suburban developments happening at the same time,” says Miller. Unlike the maligned high-rises to come, it was “an attempt to connect people to the ground around them”; a dark irony, considering what was below the surface.

As one of Chicago's first public housing developments, Altgeld is powerfully instructive of how progressive European ideas influencing American public housing were loosely adapted to the American real estate market and its unceasing devotion to the pastoral ideal embodied in the single-family home. Miller connects Altgeld's plan to the legacy of Zeilenbau housing in Weimar Republic Germany. The Zeilenbau concept arranged linear social housing apartment blocks in parallel rows in green fields, to give poor people a reprieve from unsanitary slum shantytowns, granting access to light, fresh air, and outdoor space. There's a loose chain of custody from the Weimar social democrats who advocated for this sort of housing, to Mies van der Rohe (who relocated much of European modern architecture and planning from Germany to Chicago after the former head of the Bauhaus set up shop at the Illinois Institute of Technology), and then to the prolific and well-connected Naess and Murphy. Architects like Mies arrived in Chicago when the Great Depression generated the political will to dramatically expand the public sector, and Miller says Altgeld is an echo of the ways Weimar-era socialists sought to “house the masses in a very affordable and economic way.”

But the Altgeld plan broke apartment complexes into smaller townhouse blocks of just a few units, wrapped them in between curving streets with few connections to main thoroughfares, and cleared out plenty of room for parking. The Zeilenbau concept was largely stripped of its social and political context by the 1940s, and adaptation to the American housing market entailed a move away from the communal ideal of socialist housing and toward the individual self-determination of single-family homes, which public sector



The design of Altgeld Gardens goes against the typical high-rise structure of public housing.

© ZACH MORTICE

austerity, more than moralistic design considerations forecloses as possibilities for public housing.

Altgeld's details speak to a very American set of housing aspirations. Connected side by side and offset slightly, the small apartment blocks are interrupted by the quirkily stepped parapets that Miller admires, each one emphasizing a roof gable—the ultimate American symbol of single-family hearth and home—and popping up to remind people that public housing can trade in the same domestic signifiers that the private market does. It's likely these details were applied to reinforce the dignity of the new residents. But considering what's beneath the ground and in the air, it becomes a futile, superficial gesture, a nod to a suburban mirage of clean living and good health at odds with the way this place has poisoned the people with least freedom in where they lived.

From CHA's perspective, Altgeld's remoteness was attractive, as it would limit antagonism from white people, and would open up a new area of the city to Black families. The environmental racism evident at Altgeld was also willfully applied. The city opened up a municipal dump in the area in 1940, but allowed Altgeld to be built just a few years later. And CHA exacerbated problems by ignoring toxins leaching from a former waste dump, using asbestos, and dumping PCB waste at the site. It wasn't till 1986 that Mayor Harold

Washington banned future landfills there after an explosion of activism from PCR.

The \$22 million FRC is a building with no front or back, and its brick façade is conventionally contextual, matching the vast majority of buildings on site. The aluminum-clad blue atrium sections are a playful counterpoint, popping up over a community room, an indoor play area, and the library's YouMedia music lab and recording studio. “We have a lot of up-and-coming rappers out here,” says Bernadette Williams, president of Altgeld Garden's Local Advisory Council. Staggered window patterns on the library's east face reinforce the sense of cheerfulness, but the FRC is never a domineering presence, and it resists any singular postcard profile.

Things are a bit grander on the inside, especially in the library, where the ceiling rises up from the entrance to a civic-scaled 28 feet, flaring the roofline up and down to alternately hide and reveal the atrium sections. Similarly, the largest community center meeting room and the indoor play area at the childcare center feature tall ceilings detailed with layers of sculptural geometry.

The amorphous shape of the building is felt most acutely in the childcare center, to be operated by Centers for New Horizons, where many of the 12 classrooms end in rounded edges. New Horizons has been in Altgeld for more than 20 years, and Christa Hamilton,

ARTS & CULTURE



Inside the library in the FRC ■ COURTESY KOO/MIKE SCHWARTZ

continued from 17

its executive director, says that the greatest benefit of the new facility is that it will allow them to offer more capacity for kids aged six weeks to 24 months. “We’ve had generations of families come through our program at Altgeld,” she says.

“This is one of the only places we would be putting a childcare center,” says Ann McKenzie, the CHA’s chief development officer. “If we were on the north side, the childcare centers exist already.” It will also offer more space for wraparound social outreach services for both parents and kids, like counseling and after-school programming.

Some of the inward-facing spatial patterns at Altgeld are repeated at the FRC. There are two internal courtyards, including an outdoor playground, where a cruciform brick pattern on the walls references the Altgeld apartments’ signature stepped roof parapets. It’s a defensive measure that’s an echo of past trauma, and something the community wanted to keep their children protected. “[At] Altgeld, unfortunately the community violence is high,” says Hamilton. “The reality is that our children were not as safe as we would like them to be in an outdoor space.”

Cheryl Johnson, who took over her mother

Hazel Johnson’s role at PCR after her death in 2011, says the childcare center is “beautiful” and agrees that the FRC is a vital resource. But she has a broader critique. What Altgeld needs is not so much new public amenities as a new economy. What does the city owe Altgeld, and does the FRC make up any of this gap? “We don’t even have a grocery store,” she says. “We don’t have a commercial strip.”

That wasn’t always the case. Next to the FRC is an largely abandoned purpose-built commercial building designed by Chicago modernist architecture firm Keck and Keck. And its sweeping curvilinear profile—an inspiration for Rappel’s design for the FRC—once contained a co-op grocery store, though it’s been disused and mostly empty for years now; the object of Preservation Chicago’s advocacy efforts. Additional commercial spaces were part of a CHA master plan that KOO worked on in 2013 with Johnson and Williams, but commercial elements didn’t make the cut, and CHA isn’t making retail a high priority at Altgeld. “CHA funding for non-housing related purchases is extremely limited and a commercial building does not fit within our mission,” says McKenzie. When Mayor Lori Lightfoot visited the FRC earlier this month, and was asked by activists if a grocery store could be

brought back to Altgeld, she fled the scene.

Johnson was involved early on in the effort to plan the FRC, but says she never got a satisfactory picture of how it would be used. She wanted more space for PCR, to do trainings on emergency preparedness, mold remediation, and more.

And then there’s the catch-22 common to public engagement in all low-income communities. To design successful projects that serve residents’ needs, administrators, planners, and architects need a deep and time-intensive public engagement process, but no one’s time is more expensive than the poor. “Everybody that’s working on these developments in our community, they aren’t being compensated to do this work,” says Johnson. “We don’t have the luxury to be able to volunteer because we lack job opportunities. People are struggling.” Without this level of engagement, it’s harder to build successful infrastructure that could be the kind of boon to economic prospects residents need to have more time to volunteer. “I think we were kind of used, just to justify that they had resident engagement,” she says.

These shortfalls of the design process and the systemic impediments to health and equity on 130th Street make it clear that the FRC, or any set of buildings, is not the answer to what the community needs. “There’s no way it can reverse 70 years of racism and bad policy, but hopefully it can support small ‘d’ democratic change,” says Rappel. If anything, the FRC’s potential lies in its ability to be a forum for community organizing, a place to assign door-knocking rolls and cyberbully the mayor while someone you trust watches your kids. “In whatever way this building can be supportive of the community and their needs, that would be success,” he says.

Johnson sees this potential, but during a pandemic, acknowledges that the efficacy of any sort of community forum is “all speculative.” For example, while the library is now open, the childcare center won’t admit kids until June.

This appraisal of the FRC’s real utility is one part of a wider disciplinary argument within design. It’s based on the dawning recognition that the design and architecture industry, despite Solomonic rhetoric about how visionaries use architecture to make the world a kinder, gentler, more equitable place, are really just handmaidens of capital, and are complacent enough to do its bidding. Like, for example, building housing for a near-captive population on land degraded by industries granted the freedom to pursue profit at the

cost of public health, and getting cover from the public agencies that manage it. The domestic detailing and the public outdoor space at Altgeld might have been enough to convince designers themselves they were on the right side of history, but underlying (and underground) structures have disabused us of this idea. Good politics, if it happens in a design studio, works to subvert these systems. More importantly, designers have to get involved as political actors alongside the people they build for, to make sure they get the opportunity to create places that soar anywhere near the heights of their rhetoric.

Designers hitching their star to Altgeld’s horizon-setting activism is a smart play. In addition to being a fundamental origin point for the environmental justice movement, the community has been pushing for a new library since at least 2009, when a flood rendered their old library unusable. Altgeld youth and Johnson showed up at Mayor Daley’s office to demand to use his Internet to complete their college applications.

And Johnson has another idea of what architecture could do for Altgeld, one that’s much more experimental and potentially transformative. Altgeld, she says, needs a place to study how environmental degradation affected the community, so that it never happens again. “It’s an open environmental lab,” she says. “It could be a new way of introducing science to our community. It’s so big of a missed opportunity.” Johnson says she doesn’t think that the CHA would be supportive. Done correctly, with true community control, such a lab would be a place founded to document generations of institutional failure.

“We’re always dealing with the sins of the past,” says McKenzie. Her response to the idea of an environmental lab is diplomatic, if not clinical: “We will continue to look to the Altgeld community for guidance in future endeavors. We appreciate opportunities for CHA residents and environmental education, especially [ones] that might lead to careers.”

A facility that teaches environmental science to a community that’s been victimized by environmental racism is a powerful narrative of self-determination and a fantastic prompt for architecture. It would also be a political fight to establish. For their own disciplinary horizons, and, more importantly, to help Altgeld claw back what it’s been deprived of, it’s the type of fight designers should line up for. ■

Twitter @zachmortice

meet the Reader

**As we look forward to our
50th Anniversary on October 1st
we celebrate the staff of the Reader
who make the paper possible.**

Taryn Allen
Editorial Associate



A great philosopher once asked, “If the *Reader* has an all-staff meeting and no one sings Taryn Allen’s praises, did the staff even meet at all?” Since she joined the crew in November 2019, the editorial associate has become an essential piece of the *Reader* puzzle, supporting every side of the organization with an unflappable cool and excellent punctuation. Born in Littleton, Colorado, and raised in Canandaigua, New York, Taryn had recently graduated from the University of Denver and moved to Chicago when she came to work at the paper. “Getting hired at the *Reader* as my first full-time job was life-changing,” she says. “It allowed me to immediately feel plugged into Chicago culture, and the team is more quirky and queer than I ever could have hoped for.” Taryn lives with her girlfriend Monica and their cats Kopi and Fika on Chicago’s north side, where she spends her free time visiting neighborhood gems such as Middle East Bakery and Grocery, listening to songwriter Mac Ayres, and watching *BoJack Horseman* and the 1999 version of *Annie* (which she describes as her “guilty pleasure movie,” despite the fact that it’s more PC and less bathtub-gin-soaked than its 1982 predecessor). Taryn is also a natural athlete who enjoys skateboarding and trying her hand at different recipes, instruments, art projects, and languages. “I think I’m generally good at picking up new skills quickly,” she says. That’s an understatement for sure, but we’ll let it slide.

@itstarynallen

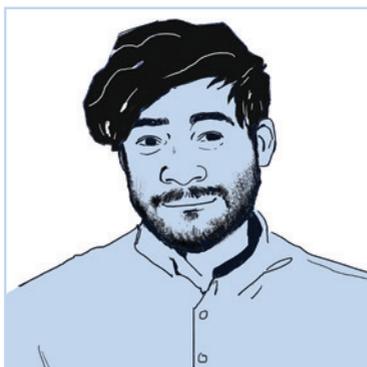
Yazmin Dominguez
Media Partnerships Coordinator

You may think you know Chicago’s independent media industry, but few people know its ins and outs quite like the *Reader*’s media partnerships coordinator Yazmin Dominguez—and she’s still just getting started! Raised in the Chicago suburbs, Yazmin graduated from Huntley High School before earning her bachelor’s degree in journalism with a minor in community service at DePaul University. She completed a reporting fellowship with City Bureau during her studies, and she joined the *Reader* shortly after graduating in 2019. Since then, this Leo has flexed her natural leadership skills, working with co-publishers Tracy Baim and Karen Hawkins to establish the Chicago Independent Media Alliance (CIMA), which unites nearly 70 local outlets for revenue and editorial projects that bolster their mutual survival and ability to serve their communities in an ever-changing media landscape. The experience has led Yazmin to view the journalism profession through a new lens. “I believe American journalism is going through a transformation that will only be accelerated by a younger generation of journalists that truly recognize the harm media has caused on communities of color, understand media’s influence, and the civic responsibility that comes with working in the industry,” she says. Outside of the *Reader*, Yazmin’s side hustle is working as a general operations staffer for various production companies in the city. You might just find her scanning your ticket, handing you free merch, or yelling at you to stay 6 feet apart as a social distance ambassador if you attend any Drive-In events this summer.

@yazminemiliad



Sujay Kumar
Co-Editor in Chief



Born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Sujay Kumar moved to Chicago with his family in 1998, just in time for Michael Jordan to announce his second retirement. In the fourth grade he starred as the Prince of Morocco in the fifth grade’s production of *The Merchant of Venice*, but when he entered the University of Illinois he traded theatrical glory for the mighty pen, taking basic journalism courses while majoring in biochemistry. Despite Sujay’s talent for science, the fates steered him straight toward media after graduation. He earned his master’s in journalism at Columbia University and worked at the *Daily Beast* and then returned to the midwest to work for *Fusion*. Drawn to the *Reader*’s rich history of reporting, Sujay joined the team in 2018, and the next year he became co-editor in chief with Karen Hawkins. “I think we have a good thing,” he says, noting that their communication styles create a perfect balance. Most importantly, sharing EIC duties gives Sujay more time to focus on his love of editing longform stories. “People like me don’t usually get jobs like this, so I want to use my ‘big magazine editor’ power for good,” he says. *The Daily Planet* staff never really grasped that mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent and the more ostentatious Superman were the same guy, but at the *Reader* we get that some heroes do their best work beyond the spotlight.

@sujay721

**artist, writer,
performer?**

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR
CREATIVE PEOPLE

*Supportive, Affirming, and Goal-
Directed Psychotherapy and
Hypnotherapy for Adults*

MAX K. SHAPEY, LCSW
Located in Downtown Evanston

847-877-1940

www.maxshapey.com
maxshapey@aol.com

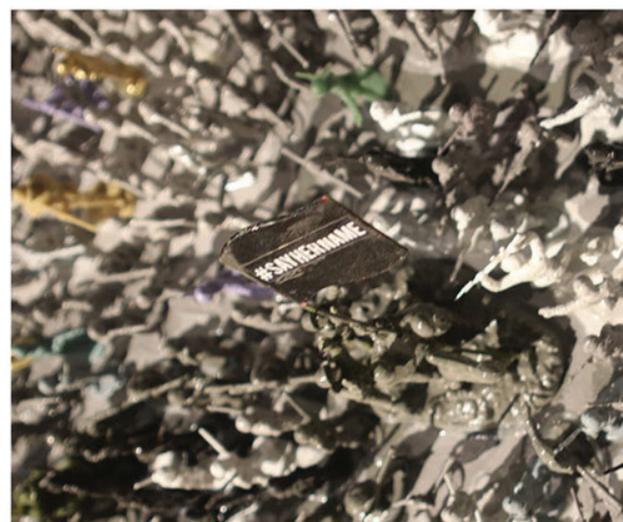
Blue Cross Blue Shield Preferred Provider
Cigna Preferred Provider

**CHICAGO
TAKES 10**

An artistic tour of
Chicago’s performing arts
during the pandemic.

chicagotakes10.org





Left: *Say Her Name* by Roger Carter is a mixed media piece that utilizes army action figures to create a three-dimensional portrait of Breonna Taylor, who Kentucky police fatally shot in her apartment in 2020. Getting close to the piece, visitors can see that the toys are holding up a flag that says, “#SAYHERNAME.”

Right: Multidisciplinary artist Paul Branton served as one of five jurors who helped select 85 works of art out of the hundreds submitted this year; first-time Black Creativity artist Lexus Giles has sculptures in this year's exhibition. “It was affirmation to me just because this is something that I've wanted since I was a kid,” she says.  ARIONNE

NETTLES

VIS ART

Black creatives never stopped creating

This year's Black Creativity is a testament to the artists and program leaders who didn't give up on shining a spotlight on Black art.

By **ARIONNE NETTLES**

At this year's “Black Creativity Juried Art Exhibition,” two works by artist Lexus Giles—titled *She's Healed* and *She is Me*—invite visitors into the gallery that houses much of the exhibition's sculptures.

“I'm a storyteller,” Giles says. “Those busts came from a poem [I wrote] called ‘Tribulations of a Black Woman,’ and there are actually three other pieces along with it that kind of broke down that poem.”

Giles, 26, is a high school teacher in Mississippi who learned about the Museum of Science and Industry exhibition from a former

professor, a testament to Black Creativity's reach, and really, its rarity as a large-scale exhibition of Black art.

“A lot of times, you go to some museums and you don't see a large, or even see some, representation of Black art. I feel like that's something that I wanted to see as a kid and I never got a chance,” Giles says. “That's important for both me as an artist seeing my work—because I do want to be in museums when I get older, I do want to be a household name in the art world—but I also think it's important for generations coming in now.”

A 2018 Artnet analysis showed that although the exhibitions focusing on Black artists has jumped to record-breaking numbers in recent years, Black art accounted for less than 3 percent of museums' acquisitions—in some museums, it was less than 1 percent.

“Juried Art Exhibition” has been an antidote to the industry's lack of Black representation for more than 50 years. As the longest-running exhibition of Black art in the U.S., it is part of a great legacy of celebrating achievement in science, technology, engineering, art, and medicine. The Black Creativity program started in 1970 as Black Esthetics—a collaboration between local artists and staff at *The Chicago Defender*. It was renamed in 1984 and expanded to include the sciences, adding more exhibits and educational programming.

It's this history that makes Black Creativity anything but ordinary, but that achievement is not easy. Even simply combing through all of the entries from artists like Giles who submitted their work from around the country can be

difficult to do, staff say.

To do this kind of mass selection, the museum relies on the invaluable help of jurors. Multidisciplinary artist Paul Branton is one of five jurors this year. He says he's always marveled at how remarkable the art is in this exhibition and how it shows the many parallels of Black communities around the world: no matter

BLACK CREATIVITY
Through July 4, Wed-Sun, 9:30 AM-5:30 PM, Museum of Science and Industry, 5700 S. Lake Shore, 773-684-1414, msichicago.org, \$21.95, \$12.95 for children 3-11, free for members, must reserve timed-entry tickets.

where an artist is from or where their heritage and inspiration takes them, it shows some of the same triumphs and frustrations of Black life.

“After years and years of being excluded on walls and major institutions, this is one of the



places where we can shine and we can show our excellence,” Branton says. “Way before I was a juror, way before I even participated in the show as an artist, this was one of the things that I looked forward to every year, to just marvel at what we can do, and how no matter what corner of the world or what corner of the country, there are things that we can connect with.”

This year’s exhibition covers hard-hitting topics such as recent police violence and the global pandemic, while also celebrating Black joy and Black love. But getting to this point was a challenge as museums in the city, including MSI, closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. The group of jurors whittled more than 600 submissions down to 85 final pieces—but they did this all virtually.

“I know how difficult and uncertain it was as an artist to continue to show your work to the public, in-person,” Branton says. “And I’m just happy to see that this many people never stopped creating. That passion that burns inside us, that drives us to create things, to paint things, to sculpt things, to document—it was still there. And this exhibit, it’s a testament to that.”

The “Juried” space may look as stunning as ever, but logistically, lining the gallery walls this year was a great feat. Normally, Black Creativity kicks off on Martin Luther King Day in January, where families swarm to the museum for Family Day. Opening days of the past generally included a packed house for “Juried” and interactive activities in its Innovation Studio among other programming and opportunities.

But this opening day, of course, was different, and the museum wasn’t sure when it could even open. Not knowing the timing of Black Creativity threw a wrench into a usually well-oiled process, and it took the work of all departments to work through those challenges.

“Knowing that we weren’t sure when we’re going to reopen, we had pushed the date for setting up the exhibit and opening,” says Manny Juarez, director of science and integrated strategies. “And so, when we finally found a time where we felt comfortable, then we accelerated that process and of course, everything had to change.”

Multiple calls for art went out to combat a less-than-desirable initial response, the artists whose work was chosen had to set up specific times to drop off their pieces, and overall, programming had to change and be refigured into ideas that could be rolled out slowly.

In January and February, virtual programs

took the place of what would have occurred in-person. In April, the “Juried Art Exhibition” and the Innovator Gallery—the gallery that celebrates Black innovators—opened separately plus a new art and activism exhibit opened that invited students to come in and contribute to two murals.

Although Martin Luther King Day has passed, Black Creativity will have the opportunity to bring families back for another holiday. This year, Family Day will be held on Juneteenth, June 19, with programming that further reinforces the idea of art and activism. One of this year’s honored innovators, J. Ivy, wrote a poem for the event, and visitors can share an artistic expression of what those words mean to them.

And, the show will be available until July 4, totaling a much longer run than its normal length of less than two months. Because MSI is able to extend the run of the show, it hopes that even though there will be fewer people visiting at a time, more people overall will get to experience it. With all the many changes, Juarez says the past year of planning for Black Creativity has been a learning experience.

“Next year, hopefully things will be better,” Juarez says. “But I think there’ll be a lot of changes that will be for good, that this horrible year has helped us sort of develop and be nimble and flexible, I think for the better.”

And the lessons learned extend far beyond the logistics of creating a show. During a time that has been filled with stress and struggle for so many, it also is a reminder of just how to have grace for one another.

“We like to say we approached [the process] with a lot of grace, because some things didn’t happen as quickly as we would have hoped, and sometimes answers don’t get to someone as quickly as we hoped,” Juarez says. “But . . . at the end of the day, something like this is present, and we’re standing here in front of and in the middle of a really terrific show. And the show almost didn’t happen.”

But Black Creativity *did* happen—and is continuing to happen.

“I’m proud of every time I walk into this space, there’s a sense of pride in what Black creatives continue to do,” says Branton, artist and juror. “There’s a sense of pride in when you look back in history, and you talk about five decades’ worth of doing this, that somewhere in a small paragraph in a corner of a history book, that my name is in there somewhere.” 

 @ArionneNettles

**THE ANTI-
RACIST
WRITING
WORKSHOP
HOW TO DECOLONIZE
THE CREATIVE
CLASSROOM
FELICIA ROSE CHAVEZ**

LIT

Class is in session with *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop*

Felicia Rose Chavez's book challenges how educational institutions support people of color—and provides a blueprint to be better.

By **DARSHITA JAIN**

“How do we define ‘professional?’” It was the warm-up question for a social justice workshop I am currently a part of. The answers ranged from clothing to conversation to language used in a workplace or to be eligible to enter a workplace. Most of us, people of color, talked about code-switching. Someone initiated a conversation about tattoos on Black men. I talked about needing to tame my hair when I was a child. Of course institutions came up—most of us grew up not knowing what happens behind institutional doors. We were told authority was and is to be respected, not questioned. We were raised to be a model minority, understand and adjust according to the system you want to walk into. Work harder than most other people; speak only when spoken to.

In her book *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop: How to Decolonize the Creative Classroom* (Haymarket Books), educator and poet Felicia Rose Chavez zooms in on the culture inside writing degree classrooms and her personal experiences “surviving” the institution. She draws critique from her time at schools, particularly the Iowa Writing MFA. In the introduction she says, “The implicit imperative for people of color in MFA programs is to write but not to exercise voice.” When the culture is to sit silently while others critique your writing, she dares to ask, “Who does this pedagogy actually serve?” and “Why do people of color need to be protected from it?” Not represented, not included—protected.

2020 was nothing if not a year of reckoning. In the last year, when most educational institutions spent time reckoning with harm

being done inside their systems, most of them looked to representation as an answer, representation as a way to draw more people of color in. Only, it was representation without systems of support. What are these systems of support? How does one build them?

Part memoir, part syllabus, mostly intervention, Chavez's *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop* advocates for dismantling by creating parallelly. Chavez is an award-winning educator with an MFA in creative nonfiction from the University of Iowa. Last year, she also coedited *The BreakBeat Poets Volume 4: LatiNEXT* with Willie Perdomo and José Olivarez. Chavez's teaching career began in Chicago, where she served as program director at Young Chicago Authors and founded GirlSpeak, a feminist webzine for high school students. Originally from Albuquerque, she currently serves as the creativity and innovation scholar-in-residence at Colorado College.

In the preface, Chavez invokes June Jordan's Poetry for the People, a collective at UC Berkeley, designed to understand poetry and power simultaneously, a blueprint with step-by-step instructions on how to build community through classrooms. Jordan believed in confronting politics through the personal—in her classroom, students were encouraged to take from their own lived experiences to create emotionally impactful work and take up space in a society that denies them that. Poems were not only villanelles and sonnets, they were also a response to the murder of a fellow Chinese immigrant whose murderers walked free; also a response to a mother who was suddenly illiterate in this country where

ARTS & CULTURE

she spoke three languages but no English.

Following in Jordan's footsteps, Chavez's experimental memoir is a step-by-step guide of how to decenter whiteness in pedagogy. She is advocating for a pedagogy of deep listening and unlearning white-centric definitions of craft. The book outlines concrete and accessible steps to do that. "People of color need a collaborative artistic community to which they belong and feel safe; they need it but don't always know how to ask for it and are often unaware that alternatives exist."

Spanning from initial course planning to final critique criteria, Chavez makes it clear that what works for white students to feel safe to pick up a pen and write is not what works for students of color. With triggered questions and check-ins, she is examining how we build a space to create, intentionally for writers for color. In a stunning prep chapter, she asks professors to stop using the word "master" in syllabi to not conflate master with "expert," especially to people whose histories include slavery, colonialism, and complete erasure of language and eradication of self and culture at the hands of whiteness.

For a system set in stone for centuries now, it is hard to fathom how one changes it. But Chavez speaks out clear and loud: It is not that hard, if you want to do it. Build a syllabi together with multicultural and multilingual texts. Build a vocabulary for aesthetic preference for students, flattening the hierarchy in the classroom. Collectively define craft concepts. Are classes respecting context? What gets called craft and what doesn't? What invites a student to choose a class? What do they eventually end up writing about and what does it do to their body, if voices of color are valued for their trauma but not for their voices? How do you teach a person to feel their body? How do you teach a person to hold space, and give them agency to also take up space?

At the end of the day, the idea is to build a system where people matter more than the standards. *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop* invites a conversation instead of posturing diversity. Chavez talks about mentorships that are about love and care. The book asks the literary canon to reevaluate who we value, what we aspire to be, what we prize in our faculties. It implicates all of us, triggers all our conditioning. I find myself asking, *What validation am I looking for and why? Didn't I also spend most of my life trying to be the smartest person in the room? What would have emerged, if I was able to stop contorting myself to fit*

the institution? Who would I be? What kind of writing would I be doing, if my classes worked on dismantling my ego and I didn't have a zero sum game idea of what progress can be?

In 2020, the Poetry Foundation had to reckon with its history with systemic racism. The staff made textbook statements about "recognizing that there is much work to be done" and that they are committed to "engaging in this work," while acknowledging that "real change takes time and dedication." The Poetry Foundation hasn't initiated a conversation about reallocating its \$257 million endowment fund. Even as the Poetry Foundation and MFA programs have implemented community engagement initiatives and brought in more poets of color, the work has more or less been optics-oriented rather than meaningful. It's a familiar story in academic and literary institutions across the city. While it takes time to change from the ground up, institutions are choosing to put faces up in the name of representation while the leadership and institutional values remain the same.

Chavez ends the book with a letter. She says there is a police van outside her house. She outlines how her husband took photos of the van and posted on their social media. How her son wanted to know if the police could do anything if they did nothing wrong. Throughout the book, while Chavez outlines steps and community building, there is a parallel reality going on. She bares her life while she asks her students to as well, dismantling hierarchy. There is devastating racism in this country. People of color do these things everyday to protect themselves. There is always fear. Always risk. "What do our bodies do with all that we don't say? Men dead, endless assault by white supremacy? Do we bow our heads, swallow our scream? What we know and don't allow ourselves to feel." Shouldn't writing workshops be spaces to hold that? At their most authentic, life outside the classroom should guide what emerges in them.

In an ideal world, *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop* would be read out loud, distributed in classrooms, passed between teachers. I visualise students emerging with full voices and clear demands for what they want their institutions to be. And writing authentically would not be labeled "brave" or "courageous" or come with risks of being labeled "radical" or "aggressively activist," but would be encouraged as the norm. **✍**

 @djain3



Store
Shop the Reader

chicagoreader.com/store



SPECIAL GUEST

UIC PROF. DR. JENNIFER BRIER
on 40 years of HIV+ representations in TV/Film

CHICAGO QUEER & NOW

The Podcast Love-Child of Chicago Reader and Windy City Times

with support from our sponsor **SHURE**
SOUND EXTRAORDINARY

Subscribe & Listen at chicagoreader.com/cqn



Don't miss an issue

Get the Next 12 Weeks of the **Chicago Reader** Delivered to Your Home

chicagoreader.com/support



2019 Chicago Inclusive Dance Festival  COURTESY
MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

ACCESSIBILITY

A base of support

Chicago Inclusive Dance Festival brings richness and depth to dance and life.

By **IRENE HSIAO**

“I don’t think there’s much difference between dance and everyday movement except for intent,” says dancer Robby Lee Williams. “Are you feeling out some rhythm, some music in your head? Or adding different qualities if you have an emotion?” A conversation with Sarah Najera, artistic director of Oak Park integrated dance company MOMENTA, sparked his recent exploration. “We were talking about how putting your pants on could be a dance movement. For example, you’re standing up straight, you need to grab your pants off the floor and kick one leg through. If you’re standing you usually kick straight down. But you have a lot of options: you could kick at a low angle, high, out to the side. The movements translate; it just depends on what you want to do with them. I was like, ‘Oh yeah! That could extend to everything else.’”

Williams was in rehabilitation from an injury when he first attended the Chicago Inclusive Dance Festival in 2019. “I’m a gunshot wound survivor,” he says. A performer with Tango 21 Dance Theater, Williams was paired with a physical therapist at the Shirley

Ryan AbilityLab who had been a professional dancer. “We started looking around for what was available as far as integrated dance goes.” Upon learning of the CIDF, he attended with the entire Argentine tango troupe. Now also a dancer with MOMENTA, Williams returns to the CIDF to lead a workshop that combines poetry and adaptive movement to translate everyday movements into dance and allow participants of all abilities to move together.

Translation is a core principle of the Chicago Inclusive Dance Festival. Founder and curator Deborah Goodman says, “We try to find and use terms to allow diverse bodies to take direction. Everybody can locomote across a stage in one way or another. Instead of saying I want you to feel your feet, I might say, I want you to feel your base of support. Everybody is sitting on a base of support. And all of dance is about a shift of weight. So when you’re shifting from a base of support, everybody can dance.”

Goodman, who danced with MOMENTA and coteaches inclusive Everybody Can Dance workshops with dancer Kris Lenzo, was tapped to begin the CIDF in 2018, shortly

after meeting Sarah Furnish, artistic director of Iowa-based Infinity Dance Company at the Midwest Convening of Physically Integrated Dance. The Midwest Convening was created by founding teaching artist of the Parkinson’s Project at Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and Loyola dance lecturer Sarah Cullen Fuller. Furnish “cooked up the idea that there had to be a festival, some way we could bring more disabled people and more diverse bodies to the field of dance,” recalls Goodman. The two brainstormed long-distance, and, when Goodman sought advice on how to proceed from MOMENTA, founder and then-artistic director Stephanie Clemens offered that MOMENTA could cosponsor the event, along with Access Living and the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, as a sister festival to CounterBalance, an annual concert of integrated dance.

“The idea of the festival was to bring more diverse bodies into dance, to highlight and encourage the training that is happening in Chicago, and to be a networking opportunity for people who are doing this work to connect and spark new ideas,” says Goodman. Crucial to this work is the power of dance to inspire. During the first festival, MOMENTA dancer and CounterBalance founder Ginger Lane led a choreography workshop for anyone who wanted to join, to create a new work performed in the fall concert called *Community Piece*. An annual showcase of films and performances also highlights possibility and creativity. “At the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities, they work all the time with people with disabilities. They’re trying to help them survive. They had never seen disabled bodies in excellence. We were showing dance videos all day, including one from [Portland, Oregon multidisciplinary performance company] Wobbly Dance. They said, ‘We’re just trying to get people up the steps, and here you have them climbing walls!’”

Now in its third year (after a pandemic hiatus in 2020), the CIDF has expanded to a three-day series of remote workshops and film screenings. The program features a keynote address on sustainable choreography by dance artist and UIC Department of Disability and Human Development graduate student Maggie Bridger; movement workshops by Williams, vogue performer Willyum LaBeija, and DanceAbility instructors Sydney Erlich and Stefanie Piatkewicz; and an autism movement

workshop for children led by AccepDance founder Susan Ojala Myers.

“Robby Lee Williams and Willyum LaBeija won awards with [disability arts and culture network] Bodies of Work and 3Arts,” says Goodman. “They were being trained to teach, and they had to present. Bodies of Work assumed they’d present at the festival. I was like, ‘I don’t have it in me to do it,’ and they were like, ‘No, you have to.’ So now it’s something the community needs.”

CHICAGO INCLUSIVE DANCE FESTIVAL
4/30-5/2, bodiesofworkchicago.home.blog/2021-chicago-inclusive-dance-festival. **FREE**

Williams describes an approach to teaching shaped both by the techniques he has learned as a dancer and collaborative experiences in theater, improv, and poetry. “I love improv because there’s a focus on verbal and nonverbal communication in being able to see, feel, and understand where your scene partners are going. Going into tango felt really natural because a lot of it is feeling your partner and responding to them. At Tango 21, the philosophy is that dance is a conversation. You’re not just moving on your own. It’s not about you, it’s about the dance. At MOMENTA, I lucked out. My first Everybody Can Dance workshop with them was a couple weeks after the CIDF. I was paired with [MOMENTA dancer] Julia Cox, and the improvisational exercises, mirroring, partnering, just worked with her. I think there’s something added when you’re able to move, feel, understand whoever you’re dancing with. I want to continue sharing that. I want everybody to be able to dance.”

LaBeija will teach a vogue workshop focusing on hand performance. “The art of voguing is all about confidence, self-expression, and telling a story,” he says. “Though vogue performance is normally a competitive style of dance, I’ve focused on infusing my aesthetic with other genres of dance—including contemporary and color guard—while keeping true to its history.”

“One stereotype that [disabled dancer and choreographer] Alice Sheppard has talked about breaking is that disabled bodies are always in crisis. Disabled bodies are not always in crisis,” says Goodman. “Humans have so much richness and depth, and dance is the perfect vehicle for describing the human condition.” 

 @IreneCHsiao



Heather Chrisler TYLER CORE

SEASON OF RENEWAL

Get busy living

Actor-playwright-illustrator: Heather Chrisler bounces back as a triple threat.

By CATEY SULLIVAN

In March 2020, playwright Heather Chrisler was holding auditions for the world premiere of her first play: an adaptation of *Little Women* at First Folio Theatre, where she's an artistic associate. Actor Heather Chrisler, meanwhile, was in tech for *The Last Match* at Writers Theatre. In both Oak Brook and Glencoe, she recalls, everyone had a gut sense of what was coming and nobody wanted it to be real.

"The day after Broadway shut down [March 12], the writing was on the wall, but we were

still in rehearsal, pretending to be normal, behaving like there'd be an opening night," Chrisler says. "We all knew though. We knew there was this tsunami coming for us. We knew there was no way we could safely continue."

The tsunami arrived. After both *Little Women* and *The Last Match* were canceled due to COVID, Chrisler wouldn't work for a year.

Now, she's watching the waters wane. In March, Chrisler's illustrated children's podcast *Don't Stop for Monkeys* went live with its first chapter in the tale of a mouse named

Thimble and his quest to find his pet-mouse beloved. Starting this week, Writers will stream *The Last Match*, with all but one of the original cast members (Ryan Hallahan has taken over for Luigi Sottile). And on May 21, Theatre Cedar Rapids will stage Chrisler's *Little Women*, *al fresco*.

All are a welcome departure from the toxic triumvirate of anger, depression, and guilt that Chrisler speaks of, with the caveat that "My grief wasn't special. It happened to everyone."

"A lot of my relatives were unfazed by the pandemic. Their industries continued. I became the person in the family whose life had been destroyed. So that was—it was hard," she says.

"Over the summer, I didn't want to engage with theater at all—and theater is my entire life," Chrisler says. "I was asked to participate in some Zoom plays, but I couldn't do it. And I couldn't watch anyone's streaming plays. It was just too painful—seeing this thing that was meant to be live and bright and in person—to see it on only a screen? I love to work on film, but I think it's a totally different art form.

"A live audience creates this electric current. You feed from it. It's a collective effort. Putting theater on film in some ways takes away that—the most important ingredient. The concept of filming theater was devastating to me. There were times I thought I didn't want to be an artist anymore. I was just that brokenhearted—all of us were," she says.

THE LAST MATCH AND DON'T STOP FOR MONKEYS

The Last Match, 4/28-5/30, available streaming with purchase anytime, writerstheatre.org, \$40 "solo" ticket, \$65 "duo," \$85 "trio," and \$100 "ensemble" (4+).

Don't Stop for Monkeys, dontstopformonkeys.weebly.com

"There was this guilt too, because I knew—I know—so many people had things so much worse than I did. For 11 months I lived in pajamas. And then, this March, all of a sudden, things got busy."

First among the "things" that got busy: Chrisler herself. Initially, she found solace in Thimble. The tale of the tiny bewhiskered hero is a study in grief and resilience, voiced by some of Chicago's finest actors and accompa-

nied by Chrisler's own marvelously whimsical (but decidedly not twee) drawings. (One of those performers is Chrisler's husband Mark Chrisler, a playwright and creator of the popular podcast *The Constant*.)

The love story of Chickpea and Thimble began backstage at Writers, after director Keira Fromm restarted *The Last Match* rehearsals in February. When the cast reunited, the atmosphere was a world away from where it left off some 11 months earlier.

"Our last rehearsal before canceling, we were in tech," Chrisler says. "We were told the League [of Chicago Theatres] would be issuing some sort of official guidance soon, and it would likely mean the opening was off. The question we had as a cast was did we want to keep working until that announcement or did we want to go home right then.

"There was a split in the room—some were like, 'If we can work another four hours, we need to keep working,' some were, 'No. We need to go get groceries and be with our families,'" Chrisler recalls.

The latter decision prevailed. Chrisler was in the grocery store parking lot when First Folio called. "I kept thinking all day that I didn't want *Little Women* to close. But I understood that if it did close, there were way bigger things to worry about in society. People dying, public safety is always going to be more important than opening a show," she says.

But understanding the grim context of the cancellations didn't alleviate the sorrow or the anger. In March 2020, First Folio's production of *Little Women* had been in development for two years. "It was an absolutely devastating day," she says.

It was the first of many. Yet Chrisler had survived intense, incomprehensible loss before COVID-19. In 2002, Chrisler's sister, 15, died by suicide.

"My work in general, it's marked by loss," she says. "I would give up all the joy of being an artist—I'd give it up in a second—to have my sister back. But her death in so many ways made me the artist I am. It was a cornerstone in my life.

"I started taking theater classes because I really just needed to be someone else. If I could take a character and share their circumstances, then what was happening to me would go away. At least for a little while," she says.

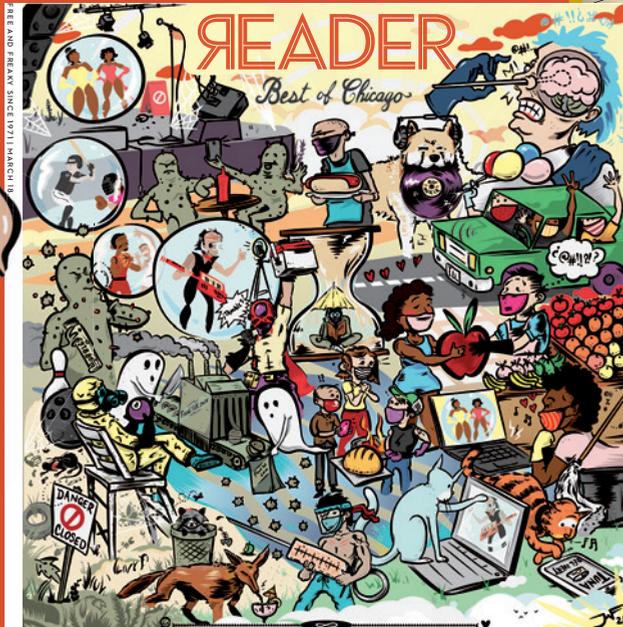
When *The Last Match* rehearsals resumed in February, social distancing meant Chrisler had a cavernous dressing room to herself. That's where Thimble and Chickpea began.

"I drew Thimble and wrote this little story



2020 was a WILD RIDE...

... beautifully captured in this
12x12.5” poster
by Jason Frederick
celebrating 2020 (and 2020 being over).



This artwork originally appeared on the cover of our March 18, 2021 Best of Chicago issue.

order yours now at
chicagoreader.com/store



THEATER



Thimble from *Don't Stop for Monkeys* © HEATHER CHRISLER

continued from 25

as something to help me through my sadness,” she says. “A lot of the animals in it talk about wanting to escape their cages. They have this feeling of being taken from the world they’re supposed to be living in. It’s a sweet, calm, gentle story but I can’t divorce it from the way I felt in the early days of the pandemic.”

For Chrisler, the later days of the pandemic brought mixed emotions.

“For our first two weeks back at *Last Match*, it snowed and snowed and snowed. You looked outside and it was pure white out. Being at Writers—all those floor-to-ceiling windows—it was like living in this little glass oasis in the middle of a storm.

“There was a profound sense of isolation inside too. We were together, but we couldn’t hug each other. We wore masks. But it was also incredibly joyful because we were all so grateful to be in the room again,” Chrisler says.

“I think we’ve all gone through collective trauma at this point,” she adds. “But we’ve also had healing and growth—and those are all themes that run through *The Last Match* and *Little Women* and the podcast.”

For director Fromm, returning to rehearsal meant that Anna Ziegler’s drama about tennis professionals took on additional meaning. Chrisler plays Galina in the production, girlfriend to an up-and-coming player stirring

things up on the pro circuit.

“For a long time, I’ve thought of *The Last Match* primarily as a sports drama about the nature of ambition, and the lengths we go to feel relevant,” Fromm says. “Ever since the pandemic hit and theaters have been shut down, I’ve been especially focused on the theme of reckoning within the play, and how we address major shifts in our lives.

“Do we let them derail and destroy us, or do we use them as growth opportunities? At the heart of *The Last Match* is a reminder that we’re only alive for precious little time and must be thoughtful in how we spend that time.”

After *The Last Match* wraps, Chrisler will turn back to *Little Women*.

“I write out of a place of, I guess, expressing my own pain and trauma. But in a nice way. With mice. And Louisa May Alcott is my hero. I, like Jo in *Little Women*, am someone who really wanted to be an artist, but I didn’t even understand what that meant until my sister died.

“Ironically, I’m now finding that *The Last Match* has a lot of the same themes that *Little Women* does. It’s about realizing what life is, what you give up for ambition, and what you gain by reaching for your ambition.” **✎**

[@CateySullivan](https://twitter.com/CateySullivan)



NOW PLAYING

RR *Downstream to Kinshasa*

During the Six Day War, Rwandan and Ugandan armies clashed in the Congolese city of Kisangani, leaving behind a large population of disabled citizens, suffering from severed limbs. The government promised a \$1 billion cash settlement to the victims which never materialized. Twenty years later, they set sail to the capital, Kinshasa, to demand recompense. *Downstream to Kinshasa* is eerily similar to the recent powerful documentary *Crip Camp*, outlining the maddening lengths to which a disabled community must go in order to achieve basic human rights, while humanizing the activists beyond their disability and struggle.

Dieudo Hamadi weaves a story of a mighty band of rebels that is at times both heart-wrenching and joyful, capturing incredibly striking footage with a handheld camera. Mama Kashinde, a dazzlingly engaging disabled rights activist, theater director, and quadriplegic, serves as both the moral compass and the conviction for the group when the going gets tough. The film cuts between the ensemble traveling to Kinshasa to make their plea, and a theater performance that explores the harsh reality of the war and the aftermath. During one scene, actor Sola plays a devastated woman in shock in a hospital bed and the doctor tells her, "Legs are like teeth, if you pull them, they grow back," introducing her to prosthetics. Later we see Sola, the young woman and brave activist, facing down the government with fire in her eyes. This film is for anyone who was somehow able to float through the cloud of grief to arrive a little closer to hope. —**SHERI FLANDERS** 90 min. [Through 5/27, Gene Siskel Film Center From Your Sofa](#)

RR *Limbo*

In the engaging dramedy *Limbo*, writer-director Ben Sharrock follows the daily monotony of a group of refugees awaiting the processing of their cases on a remote Scottish island. The primary focus is on Syrian

refugee Omar (Amir El-Masry), who struggles between the weight of his desire to fulfill his family's increasingly conflicting wishes and the goal of building a new future for himself. Providing momentary respite from the tension of his thoughts are a cast of characters from a range of countries, all finding themselves stuck in a temporary holding facility on the island.

Both engaging amongst themselves, and with the odd local townsfolk and inane refugee center staff, the personalities are quirky without being depersonalizing, as the characters' individual desires for new futures and to escape their pasts remains poignant throughout. Sharrock and cinematographer Nick Cooke utilize the broad and murky Scottish landscape to create lingering shots and a sense of a glacial creep of time as our characters wait to hear their fates. Beautifully shot and thoughtfully paced, *Limbo* accomplishes the rare feat of finding the subtle balance between the comedy and tragedy of being stuck in place as the world moves forward. —**ADAM MULLINS-KHATIB** 104 min. [AMC Theatres](#)

RR *Stowaway*

Joe Penna's *Stowaway* is set in a near-future in which manned missions to Mars are a regular, but hardly risk-free, occurrence. On the latest three-person mission to Mars, ship's commander Marina (Toni Collette), medical researcher Zoe (Anna Kendrick), and biologist David (Daniel Dae Kim) discover a titular stowaway Michael (Shamier Anderson), a space company engineer who is injured and trapped on board the ship during its launch. A long-term problem, the ship only being stocked for a crew of three, becomes a more immediate one as Michael's accident prior to launch has damaged the life support system, causing their oxygen supplies to rapidly deteriorate. The crew is faced with a grim decision in order to save their mission and hopefully themselves.

Penna's film is a relatively simple conceit, benefitting from the inherent tension of the crew trapped in an ines-

Together Together

capable environment with dwindling good options. The performances are passable, adequately portraying the swings between panic and reason that their intractable situation brings. Impressively, Penna takes the time to linger in some of the quieter moments of reflection, taking a few sidetracks off the standard space disaster path of swiftly moving from alarm-blasting crisis to crisis. —**ADAM MULLINS-KHATIB** 116 min. [Netflix](#)

RR *Tell Me When*

Tell Me When (original title *Dime Cuando Tú*) takes the familiar romantic comedy to new locations. The film focuses on Will (Jesús Zavala), a workaholic who's let life pass him by, as he embarks on an adventure to discover his roots. After his grandfather's passing, Will leaves his monotonous life in Los Angeles behind, where he was raised by his grandparents after his parents' death, and takes off for Mexico City. Once there, Will fumbles through his self-discovery against an incredibly picturesque backdrop featuring some of the city's most iconic sites before eventually falling for his captivating friend Dani (Ximena Romo). The chemistry is admittedly lacking, but it also rings true. Will is, after all, only just breaking free from a work-induced arrested development. To expect him to be the ultimate dashing lead seems foolish, no? Give it a go for a charming and clumsy look at loss, love, and life. —**BECCA JAMES** 95 min. [Netflix](#)

RR *Things Heard & Seen*

Things Heard & Seen plays like a mashup of *The Amityville Horror* and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, revealing a man who's just as haunted as the house he inhabits. Following George (James Norton) and Catherine's (Amanda Seyfried) move from 1980s Manhattan to a remote town upstate, it doesn't take long before Catherine senses a sinister darkness lurking in their old farmhouse but also in her marriage. Left alone to tend to the house and their daughter, she worries it's just the isolation talking until the voices become too loud to ignore. Equally as frightening is the uptick in her husband's shady behavior as he attempts to outrun his self-created demons. Eventually, the real demons get to him as well, and all hell breaks loose in this eerie period piece that makes a late-in-the-game pivot toward the rewards of sisterhood, leaving viewers wondering what, if any, bonds are worth blood. —**BECCA JAMES** 119 min. [Netflix](#)

RR *Together Together*

Nikole Beckwith's indie dramedy is a tender rumination of loneliness with a tour de force of comedic talent. *Together Together* follows Matt (Ed Helms), a single man in his 40s who wants to raise a child and move on to the next chapter of his life. When he hires Anna (Patti Harrison) to be his surrogate, they have to adjust to a new normal of relationships and learn more about themselves in the process. Most known for comedy and smaller bit roles in film and television, Harrison is magnetic as a leading lady—especially when she's given the chance to channel a more dramatic side of herself. While Harrison and Helms's charming rapport is at the center of *Together Together*, the film comes alive with its comedic supporting cast, including Julio Torres, Tig Notaro, and Fred Melamed. *Together Together* is incredibly grounded and heartfelt from start to finish, and weaves through the many complications of life and friendship without ever relying on convention or over-sentimentality. —**CODY CORRALL** 90 min. [AMC Theatres, Landmark Century Centre Cinema, Showplace ICON](#)

RR *We Broke Up*

Most breakups suck, but breaking up right before your sister's wedding? That's its own circle of hell. Written and directed by Jeff Rosenberg (and cowritten by Laura Jacqmin), *We Broke Up* centers on the end of Lori (Aya Cash) and Doug's (an exceptionally charming William Jackson Harper) decade-long relationship after a surprise proposal catches Lori off guard. But with Lori's sister's wedding around the corner, they pretend to still be a couple so as to not ruin her big day. *We Broke Up* delicately examines the inner workings of a relationship seemingly at its end, as well as the toll that keeping up appearances has on everyone involved. The film is simple in its conceit and execution, so simple, in fact, that it often washes over who exactly Lori is as a character and what she really wants. But *We Broke Up* is a breeze to watch thanks to its fully committed leads, who go wherever the story takes them. If nothing else, *We Broke Up* is solid evidence that Jackson Harper deserves a spot in the modern rom-com rotation. —**CODY CORRALL** 80 min. [Apple TV, Vudu](#)

MUSIC

Spirit Tamer represents a sea change from the 2017 Mia Joy EP *Gemini Moon*. "I'm projecting the truest form of myself."

ASH DYE FOR CHICAGO READER



Mia Joy is singing the dream

Three years of careful incubation have turned her debut album, *Spirit Tamer*, into a place of solace that welcomes anyone who listens.

By LEOR GALIL

As a teenager in Oak Park, Mia Joy Rocha visited the library to learn about music. “I didn’t have the Internet growing up, so I had to go to the library all the time to rent CDs to rip,” she says. Throughout the mid-2000s, Rocha would check out 20 CDs at a time, immersing herself in genres that had emerged long before she was born—Krautrock via Neu!, for example, and ambient in the works of Brian Eno. She studied Björk looking for ways to help her own voice reach the same transcendent extremes.

“Once I discovered Cocteau Twins, it was over,” Rocha says. Elizabeth Fraser’s liquid, unearthly voice struck her square in the heart. “I was like, ‘This feels like home. This feels like me.’ I didn’t know what the name of that genre was, I didn’t know what she was doing, but everything clicked. I knew that that was something that was going to be important to me forever.”

Rocha, 30, has since absorbed the dream-

pop mystique of her favorite teenage discovery into her own music. In 2012 she started tinkering with songs in her bedroom, and in 2016 she put together a five-piece band to perform and record under the name Mia Joy. Rocha’s early material is airy and ethereal, with barely any structure, but once she had a group, they helped adapt what she wrote to a more conventional rock setting. Mia Joy’s debut, the November 2017 EP *Gemini Moon*, contains moments of serene enchantment in its exquisitely textured vocal performances, but the overall feel is garage-inflected psychedelic rock.

Since then Rocha has only released eight more songs, all of them solo, largely because she’s been trying to figure out how to bring the sound in her head into the real world—she wasn’t sure how to do it, except that it probably wouldn’t involve a conventional rock setting. But after the breakup of a relationship, the dissolution of her band, and roughly three years of writing, recording, and finessing new material, Rocha has emerged with her first

full-length album, *Spirit Tamer*, which does what she’d wanted to all along—its soothing, atmospheric songs explore the spaces between indie pop and ambient soundscapes.

Powerhouse Brooklyn indie label Fire Talk announced in January that it had signed Rocha, making her the fifth Chicago act on its present roster (alongside Fran, Deeper, Dehd, and Accessory, a solo project of Dehd guitarist Jason Balla). The label has been on a terrific run lately, thanks in part to Chicago bands—Deeper’s *Auto-Pain* and Dehd’s *Flower of Devotion* were among 2020’s most celebrated indie-rock records.

Spirit Tamer comes out next Friday, and I could tell it would extend Fire Talk’s hot streak as soon as the first single, “Haha,” came out in January. Rocha’s vocals coast atop a watery synth and light, trembling guitars, radiating an inviting warmth. The song occupies a liminal space between sharpness and airiness, and the ambiguity Rocha brings to its mood—simultaneously sorrowful and romantic—increases its allure. I certainly fell for its gossamer grace, and I’ve been just as charmed by the rest of the LP.

“I think I’m projecting the truest form of myself,” Rocha says. “Even though these songs are three years old, and I think I sound even a little bit more out-there and ambient now, it’s nice to be heard in a more accurate lens.”

Rocha credits her love of music to her family—at least as far back as her paternal grandmother from Mexico, who died when she was little. “I was told that she used to sing with bands in bars, and she used to win contests around Monterrey—that she was very glamorous and loved to put on a show,” Rocha says. “Most of my memories of her are Selena based. She loved Selena, and she loved to hear me sing. I was singing Spanish—I didn’t know what I was singing.”

Her grandmother’s love of music touched everyone in the family in different ways. “The joke is that she was a beautiful singer, and it skipped a generation, ‘cause my dad is not. But it went to me,” Rocha says. Her father is a veteran guitarist on the city’s blues open-mike circuit—she says he was still gigging around town when the pandemic struck. Her older brother is a metalhead who introduced her to electronic music and alt-rock when she was a kid.

Rocha sang in the Chicago Children’s Choir for around three years, starting in fourth grade, but that was the extent of her formal training. When it came to learning how to

write and record, she was largely on her own. In summer 2011, her brother gave her a simple digital audio workstation for her PC, and she began playing around with sound effects and rudimentary recording techniques. “I was obsessed with Deerhunter at the time—I just loved how wet, reverby, super delayed, and spacey [their sound was]. I loved his play with words and composition,” Rocha says. “I was experimenting with formats like that, that weren’t necessarily traditional songs that had choruses and verses and bridges.”

The earliest songs on Rocha’s Soundcloud were posted eight years ago. Acoustic guitar shudders loudly through “L*U*C*I*D” and whispers with reverb on “Soliloquy.” On both songs, Rocha’s gentle vocals blend into the gauzy textures while providing an anchoring human presence. On some later demos, she started layering her voice with itself. “I wanted to combine my devotional choral background with my more avant-garde ambient contemporary taste,” she says. “I just wanted to be able to track multiple harmonies. I still kind of work that way, where I start with vocals and play around that.”

Rocha never attempted to study music, other than her time in the choir. For a brief time, she wanted to pursue music criticism, and about a decade ago she launched a blog to publish her album reviews (she declines to share its name). Her formal arts education consists largely of an associate’s degree in fine arts—specifically in ceramics—that she earned from Harold Washington College in 2017.

“I thought I wanted to be a painter, I thought I wanted to be a music critic, but it turns out I’m pretty good at ceramics,” Rocha says. “I love art—I think I need to be creating something or else I’ll go crazy. I kind of wanted to keep music as a passion and not something I was graded on.”

In 2014, Rocha moved into a Bridgeport coach house with five other people. The basement was occupied by Michael Mac, an audio engineer who played guitar in wild indie-pop group Oshwa. He and Rocha became friends, and he ended up lending his talents to the production of *Gemini Moon* and *Spirit Tamer*.

Mac had taken up recording out of necessity—his bands wanted to document their music, and nobody else involved had the will to learn (or the money to hire a professional). By the time he met Rocha, he was dedicated to it. “The only thing I wanted to do was just

continued from 29

make records,” Mac says. “So over the course of a year and a half, I just built up a decent-enough gear collection to where I would justifiably be able to record bands and have it not sound terrible.”

In 2015, Mac moved his operation into a former paint warehouse in the neighborhood, christening the new studio Pallet Sound. He’s since used it to record several beloved local indie acts, including singer-songwriter Tasha, ambitious pop oddballs the Curls, and of course Rocha. Though Mac had begun working with her when he lived in his home studio at the coach house, their collaboration on *Spirit Tamer* wouldn’t begin till a few years later.

“I would write things at home—create my own beats with my own drum machines, or make my own loops with my own effects, and then I would bounce it to Michael,” Rocha says. “The goal was always to try to keep it as much the same as possible, with the same kind of energy, but just with the better equipment he had.”

Mac and Rocha bonded over music—both what they were making and what they were listening to—in order to jump-start their friendship. “I definitely got to know her taste super well from living together,” Mac says. “Which I think was really valuable in making Mia’s record.”

Rocha enlisted her old roommate to record *Gemini Moon*, and when the time came for her to begin working on *Spirit Tamer*, she reached out to him again. “I’m such a private person,” Rocha says. “This record would not be possible if I hadn’t had such a close relationship with someone that I could work with so intimately, side-by-side, with every single texture and every single decision, and feel vulnerable to try things out in new ways.”

Rocha originally wanted to make *Spirit Tamer* an EP, but its length grew as she went. “This took about two years to record, partially because I worked two jobs and could barely afford to record it,” she says. “But Michael is such a gracious, close friend. He was showing me equity and grace, and going at my pace for what I could afford and what I could do. It got done because he wanted it to be out in the world, because he believed in the project.”

While Rocha wrapped up *Spirit Tamer* last year, she frequently sought advice from her roommate at the time, Greg Obis, who’d cofounded Born Yesterday Records, leads the postpunk band Stuck, and works as an engineer at Chicago Mastering Service. Obis

and Rocha had moved in together in 2019—according to Obis, both of them were looking for a quiet living arrangement. “During quarantine, I think we really connected,” he says. “Last spring was so weird. The quarantine was straining a lot of relationships, but I felt like it made us closer—I think we’re similarly very emotional and sensitive people, and so I think that caused us to come together a little bit more.”

“I would always go to him for industry questions, or I’d vent to him about industry stuff,” Rocha says. “He’s a good soundboard and just the kindest dude.”

“We did talk a lot of music-business stuff—like, trying to get my perspective on things from a record-label standpoint,” Obis says. “And with regards to shopping [the album] around, and touching base about Fire Talk when that started to come together.”

On January 9, 2019, Mia Joy opened a sold-out Deeper show at Sleeping Village, sharing the bill with the Hecks and Divino Niño. Deeper had assembled the night’s lineup, and bassist Drew McBride says the whole band were fans of *Gemini Moon*. Before that night, though, he’d never seen Rocha perform. “It was really beautiful and dreamy—it had really great space for the vocals to shine through,” he says. “People were constantly



MUSIC

Because *Spirit Tamer* took so long to finish, Mia Joy Rocha is already writing music that extends its evolution of her aesthetic. “I think I sound even a little bit more out-there and ambient now,” she says.

filling into the room, and her voice is very soft in the mix—I remember wishing people would quiet down a little more.”

Everyone in Deeper was impressed, and they shared their feelings with Fire Talk Records founder Trevor Peterson. “We’re always talking to Trevor about music that’s happening here,” McBride says. “It’s a pretty fluid relationship, talking to him about all sorts of bands that are coming up.”

Peterson lives in Brooklyn, but he grew up in Iowa and has a soft spot for the midwest. He launched Fire Talk in 2009, when he lived in Denver and played in a psych band called Woodsman. “Chicago would always be the spot where we would have the best show,” Peterson says. “I always felt the most connected to the music there. We would play at Ball Hall and DIY spots like that ten years ago, and would always have the best time.”

Through Ball Hall, Peterson met Drew Gibson, whose experimental band Baby Birds Don’t Drink Milk would release a few albums and an EP on Fire Talk beginning in 2010. Gibson introduced Peterson to prolific indie musician Jason Balla, who would eventually join the label’s roster with his old two-piece Earring. Balla in turn turned Peterson on to Deeper.

“What has always struck me about Chicago musicians—and the reason why I’ve signed so many through recommendations from other bands—is that it seems like there’s a certain level of support in Chicago that doesn’t exist in most scenes and cities throughout the United States,” Peterson says. “If you really take a look, Chicago bands champion each other in a way that I think is unique to that community. That is probably the biggest thing that’s rubbed off on me.”

Rocha is the first Fire Talk signee from Chicago that neither Peterson nor his label partner, Ruby Hoffman, has seen perform live. Rocha sent Fire Talk an early version of *Spirit Tamer* just before the pandemic, and they corresponded briefly at the time. In July 2020, once Fire Talk had rebuilt its COVID-wrecked

release schedule, Peterson reconnected with Rocha to talk about joining the roster. “What was really appealing about Mia is she made this very ethereal, beautiful record,” Peterson says. “Both Ruby and I love ambient music, and it toed that line, but we also are into psych music and folk music. The elements that Mia brings into her work embody all of those territories, and it sounds fresh.”

Rocha’s music feels very private, even though it’s been unambiguously public at least since the first Mia Joy shows in 2016. It still summons the sense of nourishing solitude that she learned to evoke while recording in her bedroom almost a decade ago. And for the past few years, she’s had the opportunity to share her perspective with young aspiring musicians.

In 2018, Mac’s friend Vivian McConnell (aka V.V. Lightbody) encouraged Rocha to join Intonation Music’s youth program as an instructor. “Personally and musically, she’s just such a gentle and sweet soul,” McConnell says. “The love pouring out of that human is so big and real. The first time I met her, I felt like she just has this really special energy.”

Intonation teachers work in pairs, and in summer 2018, Rocha became McConnell’s partner for the season’s programming. Rocha continues to work for Intonation, though of course the nature of its classes has changed due to COVID. “It’s the best job I’ve ever had,” she says. “I wouldn’t want to be paid doing anything else.”

“The kids just flocked to her and loved her,” McConnell says. “She was really fun. We had a lot of laughs, and she was a wonderful co-teacher.” McConnell says Rocha’s gentle presence disarmed the students and helped focus their attention, and she could be a source of comfort for anyone having a bad day.

Her music can do something similar. In the month or so I’ve been listening to *Spirit Tamer*, I’ve found myself returning to it to help me center myself or find a little solace during a stressful week. As it turns out, this is almost exactly how Rocha describes the effect she hopes her songs will have on people.

“Your favorite records are a piece of you—like a piece of home that you go to during a hard time, and it’s always there, and you always feel comforted in the same ways, and with time it builds new memories,” she says. “I would be so honored—so privileged—if anyone felt that way about my music.” 

 @imLeor

Find inspiration... and learn online!



Online group classes for all skill levels
are forming now. Sign up today at
oldtownschool.org

 **Old Town School
of Folk Music**

MUSIC AND DANCE
CLASSES FOR ALL AGES

PICK OF THE WEEK

A multigenerational trio reaffirms the aesthetic of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians



Mike Reed, Wadada Leo Smith, and Douglas R. Ewart © MICHAEL JACKSON

WADADA LEO SMITH, DOUGLAS R. EWART, AND MIKE REED, *SUN BEANS OF SHIMMERING LIGHT*

Astral Spirits

smithewartreed.bandcamp.com/album/sun-beans-of-shimmering-light

TRUMPETER WADADA LEO SMITH has made recordings over the past decade that celebrate uplifting movements, such as the Occupy protests and the civil rights struggle, and great jazz musicians, including Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis. At first glance *Sun Beans of Shimmering Light*, a six-year-old concert recording of a group that played just a handful of times between 2012 and 2015, appears more modest. But in fact, it synthesizes and embodies those two themes. During the 1960s, Smith was an early member of Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, an organization formed to bolster collective efforts by Black artists to promote creativity and enable survival in the face of hostile social and market forces. Five and a half decades later, the AACM remains a vital force in the city's musical landscape and a model for artistic self-sufficiency. The other two members of this trio, woodwind player Douglas Ewart and drummer Mike Reed, have both served in the organization, and their jointly composed music on this album exemplifies the ethic and style of the AACM. "Constellations and Conjunctional Spaces," named in part for Reed's concert venue, opens the record with sparse, confident gestures. Smith's trumpet switches between pure tones and distressed timbres, revealing the beauty of both; Ewart's bassoon and soprano saxophone evoke an air of ritual solemnity; and Reed's drumming emphasizes color over timekeeping. And in "Super Moon Rising," handheld percussion reminiscent of the "little instruments" most famously used by the Art Ensemble of Chicago connects the music to centuries of pre-jazz practice. But *Sun Beans of Shimmering Light* isn't just a re-creation of old ways of working; its music, by turns serene and intense, affirms their worth. —BILL MEYER

ÅRABROT, *NORWEGIAN GOTHIC*

Pelagic

arabrot.bandcamp.com

Norwegian noise-rock band Årabrot have undergone many personnel changes over their two-decade career, and front man, composer, and sole constant member Kjetil Nernes has brought forth a different phase in the group's sound with every one. In recent years, his main collaborator has been Swedish-Norwegian electronic producer and singer Karin Park; they're also a married couple, and live in an old church in Park's home village in Sweden that doubles as their studio (though they've also made several recordings at Electrical Audio, including 2011's *Solar Anus*, which won them a Spellemann Prize for best metal record). On the new *Norwegian Gothic*, Nernes and Park (who play guitar and keyboards, respectively) are joined by multi-instrumentalist Lars Horntveth (Jaga Jazzist), cellist Jo Quail, drummer Tomas Järmyr (Motorpsycho, Zu), percussionist Anders Møller (Turbo-negro, Ulver), and bassist Massimo Pupillo (Zu). As the title suggests, the album is less noise-rock than romantic goth music, though it continues to explore the postpunk sounds and dark lyricism of 2018's *Who Do You Love*. Several tracks wouldn't feel out of place on a Fields of the Nephilim record, and it's easy to hear why Nernes has cited Swans as an influence: Årabrot's evolution parallels that band's shift from brutal assault to graceful dark pop with 1989's *The Burning World*. *Norwegian Gothic* contains eloquent, elegant hooks and excellent vocal performances—on "The Lie," for instance, Nernes leans into his storytelling with utter conviction, while building swirling guitars all around him. He survived a bout of throat cancer in 2014, and he delivers every note as if it could be his last. On the epic "Hard Love," Park contributes punchy, poignant vocals that counter the track's crunchy rhythms. The uneasy, surrealist soundscape of "Hallucinational" revels in the ambience of the couple's church, and the sharp riffing and driving drums of "Kinks of the Heart" carry a jagged, high-wire electricity. "The Moon Is Dead" has a smoky, futuristic torch-song atmosphere, with Horntveth's swaggering jazz sax slithering among its pulsing, stuttering beats. Every Årabrot album is a journey through an unfamiliar landscape, and *Norwegian Gothic* shows that even at their most pop-forward, this band will always come up with something to haunt you. —MONICA KENDRICK

AYOCHILLMANNN x VALEE, *THE TRAPPIEST ELEVATOR MUSIC EVER!*

Ayodele Media

soundcloud.com/ayochillmannn/sets/the-trappiest-elevator-music-ever

A few weeks after COVID-19 shut down the country, Chicago engineer and producer Ayo "AyoChillMannn" Makinde lost his full-time job as a youth national teams administrator for U.S. Soccer. In an effort to stave off depression, he dedicated all his energy to making music, and within a year it became his career. He got a big boost from Chicago rapper Ty Made It, who enlisted Makinde as his engineer and producer and then introduced him to indescribable hip-hop phenomenon Valee (who'd performed at the last concert Makinde saw before the pan-

dem). They began hanging out and soon created the sumptuous, succinct AyoChillMannn and Valee album *The Trappiest Elevator Music Ever!* (Ayodele Media). As their collaboration took shape, Valee would frequently comb through Makinde's catalog of beats and find tracks he was eager to rap over—most of which Makinde says he never expected Valee to want. The rapper's crisp, half-whispered vocals and sidwinding, gymnastic flow tease out the dynamism in Makinde's sparse and often graceful production. On "Kees," Valee's hushed, serrated lines mirror a watery, echoing keyboard melody and illuminate the contours of a quietly palpitating bass line. Makinde pours a lot into his compact instruments: his dreamlike work on the standout "HIMMYimmy" recalls classic film scores and lounge music with its twinkling, looped sample, and its sparse, steely percussion draws on boom-bap's bluster and trap's austerity. *The Trappiest Elevator Music Ever!* runs a mere 19 minutes, but Makinde and Valee accomplish a lot in that limited time—and the energy they bring to these songs could power a long, fruitful collaboration. —LEOR GALIL

COMPOSURESQUAD, *AUTO D.*

Issa Party

composuresquad.bandcamp.com/album/auto-d

Chicago DJ and producer Jermaine Collins, aka Composuresquad, became a pillar of the city's nightlife scene after hooking up with local dance collective and record label Them Flavors in 2013. He joined the crew the following year, and soon the name "Composuresquad" on a party's bill became a sure sign it was worth attending. His interest in DJing kept him glued to the decks, which helps explain why he's only now issuing his first full-length, *Auto D.* (Issa Party). Collins treats pop, R&B, dance, and hip-hop like one big color wheel—without disrupting the mood of a track, he can use it to explore the gradients where all these styles shade into each other. "Wormhole" spices up a techno synth line and a liquid trance loop with constantly shifting, crisscrossing percussion that evokes the adrenalized euphoria of footwork, while the wistful "Grew Up, Never Going Out Sad" recalls quixotically romantic R&B and spacey experimental dance. On "Blood," Chicago rapper Saint Icky drops melty verses that tap into the track's sublime and spine-tingling frequencies—which Collins conjures with a mix of funk carioca percussion, alternately gleeful and gloomy keys, and video-game coin sound effects. Whatever stylistic direction he takes next, he clearly has the intuition to pull it off. —LEOR GALIL

DAGAR GYL ENSEMBLE OF LAWRA, *DAGARA: GYL MUSIC OF GHANA'S UPPER WEST REGION*

Sublime Frequencies

sublimefrequencies.com/products/694617-dagara-gyl-music-of-ghanas-upper-west-region

First things first. The gyl is a traditional West African xylophone with dried gourd resonators hung below most or all of its hardwood keys. (A similar instrument is called a "balafon" in Francophone Africa.) It's usually tuned pentatonically, and its full, luminous tone is haloed with a cicada-like buzz, created by vibrating membranes made from spiders'



Jupiter & Okwess © YOURI LENQUETTE

egg cases and pasted over small holes cut in each resonator. If you saw Badenya—La Freres Coulibaly at the African Festival of the Arts in 2001 or SK Kakraba at the World Music Festival in 2016, you already know what one looks like.

This album of Dagar gyil music was recorded on December 11, 2019, by Hisham Mayet of Seattle label Sublime Frequencies, in the Ghanaian village of Lawra, near the border with Burkina Faso. The Dagara people belong to a cluster of ethnic groups occupying northwest Ghana and neighboring areas of Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire, and they traditionally play paired gyile, accompanied by hand drummers. To assemble this ensemble, led by Vi-ireh Dong, Mayet enlisted master musician Aaron Bebe Sukura, who plays second gyil on the last half of the recording. They use two 14-key logyile and two drums: a large gourd-bodied kuor with a head of monitor-lizard skin and a smaller clay-pot dalari. The Dagara people consider the gyil a vehicle of connection between the community and the spirit world, and the creation of an instrument destined for this sacred role is accompanied by rituals and offerings from the moment the builder chooses which tree to cut to make it. The two mesmerizing instrumental medleys on this 40-minute album draw from repertoires that accompany funerals, weddings, dances, celebrations of birth, and even social drinking at the taverns locally called cabarets.

At many Dagar gyil performances, the audience circles the musicians, dancing and adding hocketing handclaps, and if they recognize a melody, they sing the lyrics. I can pick out melodies here, but because I'm only any good at parsing rhythms in Western music, almost everything else breaks my brain in an excellent way. The drums maintain blistering flurries of notes, while the logyile engage in a complicated mutual orbit with a much slower metabolism, occasionally developing a clear division between vamp and lead. Superficially, the result sometimes sounds like several distinct tempos and time signatures running simultaneously, but close listening has persuaded me that everyone is keeping to one pulse—the music is constructed so the various rhythms often feel like unrelated streams. Patterns of different lengths phase past each other, and one play-

ers' downbeat might be another's upbeat; sometimes three beats for the drums equals four for the logyile. In the liner notes, Sukura says the second half of the album stays in 4/4, and I can tell it does—but it's still hard for me to hold a consistent meter in my head when the medley makes its leaps. This is trance music, but it hypnotizes you with multiplicity and fluidity, not just with repetition. It suspends you among its rhythms, because whenever you follow one you're tugged toward the others. Even if you're not already dancing, it feels like levitating.

—PHILIP MONTORO

JUPITER & OKWESS, NA KOZONGA

Everloving
jupiterokwess.bandcamp.com/album/na-kozonga

My first impression of Jupiter Bokondji and his band Okwess was that their sound resembled Fishbone filtered through traditional African music. That's not to say that the players in this Congolese ensemble actually take any cues from the legendary ska-punk band—rather, both groups combine African rhythms with rock, funk, and the occasional jazzy flourish. Jupiter & Okwess have an insane stage presence, and I was glad to catch their riotous performance at Millennium Park in 2019. The band's new album, *Na Kazonga* (Everloving), does a good job capturing their musical anarchy. Several songs have multiple textures happening at once; guitar parts slot into other guitar parts while the band's five members deliver masses of vocals, sometimes in unison and sometimes in individual parts that intertwine to great effect. On *Na Kazonga*, everything is mixed at a ferocious volume, but it doesn't sound overproduced—excess is clearly part of the plan. Jupiter & Okwess attack every song with an aggressive rock intensity, so that even softer numbers such as “Bolenge Seben” feel ready to pounce. The horn section from the Preservation Hall Jazz Band seamlessly fits into the wall of sound on “Abalegele Gale,” finding a middle ground between Congolese rhythms and New Orleans second line (though I think it would also be thrilling to hear Jupiter & Okwess's music adapted for a NOLA brass band!).



Marianne Faithfull with Warren Ellis © ROSIE MATHESON

Elsewhere on *Na Kazonga*, Los Angeles vocalist Maiya Sykes adds churchy vocals to the male-dominated chorus of voices, and Brazilian hip-hop artist Marcelo D2 provides a full-on rap. The album's off-the-chain mixture is nuts in the best way, and its complexities come straight from the heart. Purists will disagree, but Jupiter & Okwess might be one of the planet's best rock bands going. —JAMES PORTER

MARIANNE FAITHFULL WITH WARREN ELLIS, SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

BMG
mariannefaithfull.org.uk/tag/she-walks-in-beauty

In these dark days, when counterculture heroes of the 60s and 70s are dropping at an alarming rate, it's important to take a break from mourning and assess who's still standing—and who's still creating vital art. By all rights, singer-songwriter Marianne Faithfull could have left us long ago. She rose to fame as much for her music as for her association with the famously debaucherous Rolling Stones camp in the late 60s, and she struggled with drug addiction, eating disorders, and homelessness at various times in the 70s and 80s. Since then she's persevered through battles with hepatitis C and breast cancer and, most recently, a terrifying ordeal with COVID-19. The daughter of an heiress, Faithfull had been gigging in London's folk clubs when she met Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham at a party for the band in 1964. She quickly became an “it girl” and released a series of light and sunny hits in the early 70s, then made it through the underground-music wringer, emerging powerful and smoky-voiced by decade's end with 1979's *Broken English*. You could say she's a survivor—and she's a witty, well-read survivor at that.

Faithfull has had literary leanings her whole life; she studied the English Romantic poets while at school at Reading, interpreted Heathcote Williams's poem “Why'd Ya Do It” on *Broken English*, set poems by her friend Frank McGuinness to music on 1995's *A Secret Life*, and took on the on the writings of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht on 1998's *Seven Deadly Sins*. While in lockdown last year,

Faithfull created what's arguably her most intensely literary work yet, *She Walks in Beauty*, which sets words by some of the most famous Romantics (Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, Lord Byron, William Wordsworth) to music by composer, multi-instrumentalist, and longtime Nick Cave cohort Warren Ellis. Ellis collaborated with Faithfull on her 2018 release, *Negative Capability*, and on the new album, he plays piano on most of the songs. Brian Eno also appears, adding borderline ambient textures to “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” and “The Bridge of Sighs.” Produced by Head, who's probably most famous for his work with PJ Harvey, the album reveals a Faithfull we've never quite heard before—her velvety, sandpapered voice intones each ode to the ages against minimal, ethereal backdrops, aided by the subtle cello of Vincent Ségal. Ellis has described the record as echoing the avant-garde sensibility of musique concrète, which is constructed using already recorded sounds as raw material, and some of its songs do in fact include street noise and other field recordings buried in their mixes. *She Walks in Beauty* isn't your typical “legacy artist” fare—by which I mean it's not a misguided and awkward bid to stay relevant, bloated with cameos by hot stars from younger generations or hobbled by inappropriate attempts at current styles. It also isn't the type of album you'd throw on at a party, and it's all the better for it. Save *She Walks in Beauty* for a late night with red wine, a spliff, and maybe your favorite volume of verse, when you can revel in the work of an artist who's still trying new things at 74. Enduring warriors like Marianne Faithfull know no other way. —STEVE KRAKOW

GREAT DECEIVERS, GREAT DECEIVERS

LandLand Colportage
greatdeceivers.bandcamp.com

It's difficult to describe the vastness of Chicago indie rock and punk without mentioning Great Deceivers, partly because of the four-piece's pedigree. Guitarist Russell Harrison and bassist-vocalist Ben Rudolph play in unforgivingly ferocious hardcore unit C.H.E.W., while drummer Seth Engel



Mother Nature @NICCI BRIANN

continued from 33

makes delightfully solemn indie rock as Options and has been part of far too many other groups to list here. In *Great Deceivers*' 11 years together, they've issued music on several small but vital indie labels, including Florida's New Granada, Virginia's Flannel Gurl, and Chicago's Sooper. The group became so ingrained in the local scene that they were easy to take for granted—I saw them on the lineup of so many Subterranean shows that they seemed as much a part of that club's character as the door staff. But *Great Deceivers* have called it a day; singer-guitarist Max Green moved to Boston a little more than a year ago, and with their new self-titled album for LandLand Colportage (a division of Minnesota label LandLand), the band end on a sweet note. The songs on *Great Deceivers* render their somber melodies with gentleness and precision, and despite the music's vaguely sad sensibility, the fact that it's played that way helps it convey a rejuvenating vitality. On the bridge for "Getaway," the band follow a bit of tender, barely-there guitar strumming with a crushing climax, evoking a glimmer of hope that's sharpened by all the experiences that brought them to this moment. I like to imagine that everyone in *Great Deceivers* will carry that optimism with them even when this band is a distant memory. —LEOR GALIL

MOTHER NATURE x BOATHOUSE, SZNZ

Closed Sessions

mothernaturebarz.bandcamp.com/album/sznz

Rappers Klevah Knox and TRUTH, known collectively as Mother Nature, have worked tirelessly to ascend through the Chicago scene over the past few years. COVID-19 threw a gigantic roadblock in their path—the same way it did for almost anyone who isn't a billionaire using a society-shifting pandemic to get billions of dollars richer—but the duo's labor has continued to bear fruit. Last year Mother Nature worked for the first time with venerated local hip-hop label Closed Sessions, releasing an EP called *Portalz*. They've pulled out all the stops for their follow-up mixtape, *Sznz*, which features guest verses from some of Chicago's fin-

est: Cool Kids' Sir Michael Rocks, often imitated but never replicated phenom Valee, and rising royal Brittney Carter. Mother Nature's key collaborator here is Closed Sessions in-house producer BoatHouse, whose balance of resplendent luxury and hard-edged grit emphasizes the duo's intensity and chemistry. Throughout the album, Klevah Knox and TRUTH show off sharpened, battle-ready raps, but on the cool, effervescent "Treehuggaz" they also use half-sung verses to foreground their affinity for irresistible melodies and pop hooks. Their relaxed confidence gives the track the kind of incalculable magic that ought to put their career in hyperdrive. —LEOR GALIL

PAPER MICE, 1-800-MONDAYS

Three One G

papermice.bandcamp.com/album/1-800-mondays-2

It's been almost eight years since we've heard new music from local weirdos Paper Mice, but their brand-new *1-800-MONDAYS* (Three One G) was worth the wait—it's easily their best record yet. This time around, the trio blur the line between pop and herky-jerky math rock more thoroughly than ever before, stepping up the polyrhythms and bizarre time signatures that provide the foundation for their catchiest and most sophisticated melody making to date. As is often the case with Paper Mice, the lyrics on *1-800-MONDAYS* are all retellings of newspaper stories, even though they sound like fiction. Album highlight "Trial by Fire" is about attorney Stephen Gutierrez, whose pants began smoldering while he was in court defending a client accused of arson—he argued that both fires were cases of spontaneous combustion. "Fight Spider With Fire" is equally incendiary; it's a Darwin Award-worthy tale about a man who tried to use a lighter to kill a spider that was crawling on his car while—wait for it—he was filling up at a gas station. The songs' surreal subject matter lends itself to the quirky, bouncy vocals of singer-guitarist David Reminick and enhances the loopy, jittery feel of the music. Contemporary classical outfit Spektral Quartet (who've recorded some of Reminick's composi-



Silent @BECKY DIGIGLIO

tions) are featured on a handful of tracks too, adding a whole extra layer of gorgeous pop majesty to Paper Mice's dizzying approach. —LUCA CIMARUSTI

SILENT, MODERN HATE

Three One G

silent31g.bandcamp.com/album/modern-hate

There are probably a dozen memes circulating right now that chart punk subgenres and the philosophical leanings they supposedly embody, and without even finding one, I'm confident saying that goth rock and postpunk would get tagged as the nihilists of the bunch. But that stereotype downplays the social and political histories of these gloomy genres. From early on they've been more inclusive of women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ folks than punk and hardcore, which have tended to be more heteronormative and white male dominated. However, a much smaller contingent of fans have misconstrued attempts by iconic bands such as Joy Division and Siouxsie & the Banshees to subvert fascist imagery as an endorsement of those toxic ideas (for proof that far-right rhetoric in post-punk is still a thing, consult any recent Morrissey interview or the #gothsfortrump hashtag that briefly trended on socials). Baja California gothic punks Silent are staunchly in the anti-racist camp, and with their new second album, *Modern Hate*, the four-piece respond to the prejudice and white supremacy poisoning the world, as well as to the mass shootings that have plagued the United States. Silent originally intended to put out the record in 2018, but after a brief hiatus and a lineup change, they went back into the studio to rework some of the tracks with new drummer Rocio Chavez. They then set a new release date for 2020, and you can guess what happened to that plan. But like a sling-shot pulled back as far as possible before it's fired, *Modern Hate* packs a greater wallop today than it might've if it had come out on schedule. From the first notes of opener "End," front man Jung Sing commands full attention with surging melodic wails set against a plodding bass line. In addition to Silent's explorations of haunting postpunk, sear-

Hate they experiment with noisy effects, cinematic ambience, and the occasional surfy flourish. "Hands on the Wall" starts with nearly a minute of sublime haze before building into a spacious groove, while "Erased" incorporates industrial sounds that feel plucked from a horror movie (or from a deep-space alien communication). *Modern Hate* is equally transfixing and danceable, and it feels like it's over in a blink despite being ten tracks long. When Silent break into the ferocious finale of closer "No Heaven," you may find yourself reaching for the "play" button to start the album again—I've done so practically every time I've listened. —JAMIE LUDWIG

BIL VERMETTE, HUNTING FOR PLANET 9

Trouble in Mind

bilvermette.bandcamp.com/album/hunting-for-planet-9

Bil Vermette has been making ambient and electronic soundscapes for more than 40 years, and his new album, *Hunting for Planet 9*, won't disappoint fans looking for another collection of instrumental, synthesizer-heavy space waves to add to their playlist. The Berwyn musician became known for his hypnotic compositions as a member of late-70s synth collective VCSR, and after the band split in the early 80s, Vermette began self-releasing solo work on his own Rainforest Productions label, starting with 1984's *Katha Visions* (reissued in 2013 by Galactic Archive, run by Reader contributor Steve Krakow in conjunction with Permanent Records). Vermette's sound is rooted in the music of pioneering electronic groups such as Tangerine Dream and Cluster, and on *Hunting for Planet 9* he continues on his galaxy quest with melodic, gently celestial tracks such as "Saturn's Rings" and "Kuiper Belt." The album begins with the ominous "Space #8," whose loud, dissonant patchwork of sound feels like it could propel you to the darkest corners of the Milky Way—and then the next track, "Surface of Titania," arrives with a gentle bounce to return you to the comforts of the solar system. With its playful variety of spacy dynamics, *Hunting for Planet 9* is a welcome voyage through electronic sound that'll clear your head for takeoff. —SALEM COLLO-JULIN

THE CANNABIS PLATFORM

a Reader resource for the canna curious

nuEra

A NEW ERA OF CANNABIS



Close to Downtown!



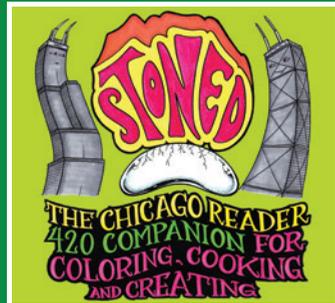
Free parking and buses & trains nearby



Friendly dispensary staff for best product suggestions



nuEracannabis.com



CBD / cannabis recipes, psychedelic drawings to color, word puzzles to stimulate your brain, growing tips, and more!

chicagoreader.com/420book

NeuroMedici

by Dr. Consalter
Your partners in health and wellness.

Find out today if medical cannabis or infusion therapy is right for you. Telemed available!

Serving medical cannabis patients since 2015.

www.neuromedici.com 312-772-2313

BLISS SHOP

CANNABIS ACCESSORIES & CBD

4809 N PULASKI
(773) 997-9238 BLISSCBDSHOP.COM

THE CITY IS SPEAKING...
AND WE HEAR YOU.

#cannabisequityncc

expungement
know your rights
careers in cannabis
www.naturescarecompany.com

NATURE'S CARE CO.

DISPENSARY **33** WEST LOOP
COMING SOON

DISPENSARY33.COM

CANNABIS CONVERSATIONS

We're continuing the conversation! Watch for the next Reader Cannabis Conversations on May 27, 2021

Space is limited. Reserve your spot now.
For more information, contact
ads@chicagoreader.com

To advertise, email ads@chicagoreader.com

CHI

STAGED



NNAMDÌ

BRAT 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY LIVE STREAM
FROM LINCOLN HALL

MAY 15, 2021

8PM CT / 9PM ET / 6PM PT

TICKETS AT AUDIOTREE.TV/STREAMS

24
HRS
ONLY

READER

SOOPER
RECORDS

LH
LINCOLN HALL



DON'T STOP THE PRESSES

LAGER

NOW AVAILABLE AT
HAYMARKET BREWING,
737 W. RANDOLPH ST.!

PROCEEDS FROM THIS BEER GO TO SUPPORT:

READER



The Daily Line

PICK IT UP
UNTIL IT'S GONE!





© MATTHEW GILSON FOR CHICAGO READER

CHICAGOANS OF NOTE

Jennifer Phạm, cofounder of Haibayô and Celebrate Argyle

“For so long, people didn’t know anything about Asian Americans. Showing who we are and being proud of who we are, it’s really important during this time.”

As told to PHILIP MONTORO

Jennifer “Nuky” Phạm, 37, helps run the Celebrate Argyle campaign and books musicians and artists at pop-up events for Haibayô, whose cross-cultural creative collaborations aim to energize the Asia on Argyle district. Phạm is a Chicago-born Vietnamese American and co-owns her family’s business, Mini Thuong Xá Pharmacy. She also serves on the board of directors for the Uptown Chamber of Commerce and on the associate board for the Chinese Mutual Aid Association.

My family were the first Vietnamese business owners on Argyle Street. I grew up in Uptown, right by Argyle. Because there were very few Asian shops in that area, and the fact that my parents were the first ones to open up a store, it was a mini mall.

It’s Mini Thuong Xá Pharmacy—the nick-

name is Mini Tx Pharmacy. In Vietnamese, *thuong xá* means “mall.” It was a video rental store, it was a music store, you could get your film developed there, it was a jewelry store. You could get your karaoke systems there, laser discs. For maybe 15 years or so, it’s just been operating as a pharmacy and medical center.

When I got a little older, my dad decided that he may want to sell the pharmacy to CVS. When he told me that, I started realizing how important Argyle was to me, and also I realized my responsibility to the area, to continue the legacy of what they created here.

From that, I worked together with different organizations to have pop-up events. Then a really good friend of mine, Hạc Trần, and I decided to create this organization called Haibayô. The name comes from a Vietnamese

phrase, “One, two, three, cheers.” In Vietnamese, when you do the cheers with someone, it’s “*Một, hai, ba, vô* [pronounced ‘yo’]!”

Haibayô formed in 2019. We actually started off as a DIY pop-up event. I’ve been in the nightlife industry for quite some time now—I basically started bartending when I was 21. I thought a really good way to bring the young folks that I grew up with to Argyle is through a party.

We worked with one of my friends that owned a restaurant on Argyle Street. We basically turned it into a Haibayô party, and we would have different DJs play. I created a cocktail menu. I called one the Lychee Cha-Cha-Cha, because my parents love dancing to the cha-cha-cha. I also made the Phở Sho with phở spices that I got at Hoa Nam grocery store, which unfortunately closed during the

pandemic.

At most of our pop-up events, we had late-night phở. Growing up, my parents used to drive me to all their Vietnamese parties, and they would make music all night long—someone would be on the keyboard, someone would be on the drums, my mom would get up and start singing. It was kind of like an upgraded karaoke. And around midnight, they would always get hungry and make phở or another noodle soup. I wanted to bring a little bit of that culture into the party atmosphere.

The first one, we featured two DJs—one was Charlie Glitch, my partner. He’s Mexican and Puerto Rican, so not southeast Asian, but very helpful with this event! We also featured my friend Norm Rockwell from the Pacifics—he’s an old-school DJ. He’s pretty active in the Chicago hip-hop community. The second one was in May, for AAPI Month. We featured Ubae, who gave us a drag performance.

It was shoulder-to-shoulder packed when we did that second event. We needed to get a larger space. I was meditating one day, and just had this thought: “I wonder what’s on top of that one building?” Hạc went to go check it out. It was a loft space, and my friend was managing it—my tutor from when I was a little girl. He was actually using it as storage. Hạc and I told him about what we were trying to do, and he agreed to let us use it.

When we did the Haibayô events, when we got into the larger loft space, we highlighted musicians and we had performances—by mostly southeast Asian artists, and folks that are directly from Argyle Street. We had Elephant Rebellion, who are a big part of the community. Suburban Kid McFly was one of the performances. Jofred Estilo, Mark Major, DJ Sabado, Supes Base, DJ Raboo, DJ Trew of Altered Tapes, DJ Hũu Lý, RTST. We also highlighted different visual artists—Cookie Kwan, Danbee Kim, Vitaliy Vladimirov, WingT2H, and poets from Luya Poetry. We had southeast Asian and BIPOC vendors. We wanted it to feel like a night market, so food always played a huge role in our events. We made it a point to feature a restaurant from Argyle for each one.

I feel like a lot of the population thinks, oh, OK, Asians are just a bunch of nerds or whatever. So here we have Ubae, who’s Filipinx and performing drag, and then we have these different southeast Asian DJs. I wanted to shine

MUSIC

a light on how amazing we all are, and how we come together through food and drink.

If you were to eat and drink with Vietnamese folks, it's called "nhậu." You're just drinking and eating with friends all night long. And when you cheers with someone, you don't do it just one time—you literally do it all night. You never take a sip of your drink just by yourself. You always say "Một, hai, ba, vô," and then you just keep doing it, like "Một, hai, ba, vô, vô, vô!"

During the pandemic, we kind of shifted gears because we couldn't host events. We ended up focusing on ways to get folks to go to the restaurants and order takeout. We did some mutual aid work, where we were able to get groceries donated to us, and we'd give them out to the Argyle-Uptown community. It was a collaboration with Sany Nguyễn, who's also a cofounding member of Celebrate Argyle, a larger organization we created together. She goes by Sany Delight.

The latest Haibayô event we did, we partnered with Uni Uni, who just had their grand opening during Lunar New Year weekend. It was a three-day event, and we had performances and an art gallery in the back.

Sany has worked with DishRoulette Kitchen, and she was the one who helped us partner up with them—they're a local nonprofit that supports restaurants and food businesses, and they were able to give us funding to do this Celebrate Argyle project. There's more folks involved—Hoàn Huỳnh, Trang Trương-Hill. It's a visual storytelling campaign to highlight the AAPI folks and businesses on Argyle Street. We mostly use Instagram.

Celebrate Argyle started at the beginning of the year. Every time we did a video for any of the restaurants, the funding from DishRoulette meant the restaurant got a \$750 grant. We're now sharing other resources—my pharmacy is a COVID-19 vaccination site, and we have a new partnership with Lyft, where you can get a ride credit to visit Asia on Argyle.

Mainly we just want folks to come to Argyle Street and care about it.

Our first video is a brief history of how Asia on Argyle got started. The next few videos focus on restaurants. The first one that just came out is Danang Kitchen. We didn't want to focus on the very popular three dishes—the bánh mì sandwich, the phở, and the spring rolls. Most places don't have that dish in the video, bánh khọt. When you go to a Vietnamese restaurant, especially on Argyle Street, most places have something very special that's not promoted. If you're on Argyle enough, then

you know what to get from each place!

We want folks to learn and appreciate our people. Stereotypically, people think Asians are all the same. But we're so diverse as a community, the AAPI community. Being an Asian person, for the most part we're taught to keep our heads down, not create any type of noise. Not cause any quote-unquote trouble. For so long, people didn't know anything about Asian Americans. Showing who we are and being proud of who we are, it's really important during this time—we want other people to step up as well.

Learn. Learn Asian American history—which is American history. People can donate to organizations that are fighting for justice, and spend their money at AAPI businesses. In 2020 and 2021, over six businesses have closed down on Argyle. Hoa Nam is one. Bingo Tea. A few jewelry stores. Herbs Medic, the acupuncture shop. Altogether it's nine, actually—some of it has been due to retirement or lack of succession, most of it due to COVID. Argyle is already so small to begin with. To have that many businesses close—we just thought this is a really important time to show people who we are and what this area's about.

For Haibayô, we have something in the works for AAPI Month in May. We're collaborating with Qideas, a plant shop in the corridor, to host an outdoor event all along Argyle Street.

Ellen Dương—her family owns Qideas—voiced a lot of her concerns about the Asian hate. A few weeks back, there was a Vietnamese man walking around at night, and he got assaulted. On top of that, there's just been a lot of racism in general, with the rhetoric and the video we're seeing from all over the world—people are equating us to the virus. It's been really tough. We've addressed it through a Stop AAPI Hate video that we created.

We thought it would be a good idea to celebrate our unique culture with this outdoor event. We want to create a space where there's Asian American books available, and we want to get the community involved where they can sell their stuff outside. We want folks to wear their cultural attire if they feel comfortable. I'd be wearing an áo dài, which is a Vietnamese traditional dress. We want to create a safe space to be very proud of who we are. Instead of keeping our heads down and being in fear right now, we're just giving a fuck you to that. We're choosing love over hate. 🏳️‍🌈

👤 @pmontoro

GOOSE ISLAND BEER CO.

312

Lemonade SHANDY

THE Chicago ORIGINAL

GOOSE ISLAND BEER CO.

LEMONY. JUICY. REFRESHING.

© 2021 GOOSE ISLAND BEER CO., CHICAGO, IL | ENJOY RESPONSIBLY

CORSETS

CUSTOM FIT

ANY STYLE | ANY COLOR

WWW.LEATHER64TEN.COM

64TEN CHICAGO

6410 N. CLARK ST CHICAGO, IL 60626 | 773.508.0900 | @LEATHER64TEN

EARLY WARNINGS

CHICAGO SHOWS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IN THE WEEKS TO COME

ALL AGES FREE



Jake Miller ZACK CASPARY

NEW

Afro Fusion Day Party featuring DJ Dee Money, DJ 3k, DJ Matrix 5/8, 3:30 PM, the Promontory

Afro Fusion presents Afro Beats in Hyde Park featuring DJ Dee Money, DJ 3k, DJ Matrix 5/8 and 5/29, 8 PM, the Promontory

Adrian Alexander, Ixto, Bedroom Logic, Enberg, Alfred Clayton & Brock Hegre 5/8, 8 PM, Le Nocturne Chicago

Altered Stage 6/26, noon, Reggies' Music Joint

Ólafur Arnalds 5/20, 8 PM, livestream at outmost.stream

Drake Bell, Outdrejas, Connor Stratton 5/20, 7 PM, the Forge, Joliet

Body Afro-Caribbean dance party hosted by Ms. Mighty 5/9, 9 PM, the Promontory

DJ Brock 4/30, 7 PM, Cerise Rooftop at Virgin Hotels Chicago

Buckcherry, Unlikely Souls, Releaser 8/20, 7 PM, Brauer House, Lombard

Josh Caterer and friends 5/13, 8 PM, livestream at noonchorus.com

Cleopatrik, Zig Mentality, Ready the Prince 9/22, 7 PM, Cobra Lounge

Chris Connelly 6/26, 8 PM, GMan Tavern

Cordovas 5/8, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Nicola Cruz 10/28, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

D Liva with Elephant Lore 5/15, 4 and 7 PM, Bourbon on Division

DCG, Pronto Spazzout, Lil Romo, Jr 007, Baha Banks, Fast Money Ant, DJ Victoriouz 5/6, 5 PM, the Forge, Joliet

A Different Vibe featuring DJ Machede, DJ Joe Kollege 5/9, 5 PM, the Promontory

Dustbowl Revival 5/6 and 5/13, 9 PM, livestream at mandolin.com

Kurt Elling 5/7, 6 and 9 PM; 5/8-5/9, 5 and 8 PM, City Winery

DJ Will Galvan 5/1, 7 PM, Cerise Rooftop at Virgin Hotels Chicago

Goddamn Gallows 7/14, 7 PM, Reggies' Rock Club, 17+

Golden Dagger Spring Market sale featuring V.V. Lightbody (DJ set) 5/1, noon, Golden Dagger

Gravetones, Dead Beat Jacks 5/21, 8 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggies'

Jay Electronica 12/3, 9 PM, the Promontory

Jmsn 10/17, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, on sale Fri 4/30, 10 AM, 18+

Paul Johnson, James "DJ Acid" 5/15, 9 PM, Le Nocturne Chicago

Kayhan Kalhor & Navid Afghah 5/14, 7 PM, livestream at uchicago.edu

Keb' Mo' 5/6, 8:30 PM, livestream at citywinery.com

Kingtrey 6/3, 8 PM, the Promontory, 18+

Leftjones 5/2, 6:30 and 9 PM, the Promontory

Adrianne Lenker 11/18, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Lucero, Morgan Wade 11/5, 9 PM, Metro, 18+

Marbin, Elysian Green 7/2, 8 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggies'

Mariachi Estrellas de Chicago 5/6, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

John McCutcheon 11/14, 5 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

M.E.A.T. Chicago Market Days XXL featuring DJ Ben Bak-

son, Las Bibas From Viscaya 8/6, 9 PM, Radius Chicago

Jake Miller, Fly by Midnight, Just Seconds Apart 10/15, 8:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Motel Breakfast 6/5, 8 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggies'

Naperville Soulfest featuring Keke Wyatt, Le'Andria Johnson 6/5, 5 PM, Naper Settlement, Naperville

Neptune's Core 5/6, 7 PM, City Winery

Osees, Mr. Elevator 9/17-9/18, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Planet Booty, Rich Aucoin 11/4, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Rico 5/7, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Tom Ryan, Dan Holohan Band 11/12, 8 PM, Szold Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Ty Segall & Freedom Band 5/15, 7 PM, streaming at levitation-austin.com

Chris Siebold & Psycales 5/26, 7 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggies'

Skinny Limbs 5/6, 4 PM, livestream at audiotree.tv

Smooth Hound Smith 6/3, 6 and 9 PM, Bourbon on Division

Shayna Steele 8/18, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston, on sale Fri 4/30, 10 AM

Summer Salt, Covey, Breakup Shoes 10/6, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, on sale Fri 4/30, 10 AM

Tireswarm Car & Motorcycle Show featuring Saliva, 9th Planet, Unlikely Souls, EGxBH 4/29, Brauer House, Lombard

A Tribute to Ozzfest featuring Killer of Giants, Freak on a Leash, Hellbilly Deluxe, Centric, Zero Signal 5/29, 7 PM, Brauer House, Lombard

Twista, Do or Die, Crucial Con-

flict, Beadz, White Smoke, 44 Kingz, Woominati Crew, and more 6/5, 9 PM, Brauer House, Lombard

Two Attics, Zoska, Dioscurii, Kreeppshow 5/8, 9 PM, Bourbon on Division

Waco Brothers 5/29, 6 and 9:30 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggies'

Javon Watson Experience 5/19, 7 PM, the Promontory

Bounce and Break Yo Back 3 featuring Thank You Chicago DJs 9/18, 10 PM, the Promontory, rescheduled

Chicano Batman, Inner Wave 12/17, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, rescheduled, lineup changed, 18+

Chosen Few Picnic & House Music Festival 2021 7/3, in-person concert postponed until 2022; streaming at chosenfewdjs.com

Dirty Knobs with Mike Campbell, Jeremy Ivey 4/2/2022, 8 PM, Park West, rescheduled, opener added, 18+

Ekali, William Black 10/2, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, opener added, 18+

Flora Cash 6/18, 8:30 PM, Lincoln Hall, canceled

Flotsam & Jetsam, Wrath, Creep, Spare Change 5/23, 7:30 PM, the Forge, Joliet, canceled

Sonny Fodera, Dom Dolla 10/28, 8:30 PM, Concord Music Hall, rescheduled, 18+

Fozzy, Through Fire, Royal Bliss, Zero Theorem 9/3, 6:45 PM, the Forge, Joliet, rescheduled

The Garden 11/17, 7:30 PM, Bottom Lounge, rescheduled

Goo Goo Dolls 8/6, 7 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion, postponed

Terisa Griffin 10/23, 8 PM, the Promontory, rescheduled

Hot Mulligan, Heart Attack Man, Meet Me at the Altar, Super American 6/27, 6 PM, Bottom Lounge, canceled

Japanese Breakfast, Luna Li 9/15-9/16, 8:30 PM; 10/11, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, shows added, 17+

Billy Joel 6/25/2022, 8 PM, Notre Dame Stadium, Notre Dame, rescheduled

Lovesexy dance party in tribute to Prince and DJ Kwest, On featuring DJ Salah Ananse and more 9/10, 10 PM, the Promontory, rescheduled

Taj Mahal Quartet 5/6, 6 and 9 PM, City Winery, postponed

Never miss a show again. Sign up for the newsletter at chicagoreader.com/early

Matchbox Twenty, Wallflowers 8/7/2022, 7:30 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, rescheduled

Matis Trio with Matisyahu 5/7, 8 PM; 5/8, 6 and 9 PM, City Winery, postponed

Dave Matthews Band 8/6-8/7, 7:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion, rescheduled

Michael McDermott 5/12-5/13, 8 PM; 5/14, 5:30 and 8:30 PM; 5/16, 7 PM, City Winery, shows added

Reba McEntire 3/19/2022, 8 PM, Allstate Arena, Rosemont, rescheduled

Carrie Newcomer 10/24, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, rescheduled

Nile 11/4, 7 PM, the Forge, Joliet, canceled

Polaris 6/24, 9 PM, Lincoln Hall, postponed

Revivalists 4/8/2022, 8 PM, Aragon Ballroom, rescheduled, 17+

Riot Fest 2021 with Smashing Pumpkins, Run the Jewels, Pixies, Coheed and Cambria, Taking Back Sunday, Sublime With Rome, Dirty Heads, Lupe Fiasco, Vic Mensa, All-American Rejects, New Found Glory, Simple Plan, Gogol Bordello, Circle Jerks, and more 9/17-9/19, Douglas Park, updated lineup

Santana; Earth, Wind & Fire 7/2/2022, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park, rescheduled

Rina Sawayama 4/30/2022, 7 PM, Metro, rescheduled and venue changed

Snow Patrol 3/11/2022, 8 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion, rescheduled

Accidentals 5/9, 7 PM, livestream at crowdcast.io

Ronnie Baker Brooks 5/21, 6 and 9 PM, City Winery

Caifanes 5/7-5/8, 7 PM, Seat-Geek Stadium, Bridgeview, 17+

Concrete Roots 5/22, 8 PM, Bananna's Comedy Shack at Reggies'

Cordovas 5/8, 7 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Beau O'Reilly 5/15, 8 PM, Constellation, in-person concert with a concurrent all-ages livestream at youtube.com/constellationchicago, 18+

Young Thug 5/21, 8 PM, livestream at veeps.com



GOSSIP WOLF

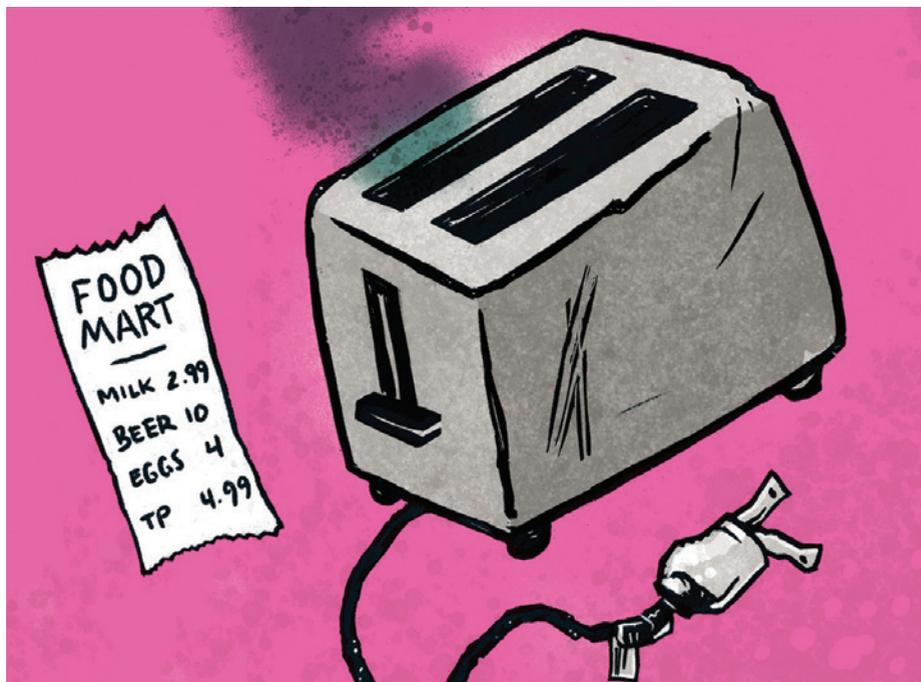
A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

AYANNA WOODS has had her music performed by Third Coast Percussion, featured in the theater project *No Blue Memories: The Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*, and broadcast on the Emmy-nominated show *Brown Girls*, but the funky, far-reaching R&B she makes with her band **Yadda Yadda** has a special place in her heart. Woods started writing some of the songs on her upcoming *The Yadda Yadda EP* in high school, and she calls them "a home to me over the years." She's received a **Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events** grant to buy studio time, and on Friday she began fundraising via **3Arts** to pay her band. She hit her goal of \$3,750 within 48 hours (she set it low, because she had to reach it to get anything at all), and now she's trying to double it by Monday, June 7. Paying her band is no small feat, because the lineup includes guitarist **Sam Hasting**, drummers **Jimmy Pinkl** and **Eddie Burns**, trumpeter **Ben LaMar Gay**, keyboardist **Nolan Chin**, cellist **Lia Kohl**, and violinist **Macie Stewart**—and that's not even everyone! Contributor rewards include social media shout-outs, signed posters, and (if you pony up \$500) a 30-second thank-you song.

If you've seen the book *Overtime: The Jazz Photographs of Milt Hinton*, you know that the legendary bassist captured the action behind some of the most important jazz performances of all time. Inspired by Hinton's work, local guitarist **Scott Hesse** has documented his own career in a similar way. On Friday, May 7, an exhibit of Hesse's photos, along with snaps from drummer **Alvin Cobb**, guitarist **Steve Kaiser**, and saxophonist **Nick Mazarella**, opens at **Fulton Street Collective**. Due to COVID-19, viewings are limited—you need a ticket via FSC's website or Eventbrite.

On Friday, April 30, veteran underground Chicago hip-hop act **Pseudo Slang** will drop *Live From the Qtine*, a full-length collab with German producer **Pawcut**. The early tracks sound leisurely and divine! —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.



✍ JOE NEWTON

SAVAGE LOVE

What should lesbians RSVP to a Trump wedding?

There's no time like the present to gift a broken toaster.

By **DAN SAVAGE**

Q: I have a quick question about bisexuality. What if one has a preference for dating straight individuals? As a straight woman, I am only interested in dating straight men. Is that some kind of phobia? Or is it OK for that to be a preference? I've always wanted to ask someone this but I'm afraid of being thought of as having a phobia.
—**NERVOUSLY ASKING DAN SOMETHING**

A: I think you're fine, NADS, so long as you've taken a moment to think about why you're burdened with this "preference." Our sexual attractions, orientations, and preferences are easily distorted and limited by prejudice. If you reflect on what might be at the root of your "preference" for men who are straight (or

for men who'll tell you they are), NADS, you might be able to open yourself up to more partners. But a person can reflect day and night for decades and still feel the same way. At the very least, though, we can all be thoughtful about our erotic and/or sexual biases, take responsibility for them, be considerate about how we express them, and—perhaps most importantly—do our best not to transit them. I'm not into shame but not finding a particular group of people attractive for whatever reason is something we can keep to ourselves—not just to avoid doing harm to people we aren't attracted to, but to avoid passing our erotic biases and limitations on to the next generation.

Q: My wife and I (lesbian

moms together) have been invited to her cousin's wedding. And she's marrying the son of a former Republican state official who, in the early 2000s, turned the power of his state against gays, especially gay parents. His son hasn't renounced his views—in fact, he's converted his fiancée, my cousin-in-law, to Trumpism. If it's relevant, they're more country-club homophobes than rednecks, they want to be seen as mainstream and pleasant, and they now live in a very liberal city and hide their views so they're not pariahs. Not sure how to handle—simply not responding? Citing his father's views in the RSVP? Never going to any family function where they will be, ever? I really don't want my kid around these people, but also, I

feel like maybe I should go to set an example. But then, wearing my best suit and tie to a Trump wedding deep in a red state makes me worried for my physical safety. What would you do? —**LESBIAN AGAINST REPUBLICAN PARTIES**

A: I would send my regrets along with a broken toaster and the wrong receipt.

Q: I have a cult fascination with the film *Withnail and I*. OK, I love this film. But I am troubled by the perspective this film offers on homosexuality. It's not what one would call a "modern perspective." I believe the film's portrayal of homosexuality can be seen as funny or alarming or a cultural reference point. I think it's all three. My son is gay, and with some introductory apologies, I want to tell him to watch the film. Apologies for "trial ballooning" something like this with you, Mr. Savage, and I know you are not the standard-issue gay, as if such a thing exists. But have you seen the film? And if so, your thoughts? —**FRIEND OF WITHNAIL**

A: I've never seen the film but a quick Google search of "Withnail and I" and "homophobic" brings up nearly 100,000 results. Apparently one of the film's main characters (Uncle Monty) is a "predatory homosexual" who makes unwelcome a series of advances on one of the male leads. "Is the film homophobic? Yes, undoubtedly," Philip Caveney writes at Bouquets & Brickbats. Richard Griffiths, the actor who plays Monty, "somehow manages to evoke genuine sympathy for a tragic character who is, more than anything else, lonely—but all the talk about buggery

by force does make you feel rather uncomfortable." The film was released in 1987—which in no way excuses the homophobia, of course, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a popular film released in 1987 that wasn't deeply homophobic either by commission (the hateful portrayal of gay characters) or by omission (the complete absence of gay characters). Still, the film doesn't portray homosexuality, FOW, it portrays an individual homosexual. It was doubtless a damaging portrayal at the time, as there were so few other representations of gay characters on TV or in film back then. But viewed now—viewed at a time when there are more representations of gay people in film and television than ever before—it doesn't have the power to do the same damage. So go ahead and recommend the film to your son, FOW, with the appropriate qualifiers and apologies.

Q: I just got dumped in a pretty brutal and inconsiderate way by a guy I really liked. He didn't want to tell me it was over, he just pulled away and left me to figure it out on my own. We were dating for a year and he even started dating someone else and didn't bother to inform me but didn't hide it from me either. I feel depressed and really sad because I still like him and I miss him and I don't know what to do. —**SAD AND DEPRESSED OVER NEW ENDING**

A: If he did that . . . if he broke up with you like that . . . you didn't like him. Not really. You liked the idea of him you formed in your head. He gave you the outline of a decent guy and you filled that outline in with everything you hoped he was, i.e. a kind, loving, decent guy who was

as into you as you were into him. Or at the very least, SADONE, a guy who cared enough about your feelings to end things in a kind and considerate manner if it came to that. You can and should feel sad about losing the guy you hoped he was, but don't feel sad about losing the guy he turned out to be. Because that guy was an asshole.

Q: I was just listening to the *Savage Lovecast* (Episode 750) and you were responding to a fella who was ejaculating sooner than he would like. I wanted to say that I, a female, had a male partner who always came twice. Once was quick and he played it cool, and just owned that that was how he operated. We switched to a new condom and could go for much longer the second time! Own it, guys! No need for shame about your body's functionality. —**COME AND COME AGAIN**

A: It's good advice for men who suffer from premature ejaculation (PE)—don't try to stop that first orgasm and you're likely to last longer as you build to a second—but that advice works better for younger men with shorter refractory periods. The older a man gets, the longer his refractory period becomes; if your partner's second orgasm took 12-24 hours to arrive, well, that's a long time to wait, no condom or no new condom. Older guys with premature ejaculation might want to try low-dose SSRIs, i.e. antidepressants; one of the side effects of SSRIs is delayed ejaculation and studies have shown that they are a pretty effective treatment for PE. 📧

Send letters to mail@savagelove.net. Download the *Savage Lovecast* at savagelovecast.com.
🐦 @fakedansavage

The Chicago Reader BOOK CLUB

Mikki Kendall

Hood Feminism: Notes From the Women That a Movement Forgot
Author Talk: Oct. 22, 2020

Sonali Dev

Recipe for Persuasion
Author Talk: Nov. 19, 2020

Riva Lehrer

Golem Girl
Author Talk: Dec. 17, 2020

Emil Ferris

My Favorite Thing Is Monsters
Author Talk: Jan. 28, 2021

Eve Ewing

1919
Author Talk: Feb. 25, 2021

Nnedi Okorafor

Remote Control
Author Talk: Mar. 25, 2021

Natalie Moore

The South Side
Author Talk: Apr. 22, 2021

Rebecca Makkai

The Great Believers
Author Talk: May 26, 2021

Fatimah Asghar

If They Come for Us
Author Talk: June 24, 2021

Kayla Ancrum

Darling
Author Talk: July 22, 2021

Jessica Hopper

(TBD)
Author Talk: Aug. 26, 2021

Precious Brady-Davis

I Have Always Been Me: A Memoir
Author Talk: Sep. 23, 2021

Book Club membership includes:



Exclusive access to conversations between Authors and the Reader

Discounts to your favorite independent bookstores

A curated monthly newsletter

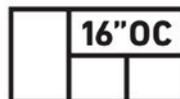
A members-only discussion forum

Special offers from Reader partners

Presented by:

THE-FOLEY--
FOOD--WINE
SOCIETY

PO
ET
RY
FOUNDATION



Learn more at chicagoreader.com/bookclub

CHICAGO READER INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE PROFILE: BUCKET O' BLOOD BOOKS & RECORDS

WRITTEN BY TARYN ALLEN



COURTESY JENNIFER MCKEE

Originally a humble storefront in Logan Square, Bucket O' Blood Books & Records opened its doors in 2010. Founder Marc Ruvolo first created the shop to sell used science fiction, horror, and fantasy books, but when he stepped away in 2013 and Grant and Jennifer McKee took over, Bucket O' Blood truly began to blossom into the neighborhood staple it is today. The couple moved the store to a larger location in Avondale in 2015, taking advantage of the added space to expand both used and new inventory. They still focus on genre fiction, plus graphic novels, the occult, and true crime—they are called Bucket O' Blood, after all.

As inventory grew, so did community outreach. Pre-pandemic, the store was constantly hosting book signings and releases, film screenings, board game nights, monthly book clubs, and other events. The McKees are proud of the diverse community of genre fiction fans and authors that they've fostered at the shop; it's brought them meaningful connections and even lifelong friends.

"As a store that focuses on genre fiction, we ultimately sell an escape from the daily stresses and reality that can feel crushing. But beyond the physical books, we provide a space for people to express themselves and connect with us," the McKees note. "We strive to make our customers feel comfortable and respected, but we don't forget that fun is a big part of that. We're honored to have regular customers that share parts of their lives with us—from taking engagement photos at the store, texting us baby pics, inviting us to birthday parties, dropping off baked goods, and so many other expressions of how a local business can cement itself as part of a community."

The owners of Bucket O' Blood have also made it a priority to create community with more than just authors and book-lovers. The McKees have held food drives for the CHlditarod Foundation, fundraised for Black Lives Matter Chicago, sourced art supplies for Assata's Daughters, run book drives for Chicago Books to Women in Prison, fundraised for CIVL, and worked with Liberation Library to send books to Illinois's incarcerated youth.

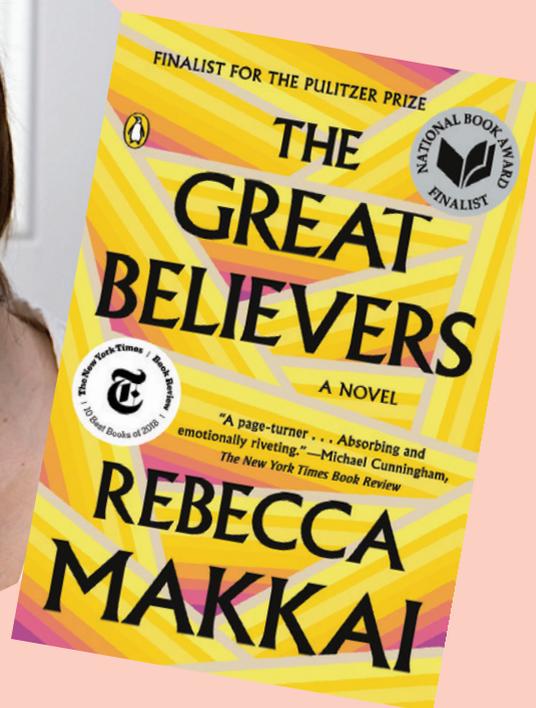
"Independent bookstores are a vital part of Chicago, as we draw people together to share their interests and experiences with each other in a setting that provides a different feeling than a bar or coffeehouse, purely by channeling the focus toward the written word." The owners continue, "Not only have we, as an independent bookstore, created a community focused around our store, but we also exist in a larger community of people who respect, support, and love literature and Chicago's amazing environment of independent booksellers."

Bucket O' Blood is available for pickup, delivery, or shipping Wednesday through Sunday. They have in-store shopping on Saturdays by appointment only. Book appointments and shop online at www.bucketoblood.com, and reach out via text, DM, or e-mail for special orders or questions.

This yearlong partnership with
independent bookstores is supported
by the Poetry Foundation.

PO
ET
RY
FOUNDATION

Poetry Foundation | 61 West Superior Street | poetryfoundation.org



Rebecca Makkai Author

Rebecca Makkai's latest novel, *The Great Believers*, was a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award; it was the winner of the ALA Carnegie Medal, the Stonewall Book Award, the LA Times Book Prize, the Clark Fiction Prize, the Midwest Independent Booksellers Award, and the Chicago Review of Books Award; and it was one of the New York Times' Ten Best Books of 2018. Her other books are the novels *The Borrower* and *The Hundred-Year House*, and the collection *Music for Wartime*—four stories which appeared in *The Best American Short Stories*. Rebecca is on the MFA faculties of Sierra Nevada College and Northwestern University. She is Artistic Director of StoryStudio Chicago. Visit her at RebeccaMakkai.com or on twitter @rebeccamakkai.

Tracy Baim - Moderator

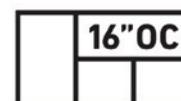
Tracy Baim is co-publisher of the *Chicago Reader* newspaper. She is co-founder and former publisher of *Windy City Times*. Baim received the 2013 Chicago Headline Club Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2014, she was inducted into the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Hall of Fame. She was inducted into the Association for Women Journalists-Chicago Chapter Hall of Fame in 2018. She is also in the Chicago LGBT Hall of Fame. Robert Feder named her to his Top 20 Women in Chicago Journalism list. She has won numerous LGBTQ+ community and journalism honors, including the Community Media Workshop's Studs Terkel Award in 2005. Baim has written and/or edited 12 books. Her most recent books are *Kuda: Gay & Proud* and *Barbara Gittings: Gay Pioneer*. Her other books include *Gay Press*, *Gay Power: The Growth of LGBT Community Newspapers in America*; *Obama and the Gays: A Political Marriage*; and *Out and Proud in Chicago*. Baim was executive producer of the lesbian film *Hannah Free*, starring Sharon Gless, and Scrooge & Marley. She directed and produced e. nina jay's *Body of Rooms* film. She is creator of *That's So Gay!*, an LGBTQ+ trivia game. Baim is the founder of the Pride Action Tank and the Illinois LGBT Chamber of Commerce. She was also co-vice chair of Gay Games VII in Chicago, and in 2013 was founder of the March on Springfield for Marriage Equality.

She received the American Institute of Architects-Chicago Presidential Citation Award in 2016 for her work on tiny homes for the homeless. Additional awards include those from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, the LGBT Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, and Unity Parenting.

Presented by:

THE-FOLEY--
FOOD-+-WINE
SOCIETY ☺ -

PO
ET
RY
FOUNDATION



CLASSIFIEDS

JOBS

ADMINISTRATIVE
SALES & MARKETING
FOOD & DRINK
SPAS & SALONS
BIKE JOBS
GENERAL

REAL ESTATE

RENTALS
FOR SALE
NON-RESIDENTIAL
ROOMMATES

MARKET-PLACE

GOODS
SERVICES
HEALTH & WELLNESS
INSTRUCTION
MUSIC & ARTS
NOTICES
MESSAGES
LEGAL NOTICES
ADULT SERVICES

JOBS

The Northern Trust Company seeks a Senior Consultant, Applications to design, build, and test software applications and solutions. Define technical system requirements for complex data processing and software development projects. Collaborate with cross-functional users to analyze business needs, create prototypes, and develop user-friendly software applications. Test and maintain computer programs, including designing, coding, and debugging. Conduct feasibility studies and design system requirements for complex data processing projects. Perform strategic planning and long-range direction for technology usage and enhancements across the business units. Position requires a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, Information Systems, or a related STEM field, followed by 5 years of progressively responsible experience with software design, development, testing, and implementation. Experience must include a minimum of: 5 years of experience with requirements definition; 5 years of experience with coding and debugging software applications; 5 years of experience with capturing business requirements and transforming requirements into technical specifications; 5 years of experience with conducting feasibility studies for complex data processing projects and preparing project phase reports; 5 years of experience with programming techniques including Algorithms, Batches, Change Handler, Maintenance Extensions, ORMB Billing/Payment, Service Programs, and User Exits; and 5 years of experience with Angular JS, Hibernate, Java, J2EE, Oracle RMB, OJAF Framework, Scripting, TOAD, Web Service Adapter, and XAI services. Job location: Chicago, IL. To apply, please visit <https://careers.northerntrust.com> and enter job requisition number 21030 when prompted. Alternatively, please send your resume, cover letter, and a copy of the ad to: Mark Pikul, 50 S. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL 60603.

Financial Analyst: Bachelor's Degree in Economics Req., \$59,925/yr, F/T, Resume to Euishun Hwang, Nedec America Corporation, 2251 Nicholas Blvd, Elk Grove Village, IL, 60007

Shampoo Assistant Prestigious Multi-Cultural salon in the South Loop seeking shampoo assistants - outstanding opportunity to learn from top stylists. Flexible hours may include Tuesday - Saturday. Seeking hard workers with excellent customer service. Please send your resume including hours of availability.

ENGINEERING Yum! Connect LLC has an opening in Chicago, IL for Engineering Manager, Quality Assurance to build and lead a team of Quality Engineers and Quality Analysts. Supervises 5 subordinates; 1 Sr. QA Engineer, 1 Software Engineer II and 3 Software Engineer in Test. Ref job code C#5571913 & mail resume to: Yum! Connect LLC. Attn: HR, 3301 Stober Road, Louisville, KY 40213.

Search is a community based organization that supports adults with developmental disabilities to live to their full potential. Our employment opportunities include full and part time positions in our beautiful group homes and program settings conveniently located in Skokie, Mount Prospect, Morton Grove and Rogers Park. Safety is a priority! We've implemented strict disinfecting and cleaning standards, provide PPE and require daily symptom screening. Come join the dedicated and long term Search family! Email your resume to jobs@search-inc.org.

Greek Studies Curriculum Director-Evaluate performance & recommend changes to strengthen teaching skills of Greek teachers. Adjust Greek language curriculum to American needs, demonstrate strategies for the Greek lessons & consult w/ students & their families about their edu. MA-Intercultural Edu, 1 yr. exp. as a Teacher/Coordinator & Greek & English fluency req'd. Mail resume to: E. Angelo Spyrtatos, School Board Pres, Hellenic American Academy, 445 Pine St., Deerfield, IL 60015.

COMPUTER/IT: The Kraft Foods Group Brands LLC seeks Manager, IT-SAP Security to work in Chicago, IL & be responsible for leading the SAP Security Role Design, Build and Implementation in a global environment. Degree & commensurate exp. req'd. Apply online by searching R-37301 at kraftheinz.avature.net/careers/SearchJobs.

SALES: Kraft Heinz Foods Company seeks Associate Director, Sales to work in Chicago, IL & manage relationships w/key retailers working w/field sales & category marketing for Kraft Heinz frozen portfolio. Degree & commensurate exp. req'd. Apply online by searching R-37034 at kraftheinz.avature.net/careers/SearchJobs

TransUnion, LLC seeks Sr. Advisors for Chicago, IL location to perform strategic planning to identify & prioritize initiatives & opportunities. Master's in Finance/Accounting/ Business/related field + 2yrs exp. or Bachelor's in Finance/Accounting/ Business/related field + 5yrs exp. req'd. Req'd skills: Must have exp. w/product strategy & management, & strategic product delivery in financial services or big data field; exp. driving solutions & bringing a product to market (research industry market to determine need & decide which products bring to market, conduct customer surveys & interviews); demonstrated ability to think strategically & conceptualize solutions that solve business problems, incl. building out growth strategy; driving & facilitating discussion w/key stakeholders to achieve optimal solution strategies, financial analysis & project management; presenting to managers. 20% telecommuting permitted. Send resume to: A. Goodpasture, REF: NP, 555 W Adams, Chicago, IL 60661

Transmission Managers in Chicago to prov engineering supp & mng complete interconnect'n proc & transmiss'n eval for utility scale wind & solar dev. Req must have MS in EE w/ spec in power sys demonstrated thru coursework. Travel monthly (1-2 dys) to Austin, TX. Apply to Orsted Onshore Services, LLC, c/o Sylvia Smith, 401 N. Michigan Ave., Ste 501, Chicago, IL 60611

COMPUTER/IT: The Mill Group, Inc. seeks Head of Technology to work in Chicago, IL. Manag & direct the maintenanc of existing facility infrastructure, plan future upgrades & direct technicial expansn. Degree & commensurate exp. req'd. Domstic & internatnl travel req'd 10% of time. Submit resume via email to ny.recruitment@themill.com w/ sbjct: Head of Technology.

Software Architect Ad Service Payment Plan, Inc. seeks F/T Software Architect in Chicago, IL to design, dev & modify software sys. using scientific analysis and mathematical models to predict and measure outcome and consequences of design. Analyze user needs and software requirements to determine feasibility of design within time and cost constraints. Analyze info to determine, recommend, and plan computer specs and layouts and peripheral equip. mods. Determine sys. performance standards. Dev and direct software sys. testing and validation procedures, programming, and documentation. Modify existing software to correct errors, allow it to adapt to new hardware, and/or to improve its performance. Bachelor's degree in Comp Sci, Eng., or related field, 1 yr. exp. in soft. dev., and work exp. with .Net and Microsoft SQL server technology req'd. Send CV and references to HR at Service Payment Plan, Inc. 303 E. Wacker Dr. Ste. 2000, Chicago, IL 60601.

Northwestern Memorial Healthcare seeks Senior Mobile Developers for Chicago, IL location to design, specification, development, implementation & testing of mobile application software. Bachelor's in Comp Sci, Electrical/Electronics Eng+4 yrs exp req'd. Req'd: 4yrs w/dev & eng iOS apps; mobile app & MVVM dev; Swift; RESTful API. Exp must incl: Sr. Role dev & release mobile apps to App Store; impl & architect multi-threaded & distributed multi-tier sys; app performance opt; CI/CD pipelines; integrating 3rd party SDKs. Background check & drug test req'd. Apply online: <http://jobseeker.nm.org/> Requisition ID: REF16802E

Greenleaf Kitchen and Cocktails is hiring all back of the house positions! Apply in person 11a-7p 205 W. Wacker Dr or email theloo@greenleafchopshop.com

Relativity (Chicago, IL) seeks Senior SQL Server DBA to work with & trouble shoot new technologies in a cloud environment that is constantly adding capability to existing products & introducing new technology. Option to work remotely. Submit resumes to Recruiting@relativity.com, to be considered, reference Job ID: 21-9009 in the subject line.

Relativity (Chicago, IL) seeks Sr. Software Engineer to architect/design/implement & test cloud native software consistently applying best practice software engineering. Must take & pass pre-interview coding test. Option to work remotely. Submit resumes to Recruiting@relativity.com, to be considered, reference Job ID: 21-9010 in the subject line.

RESEARCH

Have you had an unwanted sexual experience since age 18? Did you tell someone in your life about it who is also willing to participate? Women ages 18+ who have someone else in their life they told about their experience also willing to participate will be paid to complete a confidential online research survey for the Women's Dyadic Support Study. Contact Dr. Sarah Ullman of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Criminology, Law, & Justice Department at ForWomen@uic.edu, 312-996-5508. Protocol #2021-0019.

RENTALS & REAL ESTATE

Sunny Andersonville large, two BR, modern kitchen/bath, private balcony, natural wood, mini blinds, hardwood floors, washer/dryer, garage option, no dogs. \$1245. 708-482-4712

Bucktown : 1922 N Wilmot, 4 RMS, 2BR, 1 Blk from "Blue Line L". Modern kitchen & bath. Hardwood floors. Free Laundry. \$1300 + security. Avail 5/1. No Pets. Call (773) 317-3389

Fabulous 1 bedroom apartment available for May 1, 2021 located at 1560 N. Sandburg Terrace, Apt 2904. Decorated beautifully with all new stainless steel appliances, fabulous closet space with an unbelievable balcony and East view of the lake and downtown. Rent is \$2,400.00. If interested in seeing it please get in touch with Ed Baker at 773-491-5996. Its a fabulous apartment :-)

Edgewater 1216 W. Norwood 2nd Fl. 1200 Sq FT 2 bedroom apt. Spacious living and dining rooms. Updated Kitchen w/SS Appl, hardwood Floors, track lighting, enclosed sunporch. Walk to Lake, Redline L, shopping. Heat included. \$1400/month. \$500 non refundable move in fee. Available 4/1. 773.761.3084.

PROFESSIONALS & SERVICES

Investigation Business disputes Bankruptcy investigation Judgments Malpractice, Divorce, VIP Security Forensic accounting Asset research, Risk management forensic computer analysis. call 1-312-404-9734 <https://culper.us/en/about-us/>

CLEANING SERVICES CHESTNUT ORGANIZING AND CLEANING SERVICES: especially for people who need an organizing service because of depression, elderly, physical or mental challenges or other causes for your home's clutter, disorganization, dysfunction, etc. We can organize for the downsizing of your current possessions to more easily move into a smaller home. With your help, we can help to organize your move. We can organize and clean for the deceased in lieu of having the bereaved needing to do the preparation to sell or rent the deceased's home. We are absolutely not judgmental; we've seen and done "worse" than your job assignment. With your help, can we please help you? Chestnut Cleaning Service: 312-332-5575. www.ChestnutCleaning.com

COUNSELING & PSYCHOTHERAPY IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES we need not isolate. If you are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, or depressed we can talk. I can help you better understand these situations and create solutions for them. My practical approach entails a therapeutic alliance that is affirming, empathic, and interactive. To talk contact Michael J. Bland, Psy.D., LCPC. Northside location. 773-404-8161. Michael@BlandTherapy.com/www.BlandTherapy.com

PERSONALS

Tracy Guns & Britney Beach were at the skyscraper & CD convention in NY city. There was a party with M. Crue, B. Sabbath, ACDC - GNR & Aerosmith on Tuesday. Do you go? Yes - Bieber & Gwen said we went early, & saw L. GaGa, B. Spears. It was so fun. I can sell a lot of CDs there. I was happy.

Love,
Guns N Roses
Dominick DeFanso
Lia Lakely

ADULT SERVICES

HARDCORE XXX, NO LIMITS PHONE SEX - We have every fetish and fantasy! FREAKY PHONE SEX GIRLS <https://freakyphonesexgirls.com/>

Danielle's Lip Service, Erotic Phone Chat. 24/7. Must be 21+. Credit/Debit Cards Accepted. All Fetishes and Fantasies Are Welcomed. Personal, Private and Discrete. 773-935-4995

Exotic dancers and strippers direct to your door! Open 24/6 now hiring also call 219-201-0367 or visit website: www.hosebibleescortsandstrippers.com 3171443702.net

EROTIC PHONE CHAT Sexy Singles, Sweet Coeds, Hipster Gals. Only .99c. 800-Sexy Gal; 800-739-9425.

HARDCORE ADULT TALK! Busty Babes, Ebony Hotties, Older Ladies. 866-515-3699, only \$10 per call.

READER MATCHES

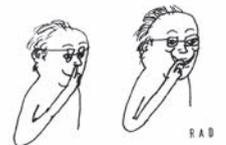
Vixens and how hot wives wanted for fun dates call 773-977-8862 fun cool clean straight single white male 24/7

Chubby biwm seeks same Chubby sexy BiWm 60 seeks chubby 50 to 70 for pleasure. I live alone in near west suburbs Scandal84@yahoo.com

DOM SEEKS OLDER SUB FEMALE married white master 52 seeks older sub female who needs pleasure and punishment and will train and seeking discreet LTR I can host and discreet come now -call-224-292-9899. dragonmastercs69@gmail.com

Submit your Reader Matches ad today at chicagoreader.com/matches for FREE.

Matches ads are not guaranteed and will run in print and online on a space-available basis.



WANT TO ADD A LISTING TO OUR CLASSIFIEDS?

Email details to classified-ads@chicagoreader.com

the platform

The Chicago Reader Guide to Business and Professional Services

business consulting

DB MATTERHORN GROUP
A Capital Funding Consulting Firm



DO YOU NEED CAPITAL TO START OR GROW YOUR BUSINESS? WE WILL PREPARE, POSITION, AND PRESENT YOUR COMPANY TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS FOR CAPITAL FUNDING. CALL NOW 312-268-5842 OR VISIT DBMATTERHORN.COM

legal

Considering Divorce? We Can Help.

COLLABORATIVE | PRENUPTIAL
DIVORCE | MEDIATION



Brigitte Schmidt Bell, P.C. 847-733-0933
lawyers@bsbpc.com
BrigitteBell.com
BrigitteSchmidtBellPC

home improvement

Noise from Outside?

Soundproofing Window Inserts

Reduce or Eliminate Fog & Water
Keeps Bugs & Spiders Out

Visit stormsnaps.com or noisewindows.com

sales@stormsnaps.com
Alpina Manufacturing, Chicago, IL
1-800-915-2828

Cubicle & Desktop Sneeze Guards

• Any size • No damage to cubicle • Easy removal • Portable, lightweight Desk shields for Children or Adults

Reopen Your Offices

sales@fastchangeframes.com
Alpina Manufacturing, Chicago, IL
1-800-915-2828
773-202-8887

Visit our website or call us for info: fastchangeframes.com

insurance services

THE BOSS
Insurance Group, LLC

- Home
- Auto
- Life
- Commercial
- Small Business

312-759-7740
www.tbossig.com

WE LISTEN, WE CARE, WE EDUCATE AND WE PROTECT BY ELIMINATING THE RISK

entertainment

LIVE & VIDEO
Entertainment

KIDS ♦ CIRCUS
NIGHTLIFE ♦ TELEGRAMS

FIREFLY PRODUCTIONS
320-333-4095
fireflyproductions.co

job skills

JARC
JANE ADDAMS RESOURCE CORPORATION

Start your career with **FREE** job training

With our Careers in Manufacturing Program, you can learn skills in:

- CNC (computer numerical control) machining
- Welding
- Press Brake Operation

Supportive services and job placement provided

Jane Addams Resource Corporation | 708.581.8356 | www.jane-addams.org

education

Stellar Career College

Start a Career in Healthcare!

- Hybrid Programs (online and/or on-campus)
- MRI, X-Ray, Surgery, Dental, Dialysis, Ultrasound & MA/Phl. Programs
- Online, Weekend, Evening and Day Schedules
- Financial Aid and Grants Available (if you qualify)
- Accredited and Affordable

Stellar Career College
205 W. Randolph Street, Suite 200, Chicago (loop) | 312-687-3000 | stellarcollge.edu

health and mental health

Mental Health is Essential

Chicago Behavioral Hospital provides hope for those struggling with depression, anxiety, substance use, and other mental health conditions.

We are all in this together. Let us help.

Inpatient and intensive outpatient programs for teens and adults.
Free and confidential assessments.

CBH
CHICAGO BEHAVIORAL HOSPITAL

844.756.8600
chicagobehavioralhospital.com

Troy Johnson, MSW, LCSW
Licensed Psychotherapist

Telehealth Sessions
LGBTQ-Oriented
Schedule Online
Free Initial Consultation

Accepting
BCBS of Illinois

773-875-0928
www.TroyJohnsonCounseling.com

books

REGGIO MCLAUGHLIN
TAP DANCE OF LIFE

WRITTEN BY
REGGIO MCLAUGHLIN

AVAILABLE AT AMAZON, BARNES AND NOBLE AND OTHER FINE BOOKSTORES. CHICAGO TEACHER, PERFORMER AND AUTHOR.

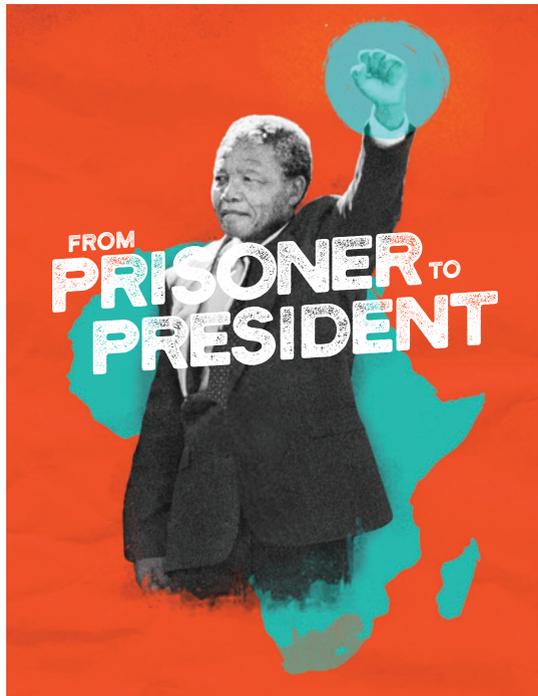
your heading here

**YOUR
AD
HERE**

To advertise, email ads@chicagoreader.com

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

AT ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM



SPECIAL EXHIBITION

MANDELA

Struggle for Freedom
Feb 20 - Sept 12

Mandela traces the history of the fight against apartheid in South Africa, with Nelson Mandela as one of its central figures.

Presenting Sponsors:

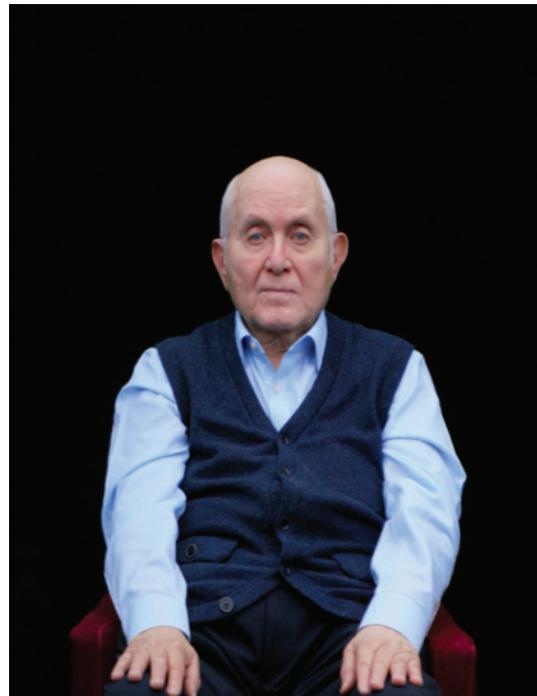


Mandela: Struggle for Freedom was developed by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (Winnipeg, Canada) in partnership with the Apartheid Museum (Johannesburg, South Africa). Tour management services provided by Lord Cultural Resources.

Developed by:



International Tour Supporters:



ABE & IDA COOPER SURVIVOR STORIES EXPERIENCE

Ongoing Exhibition

"Meet" an interactive 3D hologram of Holocaust Survivor Pinchas Gutter, who survived six concentration camps.

What will you ask him?

Abe & Ida Cooper Survivor Stories Experience features *Dimensions in Testimony*, developed by USC Shoah Foundation in association with Illinois Holocaust Museum.



ZEV & SHIFRA KARKOMI HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION

Ongoing Exhibition

Explore over 500 artifacts, documents, and photographs donated by Chicagoland Holocaust Survivors and a German rail car of the type used in Nazi deportations.

Self-guided audio tours available.



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER